



Dustin Hellberg

## Squirrel Haus

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Set in 2003, Squirrel Haus chronicles the fall and the further fall of two friends living in the eponymous house in the Iowa Midwest, a place most people imagine is bereft of craziness or fun. It is not so. In literary fashion, the book loosely parallels the Iraq War and the Epic tradition, as the protagonists fall victim - wittingly at times - to the American culture of lies and violence and excess...

## **Squirrel Haus Details**

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Author : Dustin Hellberg

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## From Reader Review Squirrel Haus for online ebook

### Nicole says

Squirrel Haus is a beautifully written novel. Hellberg does a wonderful job in making the reader feel all kinds of emotions. It is witty, poetic, heartbreaking, and charming. When a book makes you laugh out loud but also makes you want to cry, you know it is a job well done. I could not put it down.

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### Kelly says

In the opening pages, Dunham and his good friend Griffin move home to Iowa City and into Squirrel Haus, the decaying, eponymous nucleus of this quirky novel. The book details the pair's lives (told from Dunham's point of view) over the next ten months, which are filled with hilarity, heartbreak, and a strange array of friends who often inspire ridiculous escapades. Squirrel Haus itself is also arguably a main character, serving not only as the center of the action but also as the cause of much grief, with its rotting and leaking and lack of locking doors.

As a protagonist, Dunham is a series of strange yet engaging contradictions. He has an advanced writing degree but usually chooses to hide that fact from everyone except the reader. Hellberg, through Dunham, will describe a given scene with carefully constructed, sometimes Faulknerian prose, but then Dunham will turn around and pretend that he never had more than a high-school education. At times it feels as if the reader is in on the secrets of a genius, though in other moments, Hellberg seems to be using Dunham purely to mock academia and her disciples. Dunham's recreational drug use borders on alarming, and the reader has to wonder why on earth he makes some of the crazy choices he makes. His entire role in the novel is an anomaly; granted the job prospects for those with advanced degrees in English are not stellar, but surely Dunham can do better than odd construction jobs and unskilled night-shift positions. Why is he choosing this life?

Even after spending much longer with this character-driven, language-rich novel than I usually do with a book, I still feel as though Squirrel Haus has more nuances than I've properly unpacked as a reader. Highly recommended for those who appreciate off-beat characters, unexpected plot twists, and preposterous shenanigans.

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### Melissa Seng says

I was lucky enough to receive a copy of this from Goodreads Firstreads. While not my usual type of read, I enjoyed this book a great deal. I will be passing this along to friends and family to read!! Once upon a time, I lived in a house like Squirrel Haus. Some of the work that needed to be done reminded me of the place I stayed. Some of the parties that G & D had reminded me of the ones we had. They lived in "Squirrel Haus", we lived in, "The Web." Brought back memories.

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### **Amy says**

An homage to gonzo journalism for a true 90's spirit. Almost any 30-something whom chooses a life lived best outside of the box can relate to the protag's attitude toward everything in America post 9-11 and the onset of a hopeless new millennium. Well-written prose for a poet.

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