

Book Resume: Black Brother, Black Brother



***Black Brother, Black Brother* by Jewell Parker Rhodes**

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2020

ISBN: 9780316493802 (Hardcover), 9780316493796 (Paperback)

*Age Range: 8 – 12 (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 4 – 6 (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

From award-winning and bestselling author, Jewell Parker Rhodes comes a powerful coming-of-age story about two brothers, one who presents as white, the other as black, and the complex ways in which they are forced to navigate the world, all while training for a fencing competition.

Framed. Bullied. Disliked. But I know I can still be the best.

Sometimes, 12-year-old Donte wishes he were invisible. As one of the few black boys at Middlefield Prep, most of the students don't look like him. They don't like him either. Dubbing him "Black Brother," Donte's teachers and classmates make it clear they wish he were more like his lighter-skinned brother, Trey.

When he's bullied and framed by the captain of the fencing team, "King" Alan, he's suspended from school and arrested.

Terrified, searching for a place where he belongs, Donte joins a local youth center and meets former Olympic fencer Arden Jones. With Arden's help, he begins training as a competitive fencer, setting his sights on taking down the fencing team captain, no matter what.

As Donte hones his fencing skills and grows closer to achieving his goal, he learns the fight for justice is far from over. Now Donte must confront his bullies, racism, and the corrupt systems of power that led to his arrest.

Powerful and emotionally gripping, *Black Brother, Black Brother* is a careful examination of the school-to-prison pipeline and follows one boy's fight against racism and his empowering path to finding his voice.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

Updated 4.11.24

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

Childrenspublicity@hbgusa.com

★ “A powerful work and must-have for children's collections.” —Booklist, starred review

★ “An excellent selection for both elementary and middle library collections, this is a title that celebrates finding one's place in the world.” —School Library Connection, starred review

“Placing biracial boyhood and the struggles of colorism at its center, the novel challenges readers to pursue their own self-definition.” —Kirkus

“Donte's story is a good primer for younger readers on microaggressions.” —School Library Journal

“A classic sports story.” —BCCB

“This novel offers a solid story, with relatable, three-dimensional characters considering identity, that will teach readers about colorism's effects.” —Publishers Weekly

“Fast-paced and full of raw emotions: this book makes you think!” —Maria, age 43, Educator at International School of Brooklyn

“A meaningful story. And the lesson in the book is to be kind to all no matter the color or race.” —Alaina, age 11

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection
- 2022-2023 Kentucky Bluegrass Award Winner, Grades 6-8
- 2023 Master List, Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award
- 2023 Pennsylvania Young Readers Choice Award Finalist
- 2022-2023 Maryland Black-eyed Susan Book Award Nominee
- 2022-2023 Grades 6-8 Master list Nominee, William Allen White Children's Book Award
- 2022 Lewisham Book Award (UK)
- 2022 Magnolia Book Award Nominee
- 2021-2022 Sunshine State Young Readers Award
- 2021 Nominee, Outstanding Literary Work – Youth/Teens, NAACP Image Awards
- The Best Children's Books of 2021, Bank Street College of Education
- 2020-2021 Cybils Nominee: Middle-Grade Fiction
- 2021-2022 Nebraska Golden Sower Award Finalist
- 2020 Best Children's Books 2020, King County Library System
- Editor's Pick: 2020 Best Middle Grade Books, Book Riot
- Top 10 Kids' Indie Next Pick
- Amazon's Best Children's Books of 2020: Ages 9-12
- 2020 “Best of the Best” Books, Chicago Public Library
- Top 20 Books of 2020, School Library Journal
- 2024 Award Winner, Prix des Libraries du Quebec 2024 (12-17 year old)

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- 2021, Underrated,” Stephen Curry Book Club Selection with *Literati*
- 2020 Winner, Middle Grade, New England Independent Bookstores Book Award
- 2021 YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Black Brother, Black Brother Book Club Guide](#)
- [Introducing... Black Brother, Black Brother by Jewell Parker Rhodes](#)
- [FAQ with Jewell Parker Rhodes](#)
- [LB School & Library Podcast - Jewell Parker Rhodes on BLACK BROTHER, BLACK BROTHER](#)
- [The Children’s Book Podcast – Jewell Parker Rhodes discussing Black Brother, Black Brother](#)
- [The Nerd Daily – Q&A: Jewell Parker Rhodes, Author of ‘Black Brother, Black Brother’](#)
- [She Reads - An Exclusive Interview with Jewell Parker Rhodes](#)
- [Frolic - 5\(ish\) Questions with Author Jewell Parker Rhodes](#)
- [The Young Folks - Interview: Jewell Parker Rhodes & Brady Colbert Discuss Their New Middle-Grade Books](#)
- [Politics and Prose - Jewell Parker Rhodes and Kelly McWilliams](#)

AUTHOR STATEMENT

From Jewell Parker Rhodes:

I have two bi-racial children—one who presents as white; the other, who presents as black. My child with the darker skin experienced continual prejudice and harassment. Similar to Donte my child was scapegoated and threatened at a very expensive private school with a call to the police. I was terrified. And as in Donte’s family, my white husband was given more deference than me.

Parents are incredibly important for bi-racial kids. They are essential for modelling heritage and identity in profound ways to offset society’s superficial views. Initially, Donte uses anger to fuel his fencing battles against his racist nemesis. But sports, especially fencing, with its codes of chivalry, honor, and integrity, empowers him. Donte focuses on his own growth and desire to be “the best.” It can be challenging for young people to dismiss other people’s negative feelings towards them as they are just discovering themselves and moving towards adulthood. Self-esteem is dependent upon loving yourself. Donte comes to realize this and messages to others: “Be you. Even if others can’t see you.”

My grandmother taught me that “everyone is a mixed blood stew.” We should celebrate our diverse heritages and realize that skin tone is a superficial aspect of our common humanity. This is the true inspiration for *Black Brother, Black Brother*.

*A NOTE ON AGE RANGES

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A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

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