



2016

Akeelah and the Bee

Abigail Packard

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Packard, Abigail (2016) "Akeelah and the Bee," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 37 : Iss. 8 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol37/iss8/1>

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Movie Review

Title: Akeelah and the Bee

Main Performers: Angela Bassett, Laurence Fishburne, Keke Palmer

Director: Doug Atchison

Reviewer: Abigail Packard

Studio: Lions Gate

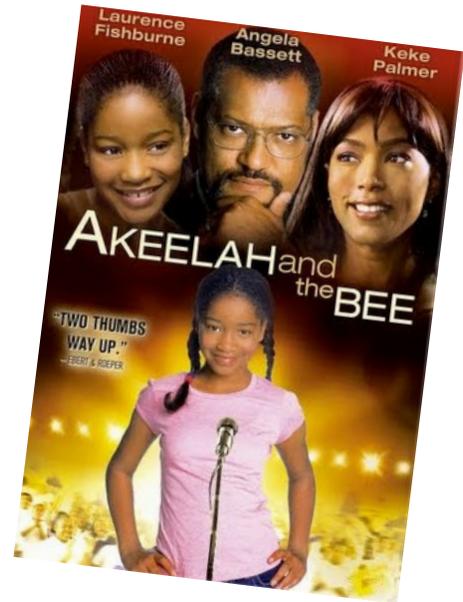
Year Released: 2006

Run Time: 112 minutes

MPAA Rating: PG

Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Dependable



Review

Akeelah Anderson is good with words; not in the eloquent flowing way, but in the spelling way. She's so good, in fact, that her teacher suggests she enter the school's spelling bee. Akeelah doesn't want to be pegged as a nerd and she doesn't want to show that she cares in a school in which she feels that no one else cares. Despite her worries and protests, she enters the bee and wins! But she's a big fish in a little pond. What ensues is a touching story of how she meets Dr. Larabee, trains for each level of the spelling bee, makes it to the national spelling bee, and ties for first place. But that story, although fun and uplifting, is almost second to the friendships she makes and the girl she becomes because she realizes how important it is to be herself.

Akeelah and the Bee is heart-warming in the cliché way. A girl afraid of herself and her talents, a mysterious teacher, and a triumphant ending. The movie is rather predictable—even the ending where she decides to misspell a word so that her competitor and tentative friend will win. It was a cute story though and the acting wasn't terrible. The story focuses around minorities and represents kids from a lot of different ethnic backgrounds. It's a good family movie that breeches the topics of self-discovery and self-love in a really positive way. Akeelah will win her way into the hearts of viewers just as she wins the spelling bee.