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Croak (Croak Series Book 1)

"Go ahead and die laughing, knowing that the safe transport of your mortal soul
will be the summer job of a sweetheart teen with godlike power and discipline problems.
A lot of books make me wish I could live within their pages,
but I wouldn't mind dying in this one."
—Adam Rex, author of *Fat Vampire*



Synopsis

Fed up with her wild behavior, sixteen-year-old Lex's parents ship her off to upstate New York to live with her Uncle Mort for the summer, hoping that a few months of dirty farm work will whip her back into shape. But Uncle Mort's true occupation is much dirtier than shoveling manure. He's a Grim Reaper. And he's going to teach Lex the family business. She quickly assimilates into the peculiar world of Croak, a town populated by reapers who deliver souls from this life to the next. But Lex can't stop her desire for justice or is it vengeance? whenever she encounters a murder victim, craving to stop the attackers before they can strike again. Will she ditch Croak and go rogue with her reaper skills?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

5 out of 5 gnomesCroak is one big bursting bundle of awesome. I adored this unique book, even though it did practically blind me with it's reflective silver cover when I was reading it outside. The

book has a lot of morbid humor which fits in nicely with my own sense of humor. This is the kind of book that you'll find yourself actually laughing out loud a lot. Lex is one heck of a troublemaker, so much so that her nickname at school is Tyrannosaurus Lex. She has so much anger and no friends, her only friend is her twin sister Cordy. After a biting incident at school she's sent off to her Uncle Mort's for the summer. She's horrified by this but when she gets there she finds that Mort lives a rather interesting life. Weird as it sounds, I think I would like to visit Croak, in description it kind of gave off a kind of Beetlejuice mixed with the town of Mayberry type vibe. One of my favorite parts of the town has to be the afterlife and all the important people in there, especially Edgar. Grims and the role of killer and culler is fascinating, also I kind of want my own scythe. Lex and Driggs are a great partnership and their relationship really had me laughing. They compliment each other perfectly and their levels of snarkiness/sarcasm are top notch. There's some serious mystery when people start dying mysteriously and nobody knows why. As the deaths pile up there are suspicions aplenty and red herrings to who the bad guy is. When the big bad is revealed though and you look back the pieces really do fall into place. The part leading up to the ending was so very intense. I gasped out loud when I figured out who was about to be found dead. The ending, wow what a downer. I so wasn't expecting what happened, I think I figured things out just about at the same time Lex did. I really am looking forward to seeing where Lex goes from here.

The premise of this book is cool. The character designs sound neat (who doesn't love a motorcycle-riding, weird experimental scientist, take-it-in-stride, Actually, I Own This Town uncle named Mort?), but unfortunately, by the middle of the book, every single character was exactly the same. I mean it; they all used the same phrases, seemed to react to everything in the same way, and I had to keep backtracking to the intro scenes to try and remember who was who. Not that they aren't physically diverse, and we're told over and over that they have different personalities. For example, one girl is described as a chatterbox. Whenever she starts talking, people roll their eyes and try to interrupt her and make jokes about how much she talks. But if you actually go through and compare how long her little speeches are compared to when literally anyone else in the book talks...well, she probably soliloquies less - mostly because she gets interrupted constantly. The only people who are in any way distinguishable are the two bullies in Croak, and it's sort of hilarious that a grown man and grown woman seem to live for the moments when they can stalk up to a group of teenagers and call them 'stupid.' that's it. That's all they do. They are ugly and they glare a lot and they are virtually identical in everything but name and gender, and all they do, despite ostensibly being very important upper management, is show up at odd moments when the teenagers are

sitting in a diner or in a park or whatever, and call them all idiots and slackers. And then the heroine says something that isn't really witty but everyone reacts like it's a TOTAL BURN, DUDE, and the bullies stomp off, defeated. The plot about the people dying of unknown causes (which is a problem when you're a reaper and it's your job to know the cause) isn't too boring or predictable, I'll give it that. But by the middle of the book, I just couldn't be bothered to care.

To me, Croak felt like a revised edition of Harry Potter, but instead of wizards, it was the world of grim reapers. Main character is thrust into this mystical world that couldn't possibly exist (yet it does) and has to learn the ropes pretty quickly in this fantastic new home (run by this crazy-yet-wise-old-man), making quirky friends and a couple of unwarranted enemies, turns out to be a real natural in this new environment, and then must defeat an evil genius. Oh, and there's this splendiferous drink that blows everyone's mind, but us muggles will never taste the likes of it. Despite the fact that I was quoting Harry Potter throughout the whole thing, this book was really awesome in its own magnificent way. It was cleverly punny (yes, punny), the story was interesting, and I loved the characters. Sometimes only a book's ending is good enough to make you contemplate continuing onto the sequel, but I was hooked onto the whole trilogy about halfway through. Ready for book two!

I'd never heard of this book before my best friend recommended it to me and I'm so glad that she did! I loved the writing and plot so much! It was really engaging and fun. I thought the characters were really relatable and real. There's some really great dark humor from a couple of the characters which I really liked. And Lex was amazing. She's exactly what I look for in a female character. But the best part of this book is how entertaining it is. I really enjoyed reading it and I'd definitely recommend it.

You'll either like Lex or want to slap her upside the head. She's not particularly likable or admirable. Most find her borderline obnoxious, which she is. You might feel this unusual take on the Grim Reaper legend is worth putting up with her. For me, it was enough to slog through to the end to find out who the killer was. I don't have any interest in continuing the series.

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