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The Closest I've Come

Amanda Bishop

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Book Review

The Closest I've Come

Author

Fred Aceves

Illustrator

Reviewer

Amanda Bishop

Rating

Dependable

Level

Young Adult

Pages

320

Year

2017

Publisher

HarperTeen

ISBN

9780062488534

Marcos Rivas wants to share all the love he has, but in his neighborhood, emotions stay hidden. Marcos lives in poverty with his neglectful mother and her racist and abusive boyfriend. School isn't a place where Marcos feels welcome either. It isn't until he is chosen for a program that helps low-achieving students find their success that Marcos begins to find hope. The only reason Marcos even shows the faintest interest is because of the cute, punk girl he has a crush on. They become close friends, but feelings aren't reciprocated, and Marcos has to discover that friendships can be more meaningful than romantic relationships. He forges new friendships through the class and learns that he doesn't need the approval of his mother when there are others in his life who want the best for him. Throughout the school year, Marcos finds the drive inside himself to look toward future success and to do everything he can to escape his rough neighborhood.

The Closest I've Come is a passionate book that explores the effects of toxic masculinity and personal motivation. This is a great book that explores boyhood and is from the perspective of a young male character. The story is told in first person, and the language is realistic and uses vernacular and slang that truly show the character's voice. This story explores the hardships of children and young adults growing up in households where adults don't believe in them and how this alters their own reflection of themselves. Books that explore the complexities of difficult lives of young adults are wonderful for sharing experiences and giving voice to those who don't feel like they have one. This book is a great example of personal growth and the importance of friendship and finding your place. The Closest I've Come is a touching and relatable story, and by the end of it readers will be rooting for Marcos and for his future.

*Contains moderate language, violence, and sexual content.