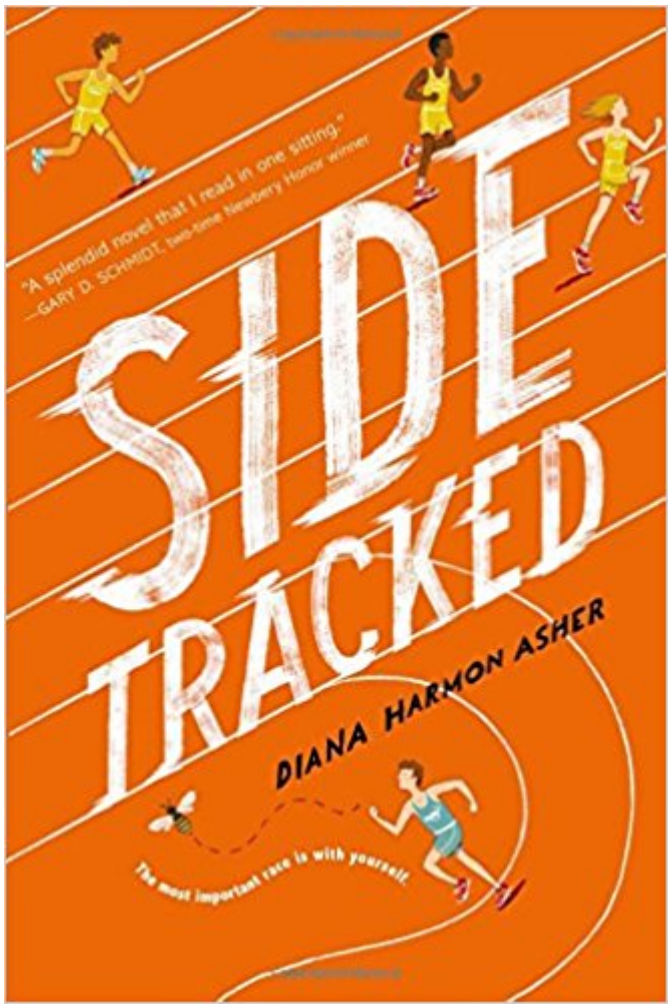
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Sidetracked



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Synopsis

If middle school were a race, Joseph Friedman wouldnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t even be in last placeÃ¢â ¬â •heÃ¢â ¬â„¢d be on the sidelines. With an overactive mind and phobias of everything from hard-boiled eggs to gargoyles, he struggles to understand his classes, let alone his fellow classmates. So he spends most of his time avoiding school bully Charlie Kastner and hiding out in the Resource Room, a safe place for misfit kids like him. But then, on the first day of seventh grade, two important things happen. First, his Resource Room teacher encourages (i.e., practically forces) him to join the school track team, and second, he meets Heather, a crazy-fast runner who isnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t going to be pushed around by Charlie Kastner or anybody else. With a new friend and a new team, Joseph finds himself off the sidelines and in the race (quite literally) for the first time. Is he a good runner? Well, no, heÃ¢â ¬â„¢s terrible. But the funny thing about running is, once you're in the race, anything can happen.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

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Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.9 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #46,539 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 inÃ Â Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Track & Field #97 inÃ Â Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Special Needs #116 inÃ Â Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Bullies

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

"Joseph's first-person voice is fresh and authentic, and his character arc is immensely satisfying." (Kirkus)"The characters in AsherÃ¢â ¬â„¢s debut novel are likable and approachable, and the story is absorbing and moves quickly. Readers will root for Joseph and his new teammates." (School Library Journal)"They come to count on each other as they race for the same

goal: doing their personal best...natural-sounding narrative with a good amount of humor." (The Horn Book)"An entertaining mix of events, conversations, anxieties, and reflections, JosephÃ¢ ¬â„¢s first-person narrative engages readers on page one and never lets up...Justice is sweet when bullies get their comeuppance in this rewarding first novel." (Booklist)"Asher is honest about the ways in which JosephÃ¢ ¬â„¢s condition sometimes affects his performance at school, but sheÃ¢ ¬â„¢s also attentive to how his sensitivities enable him to experience his environmentÃ¢ ¬â •the feel of the squishy new track surface, the air rushing past him when he runs, the colors of the woods along the course." (Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books)

Diana Harmon Asher is the mother of three sons and is deeply immersed in reading and writing programs at the nonprofit organization the ChildrenÃ¢ ¬â„¢s Village and at Blythdale ChildrenÃ¢ ¬â„¢s Hospital, both in Westchester, New York. This is her debut novel. Ã Â

What a terrific book this is. I loved the characters and I loved the writing. The book's funny and touching and, with the author's light touch, I got to learn about running. I wonder if Diana Harmon Asher has more stories to tell about Joseph, Heather et al. I would definitely want to read them...or any other book she writes.

There are those who fit right in at school, who make friends easily and understand all the rules, who have no trouble paying attention in class and following directions. And then there are the rest of us. Joseph Friedman is one of us. Small compared to the other seventh graders, slow and unathletic, struggling with attention and sensory issues, Joseph knows what it is to feel lost, to miss out on a teacher's instructions, and to be bullied. However, he is not without help. Joseph has a supportive family, and at school he has access to a Resource Room, a place where he can go to catch his breath, quell his anxieties, and reset his ADD brain when he needs to. In the Resource Room, he has Mrs. T., a teacher who gets what it's like for these kids in school. And if that's not enough, in P.E. class (Joseph's least favorite), he finds help in a surprising place. Just as bully Charlie Kastner is charging at him with a soccer ball, a new kid--a girl even--deftly cuts Charlie off and steals the ball, heading toward the goal. When Joseph finally gets to talk to the new girl, he finds out that she is named Heather, she is far taller than he expected, she is smart, and she wants to be a track star. Fortunately for them both, Mrs. T. has decided to start a track team, and even though Joseph is not fast, this offers him an opportunity to be part of something bigger than himself. I am big fan of middle grade books done well, and Diana Harmon Asher's Sidetracked nails it. The novel, her first,

is told in first person through Joseph's entertaining voice, and that makes for an absolutely charming story. Honest about the struggles of being in seventh grade, of being ADD, of being bullied, Sidetracked shows readers how to deal with life's challenges with humor and grace. I would recommend this to readers of all ages who find themselves struggling to feel like they fit in. Joseph and Heather's individual struggles to find their places, to find success in a hostile environment, to find what makes them special is something that everyone can relate to. And the fact that it's a lovely story with such fantastic characters just makes it that much better. Don't get sidetracked (sorry! sort of) from reading this book! Galleys for Sidetracked were provided by Amulet Books/ABRAMS Kids through NetGalley.com, with many thanks.

Thank you to the @kidlitexchange for providing this book to review. All opinions are my own.Joseph Friedman is a middle-school boy who tends to get picked on a lot. He's small, not athletic, and a resource room member with ADD. He loves his teacher, Mrs. T, who encourages him to go out for the new cross country team. Joseph then meets new girl Heather. She is tough, tall, and the probably the best athlete at the school. Together, the two develop a friendship that helps both of them blossom.I think my favorite thing about this book is that the main character, Joseph, was an outcast for the opposite reasons his new-found friend, Heather, was an outcast. Both did not follow the typical gender stereotypes. Middle-school is tough, especially when you are different from the norm. This book is a must-read for any middle schooler. It gets the point across that it is okay to be YOU!!

I adored this book! The main characters are endearing and their journey felt genuine - the struggles and the triumphs. Everything clicked for me in this book - the story, the kids, the adults, the things that were resolved and the things that weren't.I received an electronic review copy of this book in exchange for a honest review.

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