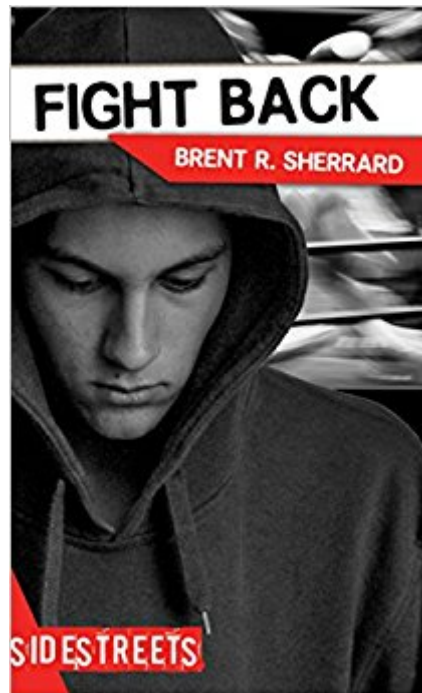




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Fight Back (Lorimer SideStreets)



Synopsis

Tyler Josten has never caught a break. Abandoned by his mother, physically and emotionally abused by his father, he grows up with a wild temper, fighting anyone he sees as a bully -- including the police. When he gets into trouble with the law, his grandmother gives up on him, and he is placed in foster care to wait for his court date. The Conways welcome Tyler into the kind of home he never imagined, one full of comfort and compassion. When Wayne Conway starts teaching him how to box, Tyler's uneasiness with people caring about him begins to disappear. With a controlled outlet for the violence instilled in him, Tyler starts taking responsibility for his life and his actions. But he still has to be able to trust other people -- and himself. [Fry reading level - 5.4]

Book Information

Series: Lorimer SideStreets

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Customer Reviews

"[An excellent read." (Tina Avon, NetGalley Reviewer 2015-04-06)"Great book for reluctant older readers about standing up for yourself and not giving up." (Nicola Farmer, Librarian at St Margarets and Berwick Grammar Schools 2015-04-05)"This book drew me in from the first page. I had to finish reading it all in one sitting because I was so invested in Tyler's story. . . Beautifully written at an accessible level, Fight Back would make a great addition to a middle school or high school library. . . My students will definitely gobble this one up just as hungrily as I did. I am actively seeking more books by Brent R. Sherrard and from James Lorimer & Company Publishers." (Mandy Peterson, Librarian at Schuyler Central High School 2015-04-04)"This is an extraordinary short novel, not just

for those readers who have difficulty reading, but for everyone, young, old, kid or adult – this is one not to be missed – and you might just learn something important about how to make your life a little bit better." (Bill Baker, Educator at York Schools, NetGalley Reviewer 2015-04-02)"This book will appeal to middle school and up readers. The characters are interesting and life-like, and the story line will appeal especially to boys! It's great to see a book that is at a lower reading level (5.4), but will grab the attention of older readers." (Judy Gottschalk, Educator at White Salmon Schools, NetGalley Reviewer 2015-03-27)"Tyler's tragic life is the focus of this action-packed novel about managing anger... Sherrard's novel sends a powerful message to teenage readers about the importance of adults who care about children and believe in the power of positive reinforcement." (Myra Junyk, Resource Links)"Abuse is one of those topics that has to be handled very delicately . . . Thankfully, *Fight Back* strikes that perfect balance of authentic and accurate." (Max Baker, NetGalley Reviewer 2015-06-22)"It's a great story about overcoming your obstacles and trying to provoke change." (Sandy Steckler, NetGalley Reviewer 2015-06-16)"I think this is a great book. It is gripping and relevant and would be a great read for any middle/senior school student. I found myself really pulling for Tyler to overcome the issues in his life. It is the right length for a reluctant reader who may feel overwhelmed by trying to read a longer novel." (Jennifer Lyon, Librarian, NetGalley Reviewer 2015-05-15)"His choice of boxing as a subject allows him to portray a boy whose emotions begin to mature along with his athletic skills. Hard-won insight neatly depicted." (Kirkus 2015-07-01)"This is a book I would recommend students to read. This is a publisher that I would read again. I find I need books for boys along these lines. High interest and low readability without it looking like a ‘baby’ book. A good read and a good find for a teacher like me." (Martha Lawton, Educator at Parker Academy and Tutoring Services, NetGalley Reviewer 2015-04-10)"*Fight Back* is part of the Reluctant Reader series from Lorimer & Company Publishers, which I am a huge fan of. The stories are easy to follow and are very realistic. My students go through some of the same things that the characters go through, which makes them feel very connected to the characters and the story . . . *Fight Back* is beautifully written . . . [A wonderful story for anyone, not just reluctant readers." (Kristina Marino, Educator at Sam Houston Math, Science, Technology High School; NetGalley Reviewer 2015-04-10)"[*Fight Back* will appeal to many tweens and teens struggling with the adults in their lives." (Sharon Lawler, Librarian, NetGalley Reviewer 2015-05-09)"This is another great selection from Lorimer's SideStreets line of Hi-Lo fiction. Tackling the gritty life of a street kid and examining the abusive environment that spawned him, Tyler is a sympathetic character that risks being passed through the system until someone steps up and cares. Teens may recognize themselves or friends and family in Tyler. Adults may see someone

they know in Tyler, and step up to do something. Make resources available to teens reading this book, including information on domestic violence and programs that offer an escape, whether it be information on shelters, academic programs, or athletics. Know the teens in your life and get this book into those hands." (Rosemary Kiladitis, NetGalley Reviewer 2015-06-24)"[Good character development and an interesting and believable storyline. I have a large collection of the SideStreets series in my library and I will definitely be adding this one to the collection." (Meghann Galbichka, Librarian at Collège St. Norbert Collegiate 2015-04-20)"This is a young adult read that covers some difficult issues. It is written very well, the main character is very strong and the author portrays his troubles well." (Donna Maguire, NetGalley Reviewer 2015-06-10)"[A great story, with life lessons and a main character that doesn't 'go soft' in the end. He stays tough, true to his nature, but he now has respect for himself with nothing to prove . . . If the rest of the SideStreet series is as good as this book, I highly recommend them for your YA reader at home, reluctant or not." (The Miramichi Reader 2015-08-15)"When trouble with the law sends him to foster care, Tyler is welcomed with compassion, and his violent impulses are transformed with the art of boxing. A novel aimed at high schoolers, written at a fifth-grade reading level." (School Library Journal 2015-09-02)"Fight Back will have appeal for both male and female readers of any reading level since the story is one of overcoming obstacles in order to find and build on one's strengths...Fight Back deals with tough and somewhat controversial subjects as a matter of course, rather than being preachy...Students who read this book may feel somehow broken as well, and Tyler provides an excellent role model for them." (CM Magazine 2015-09-01)"This book would be good for reluctant readers." (Lois Buckman, Librarian 2015-10-30)

BRENT R. SHERRARD is the author of the Lorimer SideStreets novels *Final Takedown* and *Wasted*, both of which received commendations from the Canadian Children's Book Centre. He and his wife, Valerie, live in Miramichi, New Brunswick.

Tyler has been his father's punching bag for as long as he can remember. After his mother takes his younger sister and abandons him to his abusive father, he sustains a beating that gets him removed from the house and placed with his grandmother, who doesn't really want much involvement in Tyler's life, either. Tyler becomes a street kid, fighting and getting into trouble, angry at life, until his grandmother wants him out, and he's placed into foster care with the Conway family, a husband and wife who've raised their own kids and open their home to Tyler. While staying with the

Conways, Tyler has no idea how to accept the kindnesses they give him. He's afraid to open a birthday gift from them, so he sleeps with the box, not wanting the moment to end. Mr. Conway is finally able to reach Tyler by introducing him to the world of boxing. A former boxer himself, Wayne Conway is able to train Tyler to fight his problems and get his head clear in the boxing ring, not out on the street. With the discipline of training giving Tyler a new lease on life, he's got the tools to fight his demons, but he has one last fight left to fight the one inside himself. This is another great selection from Lorimer's Side Streets line of Hi-Lo fiction. Tackling the gritty life of a street kid and examining the abusive environment that spawned him, Tyler is a sympathetic character that risks being passed through the system until someone steps up and cares. Teens may recognize themselves or friends and family in Tyler. Adults may see someone they know in Tyler, and step up to do something. Make resources available to teens reading this book, including information on domestic violence and programs that offer an escape, whether it be information on shelters, academic programs, or athletics. Know the teens in your life and get this book into those hands.

.As always, I praise James Lorimer & Company for venturing into the difficult and sensitive YA issues that their books cover. I was not sure what rating to give *Fight Back* - not because it was not a good story, but because it felt rushed to me. The plot was interesting and the main character was very interesting and somewhat well fleshed out, but the story, although compelling, didn't develop at the rate that I would have hoped. This is, I believe, mainly due to the fact that these books are fairly short. Having said that, I would have liked to see Wayne and Charlene way more developed. They just seem to have been plucked into Tyler's life miraculously - without any kind of intro or backstory into why they would be so loving towards Tyler. I think there was an interesting story to tell there. Nonetheless I gave this book 4 stars because it was an excellent read. I have read *Wasted* which was also by this author and that was excellent.

I enjoy reading these Sidestreets novels. The authors don't waste any time getting the reader engrossed in their stories and these stories are engaging and adventurous. There is just enough details to get to know the characters and these characters are individuals that teens can relate to on their level. In *Fight Back*, Tyler's life has been nothing but heartaches. At age eleven, his mother left while he was attending school, taking his younger sister with her, leaving him with his abusive, alcoholic father. Tyler's body was his father's punching bag. Knowing he had had enough, Tyler finally allows the

authorities to know that his bruises were from his father and he gets taken into protective custody. His persona and behavior has already been molded so adjusting to something different, well, let's just say it is going to be difficult to change this teen. Immediately upon sizing up his new surrounding, Tyler fists are up, he casts his place with her new peers and it looks as if the apple has not fallen far from the tree. Uprooted and placed with the Conway's now, Tyler is not used to the freedom and respect he is now receiving. Wayne, a former boxer, shows Tyler that the sport is more about confidence and self-respect and not power and anger. His wife's tenderness and concern for Tyler shows him that he is worthy of these feelings. It's a great story about overcoming your obstacles and trying to provoke change. As Tyler finds out change is difficult and although the story is short and its pace is speedy, the author shows us that there are many components to the notion of change. I received a copy of this book from NetGalley and James Lorimer & Company Ltd, Publishing in exchange for an honest review.

"A book about boxing? I'll pass." If you're thinking that, think again! This book has so much more than boxing. It's the story of a young man who suffered abuse at the hands of his alcoholic father, his rescue from that situation, and his struggle to deal with his past so he can have a better future. This book drew me in from the first page. I had to finish reading it all in one sitting because I was so invested in Tyler's story. Sherrard gives the reader plenty of background on Tyler's past without being too graphic or bogging the story's forward momentum down. Tyler's "temporary" foster parents are the most beautiful human beings - written realistically and they fulfill every hope you have in them. Tyler's classmates are believable of a typical high school as are his reactions to them. His boxing career is written as therapeutic and a bonding tool. Beautifully written at an accessible level, *Fight Back* would make a great addition to a middle school or high school library. It reminded me of if *The Berlin Boxing Club* and *A Child Called It* had been put together in a Bluford High Series format. My students will definitely gobble this one up just as hungrily as I did. I am actively seeking more books by Brent R. Sherrard and from James Lorimer & Company publishing.

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