



2010

### Sellout

JilliAnne Jensen

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Wilkins, Ebony Joy. *Sellout*. Scholastic, 2011. ISBN 9780545109284. \$17.99. 272 p.

Reviewer: JilliAnne Jensen

Reading level: Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fiction; Contemporary Realistic Fiction;

Subject: Identity--Juvenile fiction; Troubled teens--juvenile fiction; African Americans--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Fitting in isn't easy when you're the only black girl in your all white high school, but NaTasha really tries until her efforts to fit in end up embarrassing her in front of everyone at her last ballet recital. Recognizing that NaTasha is struggling with her identity, Grandma Tilly steps in. Soon NaTasha finds herself surrounded by girls who couldn't be more different from her when she begins volunteering at Amber's Place, a crisis center for troubled girls in the Bronx.. Even with a rough start involving a theft, cat fights, and abusive boyfriends, NaTasha eventually accepts and befriends the girls, and is able to find herself.

Inspired by her personal experience while in middle school, Wilkins does an excellent job in her debut novel dealing with the theme of finding and accepting oneself. This book is packed with lessons on growing up with integrity and virtue in an increasingly complex world, Addressing a wide variety of subjects, from racism, self-worth, and even chastity, this book gets the message across even if it is slightly didactic. Because the book does contain a scene containing some sexual content, which Wilkins handles very tastefully, the audience for this book will be slightly older teen readers.

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