



Looks Over

Rose Christo

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"There's nothing wrong with trying to get to know my son's boyfriend."

Skylar knows he's lucky to have an open-minded father. It's not just that Skylar and Rafael are both boys. Between their families exists a dark and turbulent past: Rafael's father was the first serial killer in the history of the Nettlebush Indian Reserve, and Skylar's mother was his last victim.

Skylar is ready to put the past behind him. But Skylar's future is tenuous at best. Skylar is still a ward of the state, and foster care can take him away from the reservation at a moment's notice. Voiceless and powerless, Skylar learns firsthand what it means to be a Native American in the 21st century. And when Skylar stumbles across his father's best-kept, twelve-year-old secret, not even Rafael can shield him from the fallout.

Looks Over Details

Date : Published August 27th 2012 by Rose Christo

ISBN :

Author : Rose Christo

Format : Kindle Edition 372 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Young Adult, Contemporary, Lgbt, Disability

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Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

The beautiful story continues...

I just love Rafael and Sky together. The author portrays their relationship so well and so lovingly. Their feelings for each other feel so natural; it is a sign of the author's skill that everything about their relationship rings true.

Interestingly, this book is so perfectly drama free. Not in a way you would expect. There is drama that happens because of where the plot takes the characters but there are no silly misunderstandings or miscommunications. This is particularly ironic because the book is about a boy who can't speak. A lesser author would have had a field day creating drama and tension from this plot element. However, this book doesn't rely on easy ways out.

My small issues with this book sound a bit silly to me. I was a little overwhelmed with Native American stories and traditions. I wanted a little less history and a little more... in a word, action. In all honesty, I'm waiting for Raf and Sky's relationship to progress past chaste kisses. They are 16 and 18 years old! I'm not talking about smut but a bit more... exploration... would feel more realistic.

That being said, this book was amazing and I can't wait for the next in the series.

Sara says

4.5 stars

I again am at a loss of words with this book. It was just as emotional and gorgeous as book one and it was so much more.

Skylar and Rafael learning more about one another. Skylar learning more about his heritage...I love learning the lessons right along with him. So many I had no clue about. I love how the Shoshone see the two spirits and how the boys are accepted.

The angst, yes angst, that happen in this one hurt. I won't lie about that. But there is so much beauty once again delivered in the simple and wonderous voice of Skylar St. Clair. I adore this boy so much and just when I think I can't love anyone beyond him Rafael does or says these things and I am a mess. A total mess. I mean, there is this one scene that is stunning, so stunning that I had to read it three times before I finished the book and then three more after. It's one of my favorites among many.

I can't get enough of this story, of these boys and the struggles of their life that turn into these triumphs that you can't help but smile and feel encouraged with.

"You're nuts," he said. "Don't know why you hang out with me."

Because I was helpless when it came to him. Because anything he said or did had the ability to make me smile, because I felt his pain for my own and wanted to wash it away. Because I

had a voice when I was with him.

Laura says

"There are only three things you need to know in life. Who you are, how the world works, and how you can change it."

Looks Over is book two in Rose Christo's Gives Light series. A series that introduced me to two of my favorite characters in fiction—Skylar St. Clair and Rafael Gives Light. I adore them. Gives Light (book one) was a book I never wanted to leave. One of my favorite reads. Sooo....I was nervous-- *shaking in my reading boots* actually--going into this one. I was so afraid of disappointment. Come to find out....there was nothing to fear at all.

THIS BOOK! This book is beautiful. I somehow, somehow fell deeper in love with these characters, this world, and words. Rose Christo creates a mood on the page like no other. A feeling of beauty, nature, family, and history.

Once again, Ms. Christo's way and words carried me into a world of nature and wonder. Along with Nettlebush Reserve, we visit several other tribes and reservations through the course of the story--each coming to life in their own way. Crops, crafts, people, and music. I loved hearing the history and connections between the tribes. I was captivated by the stories and land. Oh, how the land springs to life under Christo's descriptions and energy. The way she showcases nature in so many ways is dazzling! Colors, sounds, and smells pop off the page. I could see the flowers sway in the breeze, hear the crackle of the bonfires, and feel the coolness of a cave. So gorgeous! I found myself looking up flowers and bugs and foods. So many foods—like sagebread, samosas, wojapi, and more. The way food was prepared and shared pulled the people together into a community. You will feel how close the people of Nettlebush are to each other. When one hurts—they all hurt. They know and care for each other. I wanted to sit down in front of the fire and learn and listen. Listen, listen, listen!

Sorry, but I have to fan-girl here....Haha...I have to gush! Skylar and Rafael just about squeezed my heart to bits in this book! The emotion and tenderness is palpable and alive. Adorable, sexy, and electric! I loved every second they were together AND apart on the page. You can feel their connection and attraction whether they share the page at the moment or not. Both dumbasses felt so REAL to me. :) We get to see more of Rafael with every sigh, touch, and question he asks Skylar. And Skylar! Haha...Oh, how he made me laugh. This adorable, sweet hearted boy made me smile and giggle from the get-go. But it was the care and tender moments that stole my heart. The hand holding, caresses, and kisses made my heart soar. The little things—like spoonfuls of soup, pilot whales, flowers, face paint and freckles—made me tear up, smile ear to ear, and *sigh*.

"My hands rested on his chest where I felt his pulse racing beneath my palms. His lips, hot, rested on my forehead. It was scary, I thought, to love somebody this much. To fall into him so completely, I couldn't remember who I was, unless, in that moment, I was a part of him."

But the keep-close-to-my-heart ingredient in this book was history. How we deal with our past. How history can define us. We are taught to never forget the past. Learn from it. Honor it. Build off of it. Yet we also believe—want to believe--that we are our own people. Individuals. Where do we draw a line? Like Rafael

trying so hard to move past his father's crimes. Some people will never forgive Rafael for what his father did—especially Rafael. He is not his father though. The battle between the past and present hit the page and my heart hard. Family ties, legacy, and the weight of the past play a big part of Skylar and Rafael's story. How can Rafael be his own man if everyone still sees his father in his acts and eyes? They are all waiting for him to become his father. The guilt and burden can fill a person with so much anger. It could break a person. It breaks my heart to see what Rafael has to go through—live with. History can harm and heal. I like to think history can heal with time. That we can heal in time.

"Every society has its demons. You need to be aware of your demons if you're going to eradicate them."

I can't say this loud enough—READ THIS BOOK! I will treasure it always.

Highly recommended.

Nikyta *Miss Forgetful* says

This is probably one of my favorite YA series. It has a certain depth to it that made me actually think about things outside my safe little world. I adored everything about this story from the characters to the conflict to the resolutions.

I love that even though Skylar can't speak he's still managed to make such a great life on the reservation. An even better life than he had before. He has friends, family and people who care about him, care about his opinions. I adore Skylar for the simple fact that he's still a sarcastically funny and entertaining teenager. Then again, I also love Rafael because, while he's managed to make friends, he's still a pretty dark and grumpy kid. Skylar and Rafael together are just so sweet and beautiful it's hard to picture them ever hurting one another. And I liked that about them. It feels like they are actually meant to be together (and they are!) but it's nice that their relationship is accepted.

As with all the books in this series, *Looks Over* holds more than one conflict throughout its pages. We deal with social services, how the government treats Native Americans, and even family secrets that feel like betrayal. There's more to the story than just that but I don't want to get into much detail about it because I think it's better to figure it out yourself than to get spoiled on such things. While I loved the story, there are still some unanswered questions. Although, I'm happy to report that most, if not all, the questions I had left over from *Gives Light* are answered in this one but there are a few new questions I was really curious about. (view spoiler)

All in all, just like *Gives Light*, this book was a phenomenally beautiful read. It's sweet, intense, heartbreaking, and has so many conflicts that I never once got bored. I loved getting to see all the characters again and getting to know other ones. I loved being so thoroughly thrust into Sky's life, how the reservation works, and the problems all Native Americans face. This series is an eye opener but it is so fantastic, I'd recommend it to everyone who enjoys YA books.

Kristie says

For me to write a review, would mean I'd have to take more than a minute or two to do so. That takes away from my reading time. I need to start the third book right this minute. That's how much I loved this one. That alone should tell you.

Bev says

Woohoo, 5 stars and 5 ♥♥♥♥♥. Another wonderful story in the 'Gives Light' series. Rose Christo's writing is amazing, yet again there is no sex, and do I care, do I hell!! This book does not need sex, it has the awesome Skylar and Rafael, and the other brilliant supporting characters...it also didn't need a certain social worker who shall remain nameless, but if I ever got my hands on you, you'd really find out what the meaning of pain was!!

The most disgusting thing is that the **kidnapping** of Native American children from reservations actually **does** take place with the government and its officials turning a blind eye...one state in particular South Dakota gets paid a helluva lot of money....does it matter that the families of these children try to get the kids back...no it doesn't, as long as white families are childless and don't mind taking in Native American children, they can have the kids and get support and full backing from law enforcement agencies. Apparently 32 of the US states are breaking the law, but nothing gets done about it....are Native Americans second class citizens in the great US of A, I **definitely** think so!!

Trisha Harrington says

Looks Over was another great YA book, and the second in the Gives Light series. In my opinion, the flow of the book was amazing. Rose Christo has an amazing talent for writing great stories and this is an example of how great YA can be. She has a God-given talent for writing and storytelling in general. I am one of this series biggest fans and I am so glad I found it.

Something that made me smile was the fact we got more into Paul's return. This book didn't start off like a standalone. It was still in keeping with the first book while moving on with other issues. My favourite old witch, Catherine, was just as much a pleasure as she was in book one. Maybe even a bit more so. But no matter what she is doing, I love her. She was definitely one of the most memorable secondary characters in the series for me. There was also a family secret that would break your heart, I felt bad for poor Skylar, but his family was awesome.

Mrs. Red Clay chatted for a while with Granny. She didn't stay very long. Granny saw her to the front door and sighed when she had gone.

"If I didn't love you so much, I'd let that little hussy take you wherever she wants. She's infuriating!"

I was incredibly flattered.

One thing I admired about these books is the writing. It's a beautifully written book and has an amazing plot too. There isn't a lack of a good story or good writing. This one has both, which can be rare. The plot can seem a little depressing at times I guess. But I never felt dragged down by this book. Or the series. The plot wasn't all doom and gloom. It just happened to deal with some serious topics, but it didn't impact the book. And not once did it feel like I was being preached to, about anything. I was simply learning while I read.

Something that's highlighted in this book is how badly Natives are treated. When the cops took Skylar away and he was placed in care, it was like reading something so absurd you couldn't believe it would really happen. But it does, and Rose Christo told that part so well. It wasn't brushed under the carpet and left hanging open. She addressed everything that came up. I was anxious for someone to save him, and who else but Rafael could do it? I loved his ability to say something so huge as "I love you" during a rescue scene. Normally, it would probably annoy me. But it was Rafael and that meant it was totally something the character would have done.

He reached for me, his hands finding my hips; he kissed me, sudden and ravenous, desperate even, and my arms slid around his neck and my hands tangled in his hair, because this was home away from home, because my body, singing with reprieve, begged me to belong to his.

Then, just as sudden, he pulled back and hugged me.

"I love you, too."

I found what I was looking for and stuffed it into his hands.

He examined it in silence.

I loved Skylar and Rafael's love story. It was not a book about teenagers needing to experiment or even one full of relationship angst. It was not about two horny teenagers who had sex day in and day out. They didn't have sex in this or the first book. That never really came up. What did come up was Skylar realising he loved Rafael and Rafael admitting to Skylar that he loved him too. No words had to be spoken on Skylar's behalf. Rafael knew. Just like deep, deep down, Skylar knew. They make the perfect couple in that respect.

Rafael's face lit up in an irresistible grin. He wrapped the willow string twice around his wrist.

"Dumbass," he said.

Something that made me very emotional was a scene between Skylar and his dad. It broke my heart to see Skylar realise a huge secret that led to the attack on him and his mother. I did kind of see it coming in a sense. It probably should have blindsided me but it didn't. There was always something a bit off. Maybe that wasn't the first thing I thought of, but it was definitely something in the back of my mind when I was reading. Skylar had a lot to deal with in this book. Not only was he taken from his home and his family, but a huge family secret was revealed. He could have fallen apart but he didn't and it shows how strong he actually is as a character.

This series is best read as a series. You couldn't really pick up this book and start reading without reading Gives Light first. Some people don't like that in a series. But I found the romance progressed naturally

throughout the four books. Nothing was rushed or felt forced. Skylar and Rafael had time to form a bond and start something in the first book. Here, they had the chance to explore everything a bit more. Their feelings had the chance to grow. The plot never got boring for me. There were some moments I worried, but I never felt like giving up or putting the book down. It was captivating and thought provoking. Nothing was dull and boring.

Looks Over is an important book in the series and I highly recommend it to all fans of the first book.

My review of Looks Over can also be found on Greedy Bug Book Reviews.

Mandapanda says

Book 2 in the Gives Light series. This follows Skylar and Rafael over several months on the Nettlebush Reservation. The main themes are Skylar's precarious position as a ward of the state and the shocking truth he learns about his heritage. The lack of representation and self-determination for the Indians is horrifying. What the 'law' can get away with made me furious on Skylar's behalf.

But despite those serious issues the book is very upbeat and romantic. We are treated to Skylar and Rafael's growing love affair and the fascinating and funny goings on of their friends and families. Many Shoshone fables are shared and I'm filled with affection, fascination and admiration for these people. At times it's hard to remember I'm reading about fictional characters. It feels like a true story. I'm continuing straight on to book 3.

Thomas says

This past year has made me a cynic to romance, but boy, did Skylar and Rafael light up my heart. Their honest yet nuanced relationship, forged from shared tragedy and mutual understanding, brought all my fanboy feels to the fore. And when they kissed, well... I will "show" a passage instead of "telling" about it:

"It was soft when he kissed me, like homecoming, like summer linens on a taut clothesline, tossing in a summer wind. Our lips slid together, his lips warm, his breath warm, heat crackling its way across my skin. His glasses bumped against my cheek and we paused, for a moment, his expression sheepish, a laugh dancing at the corners of my mouth; but then he angled his head - just so - and it didn't happen again. I held the nape of his neck in the palm of my hand and felt his earring tickle my bare arm."

Rose Christo includes several compelling story lines beyond Skylar and Rafael's relationship. She weaves in Shoshone history and tradition and uses her book as a platform for uplifting Native American culture and voices. She portrays complex family dynamics spanning how skin color affects belonging to the ethics of adultery, physical abuse, and moving on from one's past. *Looks Over* highlights the terrible interpersonal consequences when those in power abuse laws such as the Indian Child Welfare Act, and the novel also shows the strength and resilience of marginalized groups. I appreciated how Christo renders challenging topics like racial justice and healthy masculinity understandable through her clear and unfettered prose.

I had a few minor issues with *Looks Over*. The plot often moves from one event to the next without a clear or consistent purpose. The side characters could have used more development: I wanted to see more intricacy from the evil Ms. Whitler, more development of rebellious Mary, and more interactions between Skylar's dad

and Rafael. Sometimes the story dissolves into a history lesson, and while Christo provides a history lesson we all need to learn, I wonder if she could have shown more instead of tell.

Overall, still one of my favorite series and I adore the relationship between Skylar and Rafael. While not as slay-my-feelings (yes, I made that an adjective) as its predecessor *Gives Light*, I enjoyed *Looks Over* and look forward to reading its future installments.

Lena ♥ Ribka says

It is rather 2, 5 stars than 3 stars.

If I have to describe with one word the second book of the *Gives Light* series it would be

disappointment.

Even Skylar couldn't save the story for me.

Everything that I so loved in the first book was pushed into the background and the main focus of the story was set on the problems of the Native Americans and their lack of rights.

I'm pretty sure that it is a very complicated topic and though I'm from Europe we know a lot about the history of the conquest of America, yes, believe me I'm informed about it. But I can't buy this pink-ideal-world-image of the Nettlebush Indian Reserve. Everybody there is super nice, very understanding, extremely tolerant, incredibly pleasant and there is a very warm affectionate and very special atmosphere. It is a kind of Pleasantville in it's best way. All bad things are outside, all villains are outside.

And that is the main idea of the second sequel.

The author changed her writing style and turned the pensive sweet and kind story in a kind of political pamphlet that ruined the magic of the whole book for me. There were no mystery in it, there were no any development of the relationship between Skylar and Rafael. I didn't feel them as I did it in the first book. Does' t matter how many times Skylar repeated how much he loved Rafael, doesn't matter how many times they passionately kissed each other, my heart stayed in stand-by-mode.

I.Felt.Nothing.

Loederkoningin says

I'm so sad that Sue and I have to put this on hold for now. But I simply...

...among other issues I have with this book. What happened? Book 1 was mindblowingly amazing.

hearts swells in advance :')

Buddy read with my bestie Sue. Because...

Kaje Harper says

The second book in Skylar's POV continues the series. It's darker than the first, and shares stories of injustice, both past and present, that are real and painful and hard to read. It also shows a deepening but still very slow, lovely relationship between Skylar and Rafael. The slowness almost moves beyond believable, for two teen boys, but there is enough other drama in the story to let the guys go on being very, very slow in some aspects, while finding themselves amazingly in tune in others.

There are some good secondary characters (I love Skylar's grandmother) and secrets kept and revealed. The book is a bit heavy on issues of the injustices done to Native peoples, past and present, for fiction. But given the real, and awful, issues involved, I can understand the author tipping the scale just a little trying to engage the reader in the problem. Which is pretty successfully done, while still writing a slow but absorbing story of a boy discovering himself, his family, and his background. Skylar continues to be a bit too good to be true, but I like him anyway.

? Jaela ? Killer ? QUEEN says

This book's events are a continuity of the first's one. Skylar, as part of the Shoshone community gets enrolled in the Nettlebush school, goes to many local and non-local fairs and learns many many other things about his roots.

This books is characterized by a serenity. You feel so peaceful while reading about these people.

Skylar learns things that change his life forever. My heart broke for him. There were pages I couldn't read without wiping my eyes. So emotional.

Rafael is so amazing. I love his spirit and everything about him.

“Rafael was an amazing artist, the kind who could capture the heart and soul of a moment with nothing but charcoal.”

Skylar's relationship with Rafael develops further. Watching these two together is always adorable. The best thing about them is that they don't have to hide their feelings or their affection in public. Everyone supports them.

“Not just loving, but being free to love--I think that's the best feeling on earth”

I'm enjoying this series so much. Just what I needed at this moment. :)

Bookwatcher says

So, this second book (of the Gives Light trilogy) is better of worst than the first? It's worth your time reading

it?

My simple and direct answers are: much better, and definitively YES!

After I end Gives Light I decide to go on, reading the second immediately, afraid I would forget some character

The first books present us a lot of secondary characters, and I was really afraid I would confuses them if I wait to long.

How silly I was... how could someone confuses such unique characters?

The story will keep from the exact point the last book leave us

Now Sky is certain he is really in love, but he is also deep afraid his happiness can be in danger... from social services.

If the first book was a complete and amazing introduction to the Native Americans, the second is a deep and profound activism story

This story is 100% about Native American children, and their precarious balance between their families and social service reallocation is non native families.

Sky is still considered a non desired minor, even if he is now in a society that accept him, living happily with his grandmother, and perfect adapt with many friends... Sky want his live, and is for the first time of his life happy and protect by not just his close friends, but by a community.

Every single member of the reservation is important to the community, and everyone is considered as equal... even a gay voiceless boy as Sky.

This books is my favorite story of this trilogy (I already read all 3)

There is romance, and a lot of drama now. Sky will have to fight to have his happiness, and keep fighting even when the situation seems hopeless.

I loved him, in his transition from a teen to a adult. It's not easy to anyone, but for him it's almost tragic. I will not spoil saying more... read to know it!

What make me decide it's my favorite book?

One scene

Yes, all the book is perfect and remarkable, but it was just one scene.

A scream.. a voiceless scream full of so much angst, rage and despair that make me feel it... all his feelings were mine feeling in that precise moment. His scream was mine scream too.

My applause to the writer, that moment as the most beautiful scene I read in a young-adult book. A voiceless scream, so loud that broke the barrier of a book page and reach my heart.

Do you want a visual example, this picture is exactly like that scene

it's just an image, or can you heard it too? That voiceless scream?

I finish this book with a bitter taste in my mouth?

Yes and no. It's always a very deep story, but I believe Sky voice is also very ironic and full of irony, so it's a hard book to read, but also incredible funny.

I can't give less than 5 stars and I wish I could find more books as this one.

Susan says

SUCH. A. TREAT.

My heart is full...

If I had to choose one book that displayed all the characteristics of what I want in my dream man, it would be Looks Over.

No, *Skylar* is not my dream man...he's only 17 for goodness sake. (though I love him more than words can say!)

No, I don't mean that this book got me all hot and bothered. There is so very little of anything physical in it. No, I'm not saying I want to be living on an Indian Reservation with a husband and children one day.

What I mean by this is that the way "Looks Over" makes me feel...the emotions...and everything I can say to describe this book...the words...it's how I'd want to describe my perfect relationship with my perfect man:

The book is funny, witty actually.

And it's smart.

And it's kind.

And it's emotional.

And it's brave in that emotion.

It's thoughtful.

It's hurt...but it's healing.

It's fiercely loyal to family and traditions.

And it's about love...first love, forever love, family love, forgiving love.

It's not a book that I read in one sitting...I was in no rush to consume it. But, I felt dedicated to it for the long haul, enjoying the moments I could spend with it. A commitment. I had a RELATIONSHIP with this book! :)

It's all over the place in switching gears (like this review). It reads more like a journal than a book.

BUT I FREAKING LOVED IT SO MUCH.

I want a Skylar in my life too. To see life through such eyes of wonder and compassion and curiosity and love...SUCH AN AMAZING CHARACTER.

I very rarely give a 5 star rating, but for me, this book wasn't about whether it was perfect or not. It was about feeling so completely in love with it, I'll never forget it and never want to! :)