



Athletic Shorts: Six Short Stories

By Chris Crutcher

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These six stories from acclaimed author Chris Crutcher are about athletes, but are not simply sports stories.

Here he presents characters from some of his best-loved novels, as well as creating some unforgettable new personalities, in tales of love, death, bigotry, heroism, and coming of age.

Ages 11+

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

If the stereotype of the "bonehead jock" is ever to be defeated, it will be at Crutcher's hands. In these six short stories, he and his athlete protagonists take on such weighty issues as racism, homophobia, sexism and the teenager's essential task of coming to terms with his parents. At the same time the author makes the world of sports compelling enough to engage even the most sedentary readers. Three of the stories revolve around characters featured in Crutcher's *The Crazy Horse Electric Game*, including the memorable eccentric known as Telephone Man. Also starring in his own story is Lionel Serbousek, the orphaned artist and swimmer of *Stotan!* In the book's final tale, Louie Banks (from *Running Loose*) is befriended by a young man with AIDS and must cope once again with the untimely death of a loved one. The stories' locales--mostly small towns in Montana and Idaho--are vividly evoked, and make a satisfying change from the well-known big cities and bland suburbs where so many YA novels are set. Ages 12-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 8 Up? The stereotype of jocks as insensitive dullards is challenged in stories that grapple with the big questions of life as well as with athletic prowess, told with good-natured aplomb and gritty honesty.

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From Kirkus Reviews

Six short stories, five of them about characters from Crutcher's novels. The protagonists are involved in sports, but the real theme is growing--grappling with something tough and finding the courage to carry on. For instance, in "A Brief Moment in the Life of Angus Bethune" (originally published in *Connections*, 1989, edited by Don Gallo), huge Angus has been elected Senior Winter Ball King as a joke: he can't dance. Too proud to stay away yet terrified to go, his problems are complicated by his secret love for the elected queen and by the fact that kids have always teased him because both his parents are gay. With wry courage, Angus achieves a triumph that should lighten any reader's spirits. The so-vulnerable Lionel (*Stotan!*) tries desperately to forgive the boy who caused his parents' and brother's deaths; less successfully, "Telephone Man" (*The Crazy Horse Electric Game*) is slowly loosening the heavy racism placed on him by his beloved father. In "The Pin," Johnny wrestles his father in a can't-win battle neither wants to win--or lose; "The Other Pin" is about a wrestler in love with the girl he's supposed to beat at an upcoming match. Finally, "In the Time I Get," Louie Banks (*Running Loose*) overcomes another kind of prejudice when he befriends a stranger who has AIDS. An involving group of stories, somewhat uneven in focus but all thought-provoking and discussable. (Fiction. 12-15) -- Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

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From reader reviews:

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