

Appendix 26.2. Dialogue Book: A Conversation After Reading Kwame Alexander's *The Crossover*

Introduce yourself to the group. Offer a statement about yourself and your world. Share any nicknames you have (like Josh Bell's *Filthy McNasty*).

Time to do some rating (10 is high, 1 is low). On a scale of 1–10, what is your relationship to poetry? To vocabulary? On a scale of 1–10, how do you rate *The Crossover*? Why?

(Reread pp. 16–17) Josh and Jordan Bell's parents have different careers. What are these careers and how do they impact Josh's thinking and writing? Do you feel one influences Josh more than the other?

(Reread pp. 20, 51, 66, 71, 93, 129, 146, 191, 214, 230). These are the basketball rules learned by Josh Bell. Which of these rules makes the most sense to you? Can you relate it to your world? How does Josh Bell learn this rule off the basketball court, too?

Someone in the group, model what a "crossover" looks like in a basketball game. In what ways do characters "cross over" within Alexander's text? How does a "crossover" work as a metaphor? Are sports in general a metaphor for life? Why or why not?

Reread "Filthy McNasty" (p. 10). Think about a basketball game. Discuss what you notice about this

poem's layout, spacing, fonts, etc. Is it like a game?

(Reread "Dear Jordan," p. 159). Why does Josh write this letter? What does it say about his character? Do you have such a character in your own life? Who?

Share with the group your favorite word (it can be slang or fancy). Look at *The Crossover* and locate slang and fancy words used by the author. Why do you think Alexander chooses such words?

Challenges. Love them? Hate them? Or something else? Share a challenge you've faced in your life and explain what happened with the choices you made. Can you relate this to Josh Bell's story in *The Crossover*?

(Reread "Free Throws," pp. 234–237). What is a free throw? When do players make them in a game? Why do you think Kwame Alexander ends the book with this poem? In what ways does it bring closure to Josh and Jordan Bell?

Final thoughts. Go around the group and make a statement to summarize your thinking about the conversation you just had. Think of one or two questions you can ask others when we come back together. What else does your group have to say?