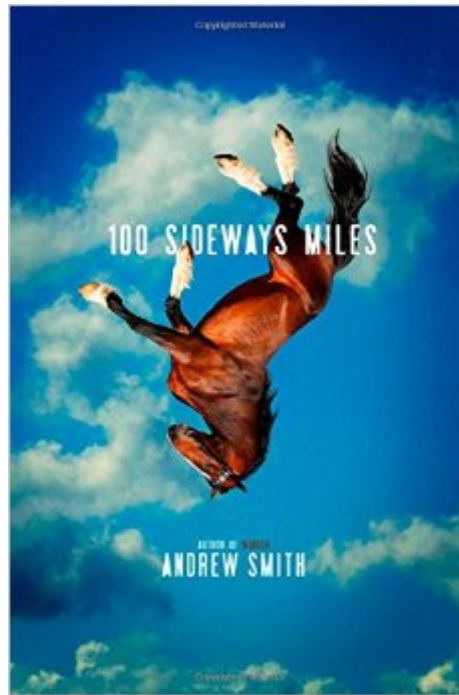


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100 Sideways Miles



Synopsis

Destiny takes a detour in this heartbreakingly hilarious novel with five starred reviews, from the acclaimed author of *Winger*, which Kirkus Reviews called “smart and wickedly funny.” Finn Easton sees the world through miles instead of minutes. It’s how he makes sense of the world, and how he tries to convince himself that he’s a real boy and not just a character in his father’s bestselling cult-classic book. Finn has two things going for him: his best friend, the possibly-insane-but-definitely-excellent Cade Hernandez, and Julia Bishop, the first girl he’s ever loved. Then Julia moves away, and Finn is heartbroken. Feeling restless and trapped in the book, Finn embarks on a road trip with Cade to visit their college of choice in Oklahoma. When an unexpected accident happens and the boys become unlikely heroes, they take an eye-opening detour away from everything they thought they had planned—and learn how to write their own destiny. NYTBR Notable Children’s Book of the Year NPR Best Book of the Year NYPL’s Best Book of the Year for Teens Chicago Public Library Best Teen Fiction of the Year A Texas Tayshas Top Ten Selection

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars See all reviews (75 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Phew! My head is spinning right now. I’m not really sure what to think of this book. On the one hand, *100 Sideways Miles* features great characters who are entertaining and hilarious. On the other hand, it is also random and “as much as I hate to say it” kind of pointless. In a way, *100 Sideways Miles* reminds me a bit of *The 39 Deaths of Adam Strand*. In addition to not having any

discernible message or point, both books follow a male protagonist who feels as if he's trapped, stuck on a path he can't get off of no matter how much he tries. In the case of *100 Sideways Miles*, this protagonist is Finn Easton, an epileptic boy with a tragic childhood and an author father whose wildly popular sci-fi novel features a character based on his son. Finn is a little peculiar. He measures life in distance, not time – something to do with the speed the Earth travels – and gets pretty philosophical about things like atoms and stars and molecules. He hates that his father's book has made parts of his life public and feels he can't live his own life, be his own person, etc., etc. I didn't have a lot of patience for this. Apart from borrowing parts of Finn for his novel, Finn's dad does not in any way pressure Finn to be a certain type of person or live his life a certain way. It made no sense to me why Finn feels so trapped or why the sci-fi book causes him to go through a mini existential crisis. Then again, there's not a whole lot in this book that does make sense. It's a bizarre hodgepodge of random tidbits that don't really have a point but are nonetheless a lot of fun. There's Finn's wacky school, which has an all-boys German Dance Club and a history teacher who frequently comes to class costumed as Betsy Ross, Charles Lindberg, a Nazi, etc.

Allow me to explain this title. There are lots of YA books out there that feature appealing, agreeable well-written characters. Clever, insightful - they engage your attention and imagination. That's hard to do and I salute every author who has ever pulled that off. It seems to me, though, that the real trick is for those characters to sustain that engaging appeal through an entire book. How often does a book peter out for you because you begin to recognize all of the author's tics and mannerisms or to detect the character outline beneath the writing? My favorite YA authors are the ones who can create characters who are as compelling on page 300 as they are in the prologue. Plot helps, of course, but who really cares how wildly, absurdly or unrealistically the plot veers and wobbles as long as the company is good? So, we all have favorite YA authors. Mine include those who are a little sharp around the edges - Libba Bray, John Green, Frank Portman, Scott Westerfeld, Sherman Alexie, and a few others. And now we add Andrew Smith, (already of "Winger" fame), to that list. Finn Easton has an original, authentic, rueful, funny and heartbreaking voice, and a backstory to match. His excellent wingman Cade and his lovely love Julia round out one of the most engaging, entertaining and thought provoking ensembles I've encountered this year. It is fair to observe that Finn has some aspects that border on the precious - his obsession with how far the Earth travels through space in a second, his regular references to everyone being composed of atoms left over from the Big Bang, and his recurring references to "the knackery", (which is an obvious echo of

Vonnegut's "so it goes").

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