Purity

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Shelby made three promises right before her mother died: one, that she’d love and listen to her father; two, that she’d love as much as possible; and three, that she’d live a life without restraint. When her father asks her to attend a father-daughter Princess Ball with him, two of her promises come into conflict. Shelby doesn’t think she can live without restraint and maintain the ball’s idea of “purity.” To remedy this conflict, she and her best friends come up with a plan for Shelby to lose her virginity before the ball. As she goes about trying to find the perfect guy, Shelby realizes that she doesn’t really have a great relationship with her father. Eventually, she realizes that her mother’s promises were in an effort to keep Shelby and her father close, and while their relationship has been strained since her mother’s death, it’s never too late to remedy hurt feelings and broken hearts.

This book is an interesting look at how the world views teenage sexuality and purity. Shelby does end up having sex with a guy she barely knows, but through that experience is able to do some deep soul-searching and come to some resolutions about her mother’s promises, her relationship with her father, and her feelings for her best friend Jonas. This seems somewhat problematic, since the book never really comes to a conclusion on how teenagers should feel about sex - is it a big deal, is it not, etc. There are also some interesting ideas about how faith in God can be strained when you lose someone you love, but these ideas are never fully resolved. The characters are interesting and the story is relatively entertaining, even if there were some mixed and unresolved messages.

*Contains severe language and severe sexual content.*