



Night of the Twisters

Ivy Ruckman

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Storm Chasers meets *Stranger Things*! An action-packed coming-of-age story of both natural disaster and the bravery it takes to face it.

When a tornado watch is issued one Tuesday evening in June, twelve-year-old Dan Hatch and his best friend, Arthur, don't think much of it. After all, tornado warnings are a way of life during the summer in Grand Island, Nebraska.

But soon enough, the wind begins to howl, and the lights and telephone stop working. Then the emergency siren starts to wail. Dan, his baby brother, and Arthur have only seconds to get to the basement before the monstrous twister is on top of them.

Little do they know that even if they do survive the storm, their ordeal will have only just begun...

Night of the Twisters Details

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From Reader Review Night of the Twisters for online ebook

Cathy says

When a tornado watch is issued one Tuesday evening in June, twelve-year-old Dan Hatch and his best friend, Arthur, don't think much of it. After all, tornado warnings are a way of life during the summer in Grand Island, Nebraska. But soon enough, the wind begins to howl, and the lights and telephone stop working. Then the emergency siren starts to wail. Dan, his baby brother, and Arthur have only seconds to get to the basement before the monstrous twister is on top of them. Little do they know that even if they do survive the storm, their ordeal will have only just begun. . .

Compelling story told in a timeline. Realistic tornado experiences that make you appreciate what is most important. Great story for 3rd-6th graders that will produce thoughtful discussions.

Orry says

PLOT: Dan Hatch explains what a red letter day is. He was in a bike race. He came in seventy-ninth and won the raffle afterward. He won one hundred dollars and a new racing bike. After the race him and Arthur went on a bike ride. They both were talking about Arthur eating supper at Dan's house. They got back to Dan's house ate supper and then Dan's mom had to go to work, his Dad had to help his grandma get the tractor running again so Dan and Arthur were home alone with Dan's baby brother Ryan. The tornado sirens went off and then stopped right away. Dan and Arthur were confused, then they heard a big gust of wind coming then the sirens went off again. Dan ran upstairs and got Ryan up from his nap and then they all ran downstairs to the basement bathroom with a flashlight and a blanket. They then waited for the storm to pass. The tornado ripped right through the house and then another one came through it right after. When the storm was over Dan, Arthur and Ryan were alright they had to find a way out of the house. Once they actually got out of the house they met up with Arthur's sister who was coming to find them. Dan found his family and decided to go live with his grandma out on the farm. Arthur's family was all ok and together.

CHARACTERIZATION: The book never actually describes the characters. Dan Hatch is the main character of the story. He does not change much throughout the story. Arthur is Dan's best friend and does not change much either. Stacey is Arthur's older sister.

SETTING: This book takes place in Grand Island, Nebraska on June 3, 1980.

I would recommend this book to anyone that likes to read a book about something that could actually happen to themselves. The gender of the person that I would recommend this book to does not matter. They would have to be over the age of ten. I liked this book and it was good to read. I am surprised that it ended with a narrator telling the reader where everyone that was mentioned in the story went to live. The narrator told how the people who lived in the town helped every other person out in the town to clean up the rubbish from the tornado.

Emily says

This was one of my favorites as a child. The author came to my school and I still have my signed copy. I needed something to help me fall asleep the other night and returned to this. I live in North Texas so tornadoes aren't uncommon so this always gives me a little thrill when I read it. I certainly wouldn't want

something this horrific to happen but I like the story and the characters and the message of pulling together and pulling through.

Rebecca McNutt says

This riveting, impossible-to-put-down thriller concerns two friends who see their town ravaged by deadly tornadoes. A story of survival and resourcefulness, this book is really worth reading.

Ata Bird says

I would recommend this to someone looking for a little more grown up version of The Magic Treehouse books or someone interested in storms. I would also recommend it from a nostalgic point of view as it reminds me of life in a midwestern small town before the internet.

Joseph Linder says

This book is really good and I recommend that you read it. This book is like magic tree house book but for just a little more older readers. This book is about two best friends that live in Grand Island, Nebraska. Tornadoes are very common in Nebraska. Little did they know that a few of them will be going through their town. Other than that, I really recommend this book.

Elizabeth Walker says

I've been fascinated by tornadoes since I was a very little girl. I was always checking out tornado books from the library so I could learn more about them.

I discovered this book during my Storm Chaser obsession back in 2010. I was 13, and I remember my mom telling me I was too old for the book.

I read it anyways, and I couldn't put it down. I was sucked in to it and I fell in love. I'm now almost 17 and I still read this book at least once a month.

I suppose my love for it has to do with my fascination with storms. But this book is the one that got me in to writing my current story.

Would definitely recommend this book.

Natalie says

Now that I'm older and more experienced, I know there are black-letter days as well as red-letter days. Those BIGGIES, the real blockbusters that mess up your life, aren't marked on the calendar either. You

never know ahead of time when you're getting one of those.

I remembered reading this book as a kid and liking it, so I was excited to see it on the Battle of the Book list.

It was pretty intense. Ruckman does an excellent job bringing the readers into the eye of the storm. I felt the pain and fear of Dan and Arthur. It was easy to imagine the confusion and panic following the storm.

I liked this just as much as an adult as I did as a kid. Fun read!

Megan Olsen says

This was another book I loved as a child, and so it also made the read-aloud list. :)

It's a well-paced narrative that describes the boy's experience one night when tornados tear through his town.

One of the things I remembered from reading it as a child, and which was true for my 7-yr-old as well, is that her descriptions are SO interesting, and it sparks interest in tornados, which sent us to the internet to look up answers. What's a tornado siren? Why is the sky green? Why do the drains make sucking noises? Why is the shower the safest place? Why does it get so dark? Why do the pipes break? Why is there hail? Why is it so big? And on and on and on...

Maybe it's because the two boys in the story are also confused about all those questions. I don't know, but something about the way the author writes all the details make them very mysterious and weird.

It's pretty tame as far as death and injuries go, but there is a sad part where he thinks about his cat probably being dead (I just skipped that part, so my son was none the wiser), and there are some tense moments where you wonder if characters are going to be alive/okay. They are in the end, but it could still be stressful for a kid.

Also, the narrator has a crush on his friend's big sister, and talks about how pretty she is. Nothing inappropriate, but still a little awkward reading it to a 7-yr-old who could care less, so I skipped those brief parts.

This one's great. Highly recommend.

Jackie says

Hour by hour, Dan Hatch, 12 years-old recounts the series of events the night seven tornadoes touched down in his small town in Nebraska. Houses destroyed, lives changed forever, and a struggle to survive are brought forth in this suspenseful fictionalized saga of a town and its people finding a way to outsmart one of Mother Nature's most deadly storms.

Night of the Twisters is a little too preachy and in some ways so outdated that kids today may not relate to the underlying story. Characters are not well-developed and the aftermath is lightly touched upon. Not the best weather-related disaster story for kids.

Jan says

Fans of adventure books by Will Hobbs and Roland Smith, especially his Storm Runners trilogy will enjoy this fact based fictional account of the Grand Island, Nebraska tornado outbreak, a series of 7 tornadoes that swept through the area the night of June 3rd 1980 leaving a trail of destruction in its wake.

It's an action packed story, filled with nail biting, tense, and scary real life situations. It's a wild non-stop ride. But it's also a story about a community coming together and giving each other strength after a terrible tragedy.

NebraskaIcebergs says

Ivy Ruckman is not a new name to me. Actually, I suspect most elementary Nebraska teachers are familiar with Night of the Twisters, a book that is based on true historical events. On June 4, 1980, a string of seven tornadoes devastated the central Nebraska town of Grand Island, killing four people, injuring one hundred and thirty-four, and destroying five hundred and thirteen homes and sixty businesses. The opening bothers me every time I reread it: "When I was a little kid, I thought a red-letter day was when you got a red-letter in the mailbox.... Now that I'm older and more experienced, I know that there are black-letter days as well as red-letter ones. Those BIGGEES, the real blockbusters that mess up your life...." The observation feels forced, just as much as the slow pace of the first few chapters. Yet I have to hand it to Ivy Ruckman, every time I reach the point where the first tornado hits the Hatch house, I am unable to put down her one hundred-and-fifty page book. Better yet, for a while after reading it, every noise around me and every change in the weather puts me on alert. After living in Nebraska for over ten years, I understand how Midwesterners can become complacent about weather alerts. Whenever I read Night of the Twisters, I am reminded why that is not a good idea.

Cherie says

Told from the POV of 12 year old, Dan, the story of the tornadoes that destroyed his home and much of Grand Island, Nebraska on the night of Jun3, 1980 was based on actual events. The names were changed, but the story is true.

Kendal(Frank) says

i liked the book more than the movie... more details

Nate says

The Hatches:

- Dan Hatch - POV character, 12 years old, just had a red-letter day winning a new bike and money in bike race in April (won the raffle and came in 79th place), and now discovers there are black letter days. Night of the Twisters becomes known as Black Tuesday.
- Mom and Dad Hatch. Mom is checking on Ms. Smiley and Dad is out at that farm helping Grandpa.
- Ryan Hatch - 1 year old brother at home with Dan and Arthur.
- Grandma and Grandpa Hatch - live nearby Grand Island in Phillips on a farm. 3rd generation on their farm.
- Aunt Goldie - goes bowling the night of tornado and is missing throughout. Found in Omaha in hotel two days later with shaky memory.
- Miverva - that Hatch cat.

The Darlintons:

- Arthur - Dan's best friend and almost constant companion throughout the story. California transplant, his family doesn't know much about basements and tornadoes.
- Stacy - Arthur's older sister that helps save Arthur, Dan, and Ryan at Dan's house. Then helps Arthur and Dan save Smiley. Dan has a big-time crush on her throughout.
- Ronnie Vae - Little sister.
- Tempest June - Youngest born after the night of the twisters.
- 4 other sisters.
- Mom and Dad Darlington - Dad has office at the Armory where he's reunited with Arthur and Stacy.

Other Characters:

- Mrs. Smiley - Elderly neighbor with new storm door. She is found sleeping in the basement and Arthur, Dan, and Stacy save her after Mom and Ryan are taken to Kmart on bus. The kids get Smiley last seat on small bus out of their neighborhood.
- Kelly - The police officer that takes the three kids out of their neighborhood and attempts to deliver them to Kmart. Another tornado touches down and almost takes them out in route. The windshield and Kelly's glasses are blown out by the near miss tornado contact and Dan has to drive the rest of the way to the police station. The kids stay the night at the station.

- Mrs. Minetti - the matron of the Police station assists the kids.

This story oscillates between feelings of terror related to tornadoes touching down and Dan and friends' bravery and sacrifice. Also with a large focus on Dan's relationships and feelings towards other characters, which adds a nice human touch to the story.
