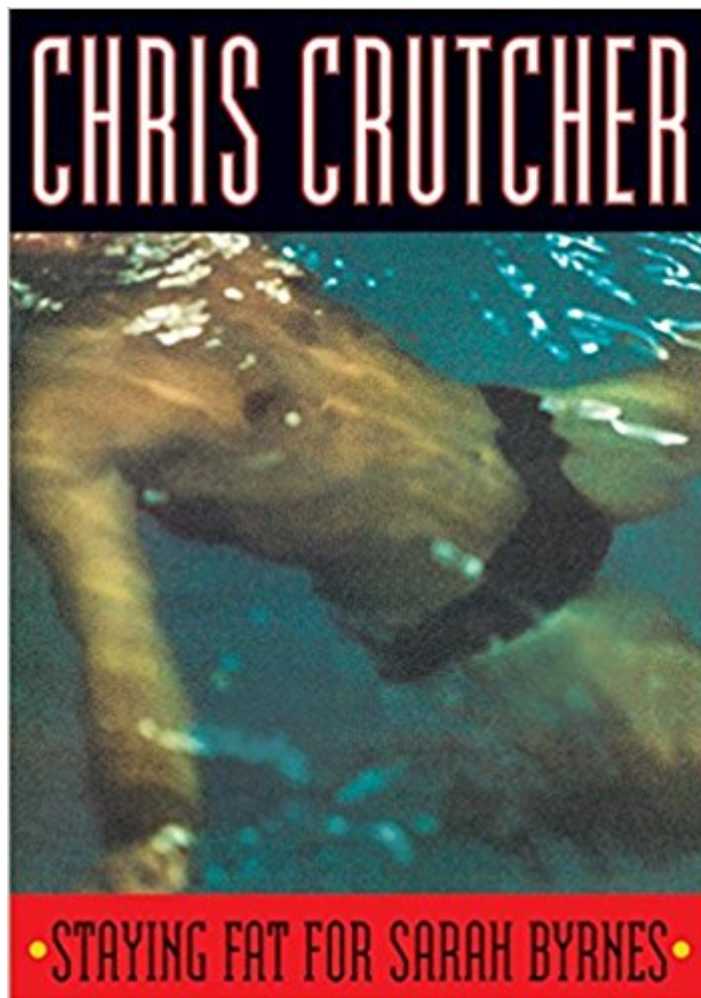


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# Staying Fat For Sarah Byrnes



## Synopsis

Sarah Byrnes and Eric have been friends for years. When they were children, his fat and her terrible scars made them both outcasts. Later, although swimming slimmed Eric, she stayed his closest friend. Now Sarah Byrnes -- the smartest, toughest person Eric has ever known -- sits silent in a hospital. Eric must uncover the terrible secret she's hiding, before its dark currents pull them both under.

## Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Greenwillow Books; Reprint edition (March 18, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060094893

ISBN-13: 978-0060094898

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.6 x 7.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 220 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #30,444 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Physical & Emotional Abuse #36 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Violence #134 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Friendship

## Customer Reviews

Such superlatives as "riveting" and "powerful" can only hint at the craftsmanship on display in this transcendent story of love, loyalty and courage. While probing such issues as friendship, free speech and moral values, Crutcher ( *Chinese Handcuffs* ; *Stotan!* ) tells a tale whose mordant humor, poignancy and suspense pack a breathtaking wallop. A social outcast in junior high due to his excessive weight, narrator Eric Calhoun found a kindred spirit in Sarah Byrnes, whose face and hands were hideously disfigured in a childhood accident. Now a senior and considerably slimmed down through competitive swimming (though still aptly called "Moby"), Eric remains fiercely devoted to his friend, whose caustic tongue is her only protection from life's inequities. When Sarah abruptly stops talking and is committed to a mental ward, Eric is compelled to take action to help her, but quickly finds that he is in over his head. He risks their friendship by breaking his vow of secrecy and enlisting others' aid--help that comes from such unlikely quarters as a former bully, Eric's swim coach and, most surprisingly, his mother's seemingly wimpy boyfriend. A subplot centering on a

self-righteous teammate drives home the point that nothing is as it appears on the surface, and leads to Eric being caught between his menacing vice-principal and the even more malevolent Mr. Byrnes--with spine-tingling results. Superb plotting, extraordinary characters and crackling narrative make this novel one to be devoured in a single unforgettable sitting. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Grade 7 Up-Chris Crutcher's stunning story of teen loyalty and courage (Greenwillow, 1993) is narrated by Johnny Heller. His convincing voice adds tremendously to the sense of immediacy with which 18-year-old Eric Calhoun tells the story of his friend Sarah Byrnes, horribly disfigured since age three. Doomed to live with the irrational and evil father who burned her on a wood stove and compelled her silence for years, Sarah finally reaches the limits of her endurance. Eric, an amazingly good swimmer despite his heavyweight size, struggles to uncover Sarah's nightmare past and find a way to help her. The two outcasts had been best friends for years, but the loyalty built on this odd friendship ultimately required enormous courage from both of them. The exciting story has it all: intense examination of values, normal teen concerns with friendship and personal growth, sports, dates and, above all, interesting and likable characters who make readers laugh through all kinds of pain, suspense, and even danger. Heller is perfectly cast as Eric with his comedic timing down so finely that listeners can hear Eric's wry perspective on himself coming through the action and introspection of this outstanding story. While keeping his tone and pitch centered beautifully on Eric, Heller manages to convey other characters' voices with only subtle modulations that contribute to making Eric an even more convincing narrator. No collection aimed at teenagers should miss this outstanding title presented in this equally outstanding way. Every adult who listens to this with a teenager will find it challenging, worthwhile, and a rare opportunity to experience something wonderful together. Jane P. Fenn, Corning-Painted Post West High School, Painted Post, NY Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

I picked this book up on a Book bub deal and am so glad I did. It is outside of my normal genre, but was thought provoking and moving. I would move this up to high school and older, not middle school, but that is my only even slightly negative comment.

I really enjoyed this book! It was a little slow to start and a tad confusing on the characters because the author tends to switch back and forth between calling his friend and his enemy by their first and

last names, but once your over that hurdel its no worries from there. I wont bother to write the synompis because it seems everyone else beat me to it but I will say that outside of the plot there are also some really juicy undertones of religion and responsibility. I love that! It really makes you think and in my opinion thats what a good book is supposed to do. Five stars!

Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes is a terrific teen read. Chris Crutcher writes a tale that many teens will enjoy, even if it is through the thank-God-it's-not-me reaction. This story will have many readers who relate to the narrator, Eric. Eric is a used-to-be-fat-but-still-lives-heavy star swimmer who is Sarah Byrnes's best friend. Sarah is the victim of a childhood tragedy that leaves her face scarred outside and in. Crutcher tells of the struggles of many teens who try to figure out their place in their world with peers, friends, and family. This story offers teens a view into what it means to be a friend, both in giving and receiving another's friendship. The plot is predictable, but this a needed device for the intended teen audience. Crutcher offers teens a pathway to help solve their own problems that might not be as obvious as Sarah Byrnes' problem. If I were a teen, and I were looking for a related read to the much-loved-by-teens A Child Called It, this book would be a definite read. Read it for yourself, and you will agree.

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I read this book because my teenager was reading it for her literature class, and, hey, I'm a fan of YA books, so why not? I did enjoy it overall, though it maybe hits upon a few too many themes...it's a tad convoluted at times...and there are a few unrealistic circumstances. Still, it's well written and interesting.

my 16 yr old nephew had to read this book for school and he was telling me about it. he said he would recommend reading it so I purchased it and read it straight thru! The book is really AWESOME!! It is a very powerful storyline of family abuse, school bully's, and most important ..getting to know people for who they are on the inside...NOT the way they look on the outside! I will recommend this book to everybody I know!!!

This is one of my all-time favorite books. As a teacher, when I have students who "don't like to read" I tell them they haven't read Chris Crutcher yet. The content is raw, real, heart-breaking, inspiring and well written. I read young adult fiction even as an adult, and I've reread Staying Fat multiple

times just because I love the story.

This was one of the last of the books I read over the past month. The story was amazingly moving - it was also quite surprising - - such a show of unconditional friendship - and such an unusual situation. Really worth a read - it will impact you for sure!

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