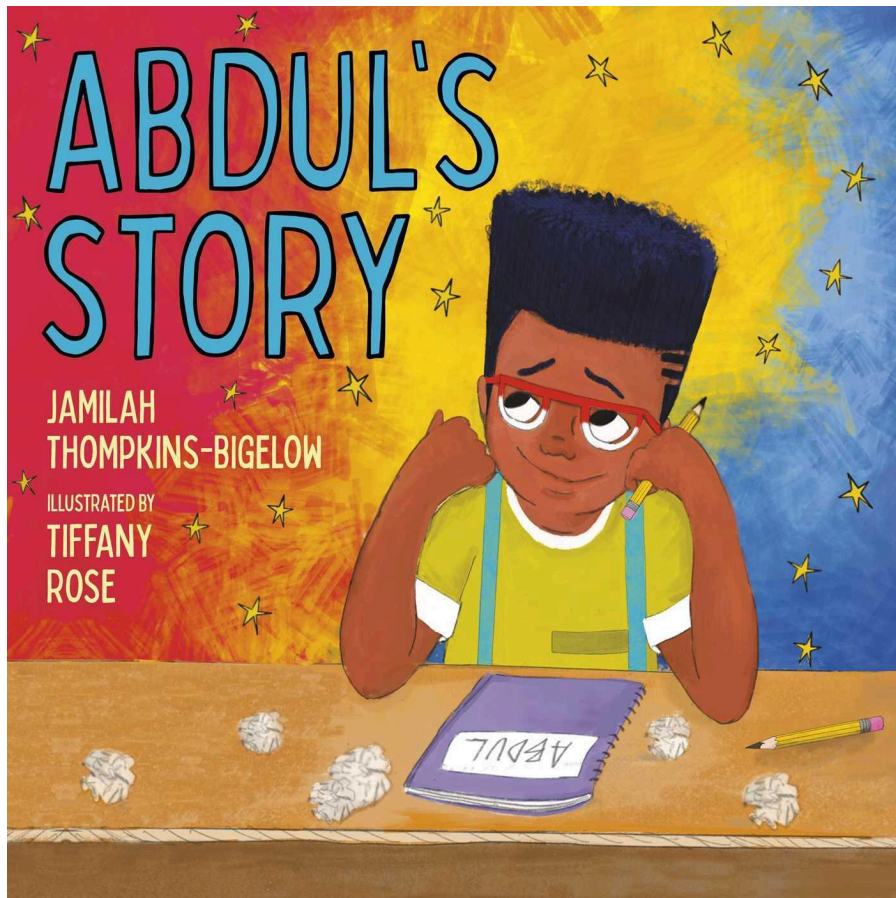


JOLLE@UGA[®]

JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION

Review of *Abdul's Story* Written by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow

Adult/ Educator Reviewer: Bataul Alkhateeb, Learning Sciences Graduate Student
Child/ Student Reviewer: Ghanim Khalfani, Kindergarten Student



Thompkins-Bigelow, J. (2022). *Abdul's Story*. Simon & Schuster
ISBN: 9781534462984

Adult's Review:

Abdul's Story is a tale of a young boy named Abdul who struggles with spelling, much like any student his age. He writes, erases, and repeats this cycle until his paper becomes full of smudges, rips, and tears. Feeling defeated, he eventually gives up, questioning, "What was the point?" - The stories *he* told, the people *he* met, and the places *he* visited were not in any books he's read. One day, Mr. Muhammed visited Abdul's writing class. Mr. Muhammed became a source of inspiration and encouragement for Abdul, who decided to take a chance and embrace storytelling again. Abdul jotted down ideas that turned into words, sentences, paragraphs, and eventually, a story. Mr. Muhammed read Abdul's story to the class. His classmates embraced him with smiles and applause- Abdul finally felt like he was a writer and that his words were valued.

Abdul's Story infuses culture, community, and storytelling through an emotional journey full of hope. Abdul's experience reminded me of my childhood. It was rare to find books in our school and local public libraries that were representative of different cultures, communities, and religious practices. I remember the first time my siblings and I found a picture book with a woman wearing a hijab in the young adult section of our local public library. We embraced each other in excitement, but we didn't know that would be the only book of its kind for a long time! *Abdul's Story* is meaningful because it offers a platform to discuss diversity, community, identity, and belonging in the classroom. It is also symbolic of success for all readers who battle insecurities, desire representation, and aim high. This book is truly a valuable piece of literature for educators and parents because of its power to serve as a culturally responsive tool. Educators may want to read this book ahead of time and learn how to pronounce the names of the characters and some of the Arabic words used in the book. The author's note provides context for the story that is truly useful!

Student's Review:

This book is important because Abdul is so cool. He has nice hair and shoes like me. If you're a kid like me, you should read this book! It is hard to spell, but I liked that Abdul tried hard. If you sound out the word, it makes it easier to write it. I didn't like when Abdul decided to give up because I wanted to know what his story was about. I also make mistakes when I write in my notebook, but I just keep trying or I ask for help. It is so fun to make up stories about heroes like Abdul.

