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Street Love: A Triple Crown Anthology

Keisha Ervin Danielle Santiago Quentin Carter T. Styles Leo Sullivan
Triple Crown Publications (Jun 21, 2007)
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As nutritious and wide-ranging in tastes as a sampler pack of breakfast cereals, *Street Love* is full of sweet moments, bittersweet scenarios, and urban grit. Created as a showcase for five of Triple Crown's best-selling authors, large themes wend through each of the stories: sacrifice, survival, family, money, and race. Triple Crown has specialized in leading what it calls the "urban fiction renaissance" and giving African-American authors the opportunity to forge careers by writing about their culture. This anthology is both a stunning introduction to the press's offerings, and a Valentine to regular readers of each author.

Keisha Ervin's "After the Storm," for example, details the rocky relationship between Mo and Quan, a couple that fights and has numerous infidelities, but ultimately can't be tweezed apart. Even Quan's mother steps in during one notable scene when Quan seems threatening: "And what you think you about to do?" she asks. "You ain't getting ready to touch her up in here! 'Cause if you do we all gon' be thumping!"

In "The Fink," by Quentin Carter, the main character gets out of prison, where he landed after testifying against a friend, and finds that his actions are still remembered in the neighborhood.

Younger urban dwellers are portrayed in T. Styles' "Cold as Ice" and Leo Sullivan's "B-More Love," highlighting the fact that kids in the ghetto have problems and issues far different than those suburban America, but that they share the same fear of the unknown, and desire for connection. The fifth story, "Allure of the Game" by Danielle Santiago, is a slice of city life so acutely rendered that it feels like a play-by-play done in real time.

The tales here aren't for everyone—there are hardcore descriptions of sex, gut-turning violence, and swearing appears frequently. But Triple Crown never has played it safe, and this anthology is an indication of how much the publisher lets its authors write about their culture and their lives in an authentic voice. If urban fiction is truly in a renaissance stage, these authors are the new Leonardos.

ELIZABETH MILLARD (August 8, 2007)

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