



The Greatest: Muhammad Ali

By Walter Dean Myers

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 7 Up-An introduction to Ali's life from his childhood to the present day, focusing on his career and the controversies surrounding him. Both his talent in the boxing ring and his showmanship earned him international fame, while his refusal to accept the stereotypical role of a black athletic star in the 1960s and his membership in the Nation of Islam brought him notoriety. Myers interweaves fight sequences with the boxer's life story and the political events and issues of the day. He doesn't shy away from reporting on the brutality of the sport and documents the toll it has taken on its many stars. Ample black-and-white photographs of the subject in and out of the ring illustrate the book. Covering Ali is a daunting task, especially since dozens of books and hundreds of articles have been written about him in the last 40 years. Fortunately, young adults have their own award-winning author, one with the perspective of being a young African American in Harlem during the height of the boxer's fame, to tell his story. Myers's writing flows while describing the boxing action and the legend's larger-than-life story.-Michael McCullough, Byron-Bergen Middle School, Bergen, NY

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 6-10. Myers tells the familiar story of Muhammad Ali's life and career in such a way as to inspire a new generation of readers, young people whose first glimpse of Ali may have come at the 1996 Olympics, when the Parkinson's-stricken former heavyweight champion lit the Olympic torch. Focusing on race, politics, religion, and boxing--"the arenas in which Ali's mark was indelible in . . . the national consciousness"--Myers vividly re-creates the life of the young Cassius Clay, from his childhood in segregated Louisville in the 1950s, through his Olympic triumph in 1960, to his rise as a professional fighter, culminating with the stunning victory over Sonny Liston in 1964. Then comes the dramatic second act of the Ali story--the transformation of young Clay into Muhammad Ali, a committed Black Muslim who would sacrifice his heavyweight title and face imprisonment by refusing to serve in the army during the Vietnam War. Myers succinctly summarizes the furor surrounding Ali's political activism, and he captures the excitement that Ali created in a generation of young African Americans (including Myers himself), who found in the brash, young boxer a new kind of hero. And, perhaps most vividly, Myers describes Ali the fighter, explaining his technique and offering a perceptive overview of the troubled business of boxing and the great physical risks the sport entails. This is finally a story about a black man of tremendous courage, the kind of universal story that needs a writer as talented as Myers to retell it for every generation. *Bill Ott*

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About the Author

Walter Dean Myers is the 2012 - 2013 National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. He is the critically acclaimed New York Times bestselling author an award-winning body of work which includes, *SOMEWHERE IN THE DARKNESS*, *SLAM!*, and *MONSTER*. Mr. Myers has received two Newbery Honor medals, five Coretta Scott King Author Awards, and three National Book Award Finalists citations. In addition, he is the winner of the first Michael L. Printz Award. He lives in Jersey City, New Jersey.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Erica Logan:

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