



Boy Meets Hamster

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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This comedy romance for young teens tells the tale of Dylan Kershaw - a fourteen year old boy who is desperate for his first kiss. He hopes that it might arrive on some beautiful dream holiday, somewhere like New York. Sadly, though, Dylan's mum has booked the family a trip to somewhere rather less cosmopolitan: a cheesy caravan park in Cornwall.

Even if Dylan was able to find any suitable kissing candidates in a seriously uncool campsite, his search for love is hampered by the fact that he has to spend most nights looking after his younger brother, Jude. Dylan is fiercely protective of Jude, who uses a wheelchair, but chaperoning someone who loves *Twinkle the Train* and *Nibbles the Giant Hamster* does nothing for one's romantic credibility. Dylan's parents aren't much help either. His dad spends most of his time in a full (but very old) football strip and his mum buys corn beef in bulk and cuts holiday vouchers out of the newspaper.

Only Dylan's friend, Kayla, understands him. She is the only person who knows he is gay and, despite battling plenty of her own insecurities, supports Dylan throughout as he tries to pluck up the courage to tell the gorgeous Jayden Lee from the neighbouring caravan how much he fancies him.

In almost every chapter, Dylan bumps into Jayden Lee one way or another, and he always manages to utterly embarrass himself, in a series of slapstick scenes. Chewing gum in hair, heads stuck in trousers, and massive karaoke inspired brawls, are just some of the ways that Dylan fails to endear himself to his impossibly sexy crush.

Though there are plenty of laughs to be had, readers will find some of Dylan's catastrophes rather predictable, and it is welcome relief when an act of bravery in a swimming pool interrupts the carousel of bad luck and sends the story in a new direction. Though it is a book about new relationships and looking for love, it is the entirely platonic friendship between Kayla and Dylan that offers the most sensitive and enjoyable parts of the story. Kayla and Dylan both have things they wish to hide, but both have passions they long to share. They very much rely on one another to navigate the troubled waters of young romance.

There is a strong coming-of-age feeling to this book, and teenage readers, of any sexuality, will recognise the cocktail of Adrenalin, desperation and confusion that is served up by teenage love affairs. Dylan and Kayla's journeys of self-

discovery will feel familiar to many readers, and show that beauty exists in all shapes and sizes and that love sometimes comes in disguise.

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