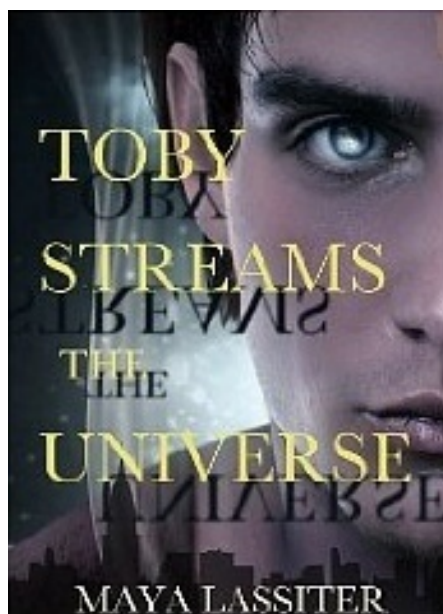




Toby Streams the Universe

Maya Lassiter

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Toby Streams the Universe Maya Lassiter

Toby Hay is a psychic living in New York City, supporting his screwed-up family using his visions to play the stock market. He also helps his private investigator best-friend with the occasional case--all while trying not to read the future of every person he meets. Such as Toby's new neighbor, a beautiful painter hiding from her violent Ex. Or Toby's psychic, sex-pot, sister, scared of her own future. Or his quirky virtual-assistant, struggling to care for her sick child. Toby wants to help them all, but his super-psychic father trained him not to interfere, lest he lose his own sanity in the process. Toby's father knew everything--he must have had good reasons for his rules. Of course, he vanished nearly a year ago...

Then a voice speaks in Toby's mind, offering a path away from the dark future predicted by the Family Histories--if only Toby will challenge what his father taught him and learn to use his visions, rather than merely control them. Now Toby must find his father, uncover the identity of the voice, and save his friends from their futures, all while figuring out how to live inside his own, increasingly strange mind.

Toby Streams the Universe Details

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Author : Maya Lassiter

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From Reader Review Toby Streams the Universe for online ebook

Carol Kean says

Riveting, funny, touching and romantic--

Like other reviewers, I was pleasantly surprised to find this jewel among all the Kindle novels that I dump after the first few pages of unbearable prose. Sometimes I hang in there to the very end, thinking the themes (domestic abuse or teen suicide, e.g.) deserve my attention in spite of the bad writing, but then I don't post a review, not wanting to become the Simon of Amazon (that snide, awful American Idol judge).

The title of this novel almost kept my from trying it. But from page one, I was caught by a voice and held by it for 350 pages. Toby has that sweet, flawed, vulnerable but messed up tone that makes Jeff Lindsay's "Darkly Dreaming Dexter" so endearing. "Toby Streams the Universe" is visceral, vivid, believable. Drunk on page one. Creeping out the neighbor lady walking her five little dogs. Toby has this "duh!" quality that seems to be the hallmark of a lot of men. All it takes is one woman to assess the situation and point out the obvious fix. Ha ha, love that in this novel, even though I hate the way men are portrayed as such dopes in so many books and movies. This time, it's okay. Clearly, Toby is brilliant, as was (is?) his missing father, the doctor. I can't elaborate or use supporting detail without giving away secrets that unfold gradually, one riveting eoc (end of chapter) after another. I love the way information is doled out a little at a time. It's one of many signs that this novel has passed a writing workshop.

Another round of editing would have helped -- but as plot holes go, hey, even my beloved Dexter looks as cratered as the face of the moon. The novel that launched the TV show even opens with a rip-off of an "Oliver" song (moon, glorious moon). So I don't really mind the plot holes or the typos.

And I like happy endings, hate tragedies, so I'm glad to offer this one spoiler: no beloved character will be murdered in this story.

"Toby" reminds me a little of another Kindle novel I recently read, Gail Cleare's "Destined," a novel of the Tarot, in the way *The Universe* can be trusted to deliver good things to those who take a leap of blind faith and go with the flow. So many problems are so quickly and cleanly resolved, and people are just so NICE, if we just give them a chance, and even mean people will either be reformed or just leave us alone, once we master the power of positive expectations. No, Maya Lassiter didn't use those words, and I don't object to New Age positive thinking. I don't mind quick-fix plots, which are discouraged in writing workshops and how-to books. "Toby," though, like Cleare's "Destined," struck a note of naïve idealism that left me wondering what planet these writers are from. Really, it's not a bad thing--no worse than the happy endings of the romance genre--but it does leave me thinking I can't give such a novel the same 5 star rating I'd give Rod Usher's "Florid States." Usher's clean, pure prose, his insightful, honest, compelling voice - we need a sixth star to distinguish novels that really transcend the usual offerings, and go really deep into the human psyche. "Toby" is leagues above others in this genre, but minor characters, especially Penelope and company, border on being pure fiction.

In conclusion, YES, I would recommend Maya Lassiter's "Toby Streams the Universe" to anyone who enjoys this genre. Die-hard disciples of "literary" wouldn't bother with the genre in the first place, but hey, this novel has substance, not just feel-good fluff and warm fuzzies. I can only digest so much tragedy without needing to escape into a pleasant world like Maya Lassiter's.

Kathryn says

The first thing that comes to mind about this book is the imagery. Along with being able to pick things out of people's minds Toby sees things, like the mermaid protectors swimming around his new neighbor with her own dark past. The way the author describes what's going on to Toby and the things Toby is seeing paints an extremely vivid picture. Not only do you get to see what Toby sees, but you get to live what he's living. I found myself fascinated with the author's way of describing it all. Besides Toby's journey we also see what the other generations of psychic Hays endured in the Family Histories, entries added to a journal chronicling each person's descent into madness. Through them Toby learns about the past generations as he's learning about himself. From stonings to being hanged as witches to multiple suicides the reader also gets to see how the others handled what's happening to Toby and how they were treated by the people around them. And, for once, I didn't see the end coming so it came as a great surprise. At times the characters can be annoying - Lara's extremely hot and cold, and Maddie can come off as a petulant child - but it's what makes them interesting.

Eddie says

Enjoyable. I got into the characters (mostly, I didn't buy into Nan somehow), but I liked most of the main characters, and liked the general idea of the story. I'd recommend it as a decent read, but there was a fair amount of language so it's probably not suited well for most of the people that I would recommend it to.

Bethany Platt says

Wow. Where do I begin? This book was amazing for starters. Maya wrote this extremely well and I had a hard time putting it down. The language through me at first but only because I'm not used to hearing that type of style everyday. Toby's struggles, as well as the other characters' struggles was amazingly plotted out to keep you turning the page. The descriptions of each vision was amazingly detailed, but too bogged down that you lost sight of the story line. I could imagine feeling what they felt and seeing what they saw. Maya pulled you in from the very first page and I loved every minute of it. It's also one of those books that keep you guessing even though every turn of event had surprised you. I felt each fear, each confusion, each struggle, and each overload. It was an incredible ride along the Hays' struggle towards freedom.

Andrew says

This is a truly special book. A book of enlightenment, trial by fire, true spiritual awakening. I just finished it, and feel both a sense of solid purpose and a giddy anxiety about the future. Reading this book was intensely personal. One of the best I've read in awhile.

Cat says

Unfortunately I am not eloquent enough to express how good this book is! This book is full of mystery, suspense, romance, humor....and real life. Each character has their own story, and because of Toby's powers,

you get to learn a lot of it too - which makes the story that much more enjoyable. At times, this book can be a bit depressing, but the author does a great job of giving you a light at the end of the tunnel. Plus there are humorous bits sprinkled throughout for some comic relief.

I really loved that Toby tried his best to balance different aspects of his life. Although he's almost 30, he's still learning how to be a good friend, son, brother, boss, etc. I also loved how the author explored many different relationships, especially parents and their effect on their children (many memories grown up still haunt various characters).

This is a truly beautiful, complex book.

Matt Kelland says

The theme of what it would be like to sense the thoughts of others and read their future is nothing new, but this does it really well. It blends romance, a bit of detection, some historical background and insanity into a believable story with great characters. They have everyday lives, and they try to cope with the bizarre things they can do, and mostly not well. But these are not tortured superheroes, they're fragile people struggling to stay sane and cope with simply being alive.

I enjoyed it a lot. It's funny, sad, exciting, and romantic, and it's filled with imaginative images.

Okay, perhaps four stars is a bit generous, but three doesn't really do it justice. It's good, and definitely worth reading if you like romantic sci fi.

Luc Reid says

Like many of his family members going back for generations, Toby can see the future, and his visions are only getting stronger over time. This might not bother him except that as far as he can tell, pretty much every one of his psychic forebears has been driven crazy by the gift--possibly including his psychiatrist father, whose lock-down approach to psychic powers actually seemed to be working until he went missing.

Maybe the greatest strength of this story is how comfortable and enjoyable the characters become, from Toby's risk-loving psychic sister to his artistic new neighbor, who sends visions of mermaids through his head, to his morally flexible best friend, a private detective who may just be able to help him find his father--if he actually wanted to see his father again in the first place. If you enjoy immersing yourself in an appealing community of characters and seeing the universe from another perspective, this one is highly recommended.

Sadie Forsythe says

4.5

I think Maya Lassiter has made it onto my auto-buy list. Unfortunately, I think the rest of her books are all YA, a genre I'm avoiding at the moment. But this is the second Lassiter book I've read this year and I just seem to love her style and her characters.

I really enjoyed Toby and his growing menagerie, especially Carl. There was humour and snark. There was a touch of romance. There was a bit of mystery. The writing was tight and well edited. Despite the cutesy and off-putting title, I basically loved the book.

OK, yeah, the ending was pretty predictable, I thought the manifested mermaids were a little cheesy and it was pretty pat how everything wrapped up in such a tight little bow, but on pure enjoyment, it's a win.

Derek says

This book was difficult. On one hand, the world building and characters were really well done. On the other, the middle was bogged down, the Hay entries some times went on too long. To be honest, I now look for and try to only read books I'm excited to return to, I guess we all strive for that. I just remember being in the middle of the book and not necessarily dying to get back into it. That being said, the ending and overall sudo mystery kept me engaged and made me want to finish and find out what happened to Tony and the gang. All in all, a decent book that I am glad I read.

Debrac2014 says

Wonderful story about a psychic family who are worried they will become insane from the constant stream of thoughts from around them! Good ending!

✿Claire✿ says

Wow. This was one of the free kindle books I downloaded when I first got my Kindle and was obsessive about seeing what sort of things I could find to read (it was all exciting at the time!). As I've had mixed results with the free books, I was uncertain about this one as the blurb didn't catch my attention as much as it had when I got it.

I was wrong. This is an amazing story of overcoming some very unusual challenges, both personal and for other people. I thought the characters were well written and even those I thought were weak at the beginning developed as the book went on. I admit, it took me a little while to get in but when I did, I couldn't put it down. This is one of those books that when it finished, I felt like I was saying goodbye to a friend by closing it up.

Definitely recommend this to anyone interested in the genre.

B.L. Hewitt says

Toby Streams the Universe, is another indie writer's take on the physic detective. Toby Hay comes from a long line of physics, in fact going back to the first entries in the Hay's family Histories, where his ancestors were stoned to death as witches. He and his sister do not just see the future, or just the past, but everything that is happening now, in the future and in the past of everyone they see or touch or even think about...all at once. No wonder they have all committed suicide by the age of thirty. Our hero Toby is fast approaching the

big three-o and now to further complicate things he has fallen in love with the girl next door, a girl that takes him to the ocean depths surrounded by mermaids every time he looks into her eyes..

There is a lot going on in this book and it is a unique take on an old premise. Sci-fi and fantasy all rolled into one. I truly enjoyed this quick read. If Lassiter stays with this genre, I will definitely keep reading. Give this one a shot.

K. Lincoln says

(in the interest of transparency this author and I both belong to the same online group)

Toby Hay has spent his life locked down under the stern shadow of his brilliant psychiatrist father- but a year ago his father disappeared and Toby is adrift in his life and the Stream.

The Stream: the constant rush of information- past, present, and future, that certain members of Toby's family can access, is spiraling out of control, visions taking over from reality, causing Toby to fall into trance-like states and pass out in his apartment's hallway.

Littering Toby's family tree are stories of drug-abuse, suicide, and despair. Being Psychic apparently drives you crazy before age 40. Hidden in the depressing family histories his father had refused to let Toby read, Toby finds a thin thread of hope; someone from his family survived.

But can Toby figure out the secret before he or his psychic little sister succumb to the family curse? He has begun to hear a weird little voice that seems to urge him to open up to the world and the Stream, but what will happen if his secret gets out? Or has his father been wrong to shut themselves away from the Stream and other people....

Luckily for Toby, one of the strengths of this book is the quirky cast of characters that are his friends. Carl, his PI best friend, Lara, the artist who moves in next door who gives Toby psychic flashes of her scary ex-husband as well as haunting mermaids, Lara's brother Andy (mohawked ashtanga yoga practitioner), and Toby's phone service assistant, Penelope.

There is snarky, affectionate banter and realistic tensions between Toby and his friends. I enjoyed the unfolding of Penelope's secrets and Lara's Italian past.

What keeps this from being 5 stars for me is the problematic nature of Toby's constant Psychic impressions. The author does a really good job of letting the reader see things as Toby does; constantly interrupted by strange visions, sounds, and flashes of past and present surrounding each person (and sometimes things) he comes into contact with. This was jarring and interesting at the beginning and through the middle of the book, but began to wear on me in the last third when I wanted the multiple tensions (Who is the voice? Where is Toby's father? How can he help Penelope? Will he join the psychic detective firm with Carl? How can he keep his sister and himself from going insane? How can he protect Lara from scary ex husband?) to move along and resolve.

The constant Psychic impressions also impacts the development of Toby's relationship with Lara; the romantic love interest. We spend so much time with the mermaids that I never really felt their connection or why she was attracted to "brain-guy" in the first place. I wanted much more of their time onscreen and less dwelling in Toby's worry about the psychic flashes he got.

The thing is just when I would start to get frustrated with the Psychic flashes, some little riddle from the plot would unfold, some cool connection, and I would be compelled to keep reading. Watching Lara charm the dog-walking lady or discover Penelope wore knee-high striped socks, or the hints Nana (Lara's grandmother) drops about knowing Toby's Psychic; all these little details kept the reading fun.

This Book's Snack Rating: Sea salt and vinegar kettle chips for the refreshing tartness of the synesthesia-like Psychic flashes and the cool cast of characters that make you eat chip after chip until you realize your lips are a bit swollen from the vinegar/salt and you need a little break from that particular flavor.

April Plummer says

This book was incredible! I am so glad I got it, and better yet, I got it for free for my Kindle. I haven't read a better free book yet.

This is a book about Toby Hay, a man who can read not only other people's minds but also other people's pasts, presents, and futures. The only problem is that he reads them too often. Used to be he had to concentrate in order to read people. Now, he only needs to be in the vicinity. His psychic mind is getting stronger...and bringing down his sanity fast. The voices are becoming too much, and the only way he knows to quiet them is to drink. A lot.

His abilities are a generational thing, and none of his ancestors fared well. They all went insane from the voices, and except for his grandfather who's laying in a drug-induced coma and his father who's missing, all of his ancestors killed themselves to escape the voices in the Stream.

Or perhaps not....

Toby starts hearing a voice inside his head. Someone or something is offering him advice, helping him through the insanity. Can he figure out how to ride the Stream without losing his sanity and find his father? Or will he succumb to the voices from his past and decide that death is the only way out?

Part of what makes this story incredible is the author's talent with words. When Lassiter describes what Toby "sees" inside other people's minds...it's beautiful. Even the scarier, darker stuff is described so beautifully.

All I can say is read it yourself. Buy this book, and I promise you'll love it too!
