

The Crossover

Kwame Alexander

Reviewed by: Anika 17

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Josh and his twin brother JB are the two sides of the same coin, almost inseparable. Together they were born to play up on the court and that's thanks to their dad, a famous basketball player. He taught them the rules of the court and how to shoot free throws real early. Josh and JB live and breathe basketball together, but soon enough that began to change as they venture through middle school. JB begins to fall in love and stray away from Josh, leaving him all alone. Being wounded by the loss of his other half, Josh seeks his parents' help, only to find that they too have their own troubles to deal with. With everything bad going on in his life coming to a head, Josh makes a terrible mistake on the court. And soon enough, he will find that there's more than a championship game at stake.

The Crossover is such a moving and engaging story to read. And what makes it so special is the fact that it's all written in verse! I've never been one for poetry or basketball for that matter, but Kwame Alexander manages to make the story multi-faceted going beyond a common basketball come up. The unique structure and style of the verse keeps the reader engaged at every moment on several levels. The author's profound poetry is incredibly well written and made me feel deeply in touch with Josh's inner turmoil. Kwame Alexander subtly and beautifully weaves important life lessons around family, friendship, and responsibility into this story. It really got me in all my feels, so I know it has something for everyone. You will laugh and you will cry throughout this brilliant piece of art. And it's no wonder because Kwame Alexander's book won a Newbery Medal and a Coretta Scott King Book Honor. He crafts just the right pacing and ending for the book, which makes for a quick but an oh, so uplifting read. I highly suggest giving it a try! A graphic novel version is also available that is worth checking out for younger readers and older readers as well!

I immensely enjoyed reading The Crossover, but there may be a few instances that readers may find fault with. Violence and bad language make an appearance, albeit minor, with name calling, a bit of blood, and a death. The romance is also on the lesser side, with minor references to sexual elements for a middle school crush and Josh's parents. These unwanted, again still very minor, aspects of the story only serve to strengthen its message and impact. Knowing that Kwame Alexander wrote this novel for middle grade readers, I would recommend this novel for readers 10 years and up. The Crossover would make a great gift for fans of sports and coming of age stories.

Recommended Titles:

Booked by Kwame Alexander (The Crossover #2)

Rebound by Kwame Alexander (The Crossover #.5)

Solo by Kwame Alexander

Swing by Kwame Alexander

The Playbook: 52 Rules to Aim, Shoot, and Score in This Game Called Life by Kwame Alexander