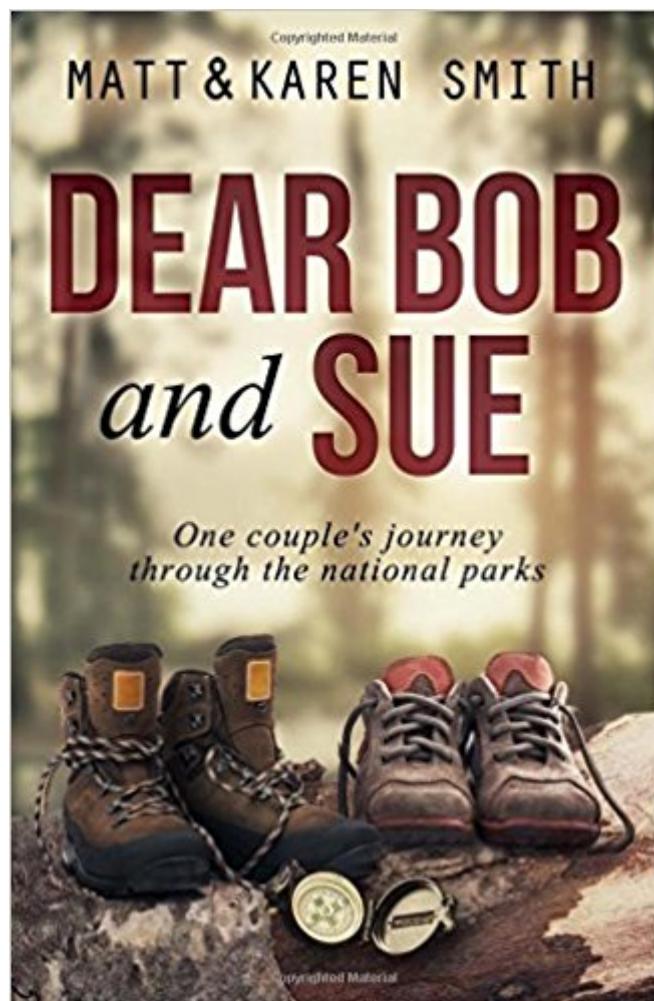


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Dear Bob And Sue



Synopsis

Dear Bob and Sue is the story of our (Matt and Karen Smith) journey to all 59 U.S. National Parks. We wrote the book as a series of emails to our friends, Bob and Sue, in which we share our humorous and quirky observations. It is at times irreverent, unpredictable and sarcastic, all in the spirit of humor. We describe a few of our experiences in each park but do not provide an exhaustive overview of each experience or park. We use these events as the vehicle to deliver insights about our relationship. We did not intend for this book to be a travel guide nor a recommendation for how to visit all 59 of the U.S. National Parks although many readers have said they've found it to be a useful guide. Rather, it is our story about how we did it. If you enjoy quirky humor set in the magnificent U.S. National Parks, this book may be for you. If you are looking for eloquent descriptions of the natural beauty we encountered or detailed descriptions of every activity you can do in each park, there are many other books available where you can find that information. All that said, many readers have commented that it's "laugh out loud" funny and a light-hearted glimpse of our journey through the parks. Some have voiced concerns about the language we used in the book. We are not entirely sure which are the offending words, but here are a few possible candidates. There is a point in the book where Matt suggests that one of the caves at Carlsbad Caverns National Park be named Put Your Scrotum in a Vise Cave. Another passage mentions that Matt has a low tolerance for bullshit. Still, another quotes Karen as saying that men who use a laptop while it sits directly on their lap expose themselves to the risk of "cooking their testicles." For the sake of full disclosure, Karen's testicle comment offends Matt as well. These are representative examples of what we feel are the most "adult" language usages in the book. If these are offensive to you, then you might re-consider whether you should read this book. We also talk about drinking beer and eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Based on comments we've received from readers, we should warn you about these as well.

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Customer Reviews

Matt and Karen have been married for over 34 years and live in the Seattle, Washington area. Having both grown up in the Midwest, they met at the University of Kansas and have been together ever since. Dear Bob and Sue is their first book project together.

I've loved the few National Parks I've visited, so I looked forward to reading about Matt and Karen Smith's visits to those parks, and to learning what about other parks I would want to visit someday. I haven't finished the book yet, but some things about it bothered me enough to look up other readers' reviews to see if I was the only one who felt the way I do. I see that others agree with me. I was enjoying the book until I read enough of his put downs of geezers and old ladies and old lady perfume, etc to know that Matt doesn't like me. Matt wouldn't like me and I find that's affecting my enjoyment of the book. He doesn't like families with children when the children behave like children. The authors don't really respect the National Parks nor the rules that preserve the parks for all. Touching something (ex: the cane-like formations in the cave) that they've been told explicitly not to touch, smuggling alcohol in where it's not allowed, camping out with cooler and beer in the lobby of a beautiful icon of the National Park hotels: huh? The emphasis upon alcohol consumption and even getting drunk, was puzzling because it - and the childish behavior in hotels, restaurants, out in the parks - conflicted with the authors' claim that they are middle aged adults who have raised a family and are turning 50. It was difficult to get to know these people; their values seem in conflict with each other. Love of the features preserved in national parks, but disdain for the people who run and visit them, and for the rules necessary for the preservation of natural treasures. Who ever did the writing is a great writer with talent for humor and description. The humorous exchanges between the couple were, I thought, cute and sometimes caused me to chuckle aloud. But the pervasive disdain for humans in general, and especially senior citizens and young children turned me off. I kept reading beyond the point of finding the book somewhat repetitive, and rather annoying in the way that the couple began racing to parks just long enough to get the park stamp, take a quick hike, then

mark that park "done" because I wanted to read about their experiences in two of my favorite parks: Acadia National Park in Maine and Badlands in South Dakota. What a huge disappointment! They raced to Acadia, spent a few hours there, never talked about specifics about what they saw, where they stayed, where they ate (and I, too, tired of the PB & J sandwiches and pizza descriptions). Badlands National Park was neglected, too, in my opinion. The project was a worthy one but it occurred to me that it was a race, not a journey, done just to turn out a book, or to travel and be able to deduct the cost on their taxes. (I'm thinking I might be wrong about that, but the book gives one that impression: that it's all about getting the passports stamped and to be able to say they did it.) I get the annoyance with people talking loudly on cell phones, but the digs against other humans were just too much and when I hold a book in my hand I don't want to have the feeling that the author doesn't like me now that I'm a senior lady. A more accepting way of looking at others would improve the writing and would also enhance Matt's life.

I have finished 50% of the book and I don't think I can go any further. I initially enjoyed the way the author captured the relationship between two hiking companions (and married couple). There are a lot of honest and funny descriptions of those kinds of irritations one has to endure when they spend so much time together. However, I have visited many of the national parks described--camping, hiking, canoeing in them. Nearly all have been seriously short-changed by the slap-dash approach they have taken to their visits. Virgin Islands National Park all about painkillers and humidity? Really? Try camping and some of the best hiking and snorkeling out there. Dry Tortugas overnight when the ferry pulls out and you're nearly alone with nature. The enormity of Big Bend with a night sky you'll never forget. Sleeping next to a stream at the floor of the Grand Canyon. The idea that thousands of people are reading about how it seems to be ok to touch things and otherwise think the rules are there for other people is pretty much my last straw.

Some good dry humor from a couple who obviously enjoy being with each other. Makes me a little jealous for their adventures but does definitely inspire me to go and see our wonderful national parks.

We vacation in a motor home, our future retirement agenda is to visit as many national parks as possible. Reading this wonderful book was like being there with the Smiths. I laughed out loud many times and imagined the wonderful sights in my mind. This will be a great resource when we begin our journey.

Had it's moments. Guess I expected it to be wittier. Found their knowledge of nature a little lacking. Guess I spend too much time outdoors to find the foibles of city people really amusing. Sorry, i know I'm being picky.

This book drew me into the year of travel to our national parks. The book is written in a unique style-an email summarizes a day's activities. After reading only a few pages I was drawn in for the ride through the entire year. And, the book has an excellent sense of humor as events unfold! This book is well worth the read.

I loved this book! A collection of emails sent to friends from Matt & Karen as they traveled thru the national parks. Lovely descriptions of the different parks, scenery, trails, 'taking care of business' at each park, how to pack for hiking. And, good-natured bickering between the 2. I laughed out loud at some of the dialogue. I'd be happy to read their next book on any new adventures.

I loved this account of Matt and Karen's national park adventures. I'm about to retire and now I think my husband and I ought to start visiting a few. Maybe I should start working out to get in shape for some of the hikes first, though. This was a very enjoyable read and I also found their website so I could see some of Matt's photographs. Two thumbs up!

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