

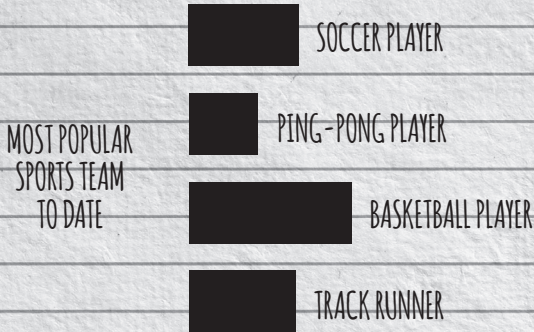
GAIL HERMAN

ON THE RUN



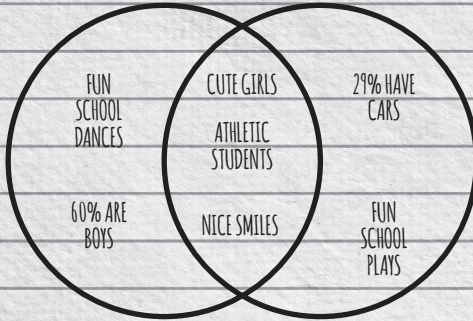


STATS OF DATING AT EAST LAKE HIGH



EAST LAKE HIGH

WEST LAKE HIGH



MOST ATTRACTIVE QUALITY FOR A GIRL TO HAVE:





ITEMS IN JACK'S
TRACK LOCKER



CHAPTER 1

TRACK STAR

The sun was shining. A cool breeze blew.

Great weather for running, Jack Porter thought.

Jack was standing at his high school track. All around him runners stretched. They warmed up.

Small tents circled the track. High school banners flew in front of each one. The smell of hot dogs and hamburgers filled the air.

“Testing,” said a voice over the loudspeaker.

“One, two, three.”

The biggest track meet of the season was about to start. Schools from across the state had come to East Lake High. East Lake was Jack's home track. West Lake, the school across town, was there too.

The biggest contests were always between the two schools. Everyone at West wanted to beat East. And everyone at East wanted to beat West.

Jack didn't care about beating West. He cared about beating everyone. For him, this meet was extra important. He was a senior. These would be his last home races. And he wanted to go out a winner.

"Good luck, Jack," one runner said.

Jack nodded. "You too."

"We're rooting for you," said another.

Jack just smiled.

Those guys went to another school. Jack didn't know them. But everyone knew Jack.

Jack Porter was a star. Pretty amazing, he knew. Years ago, no one paid attention to him. Or if they did? They teased him. Kids even bullied him

sometimes. Jack used to be a skinny kid. Funny-looking. Back then he just didn't fit in.

In high school Jack wanted things to change. So he joined clubs. He worked on the school newspaper. That helped a bit. He made one friend: a boy named Luke. Luke didn't fit in either. They spent time together. They hung out. But it wasn't enough.

Jack wasn't an athlete. He knew that. But he always loved to run. So he tried out for track. And he found his place. He grew taller and stronger. His straight brown hair turned gold in the sun.

Jack looked different. And he acted different too. For the first time, he felt sure of himself.

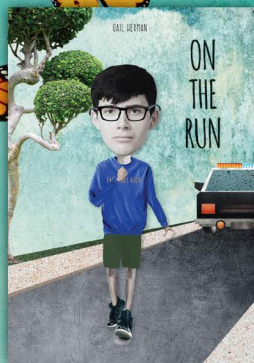
Soon, Jack was the number one runner. He made a ton of friends. It became hard for Jack to remember the past. How it was before. How he felt out of place. How he wanted people to like him.

But that was then. This was now.

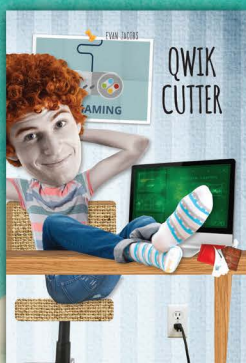
"Runners! Check in for the mile," the announcer said.

Jack slipped on his spikes. He tied the laces tight. He did one more stretch. Then he stood up straight. He had a race to win.

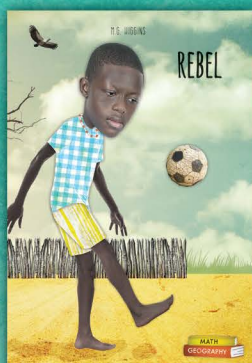
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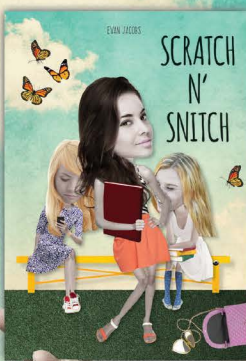
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ON THE RUN



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JACK PORTER, TRACK STAR. EVERYONE LIKED HIM. AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT HE THOUGHT. HE MET BECKY AT THE LAST MEET OF THE YEAR. WHOA! SHE WAS PRETTY. AND SHE WANTED TO GO TO THE DANCE WITH HIM. BUT THEN SHE TURNED ICE-COLD. WHY? SHE ACTED SO BORED HE ALMOST DIDN'T CARE.



 **SADDLEBACK**
EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING
www.sdlback.com

LEXILE 160L HL

ISBN: 978-1-68021-105-4

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