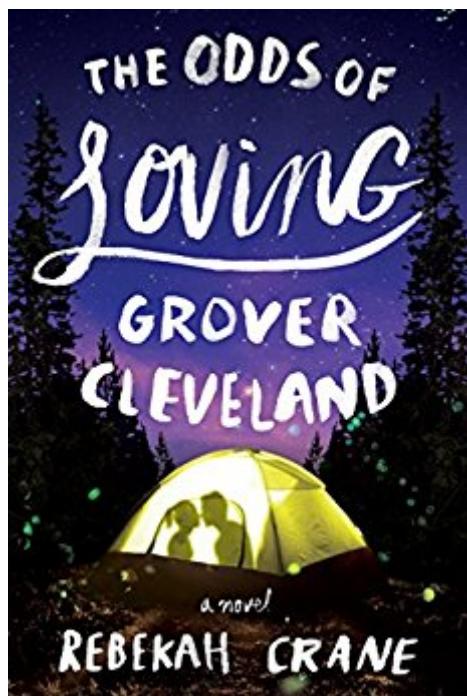


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The Odds Of Loving Grover Cleveland



Synopsis

According to sixteen-year-old Zander Osborne, nowhere is an actual place. And she is just fine there. But her parents insist that she get out of her head and her home state and attend Camp Padua, a summer camp for at-risk teens. Zander does not fit in—or so she thinks. She has only one word for her fellow campers: crazy. In fact, the whole camp population exists somewhere between disaster and diagnosis. There is her cabinmate Cassie, a self-described manic-depressive-bipolar-anorexic. Grover Cleveland (yes, like the president), a cute but confrontational boy who expects to be schizophrenic someday, odds being what they are. And Bek, a charmingly confounding pathological liar. But amid group “share-appy” sessions and forbidden late-night outings, unlikely friendships form, and as the Michigan summer heats up, the four teens begin to reveal their tragic secrets. Zander finds herself inextricably drawn to Grover’s earnest charms, and she begins to wonder if she could be happy. But first she must come completely unraveled to have any hope of putting herself back together again.

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Customer Reviews

This review (as always) does NOT contain spoilers, except for some minor characterization, if you count that. I've been reading Kindle First Books since the program started. And poor sad, sad little me, most of the time I've been disappointed (Just look at some of my reviews). The Odds of Loving Grover Cleveland is by far the best book I've read these last few years as a loyal First member. Even the title is a fantastic fit, as weird as it sounds at first glance. I mean, Grover Cleveland? Like the President? The only thing I know about the guy is that he was elected for two non-consecutive terms, and the only reason I know that is because my mom made me eat all my meals on a President placemat so I didn't spill mac and cheese on her stained cedar. Oh, and he had a different color bow tie in the second picture, and as we all know, bow ties are cool. The book is written in present tense, which isn't my favorite, but I give it a pass since it's in first person. This means that we learn about what happens with our main character as she experiences it, which I think in this case, was a good choice. The book takes place almost entirely at some sort of summer camp. But it's not your run of the mill murder camp run by some guy called Jason, nor is it Space Camp where all those rich kids come back and brag about how they got to build mini rockets and ride that crazy spinning simulator, a marvel us plebians could never comprehend. Actually, they never really say what exactly Camp Padua is, but I'm assuming it's for troubled teens and/or teens with behavior disorders to share the summer with kids like themselves. Basically, it's a story of how these teens go to summer camp and how it changes them; and how they change it in the process. Yet at the same time, it's NOT basic; it's both a simply-told story we've all heard yet a unique one at the same time. It's hard to describe. Maybe it's like the Breakfast Club? That comes up a few times in the book, but I've never seen it. Just read this book. Really. In case you're not convinced yet, the protagonist is at camp and doesn't seem to happy about it. I'll just call her "Main" or some variation. People that read reviews are smart; you'll pick up on it. Anyway, we open up with Main Squeeze and she seems a bit... Constrained. Odd. When she gets in a bind (or just, exists, I guess) she likes to conjugate French verbs. She tries to keep to herself, stay stuck at nowhere, but come on, this is camp, no way that's going to happen. Some of the things she dealt with hit close to home, like the apathy she has when she should be feeling SOMETHING when the people around her are, but doesn't. I thought her journey dealing with that was remarkably accurate. Main Street quickly meets Grover Cleveland, who shares the height but not the girth of the former commander-in-chief. He's a quirky, outgoing string bean who's like C-3PO in the asteroid field, knowing the odds to all kinds of

random things like being struck by lighting. His name, what he does, maybe it has something to do with the title...? *nudge nudge* Along with these two, there's also the tougher than hermetically-sealed glass Cassie, the Blue Christmas Dori who needs to find herself (ha!) and even the well-known star of a popular game show (Or is he?), who all work together to make the camp counselors earn their pay. Now, even though I'm describing them with these quick tidbits, what makes Crane's writing work so well is that the characters of this book aren't caricatures scanned from DSM-III, but are shown as actual living, breathing human beings. The dialogue is the best I've read in a long, long time. It's witty at times, simple at others, revealing or concealing depending on the situation. And the conversations and word choice sound like things a reality-based homo sapien might utter periodically. I think this is a major point Crane wanted to show her readers, that everyone has imperfections, and they manifest themselves in each of us in different ways. For some of us that could be being too cheap to shop at the mall, other times it's one of these disorders like the kids in this book. And then there's those of us that are just too gersh dern good at Mario Kart Wii. We all have our problems. That doesn't mean there's something wrong with us. It just means we're alive. It's a good message, but parents, don't expect it to be told through rainbow puppies on unicorns.

There's some F-bombs, sex jokes, tough problems at home, "adult situations", you know, Teenagers 101. It's not sugar-coated, but it's not intentionally dark where every kid is the next Charles Manson because they somehow each have the single worst American childhood ever of all time. And they don't just get into crazy, stupid situations, although of course, it's camp, so... Yeah. Still, I feel like this content was woven in for realism and used artfully instead of for shock value, and that makes a yuge difference. Of course, as much as I enjoyed the book, there were some... Interesting choices, but it's still an easy five stars. I didn't particularly care for the ending, or at least, the very very ending, and there were some times where the Main Idea said or thought things that were sappier than a overflowing spigot on a maple tree, but the otherwise realistic dialogue and strong characters more than made up for these brief moments. Overall, this is not only easily the best Kindle First book I've read, but one of the top ten books I've read, and I'll definitely be looking into more of what Rebekah Crane has to offer.

It took me a little while to get the book started, but once I did I became completely engrossed. I loved the characters and how flawed they were; proving the point that one should never judge - anyone or anything- by how they appear. Even as an older reader (50+) this book really touched my heart. Don't pass this one up.

First off, I am not a young adult. I am over fifty. I truly enjoyed this book. What a wonderful, terrifying story. Life is difficult. Choices aren't always easy. We must learn to accept and forgive. And love. Always love.

The Odds of Loving Grover Cleveland is a fantastic story, loaded with insight and messages. Insight and messages not just for teens but, for everyone. The story centers around four teens from different parts of the United States. Each has their own issues, which is why they have been sent to Camp Padua, in Michigan, a summer camp for at risk teens. The four teens, each around sixteen years old, are Zander, Cassie, Grover (as in Grover Cleveland, the President) and Bek (as in Alex Trebek, the game show host). In the beginning, you'll find yourself laughing out loud as Rebekah builds an image of the camp, it's councilors and the teens it hopes to help: In a story told pretty much through the eyes of Zander. As the characters start to form in your mind, you'll find yourself chuckling, then laughing and finally realize there are tears in your eyes. Tears because the messages imbedded in each character's issues are so true to life; everyone's life, to some extent. You'll quickly fall in love with Zander, as she conjugates verbs in French in her head to escape facing reality. Next comes Cassie who takes absolutely nothing seriously and who banters back and forth with everyone about everything. As Grover enters the picture he will become the voice of reason, well sorta. If crazy reason can be considered the voice they should listen to. And finally, there is Bek. Bek, who you never know if he's telling the truth. Bek, who I frankly never figured out. But then, neither did anyone else. As the four of them befriend one another, try to figure one another out and end up supporting each other, you'll suddenly realize how deeply you've been drawn into their lives. How deeply you care about them and want to help them through their struggles. Struggles we recognize and have all been through, to one extent or another. Rebekah Crane has done an outstanding job of building characters you'll adore and imbedding them in a plot full of twists, turns and a slew of messages we all need to hear. The Odds of Loving Grover Cleveland is one of the best books I've read in a long time and should be a must read for everyone!

I wasn't exactly swept away when I first started this book, but it did get better as it went along. I ended up being unable to put it down towards the end, though it was predictable. I felt like the story wasn't actually about the protagonist, Zander, at all, and it sort of became a book about her roommate Cassie. Cassie in my opinion was the strongest and most believable character. I just wish

the author would have put as much effort into her other characters as she did with Cassie. The others fell a little flat. The writing is decent, typical of a YA novel. I'll give the author credit, I personally hate present tense writing but she did a pretty good job with it. It didn't feel distracting to me like present tense writing normally does. Overall I was pleasantly surprised and happy to have stumbled on this book.

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