



Man V. Nature: Stories

Diane Cook

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***San Francisco Chronicle* Notable Book of the Year**

***Boston Globe's* "Best Fiction of 2014"**

Roxane Gay's Top Ten Books of the Year

An Amazon Best Short Story Collection of 2014

An iBook Best of 2014

A refreshingly imaginative, daring debut collection of stories which illuminates with audacious wit the complexity of human behavior, as seen through the lens of the natural world.

Told with perfect rhythm and unyielding brutality, these stories expose unsuspecting men and women to the realities of nature, the primal instincts of man, and the dark humor and heartbreak of our struggle to not only thrive, but survive. In "Girl on Girl," a high school freshman goes to disturbing lengths to help an old friend. An insatiable temptress pursues the one man she can't have in "Meteorologist Dave Santana." And in the title story, a long fraught friendship comes undone when three buddies get impossibly lost on a lake it is impossible to get lost on. In Diane Cook's perilous worlds, the quotidian surface conceals an unexpected surreality that illuminates different facets of our curious, troubling, and bewildering behavior.

Other stories explore situations pulled directly from the wild, imposing on human lives the danger, tension, and precariousness of the natural world: a pack of not-needed boys take refuge in a murky forest and compete against each other for their next meal; an alpha male is pursued through city streets by murderous rivals and desirous women; helpless newborns are snatched by a man who stalks them from their suburban yards. Through these characters Cook asks: What is at the root of our most heartless, selfish impulses? Why are people drawn together in such messy, complicated, needful ways? When the unexpected intrudes upon the routine, what do we discover about ourselves?

As entertaining as it is dangerous, this accomplished collection explores the boundary between the wild and the civilized, where nature acts as a catalyst for human drama and lays bare our vulnerabilities, fears, and desires.

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