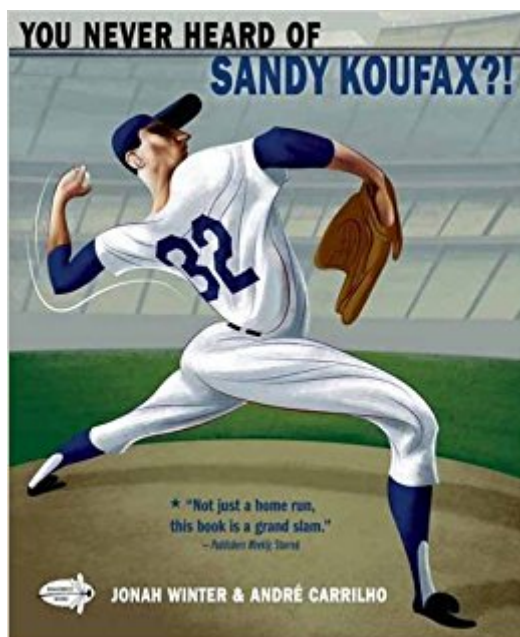


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You Never Heard Of Sandy Koufax?!



Synopsis

In this striking picture book biography, an old-timer tells us what made Sandy Koufax such an amazing baseball player. We learn that the beginning of his career with the Brooklyn Dodgers was rocky, that he was shy with his teammates, and experienced discrimination as one of the only Jews in the game. We hear that he actually quit, only to return the next season firing one rocket after another over the plate. We watch him refuse to play in the 1965 World Series because it is a Jewish high holy day. And we see him in pain because of an overused left arm, eventually retiring at the peak of his career. Finally, we are told that people are still scratching their heads over Sandy, who remains a modest hero and a mystery to this day. Accompanied by sidebars filled with statistics, this Parents Magazine Best Book of the Year and Booklist Top of the List is sure to delight budding baseball fans.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0830 (What's this?)

Paperback: 40 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 17 customer reviews

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Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. The huge lenticular cover image of pitcher Sandy Koufax in action makes this book hard to ignore; Winter's fan-in-the-stands-style prose and Carrilho's high-impact, editorial-style images make it hard to forget. Neither author nor artist explain the famously self-contained 1960s

Dodgers pitcher (Just when you were startin' to understand him, he'd haul off and throw you a curve, says the anonymous former teammate who serves as narrator). Instead, they capture what it feels like to be in the presence of an exemplary athlete. The obstacles that Sandy Koufax faced—physical limitations; anti-Semitism (Some of the guys said some pretty lousy things behind his back—things I can't repeat)—are portrayed with zero sentiment; readers will root for Koufax because he is an engine of pure action. Debut artist Carrilho, offering texturally complex, digitally manipulated pencil drawings, has a bold, arresting aesthetic: while his harsh shadows, distorted perspectives and angular faces speak of a hardboiled reality, the baseball field itself is a storied place, rendered not in green but gold. Koufax becomes a figure of totemic strength, his eyes narrowing to black slits underneath bushy eyebrows, his body twisting as he delivers the perfect pitch. Not just a home run, this book is a grand slam. Ages 4–9. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review. Grade 1–5—This picture-book biography of a pitching ace is a real treat. Much about this private man has been a mystery, so Winter focuses on how the gifted young athlete went from unpredictable to otherworldly in such a short time. Koufax spent his early years with the Brooklyn Dodgers, where he was either warming the bench or walking batters. The team moved to Los Angeles in 1957, and it wasn't until 1961 that he learned to control his pitch. He then proceeded to flummox opposing hitters until 1966, when he unexpectedly retired. The unnamed narrator, a teammate who speaks in the vernacular of an old-timer, greatly influences the voice of the book: readers can hear the spit of sunflower seeds between the lines. That Koufax was a Jew playing baseball at a time when the game was still deeply segregated is mentioned and honored, particularly with the anecdote of how he gave up his spot in the World Series rotation to observe a High Holy Day. Carrilho's caricature style is reminiscent of Al Hirschfeld's work, exaggerating everything that is beautiful and unknown about Koufax, from his extraordinarily athletic body to his private mystique. The graphite illustrations, enhanced via Photoshop, are dominated by golds, grays, and, of course, Dodger blue. While the author never offers an explanation for his subject's metamorphosis, that it should be hailed and remembered is never in doubt. This striking book deserves a wide audience.—Kara Schaff Dean, Walpole Public Library, MA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As a born and raised Brooklyn Dodger fan who whose family actually moved from New York to Los Angeles the same year as the Dodgers and being Jewish Sandy Koufax was one of my idols. He not only became the greatest pitcher in all of baseball during my lifetime but he was an unmatched Jewish role model. When Sandy wouldn't pitch in the biggest games of the year if they fell on the High Holidays (Rosh Hashanah as well as Yom Kippur) it was a lesson to all Jewish youth. As I was a pitcher myself with good success in Little League Babe Ruth League American Legion as a young teenager one of my big games fell on the High Holidays. Being young and unworldly I started to say I should be allowed to pitch but my tough little Brooklyn Mother (I am 62) snarled at me and said: "IF IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR KOUFAX IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU!!! YOU AIN'T PITCHING!" To this day fifty years later I'm glad my Mom said what she said. (Note: Full disclosure: There was one more word in my Mother's declaration that I'm leaving out to make sure that my review makes it past the censors!) This elegantly designed short "children's book" presents Sandy's story from start to finish and in a very easy to read format tells of Sandy's rise from a young bonus-baby whose fastball could beat an intercontinental ballistic missile in a race but couldn't hit the side of a barn from 60-feet-six-inches away to his having the greatest consecutive five-year pitching string in the history of Major League Baseball. Being that my oldest Granddaughter is ten-years-old my son and I have been discussing the best most sensitive way to discuss with her and prepare her for the anti-Semitism that has existed and continues to exist in the world today. When I came across this book and saw that it handles it in such a gentle way I immediately saw that combining our families love for the Dodgers and my Granddaughter's love of baseball and the Dodgers that this book would be a perfect starting point to ease it into her growing life-view. Being that I was born in Brooklyn and my Grandkids have made comments

about my accent (hey whatcha tawking about accent?) and the fact that the book is narrated with a Brooklyn accent makes it near perfect for my son and his goals. Also since I'm an old-time-old-school-stat-freak there are also just enough statistics lightly sprinkled throughout to be able to make verifiable points that my Granddaughter will be able to use down the road when the inevitable unavoidable baseball arguments with the "enemy" come up. There are no actual pictures in the book just what I would describe as large "pop art" drawings that help to give a unique feel to a very unique overall package. I am very grateful that I came across this distinctive book. As I finish writing this review I'm trying to think of something special to write to my Granddaughter on the inside cover as I can only hope that this book will one day be shared with her children.

I am a huge Koufax fan and was looking forward to this book because of the positive reviews. But it is odd, and not in such a good way. The drawings are unusual, and not in such a good way. Abstract, but not successfully so. And the text is just so-so. I wish it were otherwise. There is a feel for Koufax's gentleness in some of the text, but the artwork makes him appear to be a brute.

There aren't that many baseball books in print for kids. I got this for my 9 year old grandson, who is a pitcher. I'm sure he'll like it. I'm just grateful there is anything out there.

My son is a lefty. He really enjoyed reading this book about a left-handed pitcher. It got him excited to start his baseball season!

great book and in fine condition as was stated by the seller- most pleased with the purchase

grandson loved it

Nothing great, just ok. More of a child's book.

This book is pathetic. Turns out it's a "Picture Book Biography." With no actual pictures. Or photographs anyway. Just lousy cartoons. Claims to have all of 40 pages but I'm dubious. (They're not numbered.) With one (brief) huge-print paragraph per page. Period. I should have looked more closely before buying. It's for age ranges four through eight. If you're any older (and I mean ANY older), don't waste your money. Buy the Jane Leavy book instead. It's brilliant. Unlike this turkey. I certainly wouldn't risk giving it to any eight-year-old I know...

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