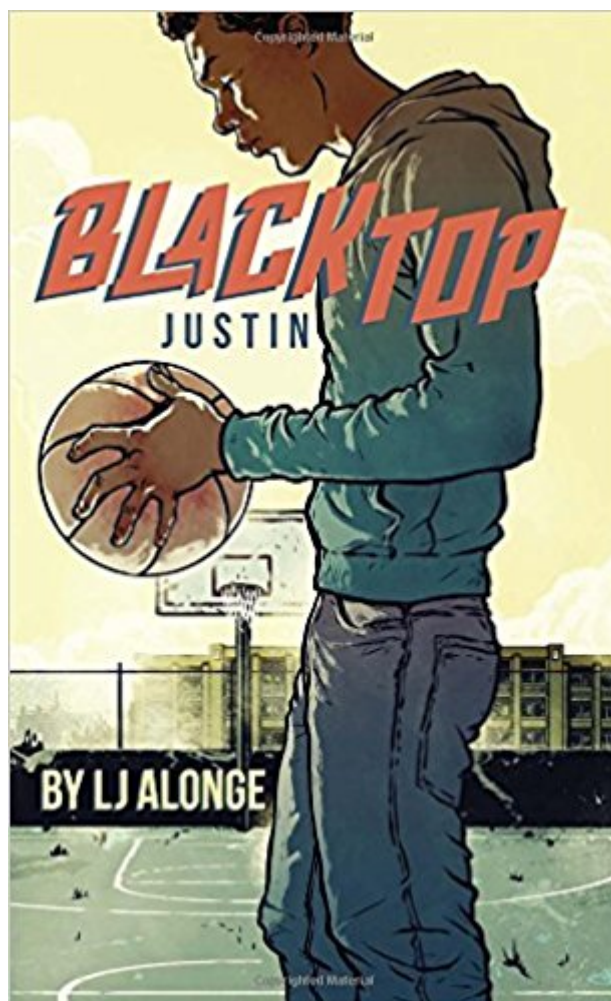


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## Justin #1 (Blacktop)



## Synopsis

An action-packed basketball series from author LJ Alonge set on the courts of Oakland, CA. Justin has a list of goals stashed under his mattress. Number 1 is "figure out life plans." Number 5 is "earn Zen Master rating in WoW." Nowhere on that list is "play the crew from Ghosttown," but that's the type of trouble that always seems to find him. The debut title from LJ Alonge's new basketball series pulses with action on and off the court. With wit, humor, and honesty, Justin unfolds over one hot summer.

## Book Information

Series: Blacktop (Book 1)

Mass Market Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: Grosset & Dunlap (June 7, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1101995629

ISBN-13: 978-1101995624

Product Dimensions: 4.1 x 0.4 x 6.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #206,595 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #33 in Books > Teens >

Literature & Fiction > Sports > Basketball

## Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up Justin is having a tough summer in his gritty Oakland neighborhood. In order to distance himself from his alcoholic father and his boring stepfather, he has a list of goals for himself but is torn between his love of video games and literature and his desire to fit in with the other teens in his neighborhood. When Justin's attempt to earn points with the local gang by vandalizing a store ends poorly, his friend Frank decides that the two can prove themselves by defending the neighborhood basketball court against the rival Ghosttown players. They find enough misfit members to make a team, and Justin discovers that even though he hasn't achieved his goals, he has made progress toward them. This is a quick read with uncomplicated prose, and the basketball descriptions, as well as the theme of identity, will resonate with readers who are interested in urban fiction. Justin isn't caught for setting the store on fire, and he doesn't experience any guilt over destroying his friend's livelihood, which is disturbing, and the anachronistic use of the term Negro is confusing. VERDICT While the short length and cover illustration make this seem appropriate for a

younger audience, the situations and coarse language make this a better purchase for high school libraries with struggling or reluctant readers. —Karen Yingling, Blendon Middle School, Westerville, OH --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

"A winning combination of interest and approachability. Debut author Alonge writes with nimbleness and insight, and Justin's narration is leavened with shrewd, rueful observations and quick turns of phrase." (Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, \*STARRED REVIEW\*) —"The brief novel is both a satisfying basketball story and an African-American boy's first-person account of finding his way in the world... debut author Alonge plays the game just right." (Kirkus Reviews) —"A coming-of-age story with hard edges and heart." (Publisher's Weekly) "This gritty series-starter follows African American fifteen-year-old Justin through Oakland, where he and friends learn to scheme and swindle... Accessible prose (with profanity) and fast-paced action make this suited to older reluctant readers." (Horn Book Guide Reviews)

As a teacher in an urban school, working with at-risk students, this is one book that they read without complaints. It works for my students on so many levels - characters and dialogue that they understand and relate to, not too much exposition, and believable situations and outcomes. The response to this book has been so positive that we ordered all the books in the series.

Alonge has made a thoughtful and powerful read. He's not interested in grand proclamations -- the power is in the details. In Justin clumsily finding his way. I'm so excited to read the rest of these books and to see more from this author.

Great book for my son..

Grandkids love it, another great purchase!

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