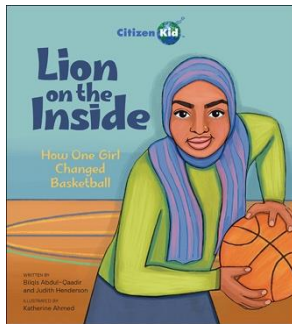


**PUBLICATION DATE**  
**September 05, 2023**

**Meet basketball star Bilqis Abdul-Qadir and co-author Judith Henderson**  
**June 23-24 at the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference**  
**signing limited advance copies of LION ON THE INSIDE**

**McCormick Place | Saturday June 24 | 11:00 AM | Booth 3929**

## **Lion on the Inside: How One Girl Changed Basketball**



A Muslim American basketball star is forced to make a difficult choice in this true story about breaking barriers.

Bilqis was born to play basketball. At three, she has her own hoop. By seventeen, she's the star of her varsity team and soon headed to college on a full scholarship, where she will be the first woman to play in a hijab in NCAA history. She is even invited to play basketball with President Obama at the White House. But at key points in her basketball career Bilqis faces rules that require her to choose between her Muslim faith and playing on the court. When international headgear regulations force her to make the heartbreaking decision to give up the game, Bilqis leads a full-court press to have the rule reversed, advocating for Muslim girls and all girls and women in sport.

A modern hero: kids will be thrilled by her skill and inspired by her conviction.

**Bilqis Abdul-Qadir** first picked up a basketball at the age of three, and she's been playing ever since. Living in a practicing-Muslim household, Bilqis followed her religious beliefs and began wearing a hijab, a traditional head covering for Muslim women, and practiced modesty on the court by covering all skin except her hands. Bilqis had a very successful high school career, scoring over 3000 points and breaking both men's and women's scoring records in Massachusetts and went on to be the first player to wear a hijab in the NCAA. But the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) rule prohibiting headgear larger than five inches ended her dream to play professionally. Unwilling to play without her hijab, Bilqis chose faith over basketball and became an advocate. Working alongside other Muslim players, Bilqis raised her voice for the next generation and effectively forced FIBA to lift the ban. Bilqis now works to pave the way for other Muslim women in sports. She and her family live in Memphis.

**Judith Henderson** does a lot of stuff. She is an author, an Emmy Award-winning composer, and wrote the theme song for the PBS show, *Arthur*. She is a TV producer, and she also illustrates. Judith's three-book series *Big Words Small Stories* is now airing as an animated series. Her other books include *Dee and Apostrofee*, *AAAlligator!* and *This Is a Dog Book!* Judith has several new books which will be published in 2023 and 2024, including *Willa and Wade* the series and *Lion on*

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# Media Release

**PUBLICATION DATE**  
**September 05, 2023**

*the Inside*. Judith lives in Montreal, Quebec.

**Katherine Ahmed** Katherine Ahmed was born and raised in New York and converted to the Muslim faith as a teenager. She attended an arts high school in Florida and earned a BA at The New School. Before launching her career as an illustrator, Katherine was the manager of a multicultural Muslim Sunday School in New York City. In 2021, she was awarded the We Need Diverse Books illustration mentorship. Katherine was a contributing illustrator to *The Reading Adventure and Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls: 100 Inspiring Young Changemakers*, and has had her work published in *Cricket* magazine. *Lion on the Inside* is her first picture book. Katherine lives in New Jersey with her husband and two daughters.

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**For more information, please contact Michaela Cornell at 416-479-6766**  
**Please send reviews or mentions to [mcornell@kidscan.com](mailto:mcornell@kidscan.com)**

***Lion on the Inside***

**Written by Bilqis Abdul-Qadir with Judith Henderson; illustrated by Katherine Ahmed**

**Ages: 5 – 8 / Grades: K – 2**

**9" x 10" / 40 pages / © 2023**

**ISBN: 978-1-5253-1003-4 HCJ**

**\$21.99 CAN / \$19.99 US**

**Publication Date: September 05, 2023**

**Bilqis Abdul-Qadir, along with co-author Judith Henderson, will be in Chicago June 23-24 at the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference to sign limited advance copies of LION ON THE INSIDE. Bilqis and Judith (or Bilqis on her own) are available for media Friday June 23 and Saturday June 24.**

**Signing for ALA attendees**  
**McCormick Place | Saturday June 24 | 11:00 AM**

