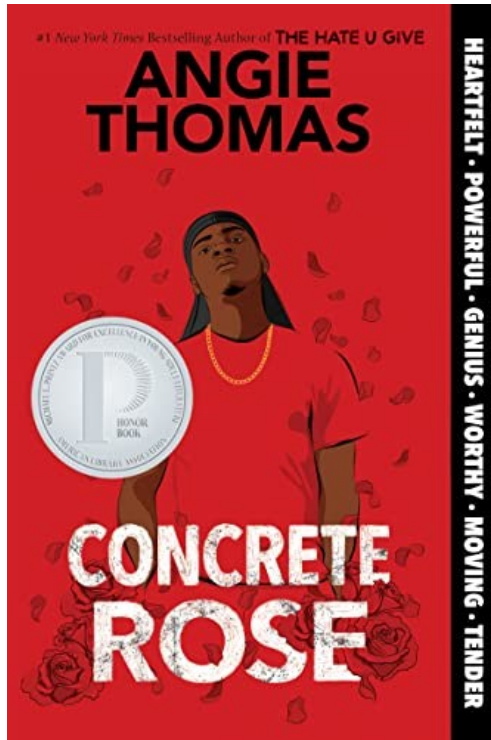


CONCRETE ROSE



Young Adult

By Angie Thomas

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Book Summary:

Life-altering events change a teenager's outlook on being in a gang.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains inexplicit sexual activities; sexual nudity; excessive/frequent profanity derogatory terms; violence; controversial racial social commentary; controversial religious commentary; and alcohol and drug use by a minor.

3 / 5

Minor Restricted
BookLooks Review Rating

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7	<p>In other words, a beatdown. That's how the big homies keep us li'l homies in line. See, there's levels to King Lords. You got youngins, badass middle schoolers who swear they got next. They do whatever the rest of us tell them to do. Then you got li'l homies like me, King, and our boys Rico and Junie. We handle initiations, recruitment, and sell weed. Next is the big homies, like Dre and Shawn. They sell the harder stuff, make sure the rest of us have what we need, make alliances, and discipline anybody who step outta line.</p>
10	<p>She could ball, and she was fine as hell. Plus she had a ass.</p>
18	<p>Once me and Iesha got into it, I forgot right and wrong. At some point, the condom broke. Now I'm at the free clinic waiting for DNA test results on Iesha's three-month-old baby.</p>
19	<p>Ma think I make money by cutting grass around the neighborhood. I do, but I make even more by selling drugs.</p>
36	<p>"I wanna make money! You and Shawn wouldn't let me sell nothing but weed." "Cause we looking out for you and the li'l homies. Selling that other shit is dangerous in more ways than one. You don't need to be doing that." ..."I'm smart with mine, unlike you," Dre says. "You probably careless enough to lead the cops right to you. You honestly need to leave this dealing shit alone, period. Weed, rocks, pills, powder, whatever. Let it all go."</p>
37	<p>"Then you'd have to admit to them that you let me sell weed."</p>
49	<p>"Let me guess, he only want you selling weed for him and Shawn for pennies." "Nah, man. He want me to quit drug dealing period. Said if I don't, he'll rat you out to Shawn."</p>
50	<p>I go to the bathroom. Ma made it my job to keep it clean every week, making me the only one who go under the cabinet. I get down on the floor to look under there real good and move around the cleaning supplies. They help hide the space in the back between the wall and the pipe that's just big enough for me to slide a Ziploc bag of drugs into. good and move around the cleaning supplies. They help hide the space in the back between the wall and the pipe that's just big enough for me to slide a Ziploc bag of drugs into. I take it out, go to the living room, and I give it to King.</p>
52	<p>I'm too tired to nod along. Right after King left, I put my son back to bed and tried to get a nap. Couldn't for thinking 'bout that conversation with King. Dre glance over at me. "You good, cuz?" I rest my head back. "King rolled through earlier. I told him what you said." "How'd that go?" "How you think it went? He was pissed, but he said he'd stop," I lie. I gotta look out for my boy. Dre nod. "Good. That's all that's bothering you?" "Dawg, when did Andreanna start sleeping good?" He laughs. "Don't tell me you worn out already." "Hell yeah. I ain't sleep worth shit this weekend."</p>

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	<p>"Come with the territory, playboy. Be glad you got nothing else to do, like school. You told Shorty 'bout him yet?"</p>
66	<p>I kiss her neck and make my way to her lips. She pull away. "Maverick." I get up and fold my hands on top of my head. Shit, I gotta tell her. "I want you to remember that I love you, a'ight? When I did what I did, I wasn't thinking that way." "O . . . kay," Lisa says slowly. "What did you do?" "Remember when me and you broke up after Carlos thought he saw me with a girl?" "Yeah?" "Well, I was stressed out. I went over to King's crib to clear my head, and . . . he hooked me up with Iesha one time." "Hooked you . . . ?" Her eyes get big. "You had sex with her?"</p>
87	<p>I fell asleep in US history. It was boring anyway. I'm tired of hearing 'bout all these fucked-up white people who did fucked-up stuff, yet people wanna call them heroes. Phillips talked 'bout how Columbus discovered America, and all I could think was how the hell can you "discover" a place where people already lived?</p>
90	<p>Problem was he hated his coach. To be honest, everybody hated Coach Stevens. Dude was a straight-up redneck. He didn't throw around the N-word, nah. It was other stuff, like having a Confederate flag on his truck, calling it "heritage." Heritage my ass. One day last year he told King to wash his car before practice. King told Coach Stevens he wasn't his slave. Coach looked him dead in the face and said, "You are whatever the hell I say you are, boy."</p>
125	<p>Shawn on the hood of his car with a forty-ounce in hand. Dark shades hide his eyes. He hold his palm out to me. I slap it and let him pull me into a hug. Then he give me the forty-ounce. I pour out a little liquor for Dre and take a swig myself. Shawn take the bottle back. "You too young for more than that. Dre would've got on me for letting you take that li'l sip."</p>
137	<p>I look at her lips, and I ain't never wanted to do anything more than I wanna kiss them right now. So shit, I go for it. Lisa kiss me right back. It's been a long time since we did this. We can't kiss fast enough, can't keep our hands off each other. It's like she hit me with jumper cables. My whole body on fire. "Damn," I mumble, and look down. It's real obvious I'm into this. Lisa look at it, too. Then she look me in the eye and unzip my pants. It's on. I help her get out that dress, and she help me get my pants off. We both down to nothing when we slide under her covers. I'm ready to put it down. "Shit!" I hiss, and raise up. "I don't got a rubber." Lisa sit up a little. "Seriously?" "Yeah. I ain't have no reason to keep them on me. You on the pill, right?" "No. Had no reason to be." For a few seconds, our heavy breathing the only sound in the room. The way she feel against me . . . it's driving me outta my mind. "I could be</p>

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	<p>careful—” “If you pull out before you—” We spoke at the same time. Our eyes lock, and, goddamn, I want her bad. “Do you wanna do this?” I ask. Lisa bite her lip. “Yeah. Do you?” I never wanted anything more in my life. “Yeah.” Lisa pull me back down and kiss my neck. “Then be careful.” That’s all I need to hear.</p>
141	<p>Damn. That was wild. Me and Lisa lying in her bed, all sweaty and panting. We went at it for hours. A’ight, an hour. A’ight, a’ight, more like fifteen, twenty, ten minutes. Either way, I did the damn thing. This was the first time we ever had sex without protection. I see what the homies mean, it do feel different. I was careful though, just like I said I’d be. I brush Lisa’s hair back and kiss her forehead. Your boy made her sweat them baby hairs out. Hell yeah. “Damn, I missed you.” She cuddle up against me. “I can’t lie, I missed you too.” “I could tell, the way you were screaming.”</p>
156	<p>“We were tryna get some ass, and you were cock-blocking,” Shawn says.</p>
157	<p>“Now that Dre gone, he’d want me to look out for you. He didn’t want you selling weed. You think he’d want you to murder somebody, even for him?”</p>
158	<p>Shawn light and smoke the blunt with one hand and drive with the other. That’s some next-level multitasking. He take a hit. “Goddamn! This that good shit,” he says, all choked up. He hold it toward me. “Sound like you need to chill out. Nothing wrong with a li’l weed.” I’ve only smoked weed like twice in my whole life. King used to clown me ’cause he’d get high and I wouldn’t join in. I wanted to sell weed, not smoke it. Shawn’s blunt got me thinking of the couple of times I did get high. I would be so far gone that nothing bothered me. ... I grab the blunt from Shawn, and I take a hit.</p>
159	<p>What if God playing with us like . . . like dolls? Some diverse-ass Barbies.</p>
161	<p>he way his eyes twinkle, they spent time together a’ight. I hope Seven was asleep. Can’t have my baby exposed to old folks’ sex. ...He fold his arms. “You been smoking that reefer?” I snort. “Who the hell call it reefer, yo?” I definitely said that out loud. “The name is irrelevant,” he says. “It’s obvious you’ve been smoking. I smell it on you.”</p>
163	<p>“Not drugs, Mr. Wyatt. Weed.” “Which is considered a drug, son,” he says. “It may not be harmful like the others, but it’s illegal, and you’re only seventeen. You don’t need to be getting high.” ...He sighs. “Son, one of the biggest lies ever told is that Black men don’t feel emotions. Guess it’s easier to not see us as human when you think we’re heartless. Fact of the matter is, we feel things. Hurt, pain, sadness, all of it. We got a right to show them feelings as much as anybody else.”</p>

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188	<p>“I don’t know,” I mumble. Lisa pregnant. The words pound my skull. I hold my forehead. “I mean, you got options. What you wanna do?”</p> <p>Yeah, it’s gon’ affect me, but I ain’t pregnant—Lisa is. This her decision. Lisa bite her thumbnail. “I don’t know. There’s an abortion clinic downtown. I heard it’s expensive.”</p> <p>Goddamn, I’m always needing money. “I’d find a way to get it.”</p> <p>“I don’t want you selling drugs again, Mav. I could call my dad. He’d pay for it.”</p>
191	<p>“And you had unprotected sex anyway,” she says.</p> <p>“Yes, ma’am. It was an accident.”</p>
194	<p>“Yeah. Some girls would make a different choice, and that’s cool. That’s their choice to make. But I wanna be a mom.”</p> <p>“You wanna keep it, too?”</p> <p>“Yeah.”</p> <p>I thought—I figured—she got so many plans, like college and basketball. A baby don’t fit in that. Messed up as this gon’ sound, thinking she was gon’ have an abortion was the only thing that kept me from balling up in a corner somewhere. It ain’t been a baby. It’s been a pregnancy.</p>
210	<p>“This is way different! I don’t want my child around that stuff. To make it worse, you’re a drug dealer.”</p>
230	<p>“He didn’t ruin my life, and he didn’t make this baby by himself,” Lisa says. “I was a more-than-willing participant. Maverick told me he didn’t have a condom, and I still wanted to have sex with—”</p>
233	<p>You gotta take everything off?” I ask.</p> <p>“Yep.” Her shirt go, and then her bra next, giving me a real good view. Man, I do love the sight of them things. I just be wanting to hold them sometimes. I ain’t a perv, I swear.</p> <p>Lisa give me the evil eye. “Stop looking at them.” I look at the wall. “You act like I ain’t seen them before.”</p>
234	<p>“Earlier, I had to tell Coach that I’m pregnant. Less than an hour later, I was called to the front office. One of the sisters and the chaplain waited for me.”</p> <p>“What they want?”</p> <p>Lisa watch her feet swing. “They wanted to discuss my salvation. Told me that I committed a sin by having premarital sex and by breaking my purity pledge. They said I must seek forgiveness, and if I have an abortion, I’ll get eternal damnation.”</p> <p>What the hell? There’s a whole lot I don’t know when it comes to God, but that sound like some bull. “You believe that?”</p> <p>“I believe God is way more merciful than they are,” Lisa says. “I told them I don’t plan on having an abortion. They want me to put the baby up for adoption. Gave me info on a Catholic agency they’ve worked with in the past.”</p>
240	<p>I gotta get back in the drug game.</p>
247	<p>Forget what you heard; drug addicts don’t only live in the hood. I mostly sell to people who ain’t in the Garden—white college students who pull up ’cause they wanna try something new, businessmen from downtown who want a “wild” weekend, these rich kids at Saint Mary’s who will spend their entire allowance to get high. I got this one customer, Jack, who got two kids, a wife, and going to law</p>

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	<p>school. Law school. Meaning he know more than anybody that weed illegal. Yet he come to the Garden every other week for some green. Had his li'l boy, Simon, with him one time, asleep in his car seat in the back of the minivan. Not the kinda dude people expect to buy weed.</p> <p>...I slap palms with them again and pass them the weed baggies, their usual.</p> <p>...He wipe his nose, a signal that he want some powder. Then he slap my palm, putting money in my hands.</p> <p>...I pretend to scratch my forehead so I can see what's in my palm. Yep, that's enough. I slip my hand in my front pocket and feel around for a baggie.</p> <p>...I don't know what it is with white kids and cocaine. Ay, if they buying, I'm selling.</p> <p>..."Catch you later, my man," he says, and hold his palm out. I slap it, sliding his cocaine to him. Easy money.</p>
278	Being a man don't got nothing to do with what I want. I gotta do what I gotta do, and it looks like that's selling drugs.
285	"Yes, I told your father early on in our relationship that I was bisexual. He accepted it."
292	King supposed to hit me up on my pager today once he get me a gun. He asked if I wanted a certain type of piece. Long as it take out Red, it's fine by me.
305	"It's not fair to lescha. You were the idiot who had sex with her. What, did you think doing stuff for me would make me have sex with you?"
306	Lisa stare at me real hard. "You're selling drugs with King again, aren't you?"
307	I'm a drug-dealing, gangbanging, high school flunk-out—that's worse than a dropout. I got two kids by two different girls at seventeen.
330	<p>My drug stash should be under the cabinet where I left it. I get on my hands and knees, and I grab the Ziploc bag from behind the pipe. It's full of smaller Ziplocs that have coke, crack, and weed in them.</p> <p>I may not be shit, but there's some shit I don't wanna do anymore. Selling drugs at the top of that list. I'll give this back to—</p> <p>Two loud knocks rattle the bathroom door.</p> <p>They scare the shit outta me.</p> <p>The Ziploc bag fall from my hands.</p> <p>And land in the toilet.</p> <p>Weed start to float around in the toilet bowl.</p> <p>And some of the coke and crack rocks start to dissolve.</p>

Profanity/Derogatory Term	Count
Ass	109
Bitch	7
Cock	2
Fuck	16
Goddamn	32
Nigger/Nigga	4
Piss	21
Shit	151