

Title: *The Field Guide to the North American Teenager*

Author: Ben Philippe

Genre: Realistic fiction

Reviewer Name and Grade: Owen M. 8th Grade

Date Reviewed: May 30, 2020

The book “The Field Guide to the North American Teenager.” Is a realistic fiction book about a teenager from Canada, moving to Austin, Texas because his mom got a new job there. The main characters in this book are: Norris; the protagonist, an African American Canadian who was shoved into Texas because of his mom's new job. One of the first people he meets is Aarti, the “girl of his dreams” or so it seems. Then he has a run in with Maddie, part of a posse of girls who run around his new school ticking people off. He later applies to a job where he runs into her for a second time. Finally there is Liam. A boy shrouded in mystery who approaches him, asking for hockey lessons, out of the blue. The book, *The Field Guide to the North American Teenager* begins each chapter with a little list the main character compiles of a specific person, place or thing. The book begins with the main character stepping off the plane, and trying to get adjusted to his new life, within his first few days he gets cornered by a group of cheerleaders, where he ends up meeting both Aarti and Maddie. Later on that week he meets Liam. A “loner” as Norris put it. He then begins to work at the boneyard, and starts a hockey club, all in the span of a few weeks. Norris’ underlying goal was to get back to Canada, where he left behind his best friend and everything that he enjoyed.

Just a warning, this book describes forms of drug abuse and under age drinking.

Did this book keep you interested? Yes, this book kept me very interested. So far, this book has been my favorite realistic fiction book of all time.

Was the pace of this book too fast, too slow or just right? This book was very very good at drawing you in. it was fast, but not too fast, there were points where you could liken the author to JRR Tolkien with the amount of detail, but it still had a boyish charm to it.

What grade level is this book appropriate for? This book is appropriate for 7th and up, depending on maturity level.

Who would you recommend this book to? This book is good for anyone, there is romance, action and comedy.

What other information do you think would be helpful to teens reading this book? That this book, as humorous as it may seem, also deals with some pretty deep stuff, so just be wary.

5 stars. I would give this book five stars because it is an excellent read and really captivates your attention.

Reviewer Name and Grade: Yujay A., 9th Grade

Date Reviewed: December 27, 2020

Norris Kaplan is a black French Canadian teenager who moves to Austin, Texas, because his mom gets a job at a university there. Norris loves hockey, and is very intelligent, clever, and cynical. Norris has divorced parents, and his dad is back in Canada with his baby brother and stepmother. Norris hates Austin at first, and when he is placed into a new high school, he starts to write about his classmates in his journal. He groups everyone into a category, such as the “Jocks”, “Cheerleaders”, and the “Loners”, and usually writes a lot of negative comments about his classmates. Norris encounters a group of cheerleaders one day including Meredith and Maddie. The cheerleaders and Norris quickly get into an argument because Norris cannot keep his mouth shut, and right when the cheerleaders are about to fight him, a girl named Aarti steps in. Norris quickly starts to fall in love with Aarti. Norris goes to get a job at a local restaurant, and discovers that Maddie’s family runs the restaurant and that she is an employee. Despite their previous interaction, Maddie is nice to Norris and helps get him the job. At school, Norris meets Liam, a lonely quiet kid who comes up to Norris asking if he would help him learn how to skate and play hockey. Norris reluctantly agrees, and eventually becomes good friends with Liam, who he discovers is very strange but a good friend. Together, they start a hockey team, and are surprised that they get enough people willing to play to make a full team. Although the team includes former rivals of Norris, such as Patrick, a football player who once shoved Norris down the stairs and who Norris calls “hairy armpits”, they work together and eventually win their first game. Maddie also helps Norris with trying to date Aarti, and Norris almost becomes her boyfriend. Norris is starting to like Texas and his life in Texas when on the night of junior prom, everything comes crashing down. His journal is exposed and the people who once thought of Norris as a friend all hate him. Norris must reconcile with his friends and mom and try to make things right before he is sent back to Canada.

Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for non-fiction) keep you interested?

The plot of this novel definitely kept me interested, as there was a lot of drama and action, and there were some very suspenseful scenes.

Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?

The pace of *The Field Guide to the North American Teenager* was just right, and let the reader have enough time to make predictions and process everything that was going on while not being too slow and boring.

What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?

This novel is appropriate for grades 9 and up, as there is a lot of strong language, mature themes, and underage drinking and drug use.

What type of reader would you recommend this book to?

I would recommend this book to anybody who wants to read a very funny and dramatic book which gives a good insight into the life of a “typical” American teenager.

What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?

Each chapter of this novel is started off with an excerpt from Norris’ journal which describes what or who the chapter will be about.

I would rate *The Field Guide to the North American Teenager* 5 Stars because it was very humorous, suspenseful, and had a good pace. There were many aspects to this novel, such as the drama, comedy, romance, and action. Norris was a very interesting character and seeing his

thought processes were humorous while also adding to the depth of the novel. Overall, this was a very good book which I would recommend to anybody looking for a great realistic fiction novel.