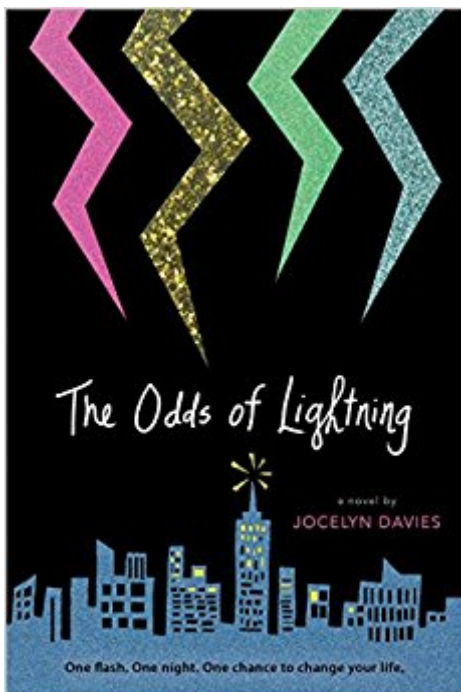


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The Odds Of Lightning



Synopsis

A bolt of lightning inspires an incredible journey in this charming, magical realism adventure that takes four teens on an all-night journey through the streets of New York City. Extraordinary things happen when we least expect them. Tiny, Lu, Will and Nathaniel used to be best friends. Then life-defining events the summer before high school tore them apart. Now, three years later, they hardly talk anymore. Nathaniel has become obsessed with winning the prestigious science scholarship that his genius older brother once won. Will has risen from anonymity to popular soccer star. Lu grew into a brash, impetuous actress. And shy, poetic Tiny has slowly been fading away. But fate weaves their lives together again the night before the SATs, during a wild thunderstorm that threatens to shut down New York City. And lightning strikes. Before they know what's hit them, the four teens embark on an epic all-night adventure to follow their dreams, fall in and out of love, reconcile the past, and overcome the fears that have been driving them since that one lost summer. And by the time the sun rises, odds are they'll discover that there's a fine line between science and magic, and that the mysteries of love and friendship can't be explained.

Customer Reviews

Jocelyn Davies One-on-One Interview with Jay Asher Jay Asher Jocelyn Davies JA: The Odds of Lightning feels like a love letter to New York City. What is it about New York that made it such a magical place to set your story? And what are some of your favorite, magical places in New York? JD: New York truly is a place that has its own magnetic force. It's this big place with some of the tallest buildings in the world, and millions of people living and working and laughing and crying and dreaming and struggling and celebrating in every one of them at any given second. People come here from all over to live out their own stories. It's a place where stories happen. With so many people living out their own stories simultaneously, it's impossible not to think about the twists of fate that cause people's lives to intersect. That idea is a big part of what inspired The Odds of Lightning. I think that's why so many books and movies take place here. There are infinite possibilities, in life and in art. As far as magical places, there are so many—but I have some favorites. Wollman Rink: What's more magical than ice skating in the middle of Central Park? Nothing makes you feel more like a character in a New York City romantic comedy. The Temple of Dendur at the Metropolitan Museum of Art: The ruins of an Egyptian temple transplanted in a giant glass-enclosed room. There's something about being there that makes you want to whisper. The Museum of Natural History is one of my favorite

places in the city. I used to go there all the time as a kid (I really did slide down the giant jade slab in the minerals and gems room like Will and Lu) so it was special for me to include it in the book. Driving across the Brooklyn Bridge in a taxi with the windows down fills me with love for New York, every time. Whether I'm going towards Manhattan, and the famous skyline is backlit by the sun or glittering at night, or toward Brooklyn, it just feels like home. In this story, when lightning strikes Tiny, Lu, Nathaniel and Will, something extraordinary happens: their deepest insecurities become physically real (Tiny turns invisible, Lu turns numb, etc...). If lightning struck you as a teenager, what fear would have manifested for you? What about if lightning struck you now? In the book, Tiny loves this line from *The Great Gatsby* about "the unreality of reality," and the rock of the world being founded securely on a fairy's wing. And that's how I felt a lot of the time—that life was always shifting beneath me, that things were always one heartbeat away from changing in unpredictable ways. The thing was, I wanted them to. Part of what inspired this book was the memory of how powerfully I wanted things to change. To be better than I was, smarter than I was, cooler than I was, more confident, happier, bolder, etc. The feeling of wanting more was all consuming. So maybe that would have manifested in being constantly, insatiably hungry for more. I probably relate to Tiny more now—that feeling of wanting to be heard and understood (both insecurities are probably why I became a writer!). On a more fun note, if lightning gave you magical powers, what would you want yours to be? And you can't say flying because that's obvious. (It's also my answer, so I want something more creative!)

Gr 9 Up • As a monumental thunderstorm threatens New York City, high school juniors Nathaniel, Will, Tiny, and Lu confront their pasts and attempt to make a future together. The four former best friends are thrust together the night before the SATs. Trapped on the roof of Will's home, they are the victims of a lightning strike that leaves each changed in a remarkable way. Seamless weaving of past and present gives readers glimpses into why each character has been transformed by the event. As the teens fight to return to normal in time for the SATs, friendships are rekindled and love rediscovered. Davies creates a fun adventure that will appeal to romantics who wish for a life-altering moment of their own. Nathaniel's superhuman strength and Will's uncontrolled body-morphing are examples of elements that beg readers to let go of reality and buckle up for the ride. The protagonists all realize how precious love is, whether it is for another or oneself, before they are ready to get back to normal. Jumping between present and past keeps the story fresh and fast, sucking in reluctant readers ready for a fun romance. Fans of David Levithan will appreciate the real-life struggles balanced with quirky elements. VERDICT For those who enjoy a touch of

magic with their romance. — Carrie Finberg, South Park High School, PA

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