



# Summer Reading 2026

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Instruction

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# Theme: Sports

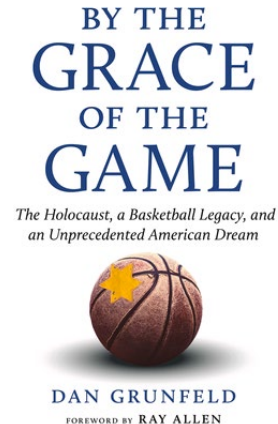
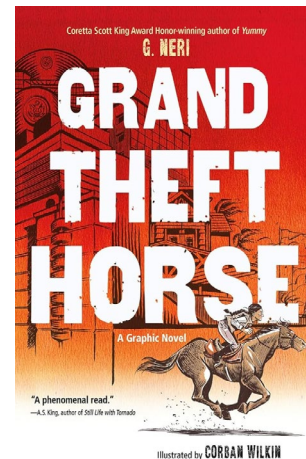
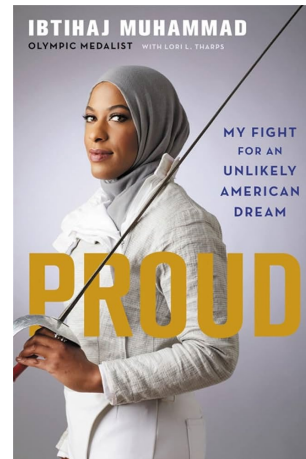
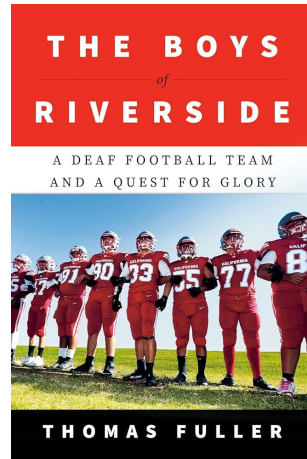
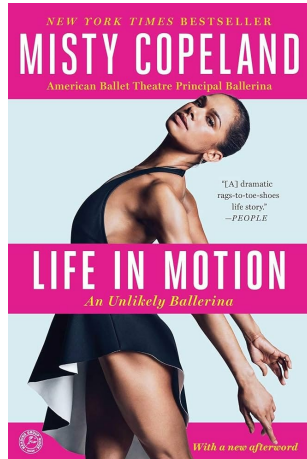
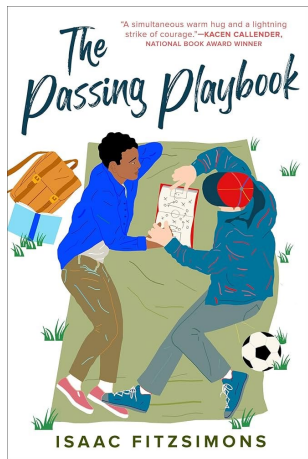
The summer reading theme of SPORTS invites participants to explore how athletics shape identity, test character, and reflect the worlds we live in.

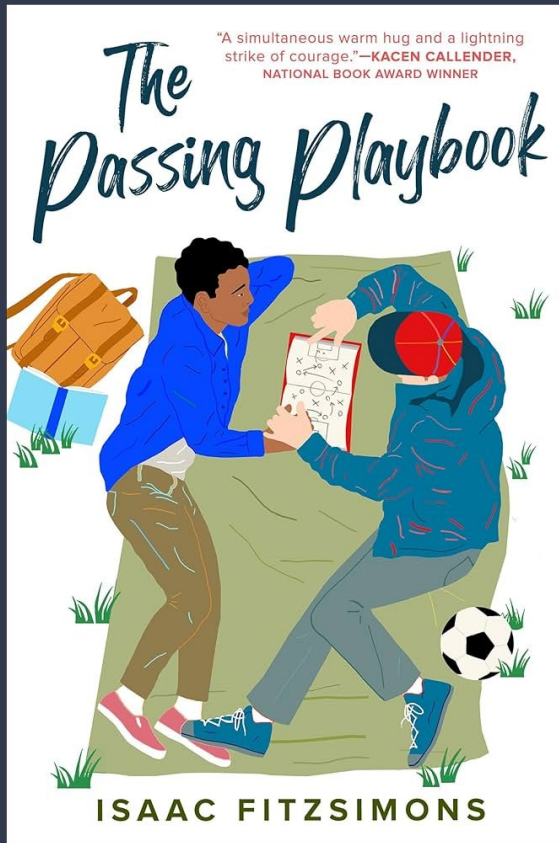
Through narratives of grit and glory, readers will examine who gets access and recognition, how race, gender, class, and nationality influence experience, and what motivates athletes to persevere under pressure. Along the way, we'll consider the meaning of "success," the power structures surrounding sport, and the responsibilities athletes carry beyond the game.

# Sports

## 2026 Summer Reading

- Select at least one book to read that focuses on the thematic concept of Sports
- Complete note-taking assignment
- Participate in group discussions in ELA classes in September
- Students in Honors/AP will read an additional assigned text





# The Passing Playbook

By Isaac Fitzsimons

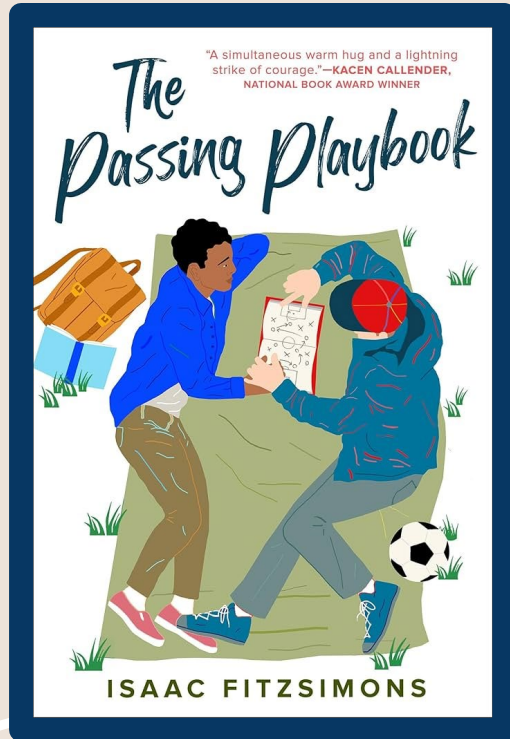
Published: 2021

YA Contemporary Fiction

304 Pages

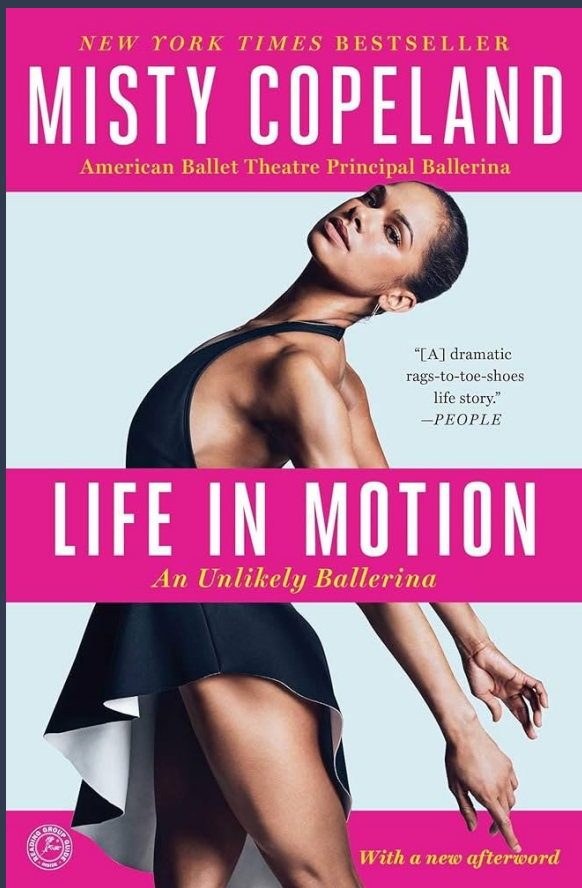
LGBTQIA+ author

- ALA Rainbow List; Lambda Literary Award finalist (YA)
- Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection
- YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults (nominated/selected lists)



**Overview:** A teen soccer player transfers to a new school seeking a fresh start, only to face a no-play policy that forces a choice between privacy and advocacy. Blending sports drama with trans identity, friendship, and school policy, it offers an affirming, accessible entry point for discussions of inclusion and student well-being.

This book includes LGBTQIA+ characters.



# Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina

By Misty Copeland

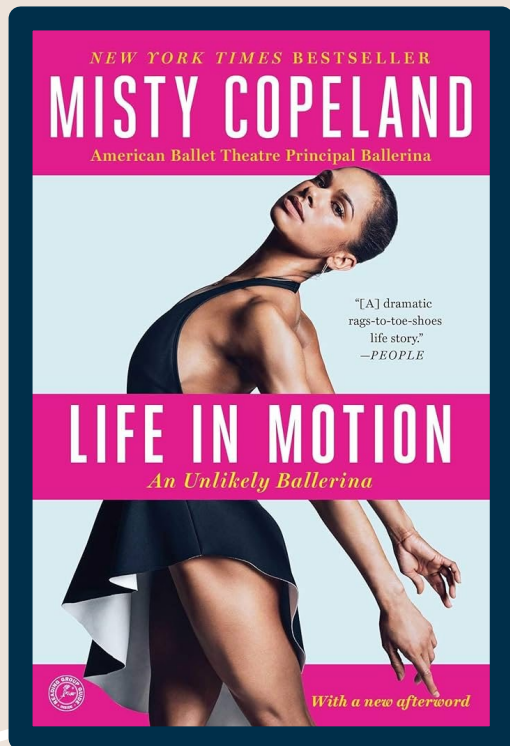
Published: 2014

Memoir

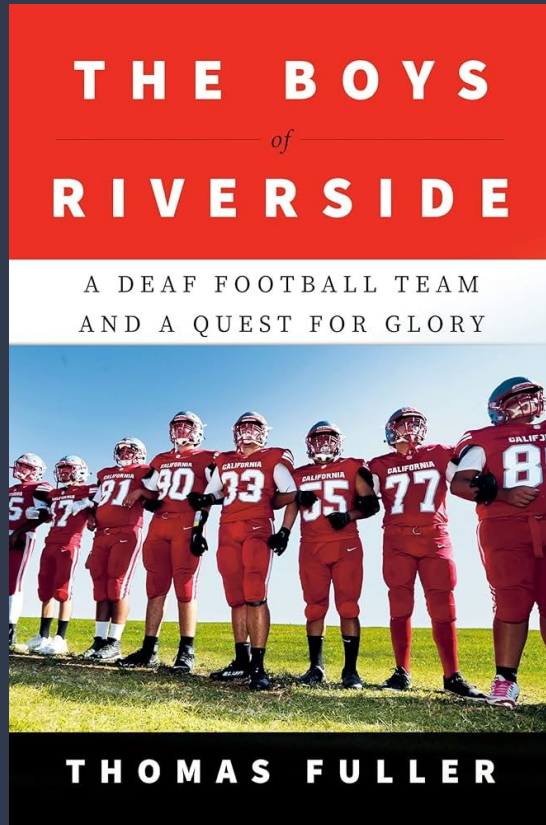
192 Pages

Diverse Female Author

- New York Times bestseller
- NAACP Image Award (Outstanding Literary Work, Biography/Autobiography)
- ALA Notable/Junior Library Guild selections (YA edition)



**Overview:** Copeland traces her path from a late start in ballet to making history at American Ballet Theatre. The memoir highlights perseverance, mentorship, and equity in the arts, inviting conversations about access, representation, and goal-setting.



# The Boys of Riverside: A Deaf Football Team And a Quest for Glory

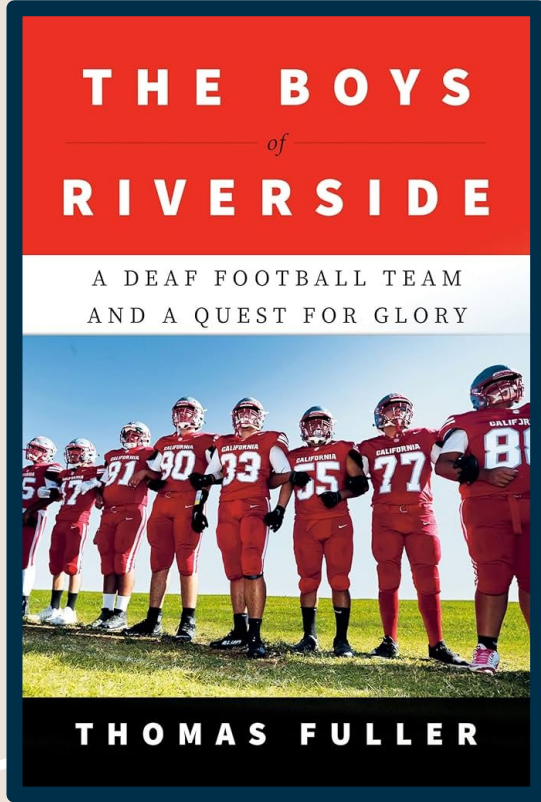
By Thomas Fuller

Published: 2023

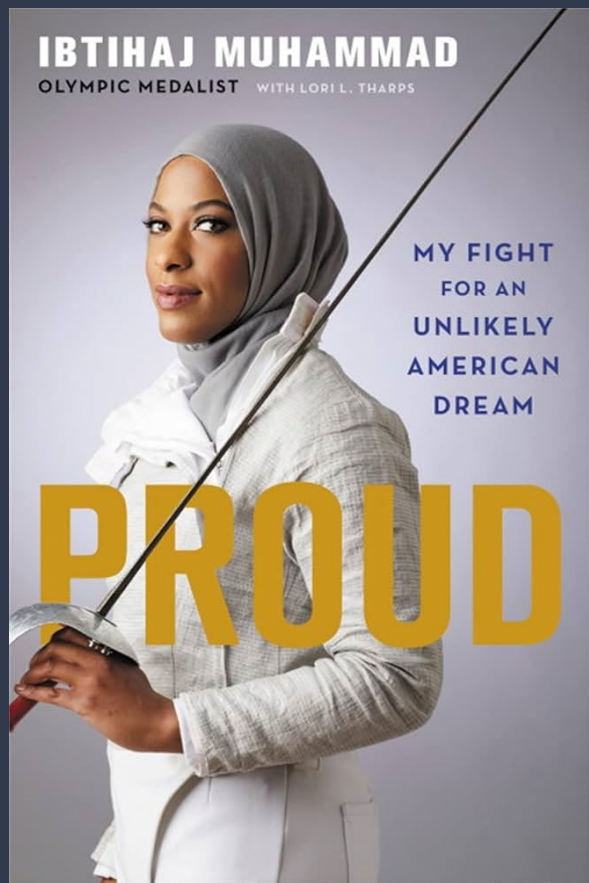
Narrative Nonfiction

288 Pages

- Noted on best-of/year lists by major outlets (reporting/narrative nonfiction)
- Praised by Deaf community organizations and sports journalism reviewers



**Overview:** A deeply reported account of a high school team from the California School for the Deaf-Riverside that captured national attention. Fuller explores strategy, culture, and language on and off the field, centering Deaf identity and community while charting an underdog season that redefined expectations.



# **Proud: My Fight for an Unlikely American Dream**

By Ibtihaj Muhammad

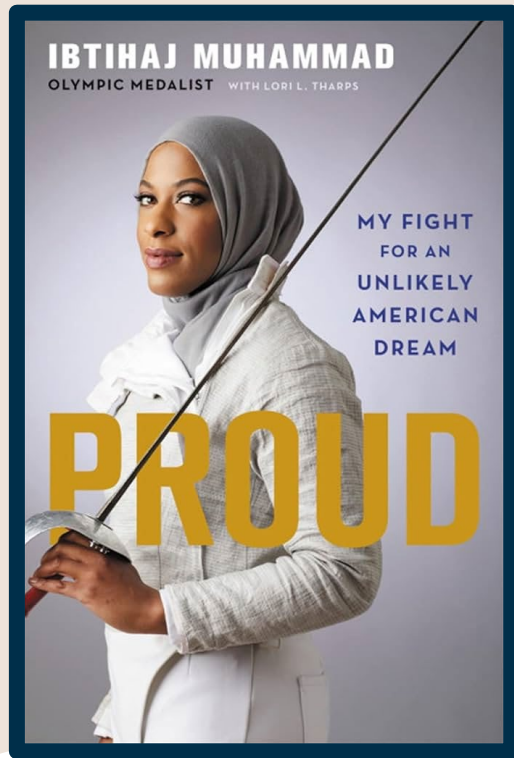
Published: 2018

Memoir

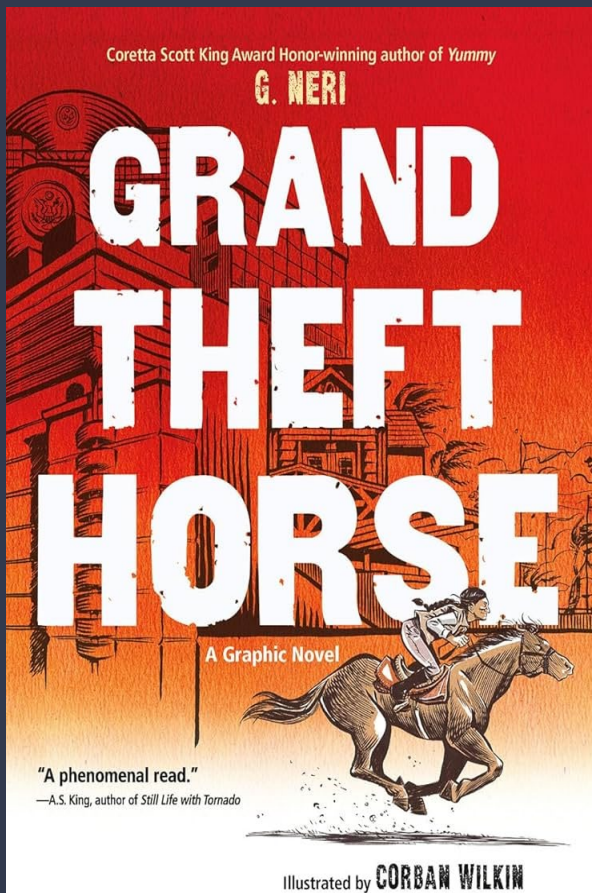
267 Pages

Diverse Female Author

- New York Times bestseller
- NAACP Image Award nominee; ESPYs honoree (broader athletic recognition)
- Junior Library Guild Selection (YA)



**Overview:** Olympic medalist and the first American woman to compete in the Olympics in hijab, Muhammad recounts navigating faith, racism, and elite sport. It's a candid, motivating narrative about identity, advocacy, and resilience that resonates across student audiences.



# Grand Theft Horse

By G. Neri

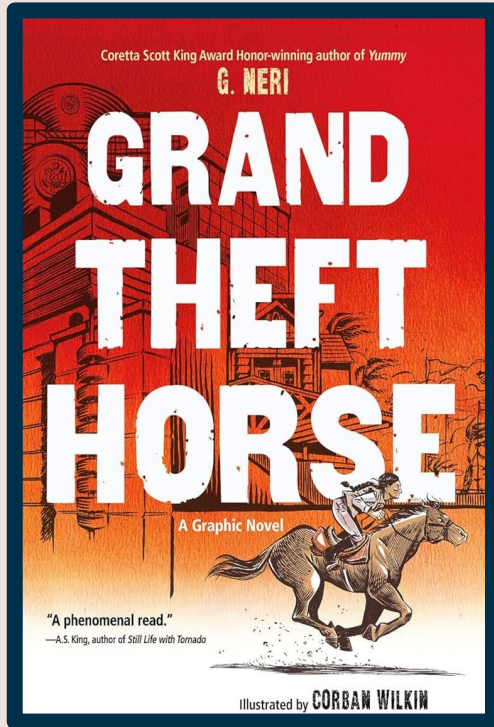
Published: 2018

Graphic Nonfiction/ Biography

160 Pages

Diverse Author

- YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction finalist (nomination lists)
- Junior Library Guild Selection



**Overview:** The true story of horse trainer Gail Ruffu, who “steals” a racehorse to save him from abuse and faces legal fallout. Told in graphic-novel form, it raises questions about ethics, whistleblowing, and the costs of doing the right thing.

# BY THE GRACE OF THE GAME

*The Holocaust, a Basketball Legacy, and  
an Unprecedented American Dream*



DAN GRUNFELD

FOREWORD BY RAY ALLEN

## **By the Grace of the Game**

By Dan Grunfeld

(already board approved in 2022)

Published: 2021

Memoir/ Sports History

304 Pages

Jewish Author

- National Jewish Book Award finalist/recognized in category lists

BY THE  
**GRACE**  
OF THE  
**GAME**

*The Holocaust, a Basketball Legacy, and  
an Unprecedented American Dream*

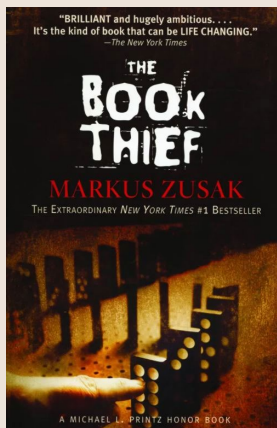


**DAN GRUNFELD**  
FOREWORD BY RAY ALLEN

**Overview:** Former Stanford and pro player Dan Grunfeld connects three generations: grandparents who survived the Holocaust, father Ernie Grunfeld's NBA journey, and his own path in basketball. It's a multigenerational story about immigration, identity, and how sport can be a vehicle for healing and opportunity.

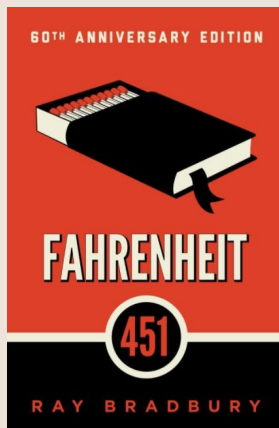
# Requirements for Honors and AP

9th Grade H



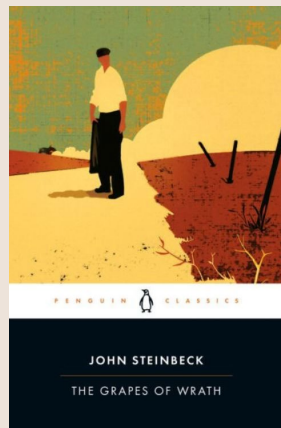
**The Book Thief**  
By Markus Zusak

10th Grade H



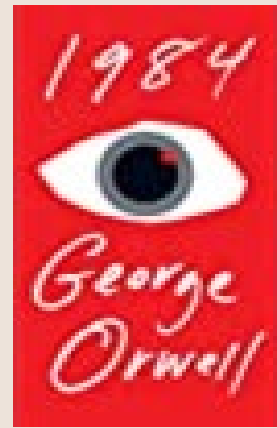
**Fahrenheit 451**  
by Ray Bradbury

11th Grade AP



**The Grapes of Wrath**  
by John Steinbeck

12th Grade AP



**1984**  
by George Orwell

# Summer Reading Assignment

**Guiding questions-** students will receive a set of guiding questions on the theme SPORTS. As they read they will be required to complete a note taking activity.

## **Choices:**

1. *Two Column Notes:* students engage in a written dialogue with the text as they read. On the left column write the important text, on the right column reflect, analyze, explain how the text connects to the thematic questions.
2. *In Text Annotations:* take notes on post-it notes or in the margin, reflecting on how the text connects to the guiding questions.
3. *Outline:* create a structured outline focused on the theme and supported with textual evidence.
4. *Mind Mapping/Sketchnotes:* create a visual representation of text, characters, plot episodes that connect to the guiding questions.

# Middle School



## Grade 6: Theme- Discovering Ourselves and Creating Community

### CURRENT LIST- No Proposed Changes

- **The City of Ember** by Jeanne DuPrau
- **Fish in a Tree** by Lynda Mullaly Hunt
- **Flipped** by Wendelin Van Draanen
- **Harbor Me** by Jacqueline Woodson
- **When Stars are Scattered** by Victoria Jamieson with Omar Mohamed

## Grade 7: Theme- Life's Journey

### CURRENT LIST- ONE Proposed Change

- **The Boys in the Boat (Young Readers Adaptation)** by Daniel James Brown
- **Counting by 7s** by Holly Goldberg Sloan
- **The Crossover** by Kwame Alexander
- **The Girl Who Drank the Moon** by Kelly Barnhill
- **Refugee** by Alan Gratz
- **Squire: A Graphic Novel** by Nadia Shamas and Sara Alfageeh



# Squire: A Graphic Novel

By Nadia Shammas (writer) and Sara Alfageeh (artist)

Published: 2022

Young Adult Graphic Novel, Fiction

366 Pages

- ALA/YALSA Best Graphic Novels for Teens list selection
- Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection



**Overview:** In a Middle Eastern-inspired empire, orphaned Aiza dreams of knighthood as a path to citizenship. Training reveals the costs of conquest and the propaganda that sustains it, forcing her to choose between belonging and speaking out. Lush art and sharp worldbuilding drive themes of identity and moral courage, great for discussions of perspective and power.

## Grade 8: Theme - Resiliency

### CURRENT LIST - No Proposed Changes

- **Before We Were Free** by Julia Alvarez
- **Brown Girl Dreaming** by Jacqueline Woodson
- **Freak the Mighty** by Rodman Philbrick
- **Running Dream** by Wendelin Van Draanen
- **Hope Wins: A Collection of Inspiring Stories** for Young Readers Edited by Rose Brock
- **The Magic Fish** by Trung Le Nguyen

# Summer Reading Assignment Example



**Directions:** Consider how your grade level theme is exemplified through character, setting, and/or plot development as you read your book. Complete the double entry journal with textual evidence and reasoning.

<b>Textual evidence that exemplifies the theme.</b>	<b>Describe how the evidence in the text relates to the theme and explain why.</b>
Example:	Example:

# How can I get a copy of my summer reading?



Digital Copies will be available on SORA.

- Go to [soraapp.com](http://soraapp.com) (or download the app on your phone)
- Select Cherry Hill Township Schools
- Sign in using your [@chclc.org](mailto:@chclc.org) username and password
- Use the Explore tab on the bottom to search for a title
- All books are available on both e-book and audio with the exception of *Grand Theft Horse* (ebook only)



AUDIOBOOK  
Education



Books are also available through:  
CHERRY HILL PUBLIC LIBRARY  
[www.chplnj.org](http://www.chplnj.org)  
(856)667-0300

INKWOOD BOOKS, Haddonfield  
<https://shop.inkwood.com/>  
(856)429-1298

BARNES & NOBLE  
[www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com)  
(856)486-1492

**QUESTIONS?**