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The Universe Versus Alex Woods

By Gavin Extence



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A rare meteorite struck Alex Woods when he was ten years old, leaving scars and marking him for an extraordinary future. The son of a fortune teller, bookish, and an easy target for bullies, Alex hasn't had the easiest childhood.

But when he meets curmudgeonly widower Mr. Peterson, he finds an unlikely friend. Someone who teaches him that that you only get one shot at life. That you have to make it count.

So when, aged seventeen, Alex is stopped at customs with 113 grams of marijuana, an urn full of ashes on the front seat, and an entire nation in uproar, he's fairly sure he's done the right thing ...

Introducing a bright young voice destined to charm the world, *The Universe Versus Alex Woods* is a celebration of curious incidents, astronomy and astrology, the works of Kurt Vonnegut and the unexpected connections that form our world.



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The Universe Versus Alex Woods By Gavin Extence Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, July 2013: Quirky only begins to describe this incredibly touching tale of an epileptic British misfit science geek who befriends an aging American Vietnam War vet. As the book begins, Alex is a teenage boy, arrested and being questioned by the authorities. What happened? How did he get here? Who is this kid? Do we even like him? Debut novelist Gavin Extence dangles these questions before us, then cleverly leads us backwards in order to answer them. The story (and therefore our journey) starts years before, when young Alex was randomly, life-alteringly struck in the head by a meteorite, rendering him both a scientific celebrity and a school yard outcast. Kurt Vonnegut's influence is obvious within specific plot points, and is also noticeable in Extence's writing, where he strikes a balance of describing tragic events with comedic style, wrapping his seriousness within subtle absurdity. Specifically, his attention to bullying is distinct, yet unsanctimonious. By the time we're back in the interrogation room, our questions about Alex have been well answered, but a bigger question demands our attention: How far would you go for a friend? --*Robin A. Rothman*

Review

"The great joy of this quirky novel is Alex Woods, an English boy who's been hit by a meteorite. Alex recounts what follows with charm and wit, even when it includes seizures, bullying and the grave illness of his best friend, an old man. Pulsing with humor and insight, this book is a delight."? *People Magazine*

"[An] incredibly touching tale... [Extence] strikes a balance of describing tragic events with comedic style, wrapping his seriousness with subtle absurdity."? *Amazon.com (Best Book of the Month, July 2103)*

"Warm and funny and tragic and uplifting all in one. Extence should be on everyone's radar."? *Jasper Fforde*

"Perfectly crafted and beautifully written... *The Universe Versus Alex Woods* may be a debut novel but it is an outstanding novel by any standards. Unforgettable."? *Red (UK)*

"With wit and warmth, Gavin Extence shines a light on one of the darkest, most difficult subjects of our times."? *Sunday Express*

"Mark Haddon meets Kurt Vonnegut."? *Observer (UK)*

"A bittersweet, cross-audience charmer, this debut novel will appeal to guys, YA readers, and Vonnegut and coming-of-age fiction fans."? *Library Journal*

"Extence's engaging coming-of-age debut skillfully balances light and dark, laughter and tears."? *Publisher's Weekly (Starred review)*

"*The Universe Versus Alex Woods* will put you through the wringer. But oh, what a wringer!"? *NPR Books -- Included on their "5 Great Summer Reads for Teens" List*

"[*The Universe Versus Alex Woods* is] done in a dark, offbeat style that brings to mind the characters' hero, the literary giant Kurt Vonnegut"? *New York Post*

"Clever storytelling, winning characters and nuanced rhythm... Alex is a precocious, endearing, infuriating

and unexpectedly brilliant teenager, and he and his indelible voice are incapable of sticking on the road most traveled. Lucky us: We get to go along for the (sometimes bumpy) ride."? ***Denver Post***

"*The Universe Versus Alex Woods* is the story of how misfit Alex comes to befriend an elderly American curmudgeon, learns to cultivate marijuana and develops a deep appreciation for the work of Kurt Vonnegut. It's a wonderful coming-of-age story, delivered in an offhand casual style that belies the deeply moral concerns of the author."? ***Arkansas Democrat-Gazette***

"Precocious and awkward, Alex Woods truly is a welcome addition to the literary world."? ***Charleston City Paper***

"If you enjoy interesting and unique experiences, you will find this to be the must-read of the summer...[*The Universe Versus Alex Woods*] is a must-have for your library, and a treat for both the young, as well as the young at heart. There is some very deep subject matter discussed, yet the end result is extraordinary. Gavin Extence is an author to watch for."? ***Seattle Post-Intelligencer***

About the Author

Gavin Extence was born in 1982 and grew up in the interestingly named village of Swineshead, England. From the ages of 5-11, he enjoyed a brief but illustrious career as a chess player, winning numerous national championships and travelling to Moscow and St Petersburg to pit his wits against the finest young minds in Russia. He won only one game.

Gavin now lives in Sheffield with his wife, baby daughter and cat. He is currently working on his second novel. When he is not writing, he enjoys cooking, amateur astronomy and going to Alton Towers.

Users Review

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Antonia Wagner:

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Candy Yazzie:

Spent a free time for you to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their friends. Usually they undertaking activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Would you like to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book may be option to fill your totally free time/ holiday. The first thing that you ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the publication untitled *The Universe Versus Alex Woods* can be good book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Leonel Burton:

A lot of people always spent their own free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with them family or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent that they free time just watching TV, as well as playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity here is look different you can read a book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book that you simply read you can spent the entire day to reading a book. The book The Universe Versus Alex Woods it is extremely good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These people were enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy the e-book. You can m0ore easily to read this book out of your smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book has high quality.

Wayne Robinson:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, and then why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. A single activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition info. Even you love The Universe Versus Alex Woods, it is possible to enjoy both. It is excellent combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout folks. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

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