

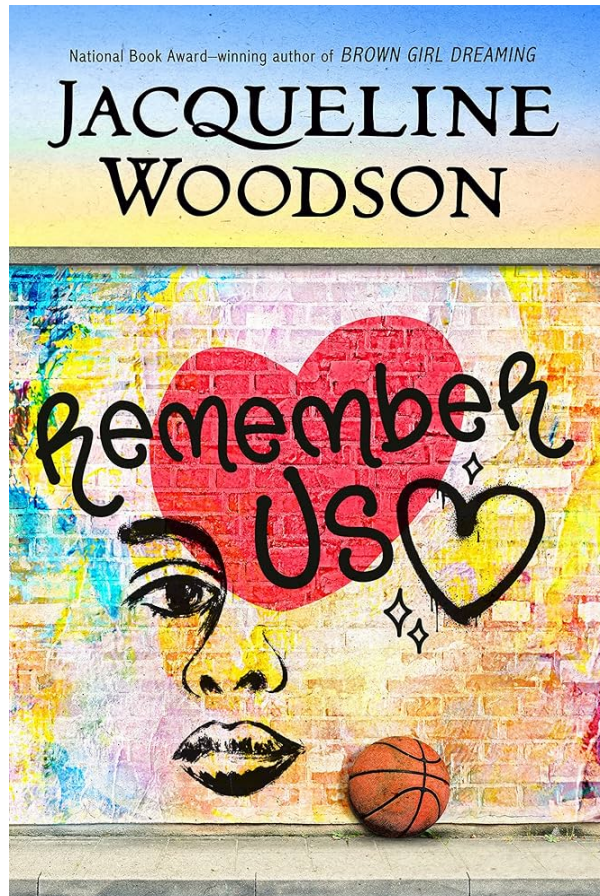
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JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION

Review of *Remember Us* Written by Jacqueline Woodson

Educator Reviewer: Angie Prophet, Instructional Coach ELA/SS

Student Reviewer: Letao Li, 5th grade student



Jacqueline, W. (2023). *Remember Us*. Penguin Random House LCC.

ISBN: 9780399545467

Adult Review:

As a middle schooler playing basketball with mostly boys, the question “What kind of girl are you?” always lingered in the back of my mind. Sadly, this was all too common as there were hardly any teams for girls. This book really resonated with me because it reminded me of the passion I had for the game, while also acknowledging the heartbreak of feeling like I couldn’t pursue it. Every girl who plays sports has experienced a moment where they’re told it’s “not what girls do.” I recall distinctly when that moment came for me, and like Sage in the story, I too thought about abandoning basketball altogether. It’s unfortunate that many girls stop playing sports between the ages of 10-13, but this book serves as a powerful reminder that sports are important for everyone, regardless of gender.

While this text provides an excellent example of life in New York City during the 1970s, education should be aware of the potential impact this could have on students who live in apartment buildings that are prone to the dangers of fire. There is also a traumatic death of a young child due to fire and the tragic loss of a firefighter parent. It is also important for educators to consider the impact that this story could have on girls who play sports. Many girls stop participating in sports due to experiences like the story.

Student Review:

Remember Us by Jacqueline Woodson is a historical fiction about how one year in New York City’s Bushwick, Brooklyn, all the buildings were burning down. Especially the buildings on Palmetto Street, a street that an African-American girl named Sage used to play on. In this year, Sage met the first kid that ever truly understood her, whose name was Freddy. Sage excelled at playing basketball, yet she was unsure whether she should play with boys or girls. Some people thought Sage couldn’t play with boys and that Sage should be more like a girl, but Freddy always had her back and cared about her. Sage had a huge year of changes, and at the end of the book, she moved away from the fires, met new friends, and left with Bushwick being part of “the once was.”

I love Remember Us because of its poetic writing and powerful plot. When I was reading, it took me to the past and I worried about what would happen next to Sage. It was further a reminder of my own memories of self-doubt and uncertainty. It helped me make connections. I think Remember Us by Jacqueline Woodson is a masterpiece.