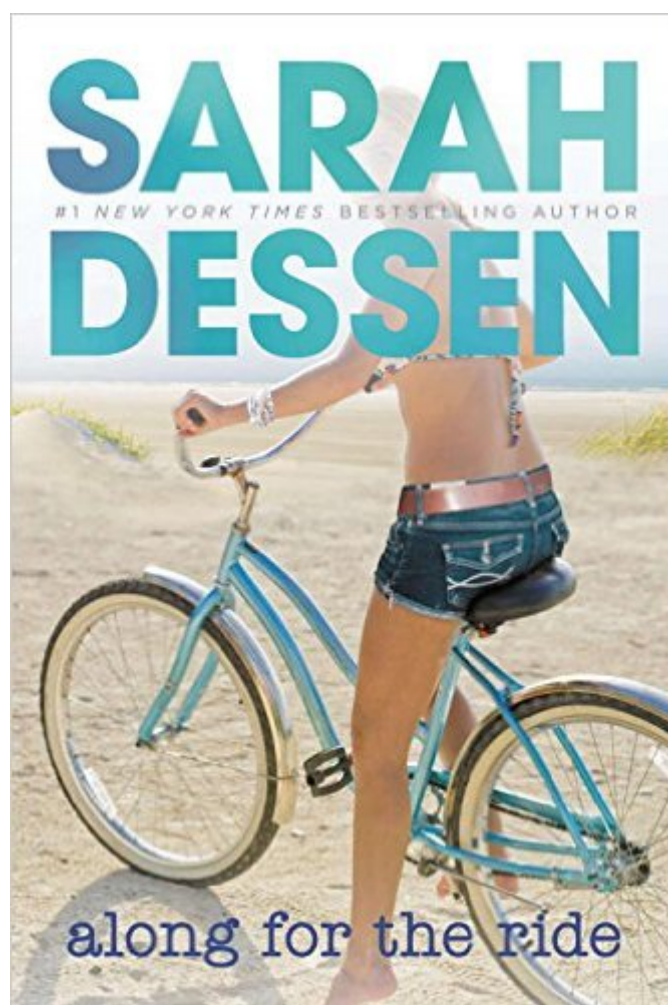


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# Along For The Ride



## Synopsis

Up all night. Nights have always been Auden's time, her chance to escape everything that's going on around her. Then she meets Eli, a fellow insomniac, and he becomes her nocturnal tour guide. Now, with an endless supply of summer nights between them, almost anything can happen. . . . As with all Dessen's books, [this] is a must-have • "VOYA, starred review Also by Sarah Dessen: Dreamland Just Listen Keeping the Moon Lock and Key The Moon and More Someone Like You That Summer This Lullaby The Truth About Forever What Happened to Goodbye

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0750 (What's this?)

Paperback: 432 pages

Publisher: Speak; English Language edition (April 5, 2011)

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ISBN-13: 978-0142415566

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars See all reviews (298 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

I must admit, I did everything I could before writing this review. I checked my e-mail at least 10 times, I watched an old episode of Friends, I snacked on sunflower seeds. It's not that I didn't want to write the review because I didn't like the book, it's quite the opposite. I knew that once I wrote the review, I would be done, moving onto another book. The truth of the matter was, I didn't want to be done with Dessen's book. Along for the Ride is about 18 year old Auden, a remarkably smart girl who's parents divorced when she was younger after years of bickering. She became an insomniac, avoiding her problems by staying awake, studying at a nearby cafe. Meanwhile, being raised by two

academic parents, Auden organized her life around school - she could answer any educational question, yet barely had any friends and missed out on every important childhood landmark (prom, bowling, learning to ride a bike..) After a strangely inspirational message from her older brother Hollis, Auden decides to spend the summer before her freshman year of college in Colby with her father, his new extremely cheerful wife, and their even newer baby, Thisbe. There, Auden discovers something about herself through interactions with Heidi, her stepmother; babysitting Thisbe; working at a clothing store with girls her age; and, above all, meeting the mysterious Eli who helps her rebuild her past. The story talks about love, redemption, and second chances. It's about how it's never too late to rediscover yourself and grab hold of your present. I really loved *Along for the Ride*. The characters were interesting, deep, and always surprising. Yes, as many young adult books, the plot was a bit predictable, but that didn't matter.

With the exception of "Dreamland," the plots of Sarah Dessen's books are as alike as slice and bake cookies--girl with relationship hang-ups forged by family dysfunction meets boy and makes new friends who teach her life lessons. Over the course of a summer or school year, said girl falls in love, and comes in to her own. Although "Along for the Ride" sticks like a squeaky wheel to this formula, I actually found it to be my favorite Dessen novel to date! I thought Auden was a more sympathetic and fully developed character than Niki, Remy, Macy, or Annabel, and her fear of making mistakes and letting her guard down made sense and were justified within the context of the story, which is a problem I've had with "This Lullaby" and "Just Listen." I also found the supporting characters--Ester, Leah, Wallace, and especially Maggie, Adam, Heidi, and Auden's family to be much richer, and the life lessons Auden learned from them (ie how to let loose and express your emotions and that women can be BOTH girly AND intelligent) to be more nuanced and entertaining than Dessen's usual scope. It's certainly true that Eli and the plot points surrounding his romance with Auden are very reminiscent of Macy and Wes in "The Truth About Forever...", but the little details of their late night escapades, made their chemistry feel fresh enough to me, although I would be interested to see if Dessen could crack her romantic interest mold of Eli/Nate/Dexter/Wes/Owen etc., and give us a guy who is truly original.

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