

READER'S GUIDE

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The Library Mule of Córdoba (Ablaze)



While set in 976 AD, readers will find many parallels to discuss between modern day book bans and the events depicted in the story. The adventurous tale is icing on the cake!

CREATORS: Wilfrid Lupano and Leonard Chemineau

ABOUT: A 2024 Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection. A fable of what happens when saving the world's books from destruction depends on the worst mule in history. The night before the biggest bonfire ever, the head librarian, a chubby eunuch named Tarid, gathers up all the books he can and loads them onto the back of a passing mule. He takes off in the hopes of saving what he can of universal knowledge in a madcap adventure: crossing nearly all of Spain with mercenaries in hot pursuit!

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“This comical yet poignant reimaging of a dark episode in Iberian history finds a trio of commoners—a thief and two slaves—partnering up with a stubborn mule to save the world’s greatest collection of books.... Gorgeously illustrated in colors that bring alive the majesty and danger of Andalusia’s golden age, The Library Mule of Córdoba makes a powerful statement on the importance of protecting knowledge in times of political upheaval, a point emphasized in a haunting coda that traces the continuing history of book burning throughout the world.” —Booklist, 2024



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In your opinion, why are Tarid and Lubna so motivated to risk everything to save the books?
2. How are censorship and the need to preserve knowledge reflected in our current society?
3. *The Library Mule of Córdoba* explores the value of sharing stories from written and oral traditions. Explore and discuss how this has personally affected your life, and what knowledge you have gained from a specific story.
4. What might the mule symbolize in the story? What elements of the mule’s behavior add to the narrative?
5. How does Chemineau add depth to the story through his artwork? Would it be as effective as a prose novel instead?

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—SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

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