



This Side of a Wilderness

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If Thoreau had written *Walden* as a narrative fiction, and designed his protagonist in the fashion of a Hermann Hesse character, then it would have resembled this novel. "He was alone in the wilderness, a wilderness that seemed deep and forever, but was surrounded by a world filled with people." Eli Sylvan is on a quest to rediscover the wilderness of his youth. He spends his weekends camping and fishing in the wild mountains of Wyoming, and then on Mondays he returns to the daily grind of the professional workforce. Feeling alienated from his friends and coworkers, Eli spends his evenings painting scenic landscapes, but this only intensifies his longing to be completely immersed in nature. Then he meets Lamara, a young woman who has a sophisticated flair and a deep affinity for the outdoors. Together they develop a plan to resign from their careers in Wyoming and move into an isolated northern Minnesota forest. But the challenge of escaping the comforts of society is greater than either anticipated, and they must prepare themselves for the possibility of failure.

This Side of a Wilderness Details

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Author : Daniel J. Rice

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From Reader Review This Side of a Wilderness for online ebook

Veronica Cuebas says

The story builds momentum and then reaches it's peak when he is living alone in the Minnesota Forest and questioning everything about life. He ponders the deep philosophical meanings of life and man's relationship with wilderness. Take your time and read it slow, you'll be glad to learn what he discovers.

Justina says

THIS SIDE OF A WILDERNESS by Daniel J. Rice:

I expected this to be an easy read about the woods. I was only partially right. I never thought the metaphor of a crumbling leaf could make me feel so deeply human, but that's exactly what happened to me at the end of this book. I couldn't help it, I felt like that leaf. This story is deeply insightful and ripe with metaphor. There were several passages when I set the book down to stare out the window and think. That said, there are parts that seemed unnecessary while reading, but then after a couple pages I was shattered by just one sentence. I'm not exactly sure how I feel yet about this book, it seems like an inspiring story about a man and woman fulfilling their dream, but there is some element of sadness that overshadows everything. I really enjoyed the journal section of part II when I got fully into the characters head while he lived alone in the wilderness. I wanted to extract the characters from part III and return them to part II so they could always be happy.

I can't think of any books I've read recently to compare this title to, but The River Why, and Desert Solitaire come to mind. The reason I gave this title 5 stars is because even though it is fiction, it reads as a true story that I can imagine myself living. Of course, I would have to be willing to give up my job and my house and my friends, and then move into the woods alone. Maybe someday.

Brian Moyer says

Unexpectedly reminiscent of my younger years

I was actually bored at the beginning of the book. However as I continued to read, e book improved. The descriptions of the north woods were great. Not much of a climax but if you like nature writing you will like is story.

Nick GR says

There are some real nuggets of truth in this novel. Mr. Rice has clearly spent some time in the wilderness, either literally or figuratively, and pondered the meaning of our lives in that context. For that alone this book is worth the time.

Unfortunately his understanding of people is much less developed. In the mechanical sense this leads to a lot of awkward dialog and character interaction. Much more importantly it leaves the thesis only half developed. The picture of man in nature is incomplete if it ignores the society in man.

I wouldn't hesitate to add this to a reading list exploring the relationship between nature and man, but it would go somewhere in the Further Reading section.
