

Outcasts United

By Author, Warren St. John

Reviewed by: Tanya, 14

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Luma had grown up in Jordan, and moved to the United States for her education. Working as a girls soccer coach, she used her strict but effective coaching strategy on all her students. While she was out on a drive one day, she was surprised to see a group of boys from multiple ethnicities playing pick-up soccer together. She was amazed by their raw skill and motivated by their passion for soccer. After quitting her job as a girls soccer coach, she created a soccer team for boy refugees that lived in Clarkston, Georgia. Contrary to her expectations, she found boys of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds come up to her interested in joining her team. She couldn't have known then, that these boys would power through the discrimination, poverty and hate that they faced as refugee children, and eventually develop into amazing, skilled and determined soccer teams who defied all expectations.

After starting this book, I found it very hard to put down! This book was both educational and inspirational, as it integrated the histories of the different countries that were experiencing war and chaos, and how the families from around the world settled in their new homes in Clarkson to try to have a fresh start. This story was truly inspirational as it showed how kids from around the world who could barely even speak English, came together through their passion for soccer, to form a second family together on the soccer field. The fact that this was a real-life story made the book even more inspirational for me.

I would recommend this book for middle and high schoolers, due to the fact that there are some events that may not be suitable for younger kids. For example, there is a scene in which a refugee mother gets robbed by a man in the streets at night. I would also specifically recommend this book to soccer fans and sports fans in general. It proves that stories of underdog teams aren't just a cliché, but can happen in real life. If you are looking for a truly inspirational and uplifting book, mixed with sports and humor, this is definitely the book for you!

Recommended Titles:

I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

The Miracle of Castel di Sangro by Joe McGinniss

No Summit out of Sight by Jordan Romero

The Ball is Round by David Goldblatt