

BOOKED

BY KWAME ALEXANDER

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Boston New York

Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Contents](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Gameplay](#)

[Wake Up Call](#)

[Questions](#)

[Why couldn't your dad](#)

[In the elementary school spelling bee](#)

[Giddy-up](#)

[Mom](#)

[Blackjack on the Way to School](#)

[Ms. Hardwick's Honors English class](#)

[The Beautiful Game](#)

[The thing about daydreaming](#)

[Busted](#)

[After School](#)

[At Miss Quattlebaum's School of Ballroom Dance & Etiquette](#)

[Chivalry](#)

[The Pact](#)

[Ever since first grade](#)

[Best Friend](#)

[Bragging Rights](#)

[The Letter](#)

[Dad's back in town](#)

[Trash Talk](#)

[PUT. THE. PHONE. AWAY, Nicholas](#)

[Trouble](#)

[Dean and Don Egelston](#)

[Fists of Fury](#)

[The library door](#)

[When you walk inside](#)

[Welcome to the Dragonfly Café](#)

[Hey, DJ, Drop That Beat](#)

[Skip MacDonald](#)

[Huckleberry Finn-ished](#)

[Class ends](#)

[Usually at dinner](#)

[Breaking the Silence](#)

[No Heads-Up](#)

[Thought](#)

[Broken](#)

[For the rest of the week](#)

[Conversation Before the Match](#)

[Playing Soccer](#)

[Game two](#)

[No Problemo](#)

[Problemo](#)

[Conversation with Mom](#)

[Dear Nick](#)

[You Want to Talk About April, but Coby's Mind Is on the Dallas Cup.](#)

[Nothing Good About Bye](#)

[The Way a Door Closes](#)

[The Next Day](#)

[In the hallway](#)

[Conversation with The Mac](#)

[First Dinner Without Mom](#)

[I'm sorry](#)

[Hanging Out at Coby's](#)

[Conversation](#)

[Let's call April, he says](#)

[Home Alone](#)

[Why You No Longer Play Football](#)

[The next morning](#)

[The Homework Questions](#)

[Texts from Mom](#)

[Texts to Mom](#)

[Jackpot](#)

[Insomnia](#)

[Standing in the lunch line](#)

[Big Trouble](#)

[Stand Up](#)

[Back to Life](#)

[Do-Over](#)

[Consequences](#)

[The day after](#)

[Conversation](#)

[The Last Time You Got into a Fight](#)

[Last night you couldn't watch TV](#)

[April is](#)

[Caught](#)

[The walk to her desk](#)

[Then She Smiles](#)

[Limerence](#)

[Coby's Back](#)

[Blackjack in the Library](#)

[You and Coby](#)

[Note from April](#)

[Change of Plans](#)

[Conversation After Soccer](#)

[Conversation with April](#)

[The only thing](#)

[Probability](#)

[Boy rides his bike](#)

[Kentucky](#)

[Breakdown](#)

[A Good Cry](#)

[What are you doing here?](#)

[1 on 1](#)

[This morning](#)

[Conversation with Mom](#)

[And Just Like That, Things Are Out of Control Again](#)

[Dressed in camouflage sneaks](#)

[Conversation with The Mac](#)

[Shrink](#)

[You miss](#)

[When Mom Starts Crying, Dad Takes Her Out, Leaving You Alone with the Shrink](#)

[Doctor *Fraud*](#)

[Chimichangas](#)

[How Did We Get Here?](#)

[Introductions](#)

[Alarm Clock](#)

[Cool?](#)

[Not Cool](#)

[Bad](#)

[After Soccer Practice](#)

[You wake up at four a.m.](#)

[The Big Match](#)

[Game On](#)

[Score](#)

[Right before halftime](#)

[Guess Who's Back?](#)

[Halftime](#)

[Coach asks](#)

[Second Half](#)

[Nine Minutes Left. Can't This Be Over Already?](#)

[Booked](#)

[Hospital](#)

[Ankle sprains](#)

[Surgery](#)

[Fact](#)

[How are you feeling, Nicky?](#)

[Bad](#)

[Worse](#)

[Only](#)

[The End](#)

[TV Therapy](#)

[This Sucks](#)

[New Rules](#)

[Mom kisses you goodbye](#)

[The Next Morning](#)

[Breakfast](#)

[Conversation with Coby](#)

[Dear Skip](#)

[Rapprochement *](#)

[Visitors' Day](#)

[Hello, Nicholas](#)

[This has got to be a sweven.](#)

[You're not really into baseball](#)

[*All the Broken Pieces*](#)

[The Next Day](#)

[Conversation with The Mac](#)

[Read Aloud](#)

[He sounds](#)

[Texts to April](#)

[Text from April](#)

[Discharged](#)

[Driving Home](#)

[*Out of the Dust*](#)

[You dial April's number](#)

[Phone Conversation](#)

[Books You Find on Google](#)

[Dreams Come True](#)

[Today, Coby called](#)

[Knock Knock](#)

[Twain *](#)

[Nerds and Words](#)

[A Long Walk to Water](#)

[Your Suggestion](#)

[Bye, Nick](#)

[Family Meeting](#)

[Text to Coby](#)

[When April](#)

[Rock Horse Ranch](#)

[Afterward](#)

[You absolutely love](#)

[Thank You](#)

[Later, at Dinner](#)

[Conversation with Mom and Dad](#)

[What happens to a dream destroyed?](#)

[On the way to the airport](#)

[Sinking](#)

[Conversation with Dr. Fraud](#)

[Regular Communication](#)

[At Miss Quattlebaum's](#)

[Regular Communication](#)

[After School, You Stop in to See The Mac](#)

[Playoffs](#)

[Text from Mom](#)

[Regular Communication](#)

[Winnifred may be a gadfly *](#)

[Waiting at the Bus Stop When a Police Car Pulls Up](#)

[Thirty Minutes Later](#)

[I've been thinking](#)

[Conversation with Dad](#)

[Hey, Mom](#)

[Mom Calls Immediately](#)

[Blue Moon River](#)

[Inside the Bag Is, Get This, FREEDOM](#)

[Sub](#)

[After the Game](#)

[While you and Coby](#)

[HEY, DEAN, you scream](#)

[One Down, One to Go](#)

[Ouch!](#)

[Freedom](#)

[Sample Chapter from *THE CROSSOVER*](#)

[Buy the Book](#)

[Middle Grade Mania!](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Footnotes](#)

Copyright © 2016 by Kwame Alexander

Text on [page 284](#) used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

All rights reserved. For information about permission to reproduce selections from this book, write to trade.permissions@hmhco.com or to Permissions, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, Park Avenue, 19th Floor, New York, New York 10016.

www.hmhco.com

Cover photo © 2016 by Steve Gardner

Cover design by Lisa Vega

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is on file.

ISBN: 978-0-544-57098-6

eISBN 978-0-544-78771-1

v1.0416

*For Lynne, Stacey, Mary Ann, John, and Deborah,
some of the coolest librarians and teachers on the planet;
and to the best English teacher I never had:
Joanna Fox, the real dragonfly lady.*

Gameplay

on the pitch, lightning faSt,
dribble, fake, then make a dash

player tries tO steal the ball
lift and step and make him fall

zip and zoom to find the spot
defense readies for the shot

Chip, then kick it in the air
take off like a Belgian hare

shoot it left, but watch it Curve
all he can do is observe

watch the ball bEnd in midflight
play this game faR into night.

Wake Up Call

After playing FIFA
online with Coby
till one thirty a.m.
last night,
you wake
this morning
to the sound
of Mom arguing
on the phone
with Dad.

Questions

Did you make up your bed?

Yeah. Can you put bananas in my pancakes, please?

Did you finish your homework?

Yeah. Can we play a quick game of Ping-Pong, Mom?

And what about the reading. I didn't see you doing that yesterday.

Mom, Dad's not even here.

Just because your father's away doesn't mean you can avoid your chores.

I barely have time for my *real* chores.

Perhaps you should spend less time playing Xbox at all hours of the night.

Huh?

Oh, you think I didn't know?

I'm sick of reading his stupid words, Mom. I'm going to high school next year and I shouldn't have to keep doing this.

Why couldn't your dad

be a musician
like Jimmy Leon's dad
or own an oil company
like Coby's?
Better yet, why couldn't
he be a cool detective
driving
a sleek silver
convertible sports car
like Will Smith
in *Bad Boys*?
Instead, your dad's
a linguistics professor
with chronic verbomania*
as evidenced
by the fact
that he actually wrote
a dictionary
called *Weird and Wonderful Words*
with,
get this,
footnotes.

In the elementary school spelling bee

when you intentionally
misspelled *heifer*,
he almost had a cow.

You're the only kid
on your block
at school
in THE. ENTIRE. FREAKIN'. WORLD.
who lives in a prison
of words.
He calls it *the pursuit of excellence*.
You call it *Shawshank*.
And even though your mother
forbids you to say it,
the truth is
you
HATE
words.

Giddy-up

she hollers,
SMASHING the ball
to the edge
of the right corner
of the table
with so much force,
it sends you diving
into the laundry stack,
trying and failing
to lob it back.

Loser does the dishes tonight.
You can't say that now, Mom. It's game point.

She drops a shot
right over the net
that you can't get to.
You're a one-trick pony, young boy.
Stick to soccer, she jokes, then
headlocks you,
hits you on the backside
with her paddle,
and soaks your forehead
in kisses
after beating you
for the fourth game
in a row.

Mom

used to race horses,
but now she only trains them.
Correction: she *used to*
train them,
which was pretty awesome,
especially when you
got to cowboy
around the neighborhood
or watch
the Preakness
from luxury box seats
with unlimited Coke and shrimp.
But she doesn't do it anymore
since there are no horses
in the city.
Last year,
she did get asked
to train
a horse named
Bite My Dust,
but when she revealed
that we'd have to move
to some small town
with no university
(or travel soccer team),
Dad said **No**
with a capital **N**.

Blackjack on the Way to School

With two sevens showing, you
say, Hit me! Coby curses
when you get a third. BLACKJACK!

Ms. Hardwick's Honors English class

is one boring
required read
after another.

So you've become a pro
at daydreaming
while pretend-listening.

The Beautiful Game

You're pumped.
The match is tied
at the end

of extra time.
Players gather
at center circle

for the coin toss.
You call tails
and win.

Real Madrid scores
the first goal.
Ours bounces

off the left post.
They make
the next two

in a row.
We make three.
They miss

their final two.
It's 3-3.
Your turn

to rev the engine,
turn on the jets.
Score, and you win.

Teammates
lock arms
for the final kick.

The crowd roars,
screams your name:

NICK HALL! NICK HALL! NICK HALL!

Like a greyhound

coursing game,
you take off

from twelve yards out,
winding
for the kill.

But right before
the winning kick
of your Barcelona debut,

Ms. Hardwick
streaks
across the field

in her heels and
purple polyester dress
yelling:

*NICHOLAS HALL,
PAY
ATTENTION!*

The thing about daydreaming

in class
is you forget
what was happening
just before ninety thousand fans
started **CHEERING** you
to victory.

So everything blurs
when your best friend whispers
from behind,
She's talking to you, bro,
and your teacher **SLAMS**
you with a question
that makes no sense:

*The expression "to nip something in the bud"
is an example of what, Nicholas?*

Uh, to nip it in the *butt*
is an example of
how to get slapped by a girl, you reply,
as confused
as a chameleon
in a bag
of gummy worms,
which sends
almost everyone
in class
into fits
of contagious snickering.

Everyone except
Ms. Hardwick.

Busted

*Nicholas, I've warned you
about not paying attention
in my class.*

This is your final warning.

Next time, it's down to the office.

*Now, can anyone answer
the question correctly?*

*I can, I can, Ms. Hardwick, says Winnifred,
the teacher's pet (and a pain in the class).*

What is the correct phrase, Winnifred?

Nip it in the bud, not butt, Ms. Hardwick, she answers, then adds,

*Sorta like when you prune a flower
in the budding stage, to keep it from growing.*

Then she rolls her eyes. In your direction.

*Precisely. It is a metaphor
for dealing with a problem*

when it is still small

and before it grows

*into something LARGER, Ms. Hardwick says,
looking dead at you.*

*Ironically, Nicholas, by not paying attention,
you have stumbled upon another literary device*

called a malapropism. Do you know what it means?*

And of course you do, but before

you can tell her Winnifred raises

her hand and starts spelling it:

M-A-L-A-P-R-O-P-I-S-M, from

the French term mal à propos, meaning

when a person, or in this case, a boy,

uses a word that sounds like another

just to be funny.

Excellent, Winnifred, and since

you're such a comedian, Nicholas, Ms. Hardwick howls,

how about you finish reading

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

and find

an example of a malapropism

in the text

*to present
in class next week.*

ARRGGHH!

After School

*Better pay attention,
or Ms. Hardwick's gonna
give you a good kick
in the grass,
Coby says
while you both wait
for Mom
to pick you up.
That was a malaprop, he jokes.
I know what it was!*

*Wanna play soccer? he asks.
Of course you do,
but you can't
because
it's Tuesday
and you have a ridiculous,
mind-numbing
two-hour special class
that your mom signed you up for
that you can't wait
to get to
because you get to spend
two hours
in the same room
with April.*

*Can't today, you lie.
Gotta catch up
on some homework.*

At Miss Quattlebaum's School of Ballroom Dance & Etiquette

the boys
must address
the girls
as *Milady*.

Milady, may I take your coat?
Milady, may I please have this dance?
Milady, sorry my hands are clammy!

After you learn
how to properly
shake hands,

*(Firm, but gentle. Not limp,
like a wet noodle. Up and down,
for two to five seconds.)*

Quattlebaum chooses dance partners.
When she gets to you,
there are two girls left:

April, and a girl with chronic halitosis.
Guess who you get?
Yuck.

sample content of Booked

- [read Beyond the Pale of Vengeance pdf, azw \(kindle\)](#)
- [read Castle in the Air \(Howl's Castle Series, Book 2\)](#)
- [The Bernini Bust online](#)
- [download Prototype to Product: A Practical Guide for Getting to Market](#)
- [read The Nation \(May 27, 2013\)](#)

- <http://cambridgebrass.com/?freebooks/Beyond-the-Pale-of-Vengeance.pdf>
- <http://weddingcellist.com/lib/Cyber-Physical-Attacks--A-Growing-Invisible-Threat.pdf>
- <http://anvilpr.com/library/The-Bernini-Bust.pdf>
- <http://berttrotman.com/library/Love-Lies-Bleeding--China-Bayles--Book-6-.pdf>
- <http://flog.co.id/library/Getting-Started-with-Knockout-js-for--NET-Developers.pdf>