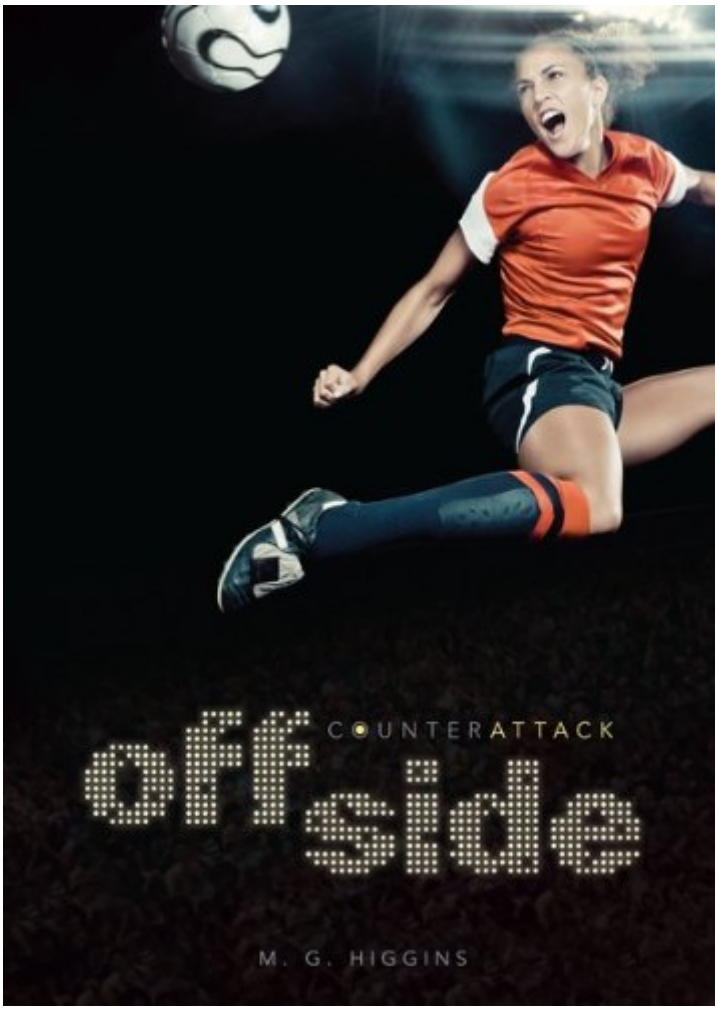
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# Offside (Counterattack)




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## Synopsis

Between finishing late school projects and looking after her brothers and sister, Faith Patel barely has time to play soccer. And when she's at practice, surrounded by girls who can afford to play in club leagues, she doesn't even feel like part of the team. So when Coach Berg starts to give Faith extra attention, she feels . . . really special. It might be crazy, but suddenly Faith has a crush on her coach. Can she keep her head in the game? The situation gets worse after Faith's frenemy Caitlyn decides that Faith's getting special treatment. Will Caitlyn tell the rest of the teamÃ¢â ¬â •and make Faith into a total outcast?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I get the feeling this book is geared to female, middle school age, reluctant readers. Since I am only one of those things, it just didn't appeal to me.For starters, I hate novellas. I see a true art in crafting a short story since you only have a few pages to tell a captivating tale. But books that get published in the 100 page arena just seem lazy to me. The author wasn't driven or skilled enough to craft a deeper more complex story.And this book rings true to that. It felt like watching a ABC Family

sitcom. Short, rushed, and the drama was so overacted. The handling of the teacher/student romance topic was done at a very 12 year old level. All of Faith’s thoughts and reactions were exactly like a pubescent girl. I’m sorry but having her have the occasional daydream about college doesn’t make her seem any older than 12.And the cover design drives me insane. I know "whitewashing" is one of the most prevalent things in YA cover art but this is just sad. Because it’s like they really tried to find a slightly tan model to portray the very Indian main character. But still had to find the most white looking quasi-tan girl they could. Why do publishers think this will make a book more appealing? I’m brown and I read A LOT! I would like to see someone who looks like me on the cover of a book every once in a while.All in all, Offside was a pretty big miss for me :(

Faith Patel may only be an average soccer player--practically a benchwarmer for the Fraser High Copperheads--but it’s something she loves. More importantly, it’s one of her few refuges from the constant pressure of family and academics. Torn between her responsibilities to her younger siblings, and her mother’s insistence that she get the grades needed to get into a good school, she has to fight for the chance to play soccer, to take a little something just for herself. Worse, her obligations prevent her from having a social life, and she afford the time and money needed to pay on club teams like many of her teammates, further setting her apart.Things get complicated when she develops a crush on her coach after he shows an interest in her wellbeing. Now Faith has to worry about what to do, how to approach the older man. Is it all in her head, or is there a real spark? And when one of her teammates finds out, will everything come tumbling down?Offside is a strong, if fairly to-the-point, story about warring obligations and inappropriate crushes. Faith’s predicament is honest, believable, and just a little painful, as we see the desperate-for-a-break, stressed-from-all-sides young woman get caught between dutiful daughter and sister, and teenager in need of stress relief. It’s easy to identify with her yearnings, confusion, and desires.However, the short nature of this book seems to keep the storylines from really going anywhere. What could have been a powerful way to explore the power dynamics between teen and adult, athlete and coach, fizzles, primarily present only in Faith’s mind. Coach Berg is pretty much an unknowing participant in the plotline, and we never get to see just what he thinks, or how he’d react. Likewise, the issue with Faith’s teammate and the potential blackmail/troublemaking also stays fairly mild, never going anywhere. While I’m definitely not advocating that the author take up what could be an intensely controversial or volatile issue, the fact remains that the storyline seemed ready to steam right into those troubled waters, before veering off into safe territory. Sadly, this book just doesn’t seem to reach its full potential, possibly due to its relative brevity, or an inability or unwillingness to push the

boundaries.Despite these shortcomings, Offside is a well-written story, with realistic characters and believable situations, featuring the sort of problems teens can undoubtedly relate to. While the storyline revolves around high school varsity girls' soccer, detail-rich and featuring numerous scenes set on and off the field, it still touches on universal themes. At just over 100 pages long, it's little more than an appetizer for some readers, but it might just be the right size to read on the bus after a game. The diverse characters and positive message, straight-forward without being heavy-handed, make this a worthwhile read. While not as strong as others I've seen in the series, it definitely has an appeal and a charm unto itself.

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to Lerner Publishing Group and Netgalley.)All Faith Patel wants to do is play Soccer (or football to us British peeps), but most of her time is spent looking after her younger sister and brothers, as her mum works nights as a nurse and her father is dead.When her coach suggests she play midfield rather than defence, she jumps at the opportunity, but another girl on the team (Caitlyn) is jealous and starts suggesting that maybe the coach is being nice to Faith because they are having some kind of affair.This is totally untrue, but the more Caitlyn keeps suggesting it, the more Faith wonders if maybe the coach does have more than professional feelings towards her, and starts to develop a bit of a crush. She then somehow convinces herself that what Caitlyn is saying is true ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ Faith and Coach Berg are in love, so she tries to make a pass at him!What will become of Faith and Coach Berg?This book was a quick read, and totally reminded me of the film ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœBend it like BeckhamÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ about the Indian girl who wanted to play football/soccer. ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœBend it like BeckhamÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ wasnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t quite so cringe-worthy though.I found Faith a little odd to be honest. If someone had suggested that I was having an affair with a teacher, I would have then avoided him like the plague, not developed a crush, and when she then started wearing lip gloss and mascara to football practise, I have to admit that I cringed a bit.When she then started thinking about ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã ËœbeingÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ with him, and asking him about what cologne he was wearing, I just couldnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t believe it, it seemed so wrong, and when she actually tried to convince herself that they were in love, and tried to get him to kiss her, I actually had to close my eyes and hide!What made this even worse was that to me it was obvious that the coach didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t have feelings for her. I was a little shocked at how stupid the coach was portrayed to be when he accepted FaithÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s help doing some counting of sports equipment though early on in the book. He allowed her to help him take inventory of equipment

when they were alone together. I canÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t imagine that in this day and age any male teacher would allow himself to be alone with a female pupil un-chaperoned, as any allegation of any sexual harassment of any type would most likely immediately end his career, even if proved to be false.Overall; this book was short, made me cringe, and made me laugh (and not in a good way).5 out of 10.

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