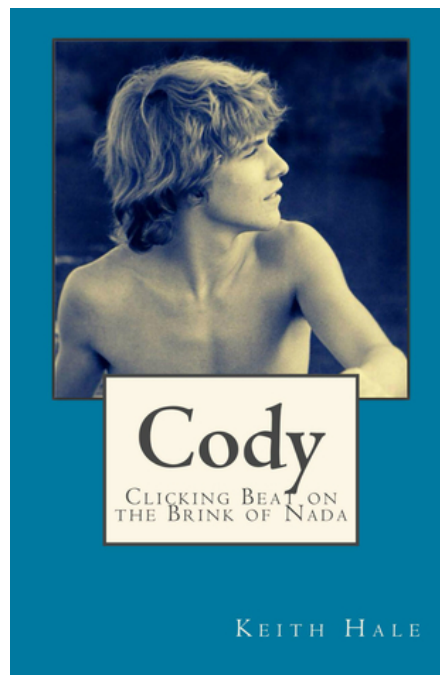




Cody: Clicking Beat on the Brink of Nada

Keith Hale

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By turns funny, romantic, erotic, and sad, this evocative novel brilliantly recreates the landscape of late adolescence, when friendships seem eternal and loves reincarnate. Set in Arkansas but first published in Amsterdam under the title Clicking Beat on the Brink of Nada, Cody quickly won praise from reviewers and readers across Europe and North America and caught the attention of William S. Burroughs and other writers who befriended the young author (Hale began writing the novel when he was sixteen). The first edition of the book was immediately banned in the United Kingdom during Margaret Thatcher's Operation Tiger. Today, Clicking Beat remains current and continues to be unique in both coming of age literature and the gay literary canon.

Cody: Clicking Beat on the Brink of Nada Details

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Author : Keith Hale

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From Reader Review Cody: Clicking Beat on the Brink of Nada for online ebook

Mike says

Fatally honest

Michael says

I am still reeling from the emotional ending of this book. First I have to say that the novel itself was not written in the most correct manner, some sentence structures being artificial and a little distracting at first. Then I got into the rhythms of the story and the characters grew on me with such intense emotions that I continued on regardless of some possible errors or overused speaking language. This book is short but deals with so many themes of weight that it is hard to remember them all; friendship developing into romance, coming out and coming of age, first major tragedies in life, loss, grief and depression, shared existences, growing apart and the depths of true love. There is a little Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance in there with the theme of philosophically trying to find one's way as balanced with the ways of those around you. I was so upset at Trotsky's choices involving Mark and Cody near the end that I wanted to shake him, but remembered that he's young and, even though great, SPOILER SPOILER these wounds will heal and I am hopeful that he will find his special someone that loves him in exactly the same way as he loved Cody. I was so pleased that there were poems, and some shared poems, at the end to bring us back into the power we felt between them, rather than ending the way it did. The poems were excellent as well.

Benjamin says

The narrator, seventeen year old Steven Trottingham Taylor lives with his mother Helen, his father having been killed just before he was born, and his fourteen year old half brother Freddy. His father was an active socialist, and his mother still holds to these ideals, Steven was named Trottingham with the intention he be called Trotsky in homage to these beliefs. Used to moving home frequently and the family has recently moved to Little Rock, Arkansas where Helen Taylor has taken a teaching position at the local university. Trotsky is pretty sure he is gay, especially following a failed attempt at seduction by Sarah whom he first met at the State Employment Service. At his new school Trotsky becomes aware of Cody, a charismatic and striking looking well built youth with soulful blue eyes and intriguing orange/blond long flopping hair, with whom he shares some classes. When they eventually meet face to face it is the start of a friendship that eventually develops in to something very special.

Trotsky is no ordinary lad; he has a good open relationship with his mother, and is especially fond of his half brother and takes a positive interest in him and his well being. In turn Freddy holds Trotsky in very high esteem, looking upon him as protective older brother and a father figure. He is socially aware and is interested in politics, poetry and literature, and is prone to exchanging poems with his friends including Cody.

The friendship between Trotsky and Cody becomes an especially close one, such that they can almost communicate on a spiritual level, yet it becomes clear to them both that while Trotsky would like to enjoy a physical relationship, Cody being straight claims he cannot reciprocate. Yet their love for one another becomes such that eventually Cody does make a move. By that time Trotsky is already enjoying a loving relationship with Freddy's best friend Mark.

Eventually tragedy strikes with profound consequences.

This is a very enjoyable story about friendship, love and understanding. It is also a story with a definite socialist leaning, and happily makes political point. The main characters come over as positive and appealing, and it is particularly pleasing that the account avoids some of the clichés found in many young gay love stories.

Matthew says

So, this is a gay coming-of-age story about high schoolers who quote Sartre and discuss politics all day long. I'm relatively young and thought that was ludicrous, but a lot of the other reviewers say that kids during that time -- the early 80s, I guess? -- were a lot better educated than my generation, so whatever. It still felt weird. Also, there's great humor in this book, the dialogue is really fun, and the main character's love interest is so dreamy he's unbelievable... but the ending! The fucking ending! A lot of the reviewers said that this is semi-autobiographical, which makes sense, because shit happens in this book for no reason and then there's no follow up to it, just like real life... but it's advertised as a novel, and even if it's based in truth, the real-life events should be worked into something that matters. AND THE FUCKING ENDING! I have never felt so depressed and cheated and pointless as I did when I finished this book... and yes, I've read the last book of the fucking Hunger Games trilogy, too.

Travisplug says

Reminds you of those lasting memories you make during adolescence. This book depicts a pure, warm honesty that's hard to find in literature sometimes. Not just any honesty but one you can bond with and relate to. The characters are really easy to become attached to. I enjoyed reading this book. It's very well written which I like.

Traci says

beautiful, heart-breaking, clever.

Elisa Rolle says

Cody, or as its author wanted to title it, and as he did in the reprint edition, Clicking Beat on the Brink of Nada, is at the same time one of the most easy and most difficult novel I have read. Easy because you fall in love for all the characters, Trotsky, Cody, Mark, Freddy, Christian, Flipping, Sarah, all of them so real and simple that they can be your high school mate, your neighbour, your brother; easy because, despite being written in an almost immaculate style (if not perfect at all), it's not boring or pedantic, and it calls both to young adult than adult readers. Difficult because it's one of the saddest novel I have ever read, but it's a strange type of "sad", I'm not crying, as often do when I'm moved by a novel, it's more like clamp around the heart, a feeling I think will remain long after I put down this book.

I knew this was not an happily ever after novel, I was not expecting it, but the range of reviews run from nice to awesome, so I had to read it. And really I'm happy, it was worth the experience; plus for most of the book,

even if knowing, I had not the feeling of imminent drama, the mood was really in line with the story, they were teenagers we were talking about, and as teenagers they behaved. In some point slightly funny, in some other very romantic and sometime even a little bit sexy, I really forgot that I was supposed to wait for a tragedy to strike.

Trotsky is in love with Cody, but Cody is straight. This is not an unrequited love, since even if Trotsky is not able to realize his love for Cody, they nevertheless build a strong relationship, something that is for sure more than friendship. Plus Cody is really the epitome of best friend, someone that will be always there when you need you most, and that will arrive to do everything to bring you comfort. Something that I like of Cody is that I think he was confident of his sexuality, and so not “threatened” by the fact that someone could be gay; even before Trotsky, Cody had a bond with Christian, who is openly gay, and he doesn’t question him or Flipping, Christian’s friend and maybe lover. The bond between Trotsky and Cody is strong, a bond probably stronger than love.

Trotsky will find love in the arms of Mark, his little brother’s best friend. Mark is 14 years old against Trotsky 17, but he is way more experienced on a sexual level. It’s Mark that seduces Trotsky, and it’s at the same time an healing and learning sex. Healing because it allows Trotsky to balance his relationship with Cody, learning because it gives him a piece of him that was essential for his growing, something he would not be able to find with Cody. Both Cody than Mark are essential to Trotsky’s development into a man and I agree with another reviewer who was hoping for Keith Hale to write a novel about an adult Trotsky; sadly I don’t think it’s in the stars and to whom wants to know what happened to Trotsky, I think the only way is to imagine, he is maybe a poet, he is maybe a teacher, he is maybe an activist... in a way or the other I think he made his own all the teachings he received from Christian, Mark, Freddy, Cody and all the wonderful soul he met the year when he was seventeen.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/141965991X/?...>

Traci Halesvass says

Sensitive tale of a boy coming of age dealing with rural culture and tragedy. Well written prose.

Dick says

This book was definitely not what I expected!

It was a thoughtful and thought provoking novel about a young man who happens to be gay. His life is explained in a mixture of socio-political experiences that were part of what all of his friends and family seemed to be about. The book takes place in Arkansas, but was first published in the Netherlands and I wonder if the Netherlands might be more into teens with very strident political views. . The political views of these teens are communistic or at least socialistic and because of the views which are also taught by the mother in her college classes, the plot thickens.

I had a hard time with 17 year olds who were quoting Sartre and reading authors that I still don't dare to read (that's my bad, not theirs) but I still don't see this happening in Arkansas or any other US city.

There is a nice story of Trotsky's friendship and love of his friend, Cody, but it was treated as a minor story although the reader knew that it was a major part of what was going on for young Trotsky.

I could only recommend this book to someone that I knew had similar or opposing views to the overall story. But it's definitely not the story that I thought I was going to read.

Craig says

The previous coming out /coming of age books I've recently read seemed to have a rather basic style of writing and the stories were very simplistic. "Cody" is a well written story with rich characters. Steve Trottingham Taylor, Trotsky, is the narrator. He has just moved Arkansas with his mother and brother. Almost on sight he falls for the astonishingly good looking Cody. The two of them hit it off right away and even though Cody is straight, the two form a meaningful friendship.

I liked that this book doesn't focus solely on Trotsky's sexuality as other books seem to do with their main characters. There is more going on in this young man's head that deals with politics, religion, family, and friendship.

Neil Munday says

deep depths to soak my brain

Avivs says

This book is beautifully written. I love the characters and the writing itself is beautiful and simple. A very moving story that you won't regret reading.

5 stars.

Lester says

Interesting reading with a good mix of feeling, joy, sadness, funny, intense, and all in all a great story of love and friendship.

Eric says

A sometimes funny, sometimes tear-producing tale of young friendship, love, and loss.

Leslie says

I read this book while on vacation. I don't know if it was the vacation high or the book high, but this book

made me want more. Glad I read this one!

Shane Pennell says

My favorite book. Period. I love the characters. The story tears my heart out, but in a good way. I've read it over and over and over and was so happy to see a revised edition come out. It's even better than ever now. Anyone who read *Perks of Being a Wallflower* and liked it should read this book.

Riley Gardner says

Clicking Beat on the Brink of Nada is a fantastic novel, making readers laugh, shake their head, go "oooooh" at things, flip pages dramatically. Once you're done, I'd recommend staring out a window on a weekday afternoon (preferably around noon) and contemplate your life. Very few novels have made me do that.

Following the narrative of Trotsky, a teenager thrown into frightening and frustrating situation, we're detailed how friendly, loss and family severely affect the lives of our youth, and eventually these character become part of your own family, which is why the end of the novel can be devastating because you realize this is it for the characters. There is no sequel, so these characters you're falling in love with are gone until you re-read.

Trotsky is dealing with more than any teenager ought to be: a mother who is an outspoken socialist at the local university she teaches out and the responses the Cold War era brings, as well as being madly in love with his best friend Cody, who loves him back only on a spiritual level (which, can we all agree, sucks quite a bit?), a dead father, while balancing school and a job and other things most teenagers write angst blogs about. Trotsky is one hell of a character and one hell of a teenager.

It feels authentic, mostly because after repeat readings, it becomes incredibly obvious the novel is semi-biographical about the author's experiences as a teenager in 1980's Arkansas. On other repeat reads, this becomes more seemingly obvious as there are events that don't seem to really interconnect with each other (the death of one character, for instance, that leads to really nothing - it just happens, and it sucks), and the style of writing at a few parts becomes a bit more abstract and occasionally difficult to follow. Don't let that push you away from the book, though. It *will* stick with you like the time you accidentally ate goldfish crackers crawling with ants. You never forget it.

Read this novel. It's something special.

Jef Blocker says

Potential readers would do themselves a disservice to pass on this novel as just a coming-of-age LGBT YA novel. The voice of the protagonist seems much older and mature than a seventeen-year-old young man; however, his upbringing seems to make this plausible. In many ways, it resonates with our times because of the political conflict within the story. The intense relationship between Trotsky and Cody borders on the metaphysical, and the philosophical discussions are food for thought. The number of gay characters and tragedies might seem a bit unbelievable when considered outside of the story; however, if the reader allows himself to allow the story to unfold, it doesn't seem like too much of a stretch. Cody certainly seems to have

a healthy and atypical perspective on sexuality, that is intriguing and refreshing. The author includes poetry written by the two main characters at the end of the book, which is an interesting touch. This would be an interesting read to discuss in context with the time it was published.

Robert L says

Really good book, some very sad parts.

Roger Kean says

I'm surprised at the reviews I've read here, notwithstanding every reader's right to their opinion. There seems to be a consensus that Trotsky, Cody, and their friends are too erudite for seventeen-year-olds in Arkansas in the 1980s. And yet at least half those I called good friends at my school wrote existentialist poetry, could quote whole passages of Sartre, read Hesse (as well as James Bond for light relief), and discussed endlessly the point of life (or lack thereof). So much the the review of the reviews. Hale's story undoubtedly belongs in the ranks of other gay masterpieces.
