

[PDF] With A Little Luck: A Novel

Caprice Crane - pdf download free book

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Description:

Review "Romantic, poignant and funny—this book is a lucky find for lit fans. Caprice Crane is a nimble and gifted storyteller."—Diablo Cody, Academy Award-winning screenwriter of *Juno*

"Crane is one of the funniest writers of popular fiction around. The dialog (inner and outer) is laugh-out-loud, snort-inducing hilarious . . . Readers will want to cross their fingers and spit while throwing salt over their shoulders if it helps Berry reach her dreams. Highly recommended."—*Library Journal*

"Fans of Stacy Ballis and Cara Lockwood will appreciate Crane's effortlessly funny style, which is often attempted in popular fiction but is rarely this well executed...Lighthearted and charmingly honest."--*Booklist*

"[A] satisfying romantic comedy...[with] real character growth."--*Kirkus Reviews*

"*With a Little Luck* scores in humor, head, and heart. In other words, it's a perfect trifecta."—Karyn Bosnak, author of *20 Times a Lady* (soon to be the major motion picture *What's Your Number?*)

"A hilarious romp that oozes charm and giddy fun. Caprice Crane is a true talent."—Molly Jong-Fast, author of *The Social Climber's Handbook*

"Witty, fast-paced, and sheer fun. Caprice Crane is a master of dialogue. Half the time I was reading this book I was smiling, which made me look like a crazy person on the subway."—Jancee Dunn, author of *Don't You Forget About Me* and *Why Is My Mother Getting a Tattoo?*

"Absolutely charming and hilarious."--Missy Peregrin, star of the movie *Stick It* and ABC's *Rookie Blue*

"Crane is a talented writer and fiercely funny, and this book is her best work." --The Roanoke Times

"*With A Little Luck* was something special, it had it all; it was funny, it was romantic, it was sweet, it was charming." --ChickLitReviews

Praise for the novels of Caprice Crane

"Perceptive, touching, and always hilarious . . . an irresistible story with equal parts humor and heart."—Emily Giffin, author of *Heart of the Matter*, on *Family Affair*

"Savage wit and breathtaking tenderness . . . Crane has romantic comedy in her DNA."—Jeff Arch, Oscar-nominated screenwriter of *Sleepless in Seattle*, on *Forget About It*

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter One

In this life, you could grow old sitting around waiting to get lucky.

That didn't come out right. What I meant is that waiting to accidentally run into Richard Branson in line to buy a burger at the very moment he's desperately looking for a new Executive Vice President of Adventure and Party Planning ("You'll just have to do," he says as he whisks you away in the limo), or waiting for that falling safe to just miss hitting you before it smashes through the sidewalk and plummets into a sewer tunnel, or waiting for a wealthy, athletic, artistic, wise, unpretentious, multilingual, manly, sensitive contradiction of impossible handsomeness to lean over and say, "Excuse me-I believe I left my stethoscope here on the way to the children's hospital" . . . Well, let's just agree you're going to be waiting awhile.

Me? I don't tempt fate. I don't dare destiny.

I may talk about hitting the lottery, but the truth is I never play because deep inside-on some level that's so far down it's beneath where I keep the memory of the time I walked in on my parents showering-I know there's no such thing as luck.

But I also have learned that believing there's no such thing as luck is very unlucky. Like, the worst. Beyond stealing someone's lucky four- leaf clover. (I know someone who did that and died. Seriously. Three years after doing it, he had a heart attack. And his great- granddaughter never forgave him-

but I guess in some perverse way she got justice.)

If that sounds like a contradiction, I suppose maybe it is. But maybe not. Maybe I just don't believe in good luck. Bad luck-particularly of the sort arising from ignoring intuition and superstitions-that's another thing altogether.

The history of superstition is also a history of timing. We'll never know whether a lone sober Trojan looked across the courtyard on that fateful night and said, "I don't like the look of that horse thing. Bad luck." But if he or she had, the protest would have fallen on deaf ears: The masses were completely tickled pink by the offering. History has shown that it pays to be suspicious of large, seemingly useless gifts from one's sworn enemy. And that includes your aunt's sketchy second husband.

Consider: If the captain of the Titanic had pulled out his tin bullhorn and announced, "Someone in first class just threw a shoe into a mirror and broke it, so I've got a bad feeling about this route- let's slow down and head south," then as a purely scientific matter, superstition would have saved that ship. I'm just saying.

And if I had only listened to my intuition-that socially acceptable term for what is really superstition-I'd never have followed Emily Ottinger through that third yellow light (I swear it was still yellow) on the way to the mall and never would have ended up wrapping my mom's new Audi around Mr. Pitrelli's pickup truck when I was sixteen. Mean, old, grouchy, kid-hating Mr. Pitrelli, I might add.

One moment follows another. Next comes from previous. So you have to stay on your toes. Protect yourself. Listen to that little voice inside you that says, "Don't do that! You won't like the consequences." Look at all the stuff that's happened to you along the twisting road of your life-good and bad. Still think that all those seemingly disconnected, random events that have no interrelation, not even a simple correlation, have absolutely nothing to do with those best-laid plans crashing and burning in the face of your destiny? Tell my dad that. In a career spent chasing the elusive lucky score, he's come up empty more times than a fashion model's lunchbox.

Better yet, tell my mom that. She was the one unlucky enough to end up married to him.

I know that by now you're thinking I sound like I know the score. But I don't want to give you the wrong impression. I may know the score, but half the time I'm not sure I know the teams or even what game we're playing.

Most of the time, I feel like a total fraud. Like I have no idea how I've made it this far without the world figuring out that I have no idea what I'm doing or that I'm relying on some sign or the fact that I glanced at the clock at 11:11 or the fact that Paul McCartney's "With a Little Luck" was playing on the radio when my alarm woke me up to give me a little extra confidence that "we can make this whole damn thing work out." This "whole damn thing" being my life.

You'd think admitting to feeling like a fraud is the kind of thing that would qualify as an innermost thought. The very kind of thing that gives rise to the term "innermost thoughts," in fact-because they're born and live and die inside you, never seeing the light of day (unless you're the type who regularly drunk-dials an ex and starts a horrifyingly ill-advised confession with, "You know, I've never told anybody this before, but??.?."). You'd think someone with any semblance of self-awareness or a good enough filter or enough Real World: Miamis under her belt would know better by now than to confess these types of things to another living breathing person. But you'd be wrong.

Here I am in this outward cloak of certainty covering extreme self-doubt, walking into Game Night with a bottle of chilled champagne and an outfit that says, "I'm definitely stylish but comfortable enough in my own skin that I don't have to try that hard." What I'm really thinking is that I tried really hard to look like I'm not trying hard; in fact, trying to look like you didn't try hard is downright exhausting. Mind you, I'm not feeling terribly stylish. Especially since it's raining. Rain is never good luck. Just ask my hair. I feel pretty good about myself, though—all things being relative. Me feeling good about myself means my up-three-pounds, down-three-pounds existence was leaning toward the down side this morning, I don't have a golf-ball-sized zit screaming for attention on my cheek, and amazingly enough, tonight's rain hair doesn't have me looking like a brunette, Caucasian, female version of Don King. Definitely a good sign.

It's hard enough being a normal girl these days. Sure, I've just described a few wacky characteristics, but I'm not talking mentality here—I'm talking normal as in "not enhanced." More and more, everywhere I turn there's some girl, some naturally beautiful girl, who is determined to turn herself into a Barbie doll. It's frightening. Plus, with global warming and the sun getting hotter and hotter, isn't there a good chance that one day all of these gals will just start to melt? I vowed to myself that I will grow old gracefully—granted, I'm only twenty-eight years old, so I'm gonna reserve the right to change my mind at some point, but for now, I'll stick with what I've got.

Which, mind you, is pretty okay on most days. I have medium brown hair that's a couple of inches below my shoulders. I put highlights and lowlights in to make it a little more exciting, but the only thing that really does is set me back a couple hundred bucks every few weeks. I have brown eyes that are fairly boring, and I've been told I have a "perfect" nose, but I don't even know what that means. That said, nothing else about me is "perfect," so I'll take it. My teeth are straight (thanks, Dr. Edelstein!), and I have dimples when I smile, which I hate. Anyway, that's me. Nothing spectacular, but I did manage to have the cutest boyfriend in school in the sixth grade, so I'm not entirely hopeless.

I walk into the party behind a guy who is wearing a T-shirt that says "Everybody Dies." Oh, and that's not the best part. See, the i in "Dies" is shaped like a gun, and it's pointing upward, toward his face. Heartwarming. Hang on, it gets better. As he closes the door behind us, this dude's small black umbrella pops open and blooms in front of him. Then he spins around to close it, and the umbrella catches my favorite sweater and claws a huge hole in it. It seems to be happening in slow motion, the umbrella opening, my eyes widening, the menacing tip moving toward me like a sword thrust. This is suddenly like the shittiest version of *The Three Musketeers* ever. And, yes, I've seen the one with Charlie Sheen.

"Sorry," T-shirt Guy says with a shrug, nonchalantly unhinging his evil, renegade umbrella from my poor, sweet, now horribly disfigured sweater.

I exhale and swallow deeply. What can I say to him? What do you say when a complete stranger has not only just destroyed your sweater but also dragged you into his blatant violation of the "umbrella opened indoors" superstition, thus almost certainly setting off a downward spiral of unfortunate future events in your life?

"It's okay," I carefully respond, anger receding from DefCon 5 to a more reasonable 2. "But . . . aren't you worried about bad luck?"

"Aw, I don't believe in any of that," he says and laughs, as if my concern is silly.

I'll show him silly. "Well," I say, and I think about it before I say it and decide not to say it and then

say it anyway. "I would be if I were you. Bad luck for both of us."

He turns and looks me square in the eye. I'd been too transfixed on his death threat of a T-shirt to look beyond it. His eyes are hazel. The kind of hazel in which, if you liked the guy, you'd notice the specks of green and gold, but if you despised him, you'd see murky brown, despite his desperately grasping at the hazel of it all.

"I promise you," he says, "you will not have bad luck because of this. It will be my bad luck, and mine alone. I'm owning the bad luck on this one." He seems amused, making air quotes every time he says "bad luck."

"Fine," I say. "I hope you're right."

"So you're wishing bad luck on me?" he asks, smiling.

"No," I correct. "Of course not. I'm just wishing it not on me."

"Right??.?." he says, and then looks around the party.

I get self-conscious and think he's bored of me, and why wouldn't he be? I'm the crazy person telling him his umbrella is going to ruin his life and possibly mine. I'd run for the hills, too.

"Well, nice meeting you," I say, even though we didn't really meet, no names we...

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