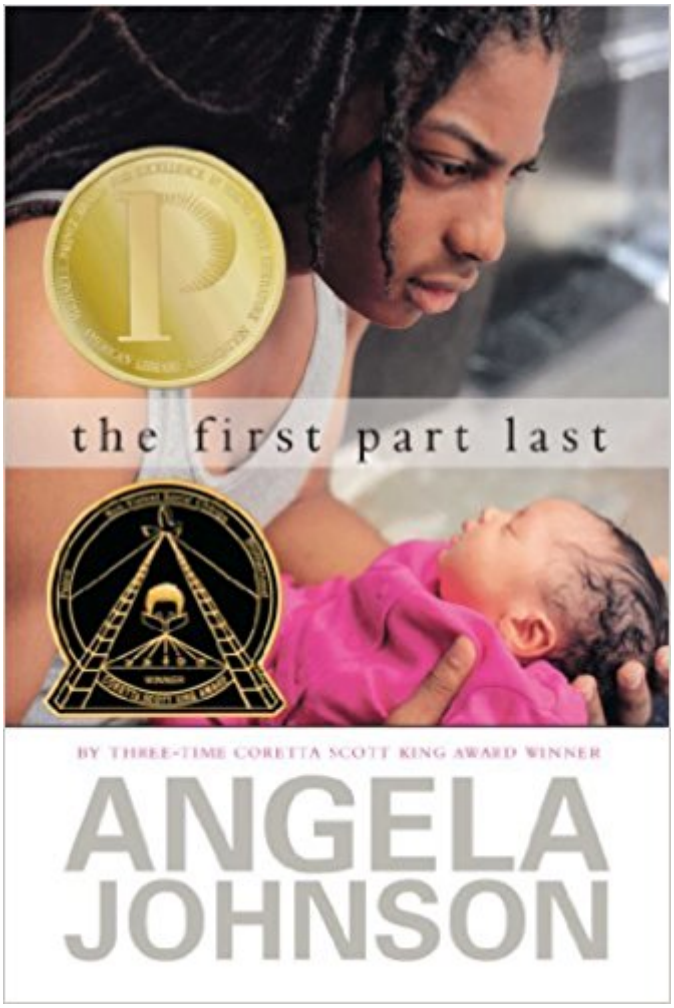
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The First Part Last (Coretta Scott King Author Award Winner)



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Synopsis

This little thing with the perfect face and hands doing nothing but counting on me. And me wanting nothing else but to run crying into my own mom’s room and have her do the whole thing. It’s not going to happen.... Bobby is your classic urban teenaged boy -- impulsive, eager, restless. On his sixteenth birthday he gets some news from his girlfriend, Nia, that changes his life forever. She’s pregnant. Bobby’s going to be a father. Suddenly things like school and house parties and hanging with friends no longer seem important as they’re replaced by visits to Nia’s obstetrician and a social worker who says that the only way for Nia and Bobby to lead a normal life is to put their baby up for adoption. With powerful language and keen insight, Johnson looks at the male side of teen pregnancy as she delves into one young man’s struggle to figure out what "the right thing" is and then to do it. No matter what the cost.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 790L (What’s this?)
Series: Coretta Scott King Author Award Winner
Hardcover: 144 pages
Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers; First Edition edition (June 1, 2003)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0689849222
ISBN-13: 978-0689849220
Product Dimensions: 4.5 x 0.6 x 7.5 inches
Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 167 customer reviews
Best Sellers Rank: #827,699 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #10 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > New Baby #92 inÃ Â Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Pregnancy #601 inÃ Â Books > Children’s Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > New Baby
Age Range: 12 - 17 years
Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 8 Up-Brief, poetic, and absolutely riveting, this gem of a novel tells the story of a young father struggling to raise an infant. Bobby, 16, is a sensitive and intelligent narrator. His parents are supportive but refuse to take over the child-care duties, so he struggles to balance parenting,

school, and friends who don’t comprehend his new role. Alternate chapters go back to the story of Bobby’s relationship with his girlfriend Nia and how parents and friends reacted to the news of her pregnancy. Bobby’s parents are well-developed characters, Nia’s upper-class family somewhat less so. Flashbacks lead to the revelation in the final chapters that Nia is in an irreversible coma caused by eclampsia. This twist, which explains why Bobby is raising Feather on his own against the advice of both families, seems melodramatic. So does a chapter in which Bobby snaps from the pressure and spends an entire day spray painting a picture on a brick wall, only to be arrested for vandalism. However, any flaws in the plot are overshadowed by the beautiful writing. Scenes in which Bobby expresses his love for his daughter are breathtaking. Teens who enjoyed Margaret Bechard’s Hanging on to Max (Millbrook, 2002) will love this book, too, despite very different conclusions. The attractive cover photo of a young black man cradling an infant will attract readers.Miranda Doyle, San Francisco Public LibraryCopyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Gr. 6-12. Bobby, the teenage artist and single-parent dad in Johnson’s Coretta Scott King Award winner, Heaven (1998), tells his story here. At 16, he’s scared to be raising his baby, Feather, but he’s totally devoted to caring for her, even as she keeps him up all night, and he knows that his college plans are on hold. In short chapters alternating between "now" and "then," he talks about the baby that now fills his life, and he remembers the pregnancy of his beloved girlfriend, Nia. Yes, the teens’ parents were right. The couple should have used birth control; adoption could have meant freedom. But when Nia suffers irreversible postpartum brain damage, Bobby takes their newborn baby home. There’s no romanticizing. The exhaustion is real, and Bobby gets in trouble with the police and nearly messes up everything. But from the first page, readers feel the physical reality of Bobby’s new world: what it’s like to hold Feather on his stomach, smell her skin, touch her clenched fists, feel her shiver, and kiss the top of her curly head. Johnson makes poetry with the simplest words in short, spare sentences that teens will read again and again. The great cover photo shows the strong African American teen holding his tiny baby in his arms. Hazel RochmanCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved

I have been wanting to read this book since high school. Glad, I finished it today and have a hardback copy of this book. Also, this will be on my Recommended Reading List.

Bobby is a teenage parent. His baby girl Feather fills him up with pride, tears, and fatigue. The novel shifts from past to present, from how he’s taking care of his child to earlier times when his girlfriend

Nia was pregnant with Feather. Bobby is a sensitive young man, at times mixed up because he’s overwhelmed with the responsibilities of fatherhood. I’ve never read about a teen father before, so I enjoyed reading this short, emotion-filled novel.

This review submitted on behalf of my daughter Bo-Ashley. She loved the book ...THE FIRST PART LAST by: Angela JohnsonPublished By: Simon Pulse in 2003Summary: During this inspiring novel Bobby, a sixteen year old high school kid living in New York City, experiences a heart breaking event in which his beloved girl Nia falls pregnant and ends up in a coma following the birth of their daughter Feather. In one chapter of the book Bobby tells us he had been covering the alley walls with graffiti. In his art Bobby had created a familiar figure, he saw Nia within this baby but he could not "find" her face as if he was loosing her and could never find her. As Bobby explains his hardships and the events leading up to his loss he finds that Feather is the only thing he has that is left of Nia and can not bear the thought of giving her up to those happy smiling families on the wall, Feather was his and he was hers. And as Nia slowly slipped further and further from her surroundings, Bobby told Feather all about a place called heaven and how he imagined the place to be, the place where he knew Nia had gone.Problem: Bobby and Nia have to decide weather to keep Feather or Give her up for adoption. And if they do give her to one of those smiling families on the wall which one will she go to?Favorites: Bobby is my favorite character in this novel because he shows so much love toward Feather. Bobby also cares for and respects his girl Nia. Although stupid to have had a child at such a young age, Bobby finds himself with mixed emotions which he expresses withstrength and meaning.Quote: " Nia: WHEN I WAS FIVE I wanted to be a firefighter. All my uniforms would have Nia on them, and I would speed through the city in the lightning trucks. I wanted the ladders to rise high into the sky and have me on them. I wanted my hands to pull people from fires and disasters. I wanted my arms to be the arms that carried out babies and kids, safe. I wanted my feet to be the ones that ran up endless flights of stairs and brought everybody back alive. But by the time I was ten I wanted to be a balloonIst, and fly up high everybody, and that’s what it feels like I’m doing now.I’m flying up high over everybody; way over the city and even myself. I’m flying over Bobby and my parents, and the park with all my friends in it. I guess this is what it must feel like to be dying. Alkl I want to do is lie here and sleep, even though I see the blood and it shouldn’t be where it is. And it was just a minute ago Bobby was singing a shampoo commercial, but he’s gone now. But that’s okay because all I want to do is fly."This was the random out of place chapter that has so much meaning for this is when Nia slips into the coma. That was the last time she heard her love Bobby. It made me cry." I can tell you how it feels sitting in the window with

Feather pointing out the creeks that rolls past our backyard. I can tell you how it is to feel as brand new as my daughter even though I don’t know what comes next in this place called Heaven."And this quote was the last paragraph when Bobby was explaining Heaven to Feather and how he knew that Nia had gone there. This also touched my heart and made me cry.THE FIRST PART LAST was about thee best novel I have ever read. The message it sends across to the reader is so beautiful and strong, at the risk of sounding cheesy this novel actually touched upon my view of my surrounds and changed the way I think about life itself. I believe anyone who has a soul and an open mind and an imagination that’s soars, one who is always asking questions will enjoy this outstanding novel. I for one know I shall read it again and soon...

I wish boys would give this book a chance. Generally it is only my 8th grade girls who pick it off the classroom bookshelf. Once one girl reads The First Part Last, the book continues to fly off the shelf for the remainder of the year as students promote it to their friends.Sarah

Another book I bought for the boys in the Juvenile Correctional Facility. They enjoyed this book and it was one of the keepers around the dorm. The boys were between the ages of 13 and 21.

I took a risk on this book. I wasn’t sure if I’d like it, but I loved it! I read it in about 90 minutes and I wish it wasn’t over. I fell in love with both Bobby and his character. I loved Angela Johnson’s sweet, easy style of writing and the beautiful way she strung her words together. This book could have been bad and predictable, but it was perfect and I highly recommend it.

Really good book. Well written. I cried for a few parts.

I loved it! I thought it was a great book in the perspective of a teenage father. It was shorter than most books I’m used too! But definitely one of my summer favorites!

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