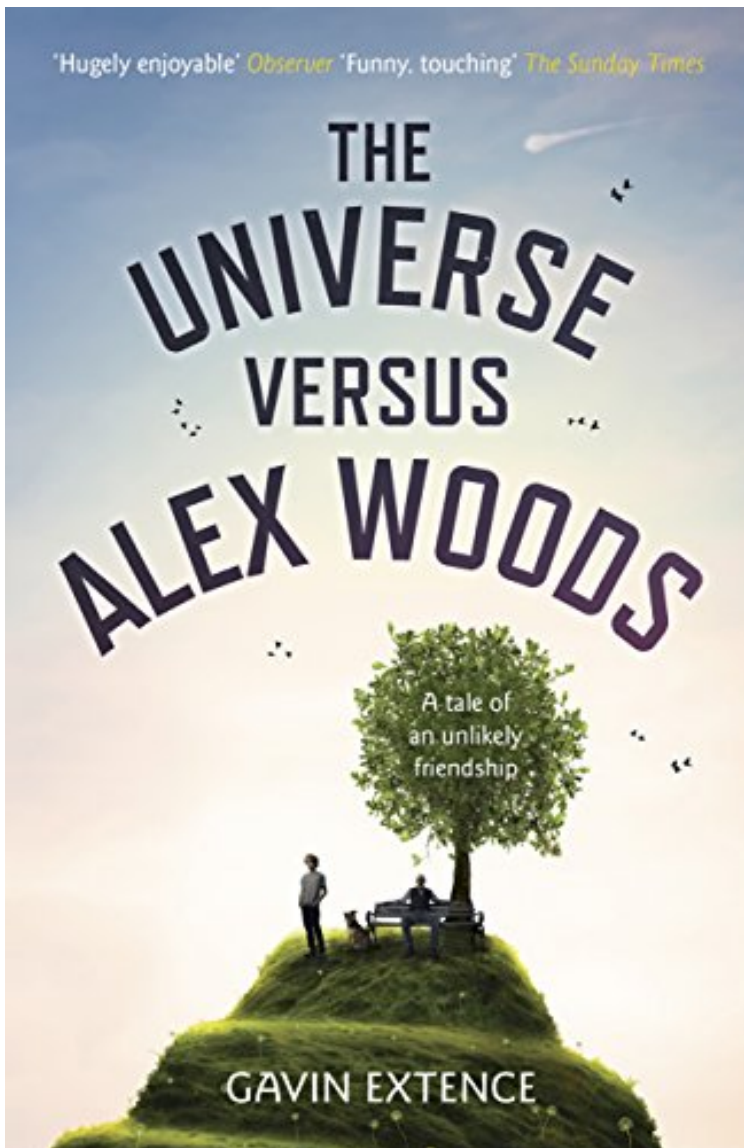


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# The Universe versus Alex Woods (English Edition)



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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur\*Perfect for fans of A BOY MADE OF BLOCKS\*\*\*RICHARD AND JUDY summer bookclub read 2013, Rising star, and shortlisted for the Desmond Elliott Prize\*\*\*\*\* A funny and touching story of an unlikely friendship and an improbable journey\*\*\*Alex Woods knows that he hasn't had the most conventional start in life. He knows that growing up with a clairvoyant single mother won't endear him to the local bullies. He also knows that even the most improbable events can happen - he's got the scars to prove it. What he doesn't know yet is that when he meets ill-tempered, reclusive widower Mr Peterson, he'll

make an unlikely friend. Someone who tells him that you only get one shot at life. That you have to make the best possible choices. So when, aged seventeen, Alex is stopped at Dover customs with 113 grams of marijuana, an urn full of ashes on the passenger seat, and an entire nation in uproar, he's fairly sure he's done the right thing. A tale of an unexpected friendship, an unlikely hero and an improbable journey, Alex's story treads the fine line between light and dark, laughter and tears. And it might just strike you as one of the funniest, most heartbreaking novels you've ever read.

Revue de presse This is a story that will have you smiling through your tears, a story that touches on the most potentially devastating of human dilemmas, without an ounce of sentimentality. It is also enormously uplifting. Perfectly crafted and beautifully written, the voice of this novel is true and clear and brings to life the human condition with insight, tenderness and humour. Which is to say the quality of style matches the quality of content. The Universe versus Alex Woods may be a debut novel but it is an outstanding novel by any standards. Unforgettable. (Red) 'It's Mark Haddon meets Kurt Vonnegut' (Observer) 'An eccentric young protagonist meets his match in a compelling comic debut' (The Bookseller) 'One of the year's most anticipated debuts' (Time Out) 'You'll laugh and cry... One of the funniest and most heartbreaking double acts in ages . . . an exceptionally good debut novel 5\*' (Heat) 'Fans of quirky tales will love this debut novel' (Bella) 'This is an extraordinary debut novel. For me, Gavin Extence has produced in his narrator and hero Alex one of the most intriguing literary young people since Mark Haddon's Christopher. He's reminiscent of a better behaved Just William as an 11-year-old, combining a hyper-intelligence with naiveté that's as quirky as his upbringing' (The Bookbag) The debate around assisted suicide is eternally controversial but, when it comes to an argument for allowing sick people of mind the right to die, The Universe Versus Alex Woods trumps any Dignitas spokesman . . . Where this novel shines is in its characterisation: the brittle outer layers of socially awkward people are unpeeled to reveal big hearts and raw emotions. The sparring between Alex and Mr Peterson is a joy to read . . . With wit and warmth, Gavin Extence shines a light on one of the darkest, most difficult subjects of our time. (Sunday Express) Warm and funny and tragic and uplifting all in one. Extence should be on everyone's radar (Jasper Fforde) 'Extence unfolds his offbeat tale with skill but his real triumph lies in providing such a memorable voice' (The Sunday Times) 'Extence's plotting is astute, and he handles the theme of euthanasia with an affecting delicacy' (Financial Times) 'Where this novel shines is in its characterisation: the brittle outer layers of socially awkward people are unpeeled to reveal big hearts and raw emotions. The sparring between Alex and Mr Peterson is a joy to read . . . With wit and warmth, Gavin Extence shines a light on one of the darkest, most difficult subjects of our time' (Sunday Express) 'The author Gavin Extence has been likened to Mark Haddon and Kurt Vonnegut, but the best comparison I can make is to JK Rowling's The Casual Vacancy. It's not the subject matter, more the way that Extence takes a small group of characters and builds up a story that hooks you in slowly and enduringly so, when the final crescendo peaks, you're so involved that you're weeping in to your pillow at 2am on a school night because you just had to know what happens. Then, of course, there's Alex: the quirkiest hero to grace modern literature since Adrian Mole . . . both heartwarming and painful to read . . . a resonant coming-of-age tale with a light touch.' (Stylist) 'Extence masters the difficult combination of comedy and tragedy and his lovingly-drawn central characters provoke deep-thought. Like his mother's colleague, emo-esque Ellie, readers will become increasingly fond of Alex, the nave - yet insightful - narrator. Here's hoping Extence plans a sequel.' (We Love This Book) 'Laugh-out-loud funny in places, Gavin Extence's debut novel perfectly captures the awkwardness and agonies of growing up . . . Death, faith and morality are some of the gigantic concepts tackled here but with a lightness of touch and humour that never sounds like preaching.' (Press Association) 'The Universe Versus Alex Woods is built on brilliant characterisation, humour and emotional sincerity, cemented by philosophical mettle . . . a very impressive debut novel. With writing that is logical yet lyrical, comic yet compassionate, Gavin Extence has revealed the simple beauty of laughter, friendship, love and reason.' (Litro) 'When the material darkens towards the end, Extence skilfully manages to keep the narrative engaging and surprising. Mr Peterson, in particular, is a welcome antidote to those endless depictions of wise old men who know everything, being a spiky, contradictory figure raging against the dying of the light with impressive and stirring verve. After it finds its voice, this is a hugely enjoyable and even wise book, with plenty to say about life and death, and Vonnegut fans, in particular, will absolutely love it'. (Observer) 'Sensitive, intelligent and articulate' (Joe Thomas, from The Inbetweeners) This is the most thought-provoking book I have read for a long time.... I laughed out loud and cried quite a lot. (Pages Pages Booksellers) 'Spectacularly barmy, unexpectedly moving and reasonably thought-provoking (beattiesbookblog.blogspot.co.uk) It's becoming a cliché to say that x is a strong debut novel which shows the author has potential but TUvsAW is one of

those novels... Extence is a strong writer. Alex Woods feels like a unique and powerful character and as a narrator had me laughing and crying... it's a tale well worth telling and reading. It's also one that makes a cross-over novel for adults and children alike and I'm curious to see that Gavin Extence writes next. (GavReads)'The novel won me over. Extence tells a great story that owes much to Kurt Vonnegut, but also something to Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and John Irving's *A Prayer for Owen Meany*. It's hard not to see an echo of Harry Potter too, in the boy hero with a scar on his head. The final section is human and touching and Extence deserves credit for the clever and timely idea of fictionalising a trip to the Swiss death clinic...Extence's hugely likeable first novel is a fairytale for rationalists' (Guardian.co.uk)This is a genuinely hilarious read, but also a deeply moving story about childhood, neurology and mortality. (Daily Telegraph)Prsentation de l'diteur\*Perfect for fans of **A BOY MADE OF BLOCKS**\*\*\*RICHARD AND JUDY summer bookclub read 2013, Rising star, and shortlisted for the Desmond Elliott Prize\*\*\*\*\* A funny and touching story of an unlikely friendship and an improbable journey\*\*\*Alex Woods knows that he hasn't had the most conventional start in life. He knows that growing up with a clairvoyant single mother won't endear him to the local bullies. He also knows that even the most improbable events can happen - he's got the scars to prove it. What he doesn't know yet is that when he meets ill-tempered, reclusive widower Mr Peterson, he'll make an unlikely friend. Someone who tells him that you only get one shot at life. That you have to make the best possible choices. So when, aged seventeen, Alex is stopped at Dover customs with 113 grams of marijuana, an urn full of ashes on the passenger seat, and an entire nation in uproar, he's fairly sure he's done the right thing.A tale of an unexpected friendship, an unlikely hero and an improbable journey, Alex's story treads the fine line between light and dark, laughter and tears. And it might just strike you as one of the funniest, most heartbreaking novels you've ever read.