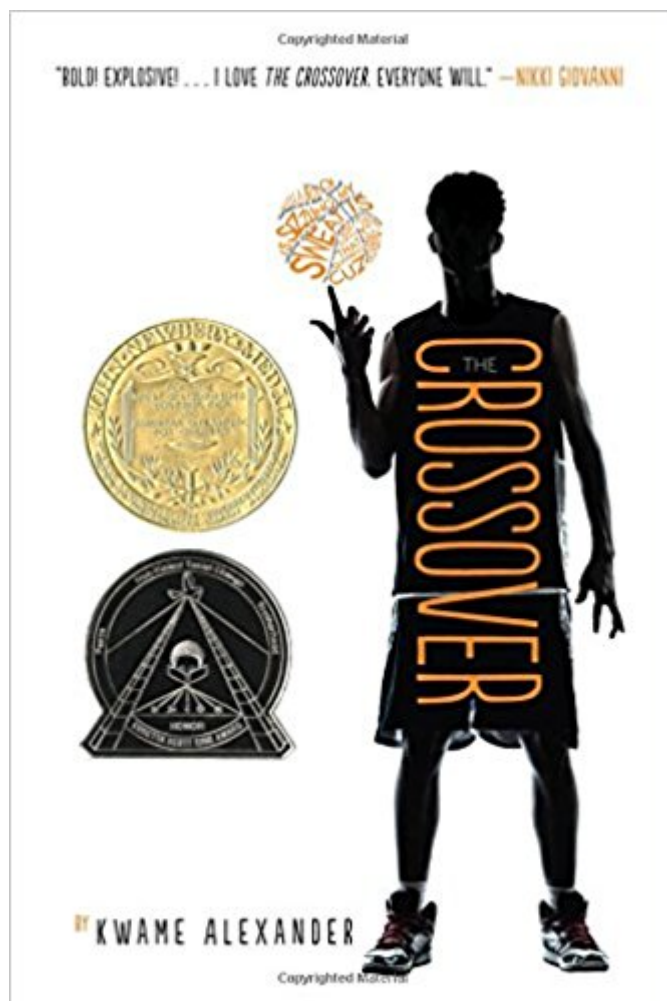


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The Crossover



Synopsis

2015 Newbery Medal Winner 2015 Coretta Scott King Honor Award Winner New York Times Bestseller
"With a bolt of lightning on my kicks . . . The court is SIZZLING. My sweat is DRIZZLING. Stop all that quivering. Cuz tonight I'm delivering," announces dread-locked, 12-year old Josh Bell. He and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood, he's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse, in this fast and furious middle grade novel of family and brotherhood from Kwame Alexander. Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 750L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Later Printing edition (March 18, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0544107713

ISBN-13: 978-0544107717

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 406 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,073 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Basketball #1 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Death & Dying #4 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Illness

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

Customer Reviews

A Conversation with Kwame Alexander We talked to the Newbery

Medal-winning author, whose new novel, *Booked*, is available in April

You've written about basketball, now soccer. Do you play sports yourself? I used to play a lot of basketball. I was average. Tennis was my sport. I was one of the top players in the state of Virginia when I was in high school. Now, I just do Zumba, which I know

you're probably thinking, that's not a sport, which is exactly what I thought until I took my wife Thursday night Zumba class and I felt like I'd run ten miles and did 100 squats. But, it was fun too. Also, I play a mean game of ping pong. How did things change for you after you won the Newbery Medal for *The Crossover*? In the words of that great poet, Jay-Z, "I went from lukewarm to hot Sleeping on futons and cots or better yet, as Eydie Gorme sang, "What a day this has been! What a rare mood I'm in! Why, it's almost like being in love." Seriously, the biggest change in my life is I get to travel to a lot more schools and libraries and conferences to share my love of poetry and reading with young people and teachers and librarians. That's a pretty awesome responsibility and a lot of fun (and frequent flyer miles).

How do you feel about the #WeNeedDiverseBooks movement happening in children's publishing? It's a big part of the civil rights movement of our day. How do we create equity and equality in the images and ideas that enable All of our children to imagine a world of possible, that empower All of our children to dream a better world, is the most important question we can ask ourselves as parents, teachers, and librarians. Many of your books involve first love. Any advice to budding Casanovas? Write poetry.

Gr 6 • Twins Josh and Jordan are junior high basketball stars, thanks in large part to the coaching of their dad, a former professional baller who was forced to quit playing for health reasons, and the firm, but loving support of their assistant-principal mom. Josh, better known as Filthy McNasty, earned his nickname for his enviable skills on the court: "When Filthy gets hot/He has a SLAMMERIFIC SHOT." In this novel in verse, the brothers begin moving apart from each other for the first time. Jordan starts dating the "pulchritudinous" Miss Sweet Tea, and Josh has a tough time keeping his jealousy and feelings of abandonment in control. Alexander's poems vary from the pulsing, aggressive beats of a basketball game ("My shot is F L O W I N G, Flying, fluttering, ringaling and SWINGALING/Swish. Game/over") to the more introspective musings of a child struggling into adolescence ("Sit beside JB at dinner. He moves./Tell him a joke. He doesn't even smile./Say I'm sorry/but he won't listen"). Despite his immaturity, Josh is a likable, funny, and authentic character. Underscoring the sports and the fraternal tension is a portrait of a family that truly loves and supports one another. Alexander has crafted a story that vibrates with

energy and heart and begs to be read aloud. A slam dunk. —Kiera Parrott, School Library Journal.

The Bell twins are stars on the basketball court and comrades in life. While there are some differences — Josh shaves his head and Jordan loves his locks — both twins adhere to the Bell basketball rules: In this game of life, your family is the court, and the ball is your heart. With a former professional basketball player dad and an assistant principal mom, there is an intensely strong home front supporting sports and education in equal measures. When life intervenes in the form of a hot new girl, the balance shifts and growing apart proves painful. An accomplished author and poet, Alexander eloquently mashes up concrete poetry, hip-hop, a love of jazz, and a thriving family bond. The effect is poetry in motion. It is a rare verse novel that is fundamentally poetic rather than using this writing trend as a device. There is also a quirky vocabulary element that adds a fun intellectual note to the narrative. This may be just the right book for those hard-to-match youth who live for sports or music or both. Grades 6-12. --Gail Bush

From the start, the Crossover by Kwame Alexander, shows off its spin moves and keeps readers entertained with creative language like, “Straight in the hole:

Swoooooooooosh. Josh and J.B., 12-year-old twin brothers are at the center of the story and are learning to work together in basketball and life. At the beginning, the boys get really mad at each other whenever they have to do something together because they feel like they always have to be together since they are twins. One example is that Josh and J.B. don’t like passing to each other in basketball. Josh and J.B. feel like real people that kids can relate to. The boys act like real kids throughout the book. They do things like Play Madden, take tests, and get in trouble with their mom. In the middle of the book, Josh and J.B. are shooting free throws. J.B. makes 41 in a row and Josh doesn’t make any. Their Dad says, “Josh, J.B. is putting on a free throw clinic,” which makes Josh upset. This shows how competitive the boys are and how much they care about basketball. Both of these things, middle school readers are able to identify with. The fast-paced free verse and hip-hop poetry continues to wow readers throughout the book. The boys continue to grow and learn new things about themselves and their relationship to each other. In the end, the boys learn to work together to win their basketball game and appreciate each other. Readers can learn to follow Josh and J.B.’s Basketball Rules of life as they enjoy the Crossover. The rules include Basketball Rule #1 which is, “In the game of life your family is the court and the ball

is your heart. No matter how good you are, no matter how down you get, always leave your heart on the court. The Crossover is a fantastic book that middle school kids will enjoy! A great read!

I read another book, *IA: B.O.S.S.*, by a talented author, John Darryl Winston, that had some basketball content and middle-grade boy friendships that I really enjoyed. Therefore, when I came across *The Crossover*, it intrigued me. The talented author Kwame Alexander did not disappoint. The book contains a tight plot that encompasses family, friendship, love, health, and more. Kwame accomplishes a difficult and ambitious masterpiece by telling a story in short rhythmic verses. Kwame also does a great job capturing the essence of brotherhood between twins, Josh and Jordan Bell, mingled with the complicated dynamics of being in junior high (Jordan falls in love with Sweet Tea, and Josh wants a sip.). This is a great book for junior high kids and older. It's an easy read with a touching story. I also love the difficult vocabulary words that are introduced throughout the book.

I love it because my nine year old son loves it. For homework he has to read everyday for at least 20 minutes and proceed to write a reading response about what he read. After reading this book, he is writing the longest responses ever! LOL I was delighted to watch as he wrote effortlessly about the reading. The funny part is that he was hesitant to read the book at first, claiming, after reading the first couple of lines and flipping through the book, that it was a whole bunch of poems!. After the first two or three pages, he quickly became immersed in the book and found it easy to talk to me about what was going on in the storyline. LOVE THIS BOOK!

The Crossover, a Newbery Medal winner, is unusual; it's a children's lit in the form of poetry, yet with a definite story line. It's about a junior high school kid, Josh (a/k/a Filthy) and his parents and twin brother, Jordan (J.B.). The book centers around basketball; the twins are basketball stars, and their father was an NBA-caliber player who played briefly in Italy. Their mother is a vice principal. I'm not the intended audience for this book -- I don't particularly like basketball, I'm well past school age (by a lot), and I'm not really all that fond of poetry -- so I had reason to suspect that I might not like this book. However, I'm an omnivorous reader, and appreciate good writing of all sorts, and by the end I found that I enjoyed it a lot. I do think it's a rather strange choice for the Newbery, although it is very creative. So it's a very different book, but the story itself is

universal. I'm glad I read it.

As a former librarian, I wonder what books children and young adults will read and enjoy. As the mother of a 13-year-old, I wonder what books will pull him away from his computer games. I believe that *The Crossover* by Keane Alexander is such a book. It is full of action and contemporary references, as well as realistic family dynamics. The poetry filled the book with movement and song; it is almost as if it gave flesh to the book. I wish there were more books with male protagonists like this in this age group. I could not put this book down. I cannot wait to share it with my son.

I wanted to introduce my son to new literature and I thought this was a great start. This book was very different because it told the story in the form of poetry. My son, who typically only reads graphic novels, comic books and things like *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Middle School*, actually loved the book and the story. While I personally have not read it, my son gives the book 5 stars.

Book #51 Read in 2017 *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander This book is so much more than a sports novel for young adult readers. Told in verse, this book tells the story of Josh, a middle school basketball player dealing with a lot of emotional issues in his life. His twin brother has just started dating his first girlfriend, his father is sick....and Josh does not know how to always handle his emotions in the proper way. This book is a powerful read and will resonate with high school readers as well as adult readers. I see myself recommending it to my students in the fall.

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