



*Running
Barefoot*

a novel

New York Times bestselling author

AMY HARMON

RUNNING BAREFOOT

When Josie Jensen, an awkward 13-year-old musical prodigy, crashes headlong into new kid Samuel Yates, an 18-year-old Navajo boy full of anger and confusion, an unlikely friendship blooms. Josie teaches Samuel about words, music, and friendship, and along the way finds a kindred spirit. Upon graduation, Samuel abandons the sleepy, small town in search of a future and a life, leaving his young mentor behind. Many years go by, and Samuel returns to find his old friend in need of the very things she offered him years before. Their roles reversed, Samuel teaches Josie about life, love, and letting go.

Deeply romantic and poignant, *'Running Barefoot'* is the story of a small town girl and a Native American boy, the ties that bind us to our homes and families, and the love that gives us wings.



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Genre: Teen and Young Adult Romance, Inspirational, Coming of Age
Recommended for ages: +14



ATTENTION
**THIS DOCUMENT INCLUDES SPECIFICS YOU MIGHT WANT TO AVOID
UNTIL YOU HAVE FINISHED READING THE BOOK.**

CHARACTERS

The love story is centered around Josie Jensen and Samuel Yates. Do you consider them the only main characters in this novel or do you think there are others who play a pivotal and influential role? If so, who and why?

Do you think the characters were realistically portrayed? Describe these character's personalities, motivations, inner qualities.

How does the way the characters see themselves, differ from how others see them? How do you see the various characters?

What did you think about their attraction to each other? What drew them in? What did you think of their relationship?

What is motivating the actions of the characters in the story? What do the sub-characters want from the main characters and what do the main characters want with them?

Were there any moments where you disagreed with the choices of any of the characters? What would you have done differently?

What past influences are shaping the actions of the characters in the story?

What do you think of the Navajo culture the author implemented in the story?

Who did you like best? And who do you like the least? Why?

Did any of the characters remind you of yourself or someone you know? How?

What were the dynamics of "power" between the characters? How did that play a factor in their interactions?

Do the main characters change by the end of this novel? Do they grow or mature? What events trigger such changes?

What do you think will happen next to the main characters?

THEMES, DEFINITIONS & SYMBOLISM

Friendship

“Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart.” ~ Eleanor Roosevelt

“What softened your heart?” I asked softly.

“Good music and a friend.”

I felt my eyes burn a little and turned from him, blinking quickly to lap up the sting of tears. “Music has incredible power.”

“So does friendship,” he supplied frankly.

“You were every bit as good as a friend to me,” I responded quickly.

“No I wasn’t. Not even close. But as nasty and mean as I often was, you never held a grudge. I could never figure you out. You just seemed to love me no matter what. I didn’t understand that kind of love.”

Josie and Samuel’s friendship starts when they are just children. But Samuel didn’t understand this friendship until later in his life. Where do you think Samuel’s anger stemmed from at the beginning? How did Samuel’s thoughts about friendship change? How do you think Samuel and Josie’s friendship changed each of them?

What is friendship for you? How would you define friendship?

Music

"Sometimes I think if I could just SEE without my eyes, the way I FEEL without my hands, I would be able to HEAR the music. I don't use my hands to feel love or joy or heartache - but I still feel them all the same. My eyes let me see incredibly beautiful things, but sometimes I think that what I SEE gets in the way of what's . . . what's just beyond the beauty. Almost like the beauty I can SEE is just a very lovely curtain, distracting me from what's on the other side . . . and if I just knew how to push that curtain aside, there the music would be."

What impact did music have on Josie's life and how she saw the world? What did you think about the music in the story? Did it shape the character's actions? Did you like the musical references throughout the book? Can you find yourself in a particular kind of music? If so, which?

QUOTES

“Like a shoe that has lost its mate is never worn again, I had lost my matching part and didn’t know how to run barefoot.”

This is one of the most highlighted quotes from the novel. What are your thoughts about it? Do you have any favorite quotes or passages in the novel that you enjoyed or found insightful?

Discuss the following quotes.

“When you realize there's so much you can't control, you get pretty stingy with what you can.”

“Human beings are not designed to be alone. Our creator gave us smooth, sensitive skin that craves the warmth of other skin. Our arms seek to hold. Our hands yearn to touch. We are drawn to companionship and affection out of an innate need.”

“And true love suffereth long, and is kind; true love envieth not; true love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. True love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; true love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. True love never faileth . . . ”

Were there any particular quotes that stood out to you? Which ones and why?

STRUCTURE, WRITING & GENERAL DISCUSSION

What did you think of the overall structure of the novel? Were you engaged immediately?

What did you think about the time-line and point of view?

How did you feel reading it? Which emotions conveyed the story? Did the story keep you interested?

Would you say this is a plot-driven book or does the story unfold slowly with a focus on character development? Were you surprised by the plot? Or did you find it predictable?

How credible did the author make the setting and dialogue?

What scene did you find was the most pivotal for the book? How do you think the story would have changed had that scene not taken place?

What scene resonated most with you personally in either a positive or negative way?

Did certain parts of the novel make you uncomfortable? Were there any scenes that made you laugh?

What is the significance of the title? Did you recognize it in the book? Would you have given the book a different title? If yes, what is your title?

What surprised you the most about the book?

How important is the setting & time period to the story? How would it have played out differently in a different setting? What about a different time period?

Based on the prologue, did you expect the ending or were you surprised?

Did you think the ending was appropriate? How would you have liked to have seen the ending go?

Have any of YOUR views or thoughts changed after reading this book?

What do you think about the cover of this book? Would you change it? How?

Has this book changed you, broadened your perspective?

What did you learn from, take away from, or get out of this book?

Did your opinion of the book change as you read it? How?

Playlist classical music

[Listen to the whole playlist on YouTube.](#)

Sergei Rachmaninoff – Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini

Richard Wagner – The Flying Dutchman Overture

Ludwig Van Beethoven – Piano Sonata Number 14 in C-sharp Minor (Moonlight Sonata)

Maurice Ravel - Boléro

Ludwig Van Beethoven – Symphony Number 9 in D Minor (Fourth Movement: Ode to Joy)

Sergei Rachmaninoff – Prelude in C-sharp Minor

Ludwig Van Beethoven – Bagatelle No. 25 in A minor (Für Elise)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Piano Concerto Number 23 in A Major

Franz Schubert – Ellens dritter Gesang (Ellen's third song - Ave Maria)

Frédéric Chopin – Nocturne in C-sharp Minor

George Gershwin – Rhapsody in Blue

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Requiem Mass in D Minor

Frédéric Chopin – Berceuse in D-flat Major

Johann Sebastian Bach– Air on a G String

John Philip Sousa – The Salvation Army March

George Frideric Handel – Messiah (Part II – Hallelujah Chorus)

Franz Liszt – Hungarian Rhapsody No 2

Maurice Ravel – Pavane for a Dead Princess

Robert Schumann – Träumerei (Kinderszenen No 7)

Claude Debussy – Girl with the Flaxen Hair

Claude Debussy - Rêverie

Claude Debussy – Clair de lune (Suite Bergamasque, 3rd movement)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky – Octobre: Chant d'automne (Les Saisons)

Sergei Rachmaninoff – Elegie in E-flat Minor

Ludwig Van Beethoven – String Quartet Number 13 in B-flat Major

Frédéric Chopin – Fantaisie Impromptu in C-sharp Minor

Edvard Grieg – Piano Concerto in A Minor

Mily Balakirev – Islamey

Johannes Brahms – Rhapsody No 2 in G Minor (Op. 79)

