ForeWord Reviews

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

Who's Your Mama: The Unsung Voices of Women and Mothers
Yvonne Bynoe, editor
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Bynoe had a tough time finding parenting books that spoke to her. The shelves were chock full of heartwarming stories from white affluent women and feminist treatises demanding that mothers choose the right side in the Mommy Wars (to work or stay at home with your child). What Bynoe couldnt find were stories from women who didnt or couldnt choose a side; stories from women of color; or stories from the women who didnt fit neatly into the narrow categories of mothers the media portrays.

So Bynoe author of *Stand & Deliver: Political Activism Leadership and Hip Hop Culture* created her own parenting book. She has gathered twenty-seven essays from women spanning all categories of society. Represented here are lesbian couples exploring a variety of paths to motherhood a woman struggling to love her new stepson while dealing with her own miscarriages and an Indian woman fighting against her traditional family in order to keep her baby without having to marry the father. There are also accounts from women who are struggling with the decision to have kids and women who have chosen not to.

Many of the contributors are established writers who have written books and been published in places like *VIBE Essence* and the *Philadelphia Tribune*. However Bynoe wanted to also “include the work of women who were not professional writers average Janes who would not otherwise have a platform for their views.” One of these women is Tanika L. Feaster who bravely recounts how she gave temporary custody of her son to another woman and then fought to get him back. Feasters story is straightforward and the emotion is often raw. The courageous recounting of stories that dont fit the June Cleaver/Soccer Mom image of the American mother is the thread that ties these essays together.

Just as this anthology contains the voices of a wide spectrum of women it will also appeal to a wide audience. It views motherhood from so many angles that almost any woman is sure to find a narrative that she can relate to. “I am hoping” Bynoe writes “that we can begin to have greater respect for all of the phases of a womans life and for the individual decisions women make about motherhood whether the choice is yes no or maybe.”

Christine Canfield