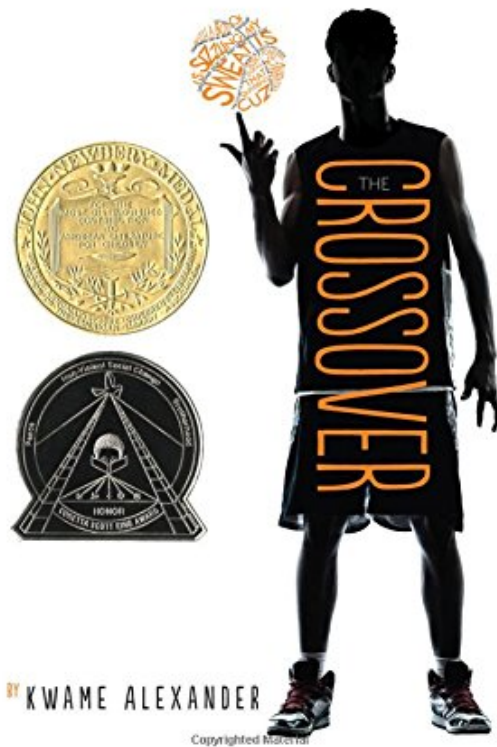


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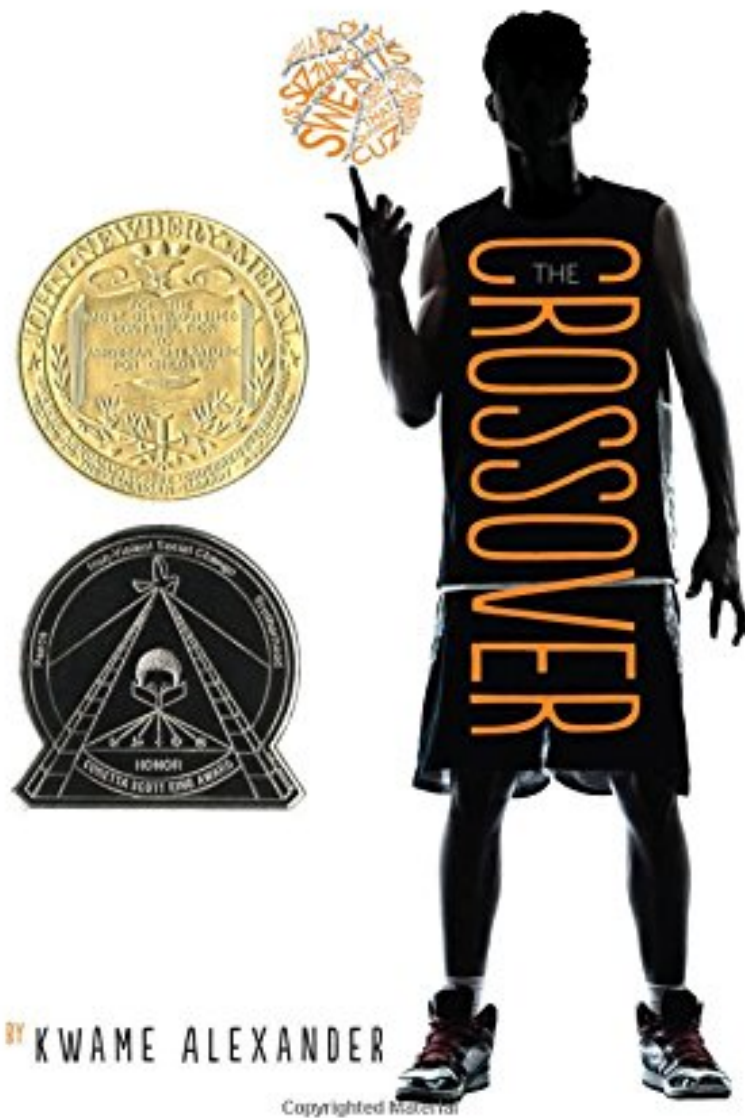


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Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.

- Sales Rank: #1477 in Books
- Brand: Houghton Mifflin
- Published on: 2014-03-18
- Released on: 2014-03-18
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x 5.00" w x .75" l, .76 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 240 pages

## Features

- sports
- basketball
- Growing Up & Facts of Life

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Most helpful customer reviews

24 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

A terrific verse novel with a wide range of appeal

By Liviana

Kwame Alexander's newest novel, **THE CROSSOVER**, is a verse tour de force. It's told through poems by the main character, Josh Bell a.k.a. Filthy McNasty. He and his twin brother Jordan (JB) are talented basketball players, but jealousy threatens to split them apart when JB gets a girlfriend.

I love how many levels of story are woven into this novel.

**THE CROSSOVER** is the kind of book I never would've picked up when I was younger because I didn't like sports. There is the sports story promised by the cover, all leading up to a big championship game, but it is far from the only plotline. Nor is it the most important plotline. That's reserved for all the family stuff.

There's the relationship between the brothers, at times super close and at other times strained. In fact, the first real schism in the story is when JB accidentally forces Josh to get his head shaved. Before, Josh's locks were

his pride and separated him from his bald brother. Then, there is the relationship with the boys' parents, especially their father, a former basketball player and the man who taught them the game. Their parents' worries are on the fringe of Josh's awareness, but most readers will be able to put the pieces together. And, although she is a small part, the girl "Sweet Tea" is still shown to be a person, a talented basketball player in her own right and pissed off by the physical signs of Josh's jealousy, frustration, and confusion.

All of this is conveyed so elegantly by the language.

Alexander's poetry flows easily and tells the story in short pieces, making *THE CROSSOVER* inviting to reluctant and casual readers. At the same time, it's a sophisticated and rewarding form. For instance, the poems recounting games use lots of clever formatting, including different font sizes and diagonal lines to convey the intensity and movement of the action. They also use more rhymes than the other poems, like the rhythm of a bouncing ball. Unfortunately, I did think the poem describing the championship game was out of place. It was an abrupt switch in tone from the poems before and after it, even if it did match the other basketball poems. There might've been stylistic switches between other poems, but rarely a tone switch. It was jarring, and right at the height of *THE CROSSOVER*'s effectiveness.

Going back to appealing to multiple types of readers, *THE CROSSOVER* is set in middle school and aimed at younger readers. I felt that there wasn't much that separated it from a young adult novel, except periodic references to the grade level or school assignments like *THE GIVER*. It particularly felt more young adult to me when Jordan contemplated which college he wanted to go to to play ball. I'm sure middle school kids daydream about a future in the NCAA, but this felt more immediate and serious. I gave some leeway since Jordan was the son of a successful player and has a better chance of making it, but it still felt off to me. What I'm getting at is I think high school students would really enjoy *THE CROSSOVER* too, but I can't see many high school students picking up a book about a thirteen year old.

*THE CROSSOVER* thrilled me, and I can't wait to read it again and pick more closely through the details.

I rarely have time to do that with all the review books on my shelves, but hey, I can take it one poem at a time. (Advantage of the form!) I also think I'll return to it because it is such a great family story. Oftentimes, children's books dispatch with the parents in order to focus on the kids doing things they probably wouldn't get away with if there were two loving, attentive parents in the picture. Josh's parents teach him, guide him, and discipline him like real parents.

Look, no one has to convert me to novels in verse. I've thought that they're the bees' knees since I first read Sonya Sones. I think *THE CROSSOVER* has the power to convert new readers to the awesomeness that is novels in verse. It certainly convinced me of its own awesomeness.

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

Loved it!

By Heidi Grange

I've been putting off reading this book because it's a sports book, and I don't really enjoy most sports books. Which is really rather odd since I do enjoy watching them. But after reading this I can easily see why it has received so much acclaim. It's a beautifully written, powerful story about family and change. I sat down to read this and I was immediately impressed with the verse. The language drew me in and made me care about Josh and his family. The exciting poems that were about actually playing basketball were so well done that I could see Josh on the floor making for the basket.

It always amazes me when an author creates a powerful story in verse, in so few words. The characters here

are vivid and clear, each one shines through as an individual, which is all the more interesting since the story is told from Josh's point of view. The plot revolves around Josh's love of basketball, his father's refusal to see a doctor, and his brother's gaining a girlfriend. Except for basketball, Josh's world is shaken to the core by his father's ongoing refusal to address physical problems, and his brother's focus on his new girlfriend. His frustration leads him to do something he greatly regrets. The climax was a shock although I should have seen it coming, there were certainly enough clues. But when you don't want something to happen, it's easy not to be prepared when it happens, even when it's in a story.

I'd say this is definitely one of the best books I've read in the last year and I highly recommend it.

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

The Poetry of Basketball

By Kevin Joseph

The Crossover is a fun read, employing a poetic, hip-hop writing style to convey the high-energy feel of youth basketball from the perspective of twelve-year-old hoops prodigy, Josh Bell. Josh and his twin brother JB, having grown up with a basketball in their hands thanks to a father who starred in the European league, are not only their team's star players, but also best friends. At least until JB becomes smitten with new girl, Alexis. Can Josh and JB's bond withstand the intrusion of Miss Sweet Tea and their father's deteriorating health? And in the face of these challenges, can their team win the county championship? Grab this book and find out!

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