PICTURE US IN THE LIGHT is a phenomenal own voices YA contemporary that I read in 2 sittings. Danny Cheng is an Asian-American teen in his final year of High School living in the Bay Area of CA. He’s a talented artist, a loving son, the
friend everyone wants to have, and he even has his future secured with a scholarship to design school.

This is what we learn in the first hundred pages, but slowly little bits of his messy reality begin to emerge, with powerful themes of suicide, illegal adoption, immigration and sexuality. We experience Danny’s coming of age just as long-hidden family secrets begin to become clear, leaving Danny grappling with his family’s skeletons, while also navigating an emotional loss within his peer group.

The author’s dedication at the front of the book speaks of the gift that I hope this book will be to teenagers. It reads: “THERE WILL ALWAYS BE SO MUCH DARKNESS IN THE WORLD, BUT MAY YOU NEVER STOP FINDING THE LIGHT AND SHINING IT ALL AROUND YOU- AND FOR ALL THE KIDS LIVING IN THE SHADOWS”. 5

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