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Off The Ice (Juniper Falls)



Synopsis

All is fair in love and hockey. Claire O'Connor is back in Juniper Falls, but that doesn't mean she wants to be. One semester off, that's what she promised herself. Just long enough to take care of her father and keep the family business a hockey bar beside the ice rink afloat. After that, she's getting the hell out. Again. Enter Tate Tanley. What happened between them the night before she left town resurfaces the second they lay eyes on each other. But the guy she remembers has been replaced by a total hottie. When Tate is unexpectedly called in to take over for the hockey team's star goalie, suddenly he's in the spotlight and on his way to becoming just another egotistical varsity hockey player. And Claire's sworn off Juniper Falls hockey players for good. It's the absolute worst time to fall in love. For Tate and Claire, hockey isn't just a game. And they both might not survive a body check to the heart.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

5 stars: "Everyone is in for a treat! Loved." -Roni Loren, author of Crash into You
5 stars: "[It's] Friday Night Lights but with Hockey. [...] There's drama. There's the love of the game. And there's romance." -Elizabeth, Goodreads Reviewer
4.5 stars: "Wow, this book had so much depth and heart. [...] This book has two characters dealing with some pretty heavy stuff, and I really loved how the author took us through that and the reactions and actions all made sense to me. It was just really well done. It made me feel for both of them, and I was intrigued with how they were dealing with it and how their relationship with each other would either benefit or hinder them."

-Lenore Kosinski, *Celebrity Readers* 5 stars: "I just loved everything about this novel. The characters, the setting, the romance, the stakes-it all worked for me. And I honestly am so excited to know that there will be more stories set in Juniper Falls, it seems to me like it's a town worth knowing." -Eva Scalzo, *Definitely, Possibly, Maybe* 5 stars: "Cross does a great job of capturing the sweet, raw emotions of young love and coming-of-age through natural dialogue and real-to-life character reactions. The secondary characters keep this story moving as well. I'm excited for the next book in this series." -Dawn Alexander, *DawnAlexander.com* 4 stars: "The absolute best thing about this book is that it is book one in the Juniper Falls series and that means there are going to be more books!!! Already I can see so many possibilities for secondary characters in this book to have a chance to tell their story and I can't wait." -Madison, *Madison's Library* 5 stars: "Readers will be drawn into the story and become invested in the character's lives. Definitely recommend!" -Kristen Cambensy, *Victim of Books* 5 stars: "I really enjoyed this story though it's a departure from the normal books I review and read." -Sharon Moritz, Librarian at Oxnard Public Library 4 stars: "There is so much to love about this book. Well-developed characters that jump off the page - check. Characters that don't act like spoiled twelve-year-olds all the time - check. Intriguing story - check. Swoony romance - check. Storyline and plot points that aren't overused - check. A good writing style - check." -Hristina Petrov, *I'll Be Fine Alone Reads* 5 stars: 5 "Love love loved this! Julie has done it again!" -Serenity, *Lovely Reads Publishing* 5 stars: "Definitely recommended for hockey fans that are looking for romance based stories. It's a nice mix and I can't wait to see what Julie Cross has in store for the next installments." -Samantha Myers, *Pink Earmuffs* 4 stars: "Tate was such a great amazing book boyfriend. He was sweet, romantic, caring, everything that any girl would want." -Christina Somerville, *Goodreads Reviewer* 5 stars: "Grab your coats and your snow-shoes! This is the best kind of cold! Curl up and enjoy a sweet romance to warm your heart! I love Tate and Claire." -Hadassah Harper, *Haddie's Haven*

Julie lives in Central Illinois with her husband and three children. She's a former gymnast, longtime gymnastics fan, coach, and former Gymnastics Program Director with the YMCA. She's a lover of books, devouring several novels a week, especially in the young adult and new adult genres. Outside of her reading and writing credibility's, Julie Cross is a committed--but not talented--long distance runner, creator of imaginary beach vacations, Midwest bipolar weather survivor, expired CPR certification card holder, as well as a ponytail and gym shoe addict.

One night a year ago, Claire and Tate had a moment together that they never told anyone else about. Nate has always had a crush on Claire, but she just thought of him as her friend. Claire is home from college to help with her father's recovery and Nate is a matured junior in high school. There is chemistry between the two of them, but will the town and responsibilities keep them apart? This was the first book that I have read from this author and it was just as good as the hype surrounding her work has indicated. She was able to create realistic, flawed and incredibly likable characters that you root for, as well as the best side characters which were described and were created with just as much care as the two main characters (aka the ex that I was suppose to not like, I was interested in her as her in a person and would love to read a book about her story). If you are looking for a romance filled with angst, so many feels, drama and hockey, then this is the book for you. The story is dual narrated by Tate and Claire, switching points of view at the chapters. I have said this before, but I absolutely love romances that are told from both character's point of view. I hate being told only half the story, and this way I know everything and I get the emotions from both people. It says Claire is a year older than Tate, but she has been away at college for a year (which yes, she left a year early but still) and he is only a junior in high school, so I guess she is two grades ahead? I was really confused at the technical issues of the ages and grades, and I would have preferred them be the same age (to simplify my life), but that is just my hang up, not the books. Anywho, Claire has so much more life experience I thought it was a little weird she was into this (very attractive) man-child, but the more I read, I realized that Tate has had some bad things happen where he had to mature faster than most boys his age. Claire was a solid character who had to deal with some hard emotional situations, and I liked her, but Tate stole my heart. He was my favorite character; starting from the moment his scrawny self tried to protect Claire during the first chapter. I would love to read more from this author be it about the other characters in this town, or anything really. This was an engaging read that I am sure lots of people will love. I received this title from the author in return for my honest review.

I've been looking forward to this book for a long time! Ever since I first learned of Julie writing it and reading a very early first couple chapters I just knew it was going to be something special. Having read it now, I was right. *Off the Ice*, the first book in Julie Cross's *Juniper Falls* series, is a spectacular book with a gripping story line and captivating characters. This book could easily be described as having a *Friday Night Lights* feel, so if you're a fan of the show, I think it would be safe to say that you would enjoy this

book. The start of the book starts off with a bit of drama, but is the foundation for the rest of the story. In a town where high school hockey is the sole focus and the main event each week, Tate Tanley finds himself in the shadow of his dad, whom the town loves and adores. Little do they know who he really is. On the side that Tate sees. However, there is one other person who knows just how Tate's dad treats him and that's Claire Connor, the girl whom Tate has had a crush on for a long time. Certain circumstances bring them together unexpectedly, but just for one night. Fast forward a year, and things have changed for both of them, but not for the better or is it? I guess it all depends on how you look at it. In a book filled with hardships, discovering who you are outside of the spotlight and perhaps even finding your spotlight once again, Tate and Claire are two characters who find shelter in each other. But it isn't without its trials and tribulations. It may be safe for me to say that aside from the unique storyline, the characters are my favorite part of *Off the Ice*. I find them individually inspiring and developed in a way that makes them work perfectly together on the page. The hardships that they each go through, don't overshadow one another, which I thought was important. Everything about the story seemed well thought out and strategically pieced together. Of course, the aspect of it having a sports background didn't hurt! I love a good book that has sports as a focus and hockey isn't one that I feel is overdone. In fact, I haven't really seen any other YA/NA books that have hockey in it. But maybe that's just me! If you're looking for an author to get hooked on, then check out Julie Cross. She has yet to write a book that I haven't been able to put down and at this point, having read many (if not all) of her books, I doubt she ever will. She's earned a spot at the top of my favorite author list and even has her own shelf on my bookcase. (Yay, Julie!)

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