



Naked: Black Women Bare All About Their Skin, Hair, Hips, Lips, and Other Parts

Ayana Byrd (Editor) , Sonia Sanchez (Foreword by)

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A collection of witty and insightful essays by African-American women of all ages and walks of life--including Iyanla Vanzant, Jill Nelson, Jill Scott, and Melyssa Ford--addresses a variety of issues related to body image, including hair texture, skin color, weight, sexuality, and acceptance. Original.

Naked: Black Women Bare All About Their Skin, Hair, Hips, Lips, and Other Parts Details

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From Reader Review Naked: Black Women Bare All About Their Skin, Hair, Hips, Lips, and Other Parts for online ebook

Marje says

A deeply compelling, challenging, and thought provoking collection of essays about what it is to be a black woman in America, and how that experience shapes your personal view of your body.

I'm not black, but I am a woman, and I found myself saying "yes, me too!" more than once, and also shaking my head over the many ways our culture tells women they are ugly.

Dear women, you are gorgeous, strong, powerful, and amazing.

Alexis says

A very thought provoking and readable collection by various black women, some of whom are celebrities and some of whom are just regular folk. There were some essays about body image, love, sex, gaining weight, losing weight, hair, skin colour and the media. I found this book rather empowering and would recommend it to many.

MissFabularian says

"Naked: Black Women Bare All About Their Skin, Hair, Lips, and Other Parts" by Akiba Solomon and Ayana Byrd is a compilation of essays that articulates the black female experience. As a black woman, I found it easy to invest my emotions in the text, and in much of the writings I could see myself and people I know. Even though the essays are exclusively by black women, the sources are diverse. Women from all regions of the African diaspora were represented, as were socio-economic backgrounds, sexuality, conscientiousness, and celebrity. No voice more important than the other.

Some of the stories were cringe inducing, while others were light and endearing. It's no surprise that the text is sexy - if you need a hint please check out the title. What is surprising, however, is that some of the sexiest essays were written by matriarchs whose seasoned beds have tantalized going back beyond the Civil Rights movement.

Although no author was repeated, there were reoccurring themes throughout the book. Some were unique to the black female experience and others are common to womanhood with no preference for race or culture. I found the topics relating to black women particularly relatable (no brainer-I'm black) and felt pity for the women who could find solace with the overwhelming pressure to validate oneself with the flattery of a man.

All in all, this book is delightful. No matter your race, there is wisdom and therapy to take from this book. All of those experiences and lessons learned should not be in vain.

Tori Danielle says

This book is phenomenal. There was so much in it that I could identify with. It's a must-have for every black female.

Dusty says

i was looking in the olympia library's very small "color" non-fiction section, trying to find something written by native women. all i found was a book full of edward s. curtis photos about native women's "ancient spiritualness." i passed on that book because i took it home once and discovered it was written by white folks and very static. like native women don't wear jeans and drive cars. anyway nothing on the shelves by native identified women, but i did find Naked. an amazing raw real and current sharing of inside thoughts, oppressions and healings, by african american women. all about color and the body, too much or too little, what it means to live the lies and stereotypes and what it means to let them go. this anthology jumps right into the most vulnerable places. i appreciate its strength and love. and i'll bet that some of these women are mixed with native blood as well. so maybe i did read something contemporary by mixed blood native women after all. there was so much in here about hair, eyes and skin tones it really reminded me of my own mixed race family.

Akiba says

This is a beautiful book filled with stories about me and you and my sisters and my mother. Stories I didn't know we had in common. I would give it five stars, but as it said in the introduction, the editors were aware that this book provides a mostly east-coast, heterosexual account of body image. I would have loved to see more of a cross-continental viewpoint. Overall, I'd buy this book for future generations to read.

Nicole says

"Naked: Black Women Bare All About Their Skin, Hair, Hips, Lips, and Other Parts" by Ayana Byrd, was a truly beautiful book. All the stories about self discovery told from middle class black women, left me educated and aware of struggles black women face in life. This will definitely go into my favorites collection. And will be greatly recommended.

"Looking at the outside, at the media, we'e continually being shown the same kind of woman. It's as if God just created one kind of flower. But how do u compare a red rose to a white rose? Or a white rose to a daisy?"

Rakisha says

One day, long ago, my husband suggested a book for me to read with the glowing praise of "this is the type of book you might like." Not believing he had even paid attention to any of the books I read, I responded with a question. "What type of books do I like?" He paused and said "You know, about women." I grimaced. My husband, who is a pretty intelligent man, could only recommend a book to me based on the fact that it was about "women." He couldn't even fully explain what he meant by that. I didn't get angry, but I did become disappointed.

My husband, however, did redeem himself this past Christmas by giving me this book as a present. He said that when he saw it in Barnes and Noble that it looked like a book that I might like. I couldn't resist, and asked him why I would like it. "Because, it is a book about Black women talking about their bodies and society's influence on how they've been taught to think about their bodies. The essays are part sexuality and part sociology." A light bulb had gone off in my husband's head. *Naked* is a book about women and it is a book that I would like. As a matter of fact, it is a book I absolutely love and I believe every woman should read it.

Every essay is a like miniature jewel. The best that I've read thus far is by Precious Jackson--an HIV-positive woman and safe sex and AIDS activist. She goes on to recount her childhood and adolescence where her grandmother taught her to hate her body as early as age 6 and leaving her in the dark about puberty and sex. When she became a young lady, she learned the power of her body and became promiscuous while trying to find someone to fill that void of body/self-love. It wasn't until Precious became HIV+ that she learned to love herself inside and out and to care for herself physically and spiritually. That essay should be the foundation for every conversation about sex a caregiver or parent has with their teenager.

The Urban Book Source says

Naked strips away all the mystery surrounding the thoughts held by black women about their bodies. Often raised in a subculture that is not tolerant of a woman sharing their fears, reservations and insecurities about their bodies African American ladies have had to long keep their thoughts to themselves, at least until now. Often over-sexualized in music and videos, Naked sheds a rainbow of light on the way black women from all walks of life, view their bodies, from Melyssa Ford and Jill Scott to a former prostitute and a house wife, this anthology has it all. With short essays like "My Tush" and "Ho Gear", this promises to be a quick enjoyable read for anyone.

1. What did you like best about this book?

I absolutely loved that this book was written by women, for other women. Some of the stories in here express thoughts and feelings that are often not talked about and mostly not accepted. It was very refreshing to see the stories of our women in print.

2. What did you dislike about this book?

I felt that the editors did a great job in being selective about what they put in the book but I still feel a few stories could have been left out.

3. How can the author improve this book?

I think the book would be even better if the editors could somehow swap out a few stories.

Dr. E says

The authors DO acknowledge the collection of narratives do not substantially address or include the experiences of Black and womyn-identified folks across the intersections of gender, class, and attraction. This was missing for me resulting in the 3-star rating; however, there is great value and connection in many of the personal stories provided and I still highly recommended it as a staple on bookshelves..

Romonda says

Every black woman who finds herself struggling with who she is as a black woman and what her place is in a world of images that do not look like us should read this book. It's a times funny, at times sad, but ultimately uplifting. I was glad to have read it, but wish that I read it many, many years before.

Lori says

This is one of those texts that should be required reading for adolescents (girls and boys) and African American youths, in particular.

All of the essays were written by Black women brave enough to voice their views, issues and personal experiences with/on topics like the concept of beauty, the complexities of African American hair and skin color, sexual behavior, dating choices, body image and weight. The contributors included entertainers, writers, scholars, professionals, activists and a number of regular, everyday folks.

The following essays were among my favorites:

Melyssa Ford's "Calendar Girl" (which detailed some of her efforts to control her image and its use and several examples of the dangers and abuse she's experienced as a dancer and model);

Cynthia Berry's "The Dark Den" (a member of a prisoner's writing group, Ms. Berry discussed some of the "guilt, anguish, hatred and pain" she's come to associate with her vagina);

Asali Solomon's "Black Fuzzy Thing" (which addresses one of the many uncomfortable truths about our hair "in its natural state, as far as most people are concerned, Black women's hair is unpresentable.") and

Akiba Solomon's "The Free Black Woman" (a no-holds barred account of the author's youthful and misguided efforts to be "Sapphire with a Jezebel chaser" before deciding that being a "free Black Woman" was a much more rewarding and liberating option.)

Demetria says

This book is a compilation of essays written by black women about black women. Writers, doctors, inmates, rappers, video vixens, college students and women from so many other walks of life, offer up their personal stories. The essays pretty much revolve around issues of identity and sexuality and self-confidence. Most of the essays are very well-written and offer compelling, diverse real life stories that most black women (and

maybe most women) could relate to on some level. Some of the pieces are too short and/or too superficial. Even with a few bad apples, this book is definitely worth the read. I would especially recommend it to young women in high school and college.

Kyrie Ele says

A collection of short stories written by women brave enough to bare all about our self awareness and consciousness of our bodies. From hair texture to big lips to big hips and not big enough hips to how the world sees us and deals with our presence; this book is all the things we admit to ourselves and our closest friends. An excellent read and funny too!

Barbara Albin says

This book relates to ALL women. The stories are about African-American women but in most cases we can just substitute ourselves, what ever our color. Under the color of our skin we are closer than we think.
