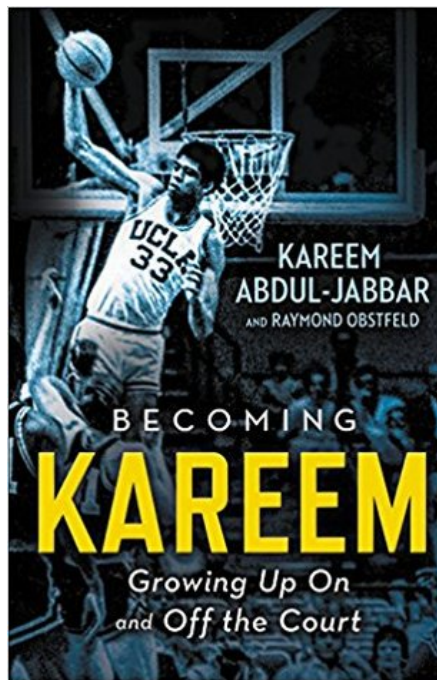




Becoming Kareem: Growing Up On and Off the Court

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar , Raymond Obstfeld

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A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER!

The first memoir for young readers by sports legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

At one time, Lew Alcindor was just another kid from New York City with all the usual problems: He struggled with fitting in, with pleasing a strict father, and with overcoming shyness that made him feel socially awkward. But with a talent for basketball, and an unmatched team of supporters, Lew Alcindor was able to transform and to become Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

From a childhood made difficult by racism and prejudice to a record-smashing career on the basketball court as an adult, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's life was packed with "coaches" who taught him right from wrong and led him on the path to greatness. His parents, coaches Jack Donahue and John Wooden, Muhammad Ali, Bruce Lee, and many others played important roles in Abdul-Jabbar's life and sparked him to become an activist for social change and advancement. The inspiration from those around him, and his drive to find his own path in life, are highlighted in this personal and awe-inspiring journey.

Written especially for young readers, Becoming Kareem chronicles how Kareem Abdul-Jabbar became the icon and legend he is today, both on and off the court.

Becoming Kareem: Growing Up On and Off the Court Details

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From Reader Review Becoming Kareem: Growing Up On and Off the Court for online ebook

Shannon says

Becoming Kareem: Growing Up On and Off the Court

I Picked Up This Book Because: Seemed like a good idea at the time.

I'm not sure what I was expecting. I knew Kareem was a basketball player and I knew I would be hearing about his life. I was surprised to learn what a deep thinker he is. How educated and well read. How he lived and dealt with the civil unrest going on in the country while trying to build a professional career.

I think hearing this in Kareem's voice made it feel so much more personal. Kareem is not just a record setting athlete. He is a man of many interest with quite a few tales to tell. More than even those in this book I'm sure.

The Random Thoughts:

The Score Card:

4 Stars

Brittany says

I felt like I knew a bit of what Kareem presented in this book, but a lot of it was new. It felt disjointed at times, but overall I liked it for a middle school/early YA crowd. I definitely want to read his adult stuff, now, too.

DaNae says

I've had a number of students blow through this and I was happy to have it for the little sports enthusiasts, but I assumed it would not interest me much. I don't know a hook shot from a touch down. I couldn't have been more wrong. BECOMING KAREEM shines not just on young Lew Alcindor's formative years but parallels upheavals in American society. Most moving are his relationships with his coaches and his religious journey. Sports fans won't be disappointed, but all readers who finish this will know what it means to live a principled life.

Shauna Yusko says

Simply WOW!

So many books to pair this with! So many curriculum tie-ins. I think is must reading for everyone, not just sports fans.

And if I wasn't already in love with this book, he made it possible to pair with one of my favorite books from this year (Schomberg), quotes John Green, and Robert Frost.

Carsen Drennen says

I love this book I can relate to his childhood and his political views also his athletic life also.

Heidi says

Fascinating account of Kareem's experiences growing up. He reads the book himself and does a great job of it.

Kathleen says

I'm not a basketball fan at all, and I LOVED this book. I couldn't put it down.

Sam Teru says

I enjoyed this book thoroughly! It provided great insight into the diverse live of the NBA's leading all-time scorer, but what I loved about this book was how it detailed Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's life on and off the court. As an avid Basketball fan, I knew of Kareem as an outstanding center, but I did not know anything about his personal life. Kareem illustrates key moments in his life narrating to as early as his memories at a boarding school and continues through his NBA and post-NBA career.

One thing I particularly loved about Kareem's autobiography was his keen perception of the setting. Kareem grew up in Harlem during the Civil Rights Movement, and his perspectives of racial tension and prejudice as a young teenager is mature beyond his years, which has greatly influenced his extracurricular involvement. He narrates specific moments of racial prejudice and injustice in his life that captivated me as a reader.

Kareem's story is compelling in that he shares a piece of his personality that many are not aware of. His progression through some his best and worst moments are captivating, and I would definitely recommend this book to anyone, regardless of your opinion of basketball. The book is published by Little, Brown Books and is available for \$9.99 on the Kindle or \$12.59 on Amazon.

Caroline says

I try to be conservative with my five star reviews, but there were just so many good things about this book.

I thought there was a good balance between Kareem's experiences with racism and intolerance without becoming overly political. It is an unapologetic look at who he has become and why, without attacking people for their different religious feelings. He skillfully approaches his life with a "here I am" lens but explains that in an age of tolerance, that doesn't mean we all have to be the same. e discusses systemic racism as he and his friends experienced it in the 1960s, and though he doesn't have to come out and say it, it is clear that that systemic racism is still all too similar today.

This book goes so far beyond an autobiography of a sports hero, though it is a tremendous sports biography as well with sports lessons included. The look at who Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is as a man and as an athlete - and how they are completely dependent on each other - is a life lesson that many young people could definitely stand to learn.

This book leans toward the older end of middle grade/young adult but is a good read for most.

Ms.Young says

An excellent memoir for sports fans, and non-sports fans alike. This story tells a journey of discovering who you are, and how different people in your life can influence who you become.

Caleb Harless says

This book is great. I like the fact Kareem wrote this book himself. It provides so much more detail about his childhood and basketball career. He doesn't brag about his career achievements although it could be easy to do being he's the all time leading scorer in the NBA. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes basketball or likes nonfiction books.

Joseph says

What if I told you that Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, one of the greatest basketball players of all time, did not play much basketball until middle school? What if I told you that until he was in the NBA, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's name was Lew Alcindor. You can find out these mind boggling facts and many more by reading Becoming Kareem, a compilation of memoirs written by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar himself, with help from Raymond Obstfeld.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was born in 1947 in Harlem, NY. His name was originally Lewis "Lew" Alcindor,

and he was Catholic. Lew was black, and was growing up in the time period of the Civil Rights Movement. Although he did not live in the south, there was still some discrimination where he lived. This book follows Lew all the way from elementary school to being drafted by the Milwaukee Bucks, so it is not his entire life, but an important part of it. We also learn about some of Kareem's mentors, including his parents, coaches, Bruce Lee, Wilt Chamberlain, Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali and Martin Luther King Jr.

It would be untrue to say this book is all about basketball. Becoming Kareem has many themes, including identity, independence, freedom, acceptance and growing up. Lew does not feel like he sees eye to eye with his Catholic religion, such as the fact that the church teaches tolerance, but Christians were still discriminating against African-Americans, so he decides to convert to Islam and eventually changes his name to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. He does this because he wants to have the freedom to make his own decisions, such as choosing his own moral values, when someone other than yourself is always trying to influence you. "And now the world would see just who Kareem is and what he could do" (217). After changing his religion, Kareem is now set apart from who he used to be, and he believes the change is for the better.

As Lew grows up, we learn how he deals with friends, family, coaches and even people he does not like. Lew's high school basketball coach, Coach Donohue, always seemed to be good to Lew. During one game, Coach Donohue says a racist term to Lew to get him fired up to win the game. Lew takes a lot of offense to this, and says that he lost all trust in his coach. Read Becoming Kareem to see how Lew deals with this issue. I believe that this book interwinds history, sports and ethics, which is very interesting. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar talks about what was going on in history the time, playing basketball and what he believes is right and wrong. I enjoyed how Becoming Kareem is written, as if Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is talking to you and telling stories.

I recommend Becoming Kareem to anyone in eighth grade and older. You do not have to be a big fan of sports to appreciate this book. Although, if you only enjoy reading action packed fantasy novels, this book is probably not for you. I still highly recommend that you try it.

Chad says

Really good memoir on finding an identity as a star athlete who was world famous even before he was in the NBA. Kareem writes as much about his personal development off the court as his achievements on it. Much respect for his honesty, integrity, and passion for more than just the game.

Lori says

Excellent read for all ages. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar provides an honest, thoughtful, and inspiring memoir that helps the reader understand his personal journey in context of the larger societal issues during which he came of age. I especially liked how he detailed his personal growth throughout different stages of his life. Kids will easily relate to his recounting of finding his "superpower" in fourth grade, to struggling with bullies, to handling conflicts with parents and coaches, to his growing awareness of racial and political issues, and to his amazing basketball career.

I will be recommending this to all middle schoolers, especially those who enjoy sports, although kids do not need to be a sports fan to enjoy this book. High schoolers will enjoy it too - especially reading about his journey through high school into college. This is an accessible and inspiring read that will be a great addition to our summer book promotions.

Marcie says

Although not as focused on basketball as I was expecting this to be, Abdul-Jabbar brings up some really good points about growing up during the days of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. Unfortunately, most of the points he raises are still concerns that exist today. I thought this was a good companion piece to *The Hate U Give*, with the bonus of not having as much sensitive content.
