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Synopsis

National Book Award Long List New York Times Bestseller
Like lightning/you strike/fast and free/legs zoom/down field/eyes fixed/on the checkered ball/on the goal/ten yards to go/can't nobody stop you/can't nobody cop you
In this follow-up to the Newbery-winning novel *THE CROSSOVER*, soccer, family, love, and friendship, take center stage as twelve-year-old Nick learns the power of words as he wrestles with problems at home, stands up to a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams. Helping him along are his best friend and sometimes teammate Coby, and The Mac, a rapping librarian who gives Nick inspiring books to read. This electric and heartfelt novel-in-verse by poet Kwame Alexander bends and breaks as it captures all the thrills and setbacks, action and emotion of a World Cup match!

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 660 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 320 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers (April 5, 2016)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 120 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #5,512 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #12 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > African-American #42 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Stories In Verse #307 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

Customer Reviews

A Conversation with Kwame Alexander We chat with the Newbery-winning author of *The Crossover* about his new novel. 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 what you're doing

not a sport, which is exactly what I thought until I took my wife's 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).

What is the most rewarding thing about being a poet? Being able to make someone feel. Something. Anything. That is powerfully rewarding. Nick's mother has a somewhat unusual job are you a fan of horse racing? I've ridden a horse exactly once. And, that was a pony. When I was ten. I know they say you're supposed to write what you know, but I agree with Toni Morrison, who says sometimes you got to write what you don't know. That's kind of exciting and revealing and fresh to me. But, I'm a fan now. I may get a horse. 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.

The Mac, and his t-shirts, are great! Is he based on a real person? I love The Mac. And, his sneaks and shirts are so friggin' cool. He is based on a whole lot of real librarians and awesome teachers that I know. I shall post all of their pictures on twitter and Instagram on April 5, 2016, the day *Booked* is launched. Please follow me @KwameAlexander and #GetBooked. You spend a lot of time in schools. What do you hope the students take away from your visit? That poetry is cool. That books are cool. That I am cool. That they want to read my books. That they want to read. Anything. Many of your books involve first love. Any advice to budding Casanovas? Write poetry.

Did you have a favorite book when you were in elementary or middle school? Any book about Muhammad Ali was my fave in middle school. I was a huge boxing fan, but also Ali was the coolest. He made words dance when he spoke. I wanted to do that. And, I did. On the tennis court. In my red high top Chuck Taylors and brown corduroy shorts I talked trash on the court. My opponents were beat before the first volley. Who is your favorite poet? My favorite poet is Nikki Giovanni-Pablo Neruda-Langston Hughes-Naomi Shihab Nye-Mary Oliver-ee cummings- Haki Madhubuti What are you working on now? I am writing a few new picture books, a YA novel about my senior year in high school which was outta control, and a prequel to The Crossover, called Rebound, which is about Chuck & Da Man & Bell when he was twelve years old. It's a pretty busy year.

Gr 6-10-Twelve-year-old Nick loves soccer, and he and his best friend Coby have big plans for winning the Dr. Pepper Dallas Cup, the renowned world youth soccer tournament, even though they will be playing on opposing teams. Besides the big game, Nick has a lot of other things on his mind. For one thing, his mother wants to move away to pursue her dream of training race horses, and his linguistics professor father is pressuring him to improve his vocabulary by reading the dictionary. Throw in the twin eighth-grade tyrants who relentlessly want to pound him and weekly lessons at Miss Quattlebaum's School of Ballroom Dance & Etiquette, and his life at Langston Hughes Magnet School of the Arts is pretty hectic. But school is also where "the Mac" can be found, Langston's resident rapping, dragonfly-loving, red mohawk-wearing librarian and Nick's favorite adult. And then there's April, Nick's current crush. Newbery-winning poet Alexander once again brings to life a novel in verse that equally captures the rapid-fire excitement of a soccer match and the palpable pain of a young boy whose family is falling apart. Peppered throughout are useful and amusing vocabulary words as well as wise-cracking yet sage life lessons from a beloved librarian. Authentic characters and amusing situations abound, making this story one that will be welcomed by readers of all levels. VERDICT Another winning goal for Alexander and middle school readers alike.-Carol Connor, Cincinnati Public Schools, OH (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

2017 ILA-CBC Children's Choice ListBook Links Lasting Connections 2016 Kirkus Best of 2016 Nerdy Book Club Nerdies 2016 Poetry/Novels in Verse New York Times Bestseller San Francisco Chronicle Best of 2016 Washington Post Best of 2016 BookPage Best of 2016 "A

novel about a soccer-obsessed tween boy written entirely in verse? In a word, yes. Kwame

Alexander has the magic to pull off this unlikely feat, both as a poet and as a storyteller. "

•The Chicago Tribune "This lively, touching middle school soccer story is full of fun."

•Common Sense Media * "A satisfying, winning read." •Kirkus, STARRED review *

"Alexander skillfully juggles verse styles to realistically capture Nick's humor and smarts, passion for soccer, and vulnerability when being bullied, having surgery, or facing his parents' troubled marriage. Emotionally resonant and with a pace like a player on a breakaway..." •

Publishers Weekly, STARRED review * "Alexander understands reluctant readers deeply, and here hands them a protagonist who is himself a smart, reading-averse kid who just wants to enjoy the words that interest him on his own terms. With accessible poetic forms and engaging formatting, Booked's pages will be turned swiftly and enthusiastically." •Horn Book Magazine, STARRED review * "Middle-school readers and their advocates will surely love

Alexander's joyous word play and celebration of reading." •Booklist, STARRED review "Newbery-winning poet Alexander once again brings to life a novel in verse that equally captures the rapid-fire excitement of a soccer match and the palpable pain of a young boy whose family is falling apart. Another winning goal for Alexander and middle school readers alike."

•School Library Journal "This is a fantastic book with a never-ending supply of new words like "onomatophobia" and "yobbery" that will leave readers full of new words and ideas. This is an absolute must-have for any library serving tweens." •

VOYA "A powerful story that will leave the reader breathless, right to the very end."

•BookPage Children's Top Pick

I purchased this on a whim for my 13yo summer school report, he was out of town at the time so I just had to wing it. I really got lucky because he loved the book, he read it cover to cover in just a few days, and has in the last 5 months of owning it re-read this book many times over! After reading this book we found others by the same Author, and my teenager has been just as engaged. Highly recommend! My 13yo is not a reader, but Kwame helped inspire him to be one.

Another book "too good just for kids!" Insightful, kind, humorous. Even better, written in kid-friendly poetry! I bought this for my grandchildren, wishing I'd had it when I was teaching seventh and eighth graders. Might need a sixth star.

Once again, Kwame Alexander has outdone himself with his wonderful use of words and unique

poetry style, to write a book about the coming of age of an eighth grade boy. Nick Hall, the main character, hates words. This avid soccer fan and player, is the son of a University Professor that has written a dictionary of unusual words. Nick is pushed by his father study daily from his dictionary. Nick's mother is a horse trainer who has been forced to move to the University city where she can no longer work. As the family stress mounts, Nick finds relief from words and family with his soccer pal, Coby, and his budding crush on the girl of his dreams, April. In spite of his hate of words, Nick's superior vocabulary and tendency for humor are constantly drawing him into hilarious episodes with teachers and setting him up for confrontations with the school bullies. As Nick's world becomes more complicated, he learns that words and books can be an outlet for stress and bullies, and lead to friendships and acceptance in unexpected ways

A great companion book to Crossed. A quick, but deep read written in prose. If your teen loved Crossed then this read is definitely for them! This book, like its predecessor, is guaranteed to fly off the shelves. Although I did not find the language as highly developed as the first novel in verse, the characterization is realistic and the topic of soccer is well defined. This title will reach a wide range of teens.

My daughter had to read this for reading club this summer.

Very pleased with our purchase.

Excellence!

Good book

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