

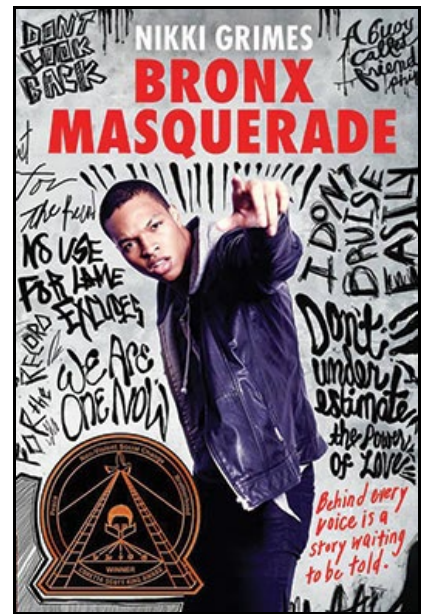
An Insider's Perspective

Bronx Masquerade

written by Nikki Grimes

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I've led so many lives, sometimes I feel as though I'm a dozen different people, all rolled into one. I've lived in Tanzania and Sweden. I've made my home in New York, New Jersey, Washington, and California. I've worked as an administrative assistant, financial aid officer, documentary photographer, proofreader, translator, literary consultant, and library assistant. I've freelanced for newspapers and magazines, edited books, sung backup for a gospel singer, toured Sweden with my own band, and co-produced radio shows here and abroad. Is it any wonder I'm comfortable creating books in multiple voices? One such book was *Bronx Masquerade*.



Bronx Masquerade is a novel written in 18 voices. It follows a classroom of high school students over the course of a year, exploring who they are behind the masks they wear, and using poetry to do it.

Bronx has no single main character, in the traditional sense, but there is one character whose point of view is represented throughout: Tyrone Bittings. Tyrone serves as Greek chorus, commenting on every character in the book. He helps the reader connect the dots from character to character and from one subplot to the next. Each character has his own story to tell, but Tyrone is privy to them all.