

A CCSS-aligned Text Set Companion for **COURAGE**



Courage is the story of a group of kids living on Chicago's south side who have to face real lives with real courage.

T'Shawn Rodgers is twelve and determined to join the swimming team as a diver. Most of all, he's determined to impress Carmela Rhodes, the hottest girl in the seventh grade (If you don't believe she is all that, just ask her.)

Overcoming his initial fear of diving off a board is easy. Managing his fears about the return of his older brother from prison is another issue. Once he worshiped Lamont. Lamont helped him deal with their father's death from cancer and encouraged him to be strong. But that was before his brother placed him in danger. Now, after having spent two years in prison, Lamont returns as a scary stranger.

Written by Barbara Binns
Harper Collins
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A series of thefts point a finger at his brother, but his own investigation leads him to believe Lamont might be innocent. But he isn't really sure he dares trust his heart and his brother when his friends feel sure Lamont is a menace. He has to protect his mother and sister, even if that means pushing his brother away. After lamont is gone, T'Shawn uncovers

he truth about his strange behavior, he's been helping other kids avoid his own mistakes. The discovery that one of his friends had been framing Lamont leads him to find the strength to apologize to his brother and beg him to come back into his life.

Barbara Binns is an African-American author of contemporary, multicultural stories, born and raised on Chicago's south side. As the eldest of five children, Barbara learned responsibility at an early age. Her eclectic career path includes work as a clinical chemist at the University of Chicago Hospitals, as a computer analyst for AT&T, and now as an author for her readers.

Her books for middle grade and young adult readers include Pull, Being God, and Courage. Her writing has won an Oregon 2010 Readers Choice award and was chosen for the 2012 YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers list. In addition to writing, she provides lectures and workshops to both experienced and aspiring authors of all ages. She finds writing for young people an exercise in self-discipline and the perfect follow-up to her life as an adoptive parent and cancer survivor. She now lives and writes in a suburb of Chicago.



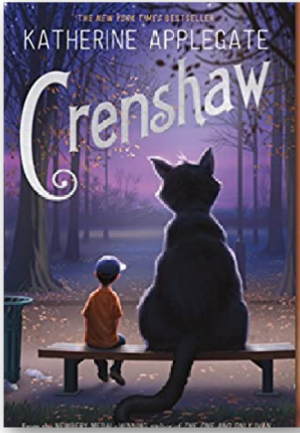
THEMATIC OVERVIEW

trust || forgiveness || empathy || betrayal || self-trust || logical thinking
sickle cell anemia || racial issues || authority || friendship || sports || diving || community
faith || empowerment || accountability || honesty || integrity

COMPREHENSION CONVERSATION

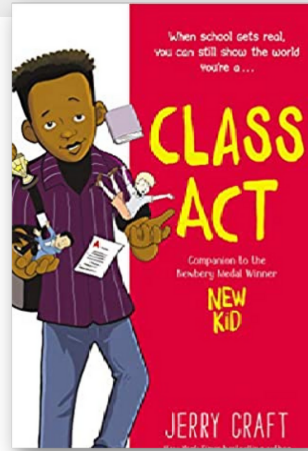
- COURAGE is similar to the biblical story called the Prodigal Son, in which a wayward young man returns home after a life of shameless indulgence. In COURAGE, T'Shawn must adjust to the return of his brother from prison. Determine how acts of forgiveness, courage, empathy, and understanding are needed to reestablish a loving family bond.
- In the story, T'Shawn supports a friend who has a debilitating illness -- sickle cell anemia. Some of the symptoms of this painful disease are fatigue, irritability, and swelling of hands and feet. What does T'Shawn's commitment to friendship reveal about his character? Explain your answer.

Fiction Pairing for COURAGE



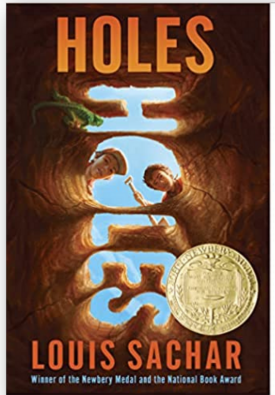
***Crenshaw* by Katherine Applegate**

Jackson and his family have fallen on hard times. Crenshaw is a cat. He's large, outspoken, and imaginary. He has come back into Jackson's life to help him. But is Crenshaw enough to save this family from losing everything?



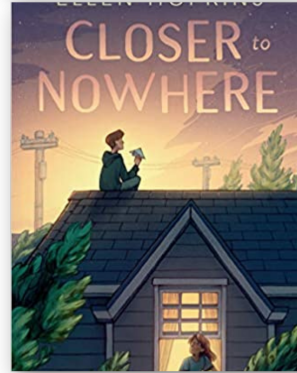
***Class Act* by Jerry Craft**

This time, it's Jordan's friend Drew who takes center stage in another laugh-out-loud funny, powerful, and important story about being one of the few kids of color in a prestigious private school. As the pressures mount, will he find a way to bridge the divide to help his friends to accept each other?



***Holes (Holes Series)* by Louis Sachar**

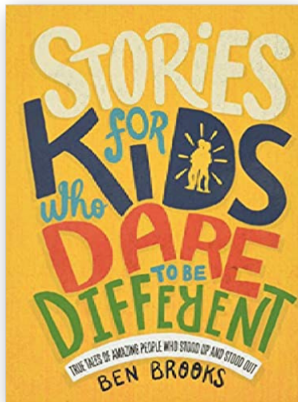
Stanley Yelnats, a kid who is under a curse. A curse that began with his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather and has since followed generations of Yelnats. Stanley tries to dig up the truth in this humorous tale of crime and punishment- and redemption.



***Closer to Nowhere* by Ellen Hopkins**

Told in verse from the alternating perspectives of Hannah and Cal, this is a story of two cousins who are more alike than they realize and the family they both want to save.

Non-fiction Pairing for COURAGE



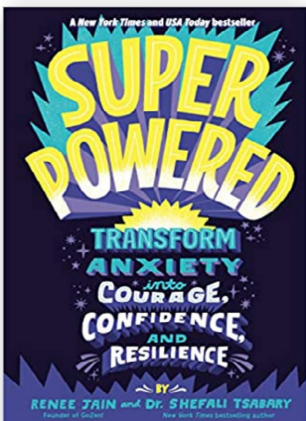
***Stories for Kids Who Dare to Be Different* by Ben Brooks**

Boys will be boys and girls will be girls - or so the saying goes. What if you've always dreamed of being a scientist but you can't see anyone who looks or sounds like you, and who has left a legacy - in the form of microscopes and Bunsen burners - for you to follow?



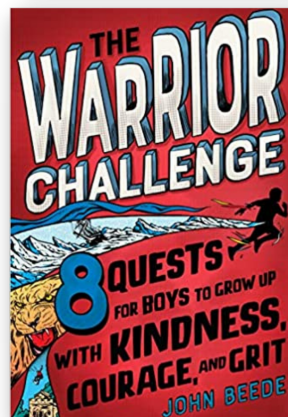
***Simone Manuel: Swimming Star (Women Sports Stars)* by Heather E. Schwartz**

Simone Manuel is one of the country's best female athletes. Learn about her childhood, the challenges she has overcome, and this swimmer's greatest accomplishments. Get the inside scoop on gold-medal-winning Olympic appearance.



***Superpowered: Transform Anxiety into Courage, Confidence, and Resilience* by Renee Jain**

Now more than ever, kids need to feel empowered as they work through anxiety, overwhelm, and uncertainty brought on by the world around them. SUPERPOWERED will be embraced by every kid with insecurities, worries, and anxious thoughts.



***The Warrior Challenge: 8 Quests for Boys to Grow Up with Kindness, Courage, and Grit* by John Beede**

A revolutionary and must-have book for boys! This action-packed, illustrated guide teaches boys to develop much-needed skills around empathy and vulnerability as they grow into self-aware, wonderful men.

