



Dan Versus Nature

Don Calame

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Dan Weekes has two dreams in life: to become a famous graphic novelist and to one day muster the courage to ask Erin Reilly out on a date. Dan's mom, however, has just one goal: to date every man in the state of California until she finally finds her Prince Charming.

When Dan comes home to find a Hugh Jackman look-alike in his kitchen, he's prepared to write off this mountain-man-slash-dentist as another soon-to-be-ex. But then his mom drops a bomb: she and Hugh—er, Hank—are engaged, and she's sending her “two favorite men” on a survivalist camping trip in the wilds of Idaho to “bond.”

But Dan knows that it's only a matter of time till Hank shows his true—flawed—colors, so together with his nerdy, germophobe best friend, Charlie, Dan launches Operation Torment Crusade—a series of increasingly gross and embarrassing pranks they'll pull on Hank until he breaks like a twig. But the boys didn't count on a hot girl joining their trip or a man-hungry bear stalking their every move. How can Dan possibly scare off Hank when his very survival now depends on him?

Dan Versus Nature Details

Date : Published April 12th 2016 by Candlewick Press

ISBN : 9780763670719

Author : Don Calame

Format : Hardcover 384 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Humor, Adventure, Fiction, Realistic Fiction, Contemporary, Funny

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From Reader Review Dan Versus Nature for online ebook

Jennifer says

At Reading Rants. <http://www.readingrants.org/2016/01/1...>

Don Calame, I love you.

Cherry (_forevermint) says

I just finished this book with a huge grin on my face. The cover says it's "an outrageously funny and wickedly raunchy romp in the woods," and yes, yes it is. There were so many funny moments that had me laughing out loud and putting sticky notes next to all my favorite scenes. I enjoyed reading about each and every one of the characters which is something I rarely experience. Dan's misadventures in the woods were hilarious to read about and his character growth throughout the novel was great. I thought Charlie's character was a little over the top when I first met him, but he is the best obnoxiously intelligent and nerdy best friend that anyone could ever want. I loved Penelope as soon as she showed up, extremely straightforward and just as obnoxious as Charlie, seeing this trio try to survive in the wilderness was so entertaining. Man, I would love to see this as a movie, it would be hilarious!

And even though the course of events is a bit predictable, that doesn't stop Don Calame from throwing a few shocking surprises at the reader. The ending was cute and satisfying (though once again a bit predictable). However, this is definitely going on my to re-read list because it was so enjoyable and definitely made my day. If you're looking for an entertaining read, don't mind getting up close and personal with Dan and the ridiculous shit (literally) he gets himself into, and like comic books, bears, smart-mouthed teenagers and class projects that require you to take care of a life-like baby doll, then definitely pick this one up as soon as it hits the shelves!!

Cassandra says

2.5/5 stars

One White Pine book down, nine to go. Full review here!

Taylor says

Dan Vs. Nature by Don Calame is a Young Adult survival adventure novel. It follows our main character Dan, along with his best friend Charlie, soon-to-be step-dad Hank, and their woodland travel companions. On their five day trip, they run into many obstacles, while Charlie assists Dan in scaring off Hank. See the rest of my (spoiler free) review here: <https://plentifulpages.wordpress.com/...>

Book Concierge says

Dan is a 16-year-old student whose main interest is creating graphic novels. His best friend, Charlie, is a super-bright geek interested in photojournalism. When Dan's Mom announces her engagement to her latest boyfriend – a dentist named Hank – Dan is unhappy but resigned. When Mom gives him a “survival week” experience to share (and bond) with Hank, Dan and Charlie concoct a plan to scare Hank away. But they weren't counting on a bear stalking them

This sounded like a decent premise for a YA novel but Calame's reliance on scatological humor and descriptions that only a 13-year-old boy will find funny just lost me. I couldn't believe that Dan and Charlie would remain BFFs through all this; I didn't buy Dan's “true love” for Erin; I really didn't believe in the totally inept adventure outfitters (especially Max (view spoiler)); he is, after all, responsible for their safety.

It should have been a fast read, but it didn't hold my attention, and as I was reading while we were on a long cross-country trip, it took me a full week to finish it. I think my nephew would have liked it when he was in his early teens; at eighteen, I think he's matured beyond this stage.

Cameron Fawthorp says

9.2389/10.2 survival good

Franny says

If Gary Paulsen and Andrew Smith had a book baby, it'd be this book. I loved every hilarious minute of it.

Jacob says

I received an ARC in exchange for an honest review.
PUBLICATION: Candlewick Press, April 12th, 2016

Dan is sort of an outcast in his class. But even more so, his best friend Charlie is a know-it-all, smart mouthed outcast who is proud of it. Together, they get beat up. A lot. When Dan comes home from school one day to find his mother introducing him to yet another boyfriend, he thinks he's seen this picture before. However, Hank isn't her boyfriend - he's her fiance. And as a birthday gift, she books a trip to the middle-of-nowhere wilderness for both of them to get to know each other. After pleading his case, Charlie comes along too and together they hatch a plan so devious and so hilarious, that will send Hank running far, far away.

In today's society, people use the letters "LOL" to indicate that they are laughing out loud but in most cases, they aren't. Maybe they snicker, smile, or even exhibit absolutely no change in facial stature, but when I type LOL for this book, I mean it. This book has everything you could want: fast-paced, gut-wrenchingly funny,

and characters that you just can't help but fall in love with. Calame is a screen-writer who helped write the movie, "Employee of the Month", and this book reads just like a movie. Never a dull moment in this novel as Dan and Charlie hatch the most hare-brained ideas of how to scare away Hank. From talking about small genitals, to copious amounts of self-love, to shooting Hank in the leg, this book is a no holds barred, whirlwind of a read.

However, as stated above, this book is listed as "Teens/YA" but personally, the material was a bit more adult in my opinion for an average teenager to read. Language and adult content abound, so if you're 18+, enjoy. My personal favorite was the TSA agent screening what Dan and Charlie tried to sneak in their bags for their flight to the wilderness. Again, an LOL moment. My wife gave me a strange look when I didn't stop laughing.

The ending was very nicely tied together too. I don't want to ruin whether or not their plan succeeds and Hank leaves Dan and his mom alone, but suffice to say, stick with this book and it won't disappoint from beginning, middle, and end.

Pinky says

This is my third year in the book club White Pine! I'm so excited to read the books this year, I love all of the choices. I am hoping to read *One Thousand Nights* next if anyone didn't take it yet. I read this novel first and loved it so much, it was hilarious and interesting. It felt like I was watching a Nickelodeon Movie, it had a great balance between humor and survival. This isn't a book that I would normally pick up but I'm glad I did.

Dan wants to be a graphic novelist and talk to his crush, Erin. His mother, on the other hand, dates as many men as she can until she finds "the one." And she appears to have found him and his name is Hank. Dan's mom decides to send Dan and Hank on a camping trip without her so that they could get to know each other. Dan and his best friend, Charlie decide to scare of Hank during the camping trip. Running away from bears, embarrassing moments and hilarious commentary, will Dan be able to scare off Hank?

The entire time I was reading this book:

I couldn't stop laughing while I was reading this book. At home, I would read and my mom and sister were concerned for my wellbeing. At school, people thought I was going crazy. But I didn't care because this was so entertaining. I couldn't stop reading but I was forced to when it came to homework and assignments :(

I loved the characters so much in this book. Dan was hilarious, and I understand how he feels. He was easy to connect to and an awesome friend. Charlie is funny as well, he is a good friend but has crazy schemes. At points of the novel, I feel like I have so much in common with Charlie while in other parts I don't. Penelope is great, I love how she never hesitates to say what she's thinking and how open she is. She's a great character and I like her a lot.

I highly recommend this novel, it will have you in tears from laughing so much. It is a fun, crazy, fast-paced read and it will keep you reading til the very end (if no one interrupts you).

I'll be off and hopefully I can read another book soon!

Kaitlyn Abshire says

I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest and unbiased review.

Dan is used to all of the losers his mom dates and he isn't surprised when they leave her...like they always do. When Dan comes home one day to find that the man her mother is dating (Hank) is now his soon to be stepdad, Dan decides that he must do everything in his power to stop the wedding from happening. When Dan's mother presents him with a camping trip to take with Hank as his birthday present, Dan sees the camping trip as an opportunity. Perhaps if Dan can make Hank as miserable and upset as possible, maybe his future won't be the sound of wedding bells.

I had high expectations for Dan Versus Nature. Ever since I have read Winger and Stand Off by Andrew Smith, books that involve male protagonist and disastrous humor definitely catch my eye. Dan Versus Nature did not disappoint. From the very first chapter, hilarity ensued. The pranks that Dan and his best friend, Charlie, formulate are seriously outrageous. With sour cream and onion body odor, forced projectile vomiting, doe urine, and more, the practical jokes and how they come to pass will have you rolling.

Dan Versus Nature was quite the quick read for me. The humor was constant and my attention did not waver. There was also some pleasant character development and development in character relationships, which is something I always appreciate. While this is my first book to read by Don Calame, it most certainly will not be my last.

Trin says

Picture *Home Alone* but in the woods, and instead of Kevin trying to stop criminals from burglarizing his house, he's trying to destroy some innocent dude simply for having the temerity to consensually bone his mom.

This kid and his friend are basically psychopaths.

This book is also remarkable for its commitment to the Nerdy Pixie Dream Girl fantasy. Here's her stunning debut:

I whip around and come face to face with one of the cutest girls I have ever seen in my life. She's got geek-chic black specs, has a blunt-cut hairdo, and is wearing a skintight Himura Kenshin T-shirt.

It's as if someone plucked the perfect girl from my mind and plopped her down in front of me. The kind of girl you dream about running into at Comic-Con.

The kind of girl who makes glasses look hot.

The kind of girl who will talk to you for hours about Hayao Miyazaki's films, and Fullmetal Alchemist, and the influence that medieval history has on Game of Thrones.

Ooh. Let me see if I can grasp what you're telling me -- is it that she's not like other girls?

If you love timeless gags like slipping laxatives into someone's food to give them explosive diarrhea, the classic "wiping with poison ivy" trope, at least three instances of riotous vomiting, a character spraying urine into another character's mouth, pages-long descriptions of farting into a sleeping bag, and the state of having an erection described as "wielding the Odinsword," then you'll love this book!

Blue says

Dan Versus Nature is a relentlessly funny, mostly scatological adventure sprinkled with viscous bear attacks, a lightning storm, a snake near-miss, a poison ivy rash, a particularly private wasp attack, a plane explosion, two broken noses, and many, many intentional ouchies. And then there is Baby Robbie, the electronic baby Dan has to take on this adventure for 50% of his grade in Life Skills. Needless to say, whatever can go wrong out in the wilderness, does. And the hapless bunch, consisting of Dan, his soon-to-be-step-dad Hank, his best friend Charlie, a stunning and smart girl Penelope, her cougar mother Barbara, and the wilderness guide Max, do their best to survive, though not with a lot of pride and dignity. They scream a lot, pee their pants, catch each other in compromising positions, huddle together in their underwear, and make some pretty heart breaking confessions. But they also save each other's lives, develop crushes, hunt wild animals, outpace and outwit a giant, poor bear, and manage some beautiful moments in nature.

Calame packs a truckload of action and adventure, turning up the hilarity dial with each page. Just when you think things cannot get worse, they do. Just when you think Charlie has given up on egging (or forcing) Dan to carry out his plan to drive away Hank from marrying his mother, he comes up with the next phase of their horrible plan. But not all is pranks and mayhem. There are strangely poetic and poignant moments, and Calame writes these well; though heartfelt, they never seem too gooey or contrived.

The characters are truly enjoyable, even when they are being rather annoying. Perhaps my one tiny complaint is that Hank is incredibly patient and good, maybe a tad bit too much, making him seem a bit unbelievable. And Penelope's mom never evolves out of the caricature of an older woman who is sexually active, to the point that even Clint, who has a much smaller role in the book, seems more real than Barbara.

Highly recommended for those who enjoy other people's misery in the great outdoors and uber-smart teenagers bickering.

Thanks to LibraryThing and Candlewick Press for a free copy of the ARC for my honest opinion.

Ashley says

Rating: 1.5/5

Minor spoilers

Dan is a fifteen year old boy whose focus right now is just on school, working on his comic, and trying to get together with Erin, a girl he's been interested in for years. His mother has had a history of bad boyfriends since his dad left her several years ago, but not for any fault of her own. She's finally found a guy she loves and who loves her back, Hank, and doesn't seem to have any of the terrible behaviour her other boyfriends had. They're now happily engaged, but Dan isn't happy at all. He doesn't have faith in the guys his mom dates anymore, and he thinks that even if Hank seems to be perfectly nice now, he must have something hidden about him that's a deal breaker. Since Dan doesn't want Hank to be with his mom, he and his friend Charlie come up with a plan to make Hank so uncomfortable with parenting through a series of pranks that will hopefully make him leave his mother. What makes it even easier is that his mom plans to send them on a wilderness trip that will allow them to bond before the wedding.

This was a book I read for a book club at my school, and if I wasn't obligated to read this (since we have to know all the books for the competition against other schools) then I never would have picked this up. I think I knew I would never like this, especially after peeking at a review or two talking about what this book was about. Don't get me wrong, I'm all for humour books but I just didn't find this book funny, it was just cringy. I couldn't really laugh at all the pranks they were pulling on a guy who was innocent and did nothing wrong except love Dan's mother.

I also didn't like the characters very much at all. The adults were okay, but the three main teenagers were pretty annoying. Dan let himself be manipulated by his friend Charlie way too much. Whenever he started feeling an ounce of guilt he just let Charlie talk him back into the plan. Charlie was just plain annoying. He spoke in the same phrasing as you would read in a professional lab report. No contractions, big words, and generally unpleasant. He didn't feel very developed either. If he was just an app on Dan's phone instead, I feel like the book wouldn't change very much. Penelope was similar to Charlie in terms of the way she spoke, which was pretty annoying, but at least she felt like someone who had a personality and could joke around.

Overall, this one wasn't my cup of tea. I'm not a big fan of watching innocent people suffer at the hands of two pretty stupid boys, so I couldn't really laugh at this one. The plot was just not my thing, and the characters were for the most part quite annoying. I think you would only like this book if you're into the whole pranking trope. It got better towards the end of the book which is why I rated it more than just 1 star, but for the most part the pranking ruined it for me. However, if you're fine with that then you'll probably enjoy this much more than I did.

Heidi says

Three and a half stars: The camping trip from hell that will appeal to teenage boys.

Dan Weekes is doing his best to survive high school. He takes refuge in his sketchbook where he creates graphic novels, starring the girl of his dreams, Erin. Strapped to his watch, is his father's broken Timex, the only thing he has from his father who vanished eight years ago. Since his dad left, Dan's mom has dated a string of bad guys. When his mom introduces Dan to Hank, he isn't concerned, but then when they announce their engagement, Dan's world trembles on its axis. Things get even worse when his mother send Dan on a week long survivalist camping trip with Hank. Dan insists that Charlie, his best friend, accompany him. Charlie and Dan cook up a plan to sabotage Hank so he will leave, but they aren't prepared for the mayhem that awaits them. Will Dan survive the wilderness?

What I Liked:

*Dan Against Nature is a book that will appeal to a certain audience, mainly teenage boys. Even though there is plenty of gross humor and embarrassing pranks, I still found myself giggling. If you like books that feature teenage boy narrators and you can handle boyish humor, this is a fun one to take on.

*The two man characters, Dan and Charlie, are the type of underdog characters you can't help but cheer for. They are small, scrawny, shy, awkward and bullied. Dan is a talented artist, while Charlie is a brainiac. Together they cook up and pull off some outlandish pranks and schemes all in order to get Hank, Dan's future step dad to run away. I was pleased to see by the end of their adventure, they both had grown and they were more confident. I also liked the way the situation with Hank was handled. I appreciated the growth and maturity.

*The humor is what makes this book. Yes, it involves a lot of boyish pranks, and plenty of bodily humor such as vomit, farts, explosive diarrhea, etc. There is also the classic wiping your behind with poison ivy, and plenty more embarrassing situations that will have you laughing out loud. This book will definitely appeal to the teenage boy, but if you aren't afraid to take on a bit of crude humor and outlandish pranks, you will get a kick out of this.

*There is even a bit of a romance, though it isn't the typical swoony, melt your heart type. It is what you would expect from a romance when you have immature teenage boys involved. Still it was funny to see the two characters come together and bond over their shared interests.

*I liked watching the rag tag group survive in the wilderness. It ends up being a survivalist story, and even though the situation was dire at times, it always remained upbeat and funny.

*The ending is satisfactory, all the story lines are tied up neatly, and there is no cliffhanger or unresolved issues.

And The Not So Much:

*It is best to go into this one not expecting it to be realistic. Some of the things that happen in the wilderness get to be a bit far fetched: the bear, the exploding plane, the survivalist guide taking off with the mother to get it on, leaving the others behind, etc. As the story progressed it got more and more outlandish, until I was rolling my eyes, especially when it came out the bear.

*I was a bit disappointed that there wasn't more development with the romances. I was hoping for more depth and so forth, but I am a girl, and I am not the select audience.

Some of the pranks get to be a bit much, and if you can't handle boyish, bodily humor, this is not a book for you.

*This is a book I would highly recommend reading on an ereader because the author includes a plethora of brainiac words that I had to look up, and I have an expanded vocabulary. I guarantee the average teenage boy will have no clue when he encounters these words, and while they served a purpose, they are over the top.

Dan Vs. Nature is a book that will appeal to teenage boys, but any reader can enjoy it if you are willing to endure some crude humor. I found myself laughing at some of the ridiculous plights, and I was entertained even though I am not the target audience. The story falters a bit though with lack of realism, but it is still fun.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own, and I was not compensated for this review.

Posted@Rainy Day Ramblings.

Ameema Saeed says

I got this book as an ARC from Penguin Random House.

I'm not going to lie, I expected it to be very predictable. It was so funny, it had me laughing out loud. It was a gross kind of funny, but really funny nonetheless. And it wasn't as predictable as I thought it was going to be, and I really enjoyed it. It was nerdy and silly, and goofy, and gross, and great! I wasn't expecting it to like it as much as I did. Even though it was a bit too predictable and gross (for me) sometimes, I found myself chuckling out loud still. It reminded me of an older version of I Want to Go Home (with a raunchier, grosser twist). It was a great wilderness adventure gone wrong!
