



Cadillac Chronicles

Brett Hartman

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Sixteen year-old Alex Riley's top priorities in life are to find his long-absent father and a girl with a decent set of breasts. But his mother has a knack for sabotaging his plans. To advance her political career, she takes in an elderly black man named Lester Bray. Lester arrives with a vintage Cadillac and an old man's personality. It takes only a week for Alex's mother to ask Lester to leave. That makes Alex angry. On the morning of his eviction, Lester and Alex set out on a road trip, ostensibly to find the boy's father in Fort Lauderdale. But the two don't just head south. They also cross through un-navigated political, racial, and personal territory. A wild ride, *Cadillac Chronicles* explores what it means to—finally—find a real friend.

Brett Hartman lived an unremarkable life in Fort Lauderdale until May 18, 1983, when he was arrested for aggravated battery. While away at Auburn University, he suffered a psychotic breakdown and months of intensive treatment. Though he made a full recovery, the events of that period never left him. He continued his education at Indiana State, where he received a doctorate in clinical psychology; he has worked as a psychologist ever since. His memoir *Hammerhead 84* covers his journey through the mental health industry. *Cadillac Chronicles* is his debut novel. He lives in Albany, New York, with his wife and their two sons.

Cadillac Chronicles Details

Date : Published October 23rd 2012 by Cinco Puntos Press (first published October 16th 2012)

ISBN : 9781935955412

Author : Brett Hartman

Format : Hardcover 304 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Realistic Fiction, Coming Of Age, Travel, Road Trip, Humor, Cultural

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From Reader Review Cadillac Chronicles for online ebook

Don O'goodreader says

Alex Riley is 16 and naive. Lester Bray is old and wise. Together they drive Lester's Cadillac Deville from upstate New York to Fort Lauderdale to find Alex's father, then to Alabama to visit Lester's sister, finally returning home.

This YA (coming of age) novel confronts the issues of racism, homosexuality, flawed parents, and bad therapists with a philosophy of personal responsibility and tolerance. The lack of evil and spirit of acceptance make the book a pleasure to read.

For the complete review see: <http://1book42day.blogspot.com/2013/0...>

I won a copy of this book in a Goodreads First Reads giveaway on July 4, 2013 from CBSD LIBRARY (A Goodreads Librarian - not the author). I received the book on July 19, 2013.

Kellee says

Reviewed at: <http://www.teachmentortexts.com/2012/...>

This is a book that surprised me. I'll admit that I definitely judged a book by its cover and when I decided to read this book, I assumed it was going to be boring. I am so glad that I still chose to jump in and I am so happy to be able to share this book with others.

Alex is a boy much like many of the teens we know- a loner, over medicated, depressed, yet brilliant and talented and no one sees it. Also, he has a mother who just doesn't see that he should be a priority. Lucky for him, his mother's need for publicity and acceptance brought him face to face with a man that changed his life.

Even reading this summary, it almost sounds cliche and didactic, but it is more than that. It is a road trip book that doesn't fit into the fold of other road trip books. I am a fan of road trip books because they are definitely a way to help characters unfold and for hope, realization, epiphanies, etc. to play a part and although this book does do that, it's clicheness ends there.

And what makes this book so special? Lester Bray. Lester Bray is the man that changes Alex's life. Lester is a man that outside of our story, changed many lives. He is so real that I feel like I know him and also makes me wish I could.

Topics: Racism, Depression, Medication, Psychiatry, Politics, Friendship, Parenting, Virginia Tech Shooting

Snatch of Text 132, 127, 128, 169, 218

Mentor text for: Characterization, Plot Development, Voice

Patricia Powell says

Alex, 16 years old takes a road trip with African American aged Lester, partly to escape his controlling mother, partly to find his absent father. This well-written coming of age story taught me something about adolescent boys. The dialog always rang true. While not overly written, there are some great turns of phrases. By the second page I was pretty sure I was going to enjoy this book, especially when I read, "The man extended a gaunt hand, tufts of gray hair at the knuckles like miniature welcome mats." Perfect, unexpected. I'll try to get this in the hands of every adolescent boy I know.

Yael Levy says

Nice!

Pamela Kramer says

"Cadillac Chronicles" by Brett Hartman is, on the surface, a journey by car to the South. But it is much, much more. It is a story of growing up. It's about growing old. It's about family. It's about loyalty. And most of all, it's about friendship.

Lester Bray is not someone Alex Riley would ever have thought of as a friend. He's more like a social project that his mother decided on. Have an elderly person move in with the two of them -- brownie points that might help to advance her political career.

But after a short time, his mom wants Lester to leave. He's old, he's grumpy, and he doesn't like politics. But when he's told he has to leave, he has nowhere to go. Alex suggests that they go south to visit Lester's sister. He offers to accompany Lester.

Alex has a secret motive. His father, who left his mother when Alex was one, has never communicated with Alex. Alex looked him up and knows he lives in Ft. Lauderdale. Alex wants to meet him and find out why his father has made no effort to be a part of Alex's life.

Lester agrees to the plan and they sneak out the next morning driving Lester's ancient Cadillac. What ensues is a trip that is life-changing for Alex. He doesn't just find his father, he finds his moral compass. And it's a compass that leads him to do the right thing -- no matter what.

Read the whole review at: [Cadillac Chronicles](#)

Vince Vawter says

A road trip for a 16-year-old is not that unusual. Maybe not even in a Cadillac Deville. But when Alex Riley hooks up with Lester Bray, an elderly black man, the game is on. I enjoyed every mile of it.

The reader needs to know that the writer doesn't cop out on the sexual yearnings of a 16-year-old as well as a boy's new-found freedom with profanity. At the same time, the reality of the racial divide is explored with a splendid frankness. To gloss over the above would make for a trip that doesn't have any soul.

Road stories demand that we learn something at the end of the journey. Alex does and so do we. In spades.

Margaret Peot says

Alex, the disagreeable, friendless teenager who is the main character in Cadillac Chronicles captured my attention from the first page, and held onto it til the end, capturing my heart along the way. There is a road trip, a beautiful girl, a fantastic, unexpected friendship, trouble with parents, along with a potent dose of racism and homophobia. Lester, the elderly man who befriends Alex, is a powerhouse, a powerful, bracing voice, making me wish all teenagers could have such a friend. A really fine book.

Rebecca Hughes says

I received a copy of this book in the goodreads giveaway. I thought the author did a fantastic job. The story of a 16 yr. old boy and an elderly man is not just a story about a physical journey but an emotional journey as well. The two of them met at a time in their lives that they really needed one another. They became the best of friends as one's life nears the end while the other's life is really just beginning. It was a wonderful journey. I loved this book and would recommend it to any adult or older teen. I thought it would be alright for my younger teens but after reading it realized that there is one chapter that is really not all that appropriate for younger teens. I can't wait to read more written by this author.

Barbara says

Although the road traveled by this novel by a debut YA author is fairly familiar, it's hard not to root for sixteen-year-old Alex Riley and hope that he manages to make his way through relatively smoothly. Alex and his mother don't get along, and he wishes that he knew more about his father who lives in Florida. Because it will make her look good and advance her political career, Alex's mother agrees to take in elderly Lester Bray but quickly changes her mind after Lester proves to be too troublesome. When Alex's annoyance with his mother grows, he and Lester take Lester's Cadillac from his home in New York to the South. The two continue to bond over the trip even while Alex learns the truth about his father and loses his virginity while visiting Lester's hometown. All sorts of detours help Alex come to understand himself better and develop tolerance for those around him. Readers will certainly fall in love with Selma who deflowers Alex and shows him how to please her through oral sex, and they will probably want to get out their maps or navigational devices and plan their own life-changing road trips. I'll be looking for more from this fresh voice.

Susan says

A must read.

Anna Olswanger says

Cadillac Chronicles is the story of a white teenage boy and an elderly black man traveling together but heading in opposite directions. The unlikely pairing of Alex, the teenage boy, and Lester, the elderly man, comes by way of an adopt-a-senior program gone haywire. The fault lies primarily with Alex's mother, a church-surfing politician wannabe who thinks that bringing an old black man into her home will help her career. Instead, Lester absconds with Alex on a road trip from Albany to Fort Lauderdale in search of the boy's father.

Cadillac Chronicles is a coming-of-age adventure crossed with end-of-life poignancy. It's a book for young readers who can enjoy a work of fiction without sorcerers, vampires, werewolves, zombies or any combination thereof.

If you like discovering the heart inside a teenage boy, you'll like this book. I did. A lot.

Brett is also the author of *Hammerhead 84*, a memoir published in 2005 that recounts his tumultuous freshman year in college and the psychiatric mismanagement that made the year special. The book picked up some very nice reviews and blurbs (including one from James Frey, pre-scandal).

Once you know this, you'll understand why Brett dedicated *Cadillac Chronicles* to the memory of Rebecca Riley, a little girl, four years old, who died from being overmedicated by a psychiatrist.

Brain Annex says

Although the overall storyline is a bit predictable, the stops along the way are interesting. Not groundbreaking but solid for a debut novel.

Elisha Roberts says

I really enjoyed this book. I'm not a fan of the swearing, but it still was an amazing book! I'd totally recommend it :)

Brandon Buford says

Great book.

Emilyf11 says

loved it. Enjoyable satisfying read.

