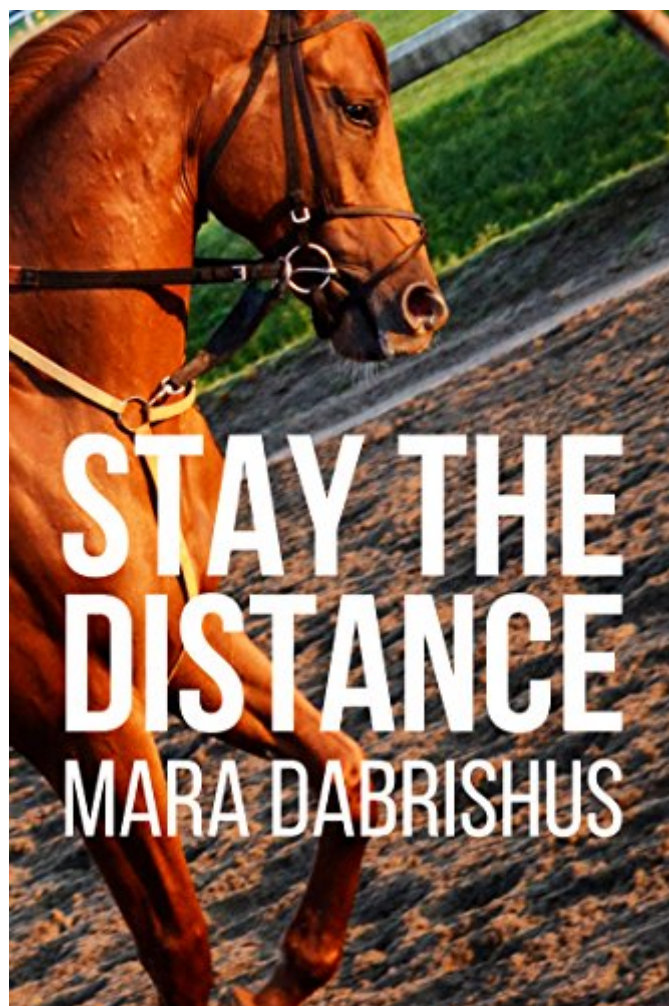


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# Stay The Distance



## Synopsis

July Carter's world is perfect from the back of a horse. From the ground, everything is a complete mess: her jockey mom ran off for California years ago, her dad always seems more interested in the horses than in her, and the horse July wants for herself will never be hers. Even though the New York racing circuit has taught her not to get attached, July can't help connecting with Kali, a hopeless filly that refuses to run when it counts. When bankruptcy rumors start swirling around the barn, the future is murkier than ever. July can't stand losing one more thing, and Beck, the barn owner's son, knows more about the rumors than anyone else. July will get the truth, even if she has to pry it out of him, for Kali's sake and her own.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ok, it's not like I'm ancient, but as someone solidly into my twenties, I have been out of the "young adult" target audience for more than a decade now. Nevertheless, I loved reading this novel even as an "old adult," and when I look back on the kinds of books I loved when I was a young adult, I know this would have fit right in among my favorites. This book would have fallen easily into my constant

rotation of horse books, surrogates for the horse I didn't have but also beloved for the characters, the drama, and the rush of the racing scenes. July Carter is a young woman just finishing high school with no major goals beyond riding the Thoroughbred horses she has come to love in the Blackbridge race barn and tracking down her mother, who abandoned her family in single-minded pursuit of success as a jockey. Told from July's first-person perspective, we get a well-rounded picture of July's life and cast of side characters, including the rest of her family and the frustratingly handsome barn owner's son. While July is mature and self-reflective in her narrative, she also is impulsive and prone to obsession just like her mother, a parallel I enjoyed following throughout the story. This is a character whose head I actually enjoyed being in, always intrigued to see how her path changes course during an eventful summer at Saratoga. That barn owner's son is a thoroughly-enjoyable romantic foil. In the grand tradition of witty banter, will-they-or-won't-they, Beck and July have tangible chemistry that encourages the reader to flip the pages faster to find out if a summer romance will figure in to their dramatic summer.

This review was originally posted on my blog CourtneysReads! I'm always worried, picking up a horse book. Being a horse person, it's always hard to determine which ones will be worth your time and which ones will make you cringe. This one I am happy to say, was excellent. Mara Dabrishus obviously knows her horses. I went through a phase where I was obsessed with Thoroughbred horse racing, so it was nice to test out that knowledge with this novel. The explanations about the tracks, the races, the horses, the training, everything was just spot on. And the writing was really beautiful. I was expecting this to read more like a middle grades book geared toward teens and adults (and don't get me wrong, I love well done middle grade books), but it didn't read like that at all. It read just like I would expect a YA novel to read when set in a horse world. I haven't had much experience with authors getting this to balance out well, but here it was excellent. July was an extremely likable main character. She was very mature for her seventeen years and her personality and situation were very easy to relate to. I found myself immediately drawn to her. Her love of horses was a refreshing thing and I loved reading about her time in the saddle and how much she enjoyed it. She handled so many stressful situations with just the right mix of teen angst and mature levelheadedness. The relationships in this novel were beautifully depicted. July's mom left four years before to chase her riding dreams across the country and hasn't been back since. The way this was handled was brilliant. Her mom just irked me, but I thought the resolution to the situation was very satisfying. And her relationship with her sister and dad were perfect.

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