Clarion Review

General

It's Raining Tonight
Eralides E. Cabrera
AuthorHouse
978-1-4772-3250-7
Two Stars (out of Five)

The boundless passion and dedication between people in love can be tried and tested, but in Eralides E. Cabrera's latest novel, *It's Raining Tonight*, nothing can stop two young people from being together.

When John meets Vanessa, "it was as if a new world had just burst, making everything change." They begin a relationship, soon experiencing challenges when John's father passes away. Luckily, both are awarded sport scholarships to Rutgers, and they are thrilled by the prospect of them both going off to college and playing basketball at the same school. However, their perfect plans begin to unravel as their families express disapproval of their interracial relationship. The couple needs to find the conviction and faith to make the relationship work.

Cabrera has penned a number of other novels, and his writing is clean, with very few grammatical or typographical errors. His direct style makes for a straightforward, easy-to-follow story. The plot flows smoothly, and there is a rather surprising twist that heightens the drama of the story.

The empowering "love conquers all" theme is moving, but it is not without problems. While readers are repeatedly told what the characters feel for each other, and John and Vanessa voice their feelings to each other and to their parents, very little of what draws them together is fully illustrated; their love seems superficial. Because of this, Vanessa's sacrifices to maintain her relationship with John seem less credible, and her rather wild emotional reaction to the thought of losing him seems unjustified. Though his character is more developed, John is not very believable either. Instead of having sympathy for the couple, readers might be confused by their actions.

The prejudices that John's mother and Vanessa's father express provide a necessary antagonistic element. Their irrational opposition to the young couple's relationship, which does

seem a bit dated, gives readers a real reason to be on the couple's side. When John and Vanessa overcome the negative forces pulling them apart and achieve their own version of happily-ever-after, readers will have their moment of satisfaction as well.

Readers looking for lighter fare may find that this brief novel is just the right fit. Overall, however, the book lacks the depth to keep readers fully engaged and invested in the novel and its characters.

Alicia Sondhi