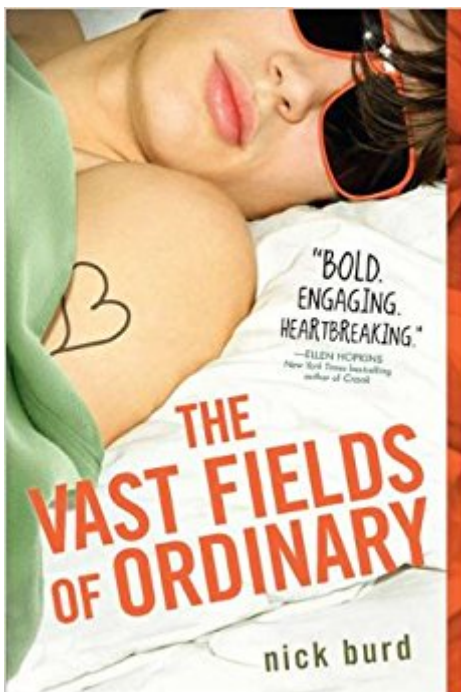


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The Vast Fields Of Ordinary



Synopsis

It's Dade's last summer at home, and things are pretty hopeless. He has a crappy job, a "boyfriend" who treats him like dirt, and his parents' marriage is falling apart. So when he meets and falls in love with the mysterious Alex Kincaid, Dade feels like he's finally experiencing true happiness. But when a tragedy shatters the final days of summer, he realizes he must face his future and learn how to move forward from his past.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A fascinating and dreamy first novel." -New York Times "Bold. Engaging. Heartbreaking." -Ellen Hopkins, New York Times bestselling author of Crank "A brilliant account of alienation and angst in the heartland." -Quest Magazine "Nick Burd reaps a bounty from The Vast Fields of Ordinary." -Vanity Fair "Burd is a terrific writer+he is a new talent to watch." -Booklist, starred review

Nick Burd attended the University of Iowa and received his MFA from The New School. He lives in Brooklyn, New York. The Vast Fields of Ordinary is his first novel.

I tried. I really really tried to identify with Dade Hamilton the young gay main character of this book. He's young, gay and feeling alienated in a small Iowa town. I've been there! I live in a small Iowa town! I was young, gay and feeling alienated once too. It's just that it was kind of hard for me to connect with Dade in this story for two major reasons. Reason #1: Dade is such a hard character to

understand. His mood swings wildly. He says something and then contradicts himself the very next chapter. He has such a hot and cold relationship with his parents that I feel more sorry for THEM than I do for him. His interactions with everyone, friend and enemy, leave me confused and wondering what Dade is so angsty about. He brings on most of his own problems and then the things he seems to care about more than anything in the world just get written off a few pages later. His relationships with Pablo and Alex are never fully fleshed out or made to feel "real". More like plot devices that are put in place so Dade can sabotage himself. Reason #2: For an alienated young gay teen in Iowa he really doesn't have a lot to be writing bad poetry over or drinking his "problems" away. He has two parents who are trying to make their relationship work for him. He has not one but two guys (plus a girl) all pining for him throughout the book. He has a cool Lesbian friend who helps him ease his way into gayness, even taking him to a local gay bar which don't exist in small Iowa towns (not to nitpick... We also have very few below-ground pools). High School sucked but we don't hear hardly anything about high school. Instead we hear that in the few months since High School Dade meets at least four people who become his friends and don't seem to want anything from him in return besides love and friendship. He lives in the 'Burbs which has become such a tired cliché of middle-class imprisonment over the years. The whole book just felt kind of stunted. Like an unfinished sentence. Nick Burd obviously is doing something right in that this book made a connection with so many people. I was sadly not one of them. Having gotten the easy part (the complaining) out of the way the descriptive writing and some of the romantic scenes in the book were very well done! I found myself continuing to read despite all the problems I listed above mostly for these reasons. I cared enough about the flawed characters and liked the style of the writing enough to finish a book and for that it deserves a 3rd star from me. I'm just still not quite sure what it all means?

I try not to know too much about a book when I start reading. I don't want to be spoiled or distracted by upcoming events. To be honest, I wasn't feeling this book. I wasn't connecting with any of the characters. I started to feel like it was an exercise in reading. What I discovered was this book is a slow drip. Drip...drip...drip. By the time I was near the end, I did care. I wanted another month of summer. Dade, Pablo, Alex and Lucy along with their friends and hangers-on made me feel like I was part of the group. Just doing time, waiting to get out of the town I didn't appreciate and start my new life at college. 4.0 for sea bass

Before reading "The Vast Fields of Ordinary", answering the question "what's your favourite book?"

was always a debacle. There were so many great books, and none of them stood out as particularly greater than the others. Now, I have a definitive answer, and if you haven't caught on yet, the answer is this one. I picked this book up because the cover was cute, the rating was high, and it fit my genre. I'll admit I had my doubts at first, because books about gay people so often turn in to 'gay books', so to speak, but this transcends that. *Vast Fields* presents you with a flawed, intricate, ultimately likable LGBT main character. Dade suffers an appropriate amount of angst given his situation, but not once does he come across as pitiful and not once does the reader start to think he has no problems and no life that isn't connected to his sexual orientation. Burd also introduces us to three other equally intriguing LGBT characters -- Alex, Dade's effortlessly cool love interest; Lucy, the confident best friend who helps Dade come to terms with himself; and Pablo, the simultaneously hateful and kind-of-sympathetic, closeted friend with benefits who will probably make you cry at one point or another. The juxtaposition of these teenagers' life with the disappearance of a nine-year-old girl is jarring, and at first feels random, but it works in its own weird way. At times laugh-out-loud humorous and at times completely heart-wrenching, this book will leave you completely satisfied but still itching to know what happens next.

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