



# Tent City

*Kelly Van Hull*

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## Tent City Details

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Author : Kelly Van Hull

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# From Reader Review Tent City for online ebook

## Melissa Cushing says

I LOVE this book! Great Dystopian novel and I really could NOT put it down once I got going. Here is the blurb from Goodreads.....

After a devastating plague, introverted 17-year-old Dani Campbell and her family find themselves living in a very different America, one run by a cult-like leader, who forces children to move to "safety camps" designed to protect the human race. Encouraged to flee by her parents, Dani and her five-year-old brother seek refuge in the Black Hills of South Dakota. On the run with danger around every corner, Dani must fight to ensure their survival in this new world while trying to unmask the mystery of how it all came to be.

Now.... there is so much more you need to know. This a story of a girl, Dani, on the run with her best friend Kit and her younger brother Brody. They flee when they are warned by Dani's parents that all kids within their age group would be sent to "safety camps". They get the warning from their Uncle Randy, who happens to work for the new government that is led by a manipulating religious crazy man. So, the kids flee, leaving their families behind, to a family owned cabin which turns out to already be inhabited by other teenagers and young adults, which is called Tent City. The unofficial leader of Tent City is Bentley. He is one of the two lead males in this stories love triangle. The other is Jack, who Dani, Kit, and Brody actually run into on their travels to Tent City and then they are reunited once again once they are living in Tent City with the others. (view spoiler) All the while Dani truly finds herself and becomes a bit of a warrior by the books end, due to the trials and tribulations she endures when she finds herself responsible for taking care of her younger brother and her best friend, out on the run in the wilderness of South Dakota. She really does become a fierce force to be reckoned with. All of this, while growing to like the two boys (Jack & Bentley), who are distinctly different in their own way and similar in others. She later finds out some of their secrets,(view spoiler) which you will have to read to find out.... :). She learns that they are both amazing and has no idea what to do about it and I truly do not know which I would choose either.... which makes me love this story even more! The ending wraps up nicely, not leaving you tortured with a crazy cliffhanger that drives you nuts until the next book comes out.... do not get me wrong.... there are still lots of "What Ifs" and questions that I need answered, so I CANNOT wait to read the sequel which is coming out soon..... so until then.... I will probably read this book once or twice or three times more! Lovers of YA/NA, Paranormal, Dystopian, Apocalyptic.... you will need to read this one! Kelly Van Hull is an amazing Indie Author and I cannot wait to see what she brings next!

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## Jack says

For book reviews and more, please visit my book blog, The Book Stop

Tent City was a book I was more than excited to read. What intrigued me most, was the original concept of the plot. It's hard to find an original dystopian novel, with the genre at it's peak these days. But it's not everything to have a glowing concept, as we all know. And Tent City greatly disappointed me with most of the basic aspects of a good book. The idea had potential, but as a novel overall, Tent City has less than impressed me.

When we start Tent City we're thrust right into the action. In most instances, this is an exciting way to

introduce the reader into the story. But in the case of Tent City, as we're reading we have no idea who these characters are, what their relationship with each other is, what their surroundings look like, what they look like. There is no character description or development. We're hopeful maybe this will change, but as we keep reading we notice as the story goes on, we see that the characters are as bland and typical as twigs. The story is speeding along, too fast, without fully explaining what's happening. Tent City is plot driven, but unfortunately the plot didn't live up to my expectations.

As I said before, the original concept is the reason I was so excited to read this. But unfortunately, because of the lack of depth in the writing, and the underdeveloped plot, I was very disappointed. The story could have been so gripping.

There were a lot technical problems in Tent City, distracting me from the story line. For example...

***“I helped Mom clean up and then we all went into the sunken living room and Dad started a fire. It cracked and popped, which Dad always said was because the wood was a little wet, or was it because it was cedar? I can remember. Brody is playing with his train set on the floor, making choo-choo sounds as the trains exchange cargo on the track. Dad sits patiently waiting for me to start.”***

Do you spot it? Yes, it changes from past tense narration to present tense. And this isn't a once off mistake. It came up numerous times throughout the novel, and to be honest it's really off putting. Here is another thing that kind of bugged me:

***“Ya, but it's been a couple of months, so they won't be expecting us.”***

***“What are ya gonna do?”***

The extensive use of 'ya'. No, just no. I get the author is trying to interpret the accent, but constantly using 'ya' is not the right way in doing it. Really irritating.

Other technical problems I had with the writing included the overuse of exclamation points, the choppy dialogue, and the repetition of words multiple times in the same sentence.

Moving on from the technical side of things. I thought the writing was shallow, too much 'tell' instead of 'show in terms of world building, and we had no background development to base the characters off of. I just feel like the novel had so much potential. If only it was written better, and the characters were more developed, described. I must admit I liked where the plot was going and how it developed throughout the novel, but it was so underdeveloped I found it hard to even focus on the story line.

Overall, Tent City was a let down. It had an epic story line, but that's as far as it goes because the story wasn't told properly and the characters really let the book down. To be honest, I wouldn't recommend this book, but you might be intrigued regardless of my review. I won't be continuing with the series, for obvious reasons, but I wish the author all the luck in the world because she's lovely!

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**Gabby says**

\*There may be spoilers in this review, but big ones will be marked\*

Actual Rating: Really hard for me to decide, so 4.5

Favourite Character: Kelly has made some absolutely amazing characters, and I can't choose just one. So Bentley (Who I need to remember has an 'e' in his name), Jack and Brody.

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review, from the "David Estes Fans and YA Book Lovers Unite!" group on Goodreads.

I remember when I first saw this book, I immediately wanted to read it. I put it on my want-to-read shelf and then when I found out it was going to be a R2r I crossed it out on my calendar and stalked the r2r thread on my phone every five seconds on the day to see if it had been posted.

Anyway, about the ending. Oh, my god. You have got to be kidding me. I need the next one. NOW. Spoilers ahead!(Seriously. Massive spoilers. I mean MASSIVE.)(view spoiler) I don't know what to say because this book is just so amazing and seriously, read it. Everyone. Read it now. Oooh, wait. Wait until the second book is closer because seriously; that cliff-hanger.

This is definitely one of the best dystopia's I've read, (And I'm a massive fan of zombies and this didn't have zombies in it so that's an extra bonus. Dystopia's really can be awesome without zombies!! And this book proved that.)

And Jack and Bentley....Seriously all that stuff, I almost died because of all the twists with them. (view spoiler)

I loved both of them from the start and didn't know which one I would have chosen, but then realised who she had chosen (view spoiler) And then I started to love him more, too. And now I just NEED them to be together and for everyone to be safe and have the best HEA ever!

Seriously, no matter how many times I guessed correctly (or incorrectly, for that matter), I was still surprised.

This is definitely one of the best books of 2013. It sits proudly on my favorites shelf :)

Oh, and I need book two now...Did I mention that already?

(And thanks Kelly for giving me that extension, because seriously, you can't rush a book this amazing. You just can't. You have to process all the awesomeness.)

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## **Laura Greenwood says**

Review posted on June 13th on [a-reader-lives-a-thousand-lives.blogspot.co.uk](http://a-reader-lives-a-thousand-lives.blogspot.co.uk)

I was given a copy of Tent City in ebook form from the author in exchange for my review.

Dani lives in the USA, except after a plague of locusts there isn't enough food for people to eat, and some people have enhanced personality attributes. When the country's dictator, General Burke, passes a law saying

that all children between the ages of 5 and 18 had to be relocated to 'safety camps', Dani's parents tell her to run, with her 5 year old brother Brody, and best friend Kit, in tow. When the trio finally reach their destination, after being helped by the mysterious Jack, they find a settlement of teenagers led by the equally mysterious Bentley. Here Kit finds love and Dani starts to find herself.

First things first, I think that this book has serious sequel potential (and I'll be reading any sequels without a doubt!), the ending was set up perfectly for it, but even if it hadn't been, the genre lends itself to being written about more than once.

I found that Van Hull's dystopian setting was well thought out, if a little rough around the edges. However, I thought this roughness worked as it was made clear that this was a dystopia in it's early stages, at one point I think Dani dates it as 7 years ago at the coming of the locusts. Up until nearing the end of the book I'd actually seen General Burke as a kind of Big Brother figure, heard but not seen, though I have now revised that opinion.

I thought that it was interesting how Van Hull integrated religion into her book, with the plagues (based on the plagues of Egypt I believe), and hints towards a surge in people believing in religion and in God. Not many dystopias ever really focus on religion, in most the religion is the State, so this was a refreshing change for it. I was a little surprised that Dani and her brother (along with the other Tent City occupants) escaped from the oppressive society so early on, though then again this worked because of the plot line for fighting against the oppression.

Character wise I found it really easy to relate to Dani, and particularly her caring for her younger brother (I have a 4 year old brother myself, and I know that even with my parents around I would do anything to protect him), and I found her growth pattern to be believable, it was gradual, and even the developing love triangle was believable. I liked the way that Dani wasn't going around kissing both of them all the time, or leading them both on, they both knew what was happening fully. Both the relationships (between Dani and Jack, and Dani and Bentley) were believable in the way they progressed, though personally I preferred the dynamic between Dani and Bentley, to me it just seemed so real because of how Dani was saying he was sweet one moment and then getting frustrated and annoyed at him the next, to me Jack simply seemed a bit aloof.

Unfortunately I did struggle with the character of Kit a bit, she wasn't a bad character or a bad person or anything, she just didn't seem to change. I think the only thing that Dani mentioned changing about her was that she stayed with the same guy for over a week. I just find it slightly difficult to believe that someone who went from living on a farm near a fairly big town, to living in a tent, changed so little.

One thing I noticed about the edition I was given was that the text seemed to randomly grow in size for a sentence and then go back to normal. Obviously this wasn't a problem or anything, and it didn't detract from the writing, it is just an edition quirk.

I always think that half the fun I have with this kind of book is to guess what the twists are, and once again I'm proud to say I guessed both of them right (though at one point I was worried that one of them wasn't going to be revealed!). As I said, I think this adds to the fun and the thrill of reading, for me anyway, and didn't detract from the story.

This is yet another dystopian novel that I will wholeheartedly recommend, and another one that doesn't have the following or the recognition that it deserves!

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## Leonie says

I read Tent City on a "read for an honest review" premise, with a copy supplied by the author.

Tent City by Kelly Van Hull is an intriguing read. The novel is written in first person present tense, from the point of view of Dani, a teenager in a dystopian or perhaps pre-apocalyptic world. I enjoyed the story, which although slightly predictable, was a pleasant journey. The idea of "advancements" was interesting, and I would have loved to see this more fully explored. However, this is probably a clever plot device on the part of the author - because I'd happily buy the next book just for this point alone.

The character of Dani, the main protagonist, was quite well written. She's a teen girl, suddenly thrust into the wilderness with her best friend and her five year old brother, Brody. Most of the time, her reactions were realistic and well thought out.

The setting was an interesting one, but one that I found slightly confusing. It took me some time to sort out what the political situation probably was, and I will say probably, because I'm still not sure. Military dictatorship? Religious dictatorship? Or a combination of both? Building a dystopian world is a difficult thing. Making it cohesive is even more difficult. This book is obviously the first in a series, so I'm hoping that this might become more clear in the next book.

I liked the premise of a family sending their children into hiding to protect them from the government, and I liked the little hints that the author gave that there was always more to be revealed around the next page. I did struggle with a few plot issues, though. (view spoiler) There was some plot revealed by dialogue that Dani was not personally a part of, that was not always clear until I'd re-read it a number of times.

I enjoyed Jack and Bentley. This is a YA novel, and although dystopian, does employ the love triangle (or in this case almost a quadrangle) so familiar to readers of teen novels. For some, this will be an attraction, but for others, the opposite.

The dialogue was at times excellent, but at other times somewhat wooden. When the dialogue was excellent, the story really moved along, but when it hit a wooden phase it pulled me away from the characters.

There were a few instances of dropping in and out of tense. Whilst the novel is written in present tense, every now and then a paragraph popped up which was written in past tense, and I found it momentarily jarring.

On the whole though, a pleasant read from a new author who has some great ideas. I'll be interested to see how she links the hints of a coming apocalypse with the dystopian society already in place.

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## Sarah says

This is a survivalist type story involving a girl named Dani who must flee with her young brother or risk being sent to a camp and made into a breeder. The author throws you straight into the story, which I loved. I was flipping pages immediately. The writing is clean with neat descriptions, making note of interesting details. I did find the main character a little hard to relate to, but that's not a problem for me. I don't need happy, go lucky main characters. I like real people, and Dani is that. The pacing of the book is excellent and there's really never a dull moment. There are a few editorial problems, but nothing that detracts too much

from story. The reason that I gave this book four instead of five star is that I thought there were some strange plot things that came out of nowhere and could have been flushed out better. Also, and this is the biggest for me, the story is told to the reader too often. I would have preferred to be shown the story. I know, it's that stupid, show, don't tell adage, but it's true and here it holds true. I wanted to see the story through Dani's eyes, instead of her telling it to me. Anyway, all in all, a really great read!

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## **Carmen says**

*I just couldn't understand how he could just take a life as if it meant nothing.*

*But that's not how it was. It was necessary. Necessary for survival. I feel bad about the lives I may have taken, but I understand. It was me or them.*

*If I had only known that I was capable of all this before we left, this might have been a little easier. Back then, I was scared all the time. But maybe this journey is what got me here.*

**BOOK #11 in Carmen-Downloads-20-Free-Ebooks-Onto-Her-Kindle-Day. More widely known as March 3rd, 2015.**

Boom!

I have mixed feelings about this book.

It's the future and America is a dictatorship run by a man called General Burke. After a plague of locusts 7 years ago, food shortages and illness have ravaged the country. That's when General Burke took over the government and started issuing commands. He (the government) now owns all lands and property. He monitors all calls and mail. Dissenters are disappeared. All of this is tolerated, but when he demands all children aged 5-18 be rounded up and put in camps, Dani's father has decided he's had enough. He asks Dani if she would be willing to 'run away' to the family's summer cabin in the woods, taking her little brother Brody with her. She agrees - under the condition that her brash best friend Kit come along.

They venture out into the woods, hoping to hide from the government's agents and survive until the family can be reunited once again.

...

There was some stuff I liked, and some stuff that made me angry. Let's break it down:

### **PROS:**

1.) This book has a pretty good plot. Two 17-year-old girls on the run in the forest with a little boy in tow. Who will they meet? Can they survive? Who can they trust?

2.) Dani is a runner. I loved reading about how much running means to her, how running helps keep her sane, and how running is amazing in general. Nice touch.

3.) Religious subplot and undertones. I can't say much more without giving stuff away, but I thought Van Hull did a good job of being artful in weaving this into the story.



4.) How the book approaches make-up and appearances. Dani usually doesn't wear make-up, but her best friend Kit does. And in one point in the book, Kit puts a bit of make-up on Dani.

*"Now, just sit still." She begins with some eye shadow. "I know you don't like all this stuff, but it can't hurt to put a little time into yourself. I know you think it's not important how you look, but it's not just about other people. I do this because when I walk out of here, I'm going to feel good about myself because I like what I see."*

Well, I don't wear make-up (unless I'm in the wedding party or going to a formal dance - so very rarely) but I like this idea that make-up is about yourself. Not to please others but to please yourself and make yourself more confident.

And, I really like that Van Hull doesn't make Dani putting on a little make-up into a big deal. No one comments on it, it doesn't make the boys more interested in her - nothing. This is good. More normal and real than what I usually see in novels.

5.) The whole "Say My Name, Say My Name" subplot. This basically revolves around Bentley saying Dani's name in every sentence and her wondering what his deal is. The way it plays out is subtle and nicely done.

6.) Dani flirting / being friendly in order to get information out of people. Instead of being skeeved by this behavior, I am actually relieved. I infinitely prefer this to when MCs just make really bad decisions being friendly and flirting with people who they should be suspicious/wary of. And it shows that Dani has (at least some) brains.

7.) The romance is not weird, trite, overly stressed, or dramatic. It's pretty straightforward and normal (for a love triangle.) It's not very sexual, it's not very possessive, obsessive or overwrought. Well done. Dani doesn't completely lose her head over the boys vying for her attention.

8.) Killing. Dani kills people, Bentley kills people. I hate these YA dystopian books where the world has obviously gone to shit but people are too bleeding-heart (or the author is too "think of the children!") to actually bring themselves to kill. In this book, killing is sometimes necessary and so that's what happens. End of story. Loved it.

9.) Becoming a badass. Dani goes from being an ingenue to someone who is a survivalist badass. This transformation doesn't even begin until 40% and I really liked how it went down. After a disastrous event, Kit tells Dani

*"I said, what are you going to do about it? Are you just going to sit around and mope about how 'unwildernessy' you are?"*

*"That's not even a real word, Kit." She smiles and I can tell she is considering herself quite clever now.*

*"Yes, it is. I just said it. And I mean it. You think you're not good at this stuff? Do something about it. It's not like you don't have time... Why don't you start some kind of training? Study maps, learn the land, learn to fight... do something about it!"...*

*...my mind is spinning with the idea of remaking myself. She's right. I don't have to be this helpless girl anymore.*

Booyah! So she trains, learns how to fight, learns a bit of medicine, etc. etc. Over the course of months, she turns into a more badass version of herself. Great! I liked the message that you need to work for that (unlike heroines who just "naturally" have all sorts of skills with no training) and the fact that it takes time.

*It's funny how I just realized there is no one to help us. I think we just get panicked and look to someone else to save us, but really out here, there's no one but us. We either figure out a way to solve it ourselves, or die.*

10.) Great ending.

...

## CONS

1.) Van Hull employs this "I know what I'm doing is stupid but I'm doing it anyway because I just can't help myself" thing that seriously annoys me. It's as if she knows her characters are doing something dumb, but can't think of a good reason that they're doing this dumb stuff. She knows the reader will think it's dumb, so she tries to justify it by saying this kind of thing:

*I don't know if I should turn around and go back, or keep going to see what it is. Maybe it's just a reflection off of something.*

*Common sense tells me I should turn around and go back, but somehow I'm drawn in like a bug to a zapper.*

Mmmmm-hmmmm. Sure. What about:

*I forget I should worry about whether he's safe or not and now I'm just interested in seeing what he's got. It brings me back to fishing with my dad and I'm overwhelmed with the desire to be sitting on the boat with him.*

Let me get this straight. You see a teenager fishing. You are supposed to be on the run and not talking to anybody because you don't know who you can trust. You KNOW you shouldn't approach/talk to him but you do anyway because... you used to fish with your dad?!?!? How stupid are you?!?!?

Another way Van Hull can be seen to be deliberately manipulating the plot is this example: when Dani leaves home her father gives her an envelope with a letter. For the first few days out, she's all like "I'll just read this letter later." For no good reason, and with the reader screaming at her to "Read it now!" because you can see a mile off what's coming. Yes, of course, the letter is damaged and becomes unreadable and now we'll never know the important stuff her father might have put in there.

I'd rather have Van Hull destroy the letter right off instead of making Dani seem like an absolute idiot for putting off reading it. If you were leaving your family and your home to go into the woods, not knowing when or if you'd see them again, do you think you'd just NOT open a letter your dad gave you? Or put it off till later? NO. Of course you wouldn't. Ridiculous. Just bad writing.

What about this: Dani & Co. are ambushed by a man with a ski mask and a gun. He interrogates them. Then he takes off his mask.

*I know he's still talking, but I'm too distracted by his face to hear what he's saying. I was expecting some sort of ruffian with a long beard and missing teeth, certainly not this. He has blond hair... his skin is tan, ... his eyes are green...*

OMG. Seriously!?!?! This man, who 2 seconds ago had a gun trained on you, is talking to you and might be saying anything - could be really important - and you can't focus because he is handsome!?!?! WTF?!?!?! I can't even with this. Listen, I love men. Love them. But you'd best believe there's not a man on Earth handsome enough that I would be checking him out after he just threatened my life and the lives of my best friend and my little brother. No way in hell.

How about when Dani meets some people in the woods at about 64%

*They can't possibly be dangerous if they have a little girl with them.*

\*bangs head against wall\* How can you be this dumb? HOW?!?!??

2.) Love triangle. Even worse, a love triangle involving (view spoiler) Does every YA book have to have a love triangle in it? There are other ways to build suspense and make things interesting, you know.

3.) Both Kit and Dani seem to have problems keeping their mouths shut and are always blabbing their business to people they shouldn't. It's highly frustrating to the reader.

4.) Avoidance. Both the boys in the love triangle (Jack and Bentley) are lying, evasive, secretive people who hide a lot of important information from Dani. I really wanted to beat the shit out of both of them. Grrrrrrr. And Dani always forgives them because "they are just so dreamy!"

5.) The fight scenes are unclear, vague, and not exciting.

6.) (view spoiler)

...

NEUTRAL:

1.) When we are first introduced to Callie we get descriptions like

*She has the whitest teeth I've ever seen, which only makes her mocha skin seem deeper brown, almost velvety. Or is it the tan skin that makes her teeth whiter? Either way, she is striking in an exotic way.*

Okay, that grates my cheese for a number of reasons. First, non-white DOES NOT equal exotic. Just no. No, no, no. Especially since everyone is American in this book. That means they are all citizens of the same country. Someone who is a 6th-generation (let's say) Chinese-American is just as non-exotic (regular? Normal? Typical?) as a 6th-generation Irish-American. Secondly, if you are going to put a character in your book and talk about their skin color, just explain what ethnicity/race they are. JUST SAY IT. I am not offended if you say, "She was white/ she was black/ she was Asian / she was Latina" or whatever, I mean JUST SPIT IT OUT. Stop being so coy. It's very annoying. Either don't mention race/ethnicity at all or tell us what's up point-blank.

I forgave Van Hull for annoying me when she finally reveals, about 55% of the way through the book, that Callie is Native American. What a relief! You could have just said that at the beginning. There's absolutely nothing wrong with just saying, "She's Native American." JUST SAY IT instead of going on and on about her "velvety brown skin" which frankly could mean anything. Vague is NOT your friend.

...

Tl;dr - This was a mixed bag. I usually don't like YA, and this book has some of the tropes I hate (love

triangle, heroine who sometimes seems to have a case of "the dumb,") but did some other things well. I liked the ending and am actually considering reading the next book in the series. (You're shocked, I know.)

Can I mention just one more thing? Usually, at the end of a self-published novel, I will run into some spiel about "If you enjoyed this book, please write a review on Amazon!" or something similar. I completely understand this and don't mind it, but it miffs me that they only say, "if you liked it" or "if you enjoyed it." To me, this insinuates that if you DIDN'T enjoy it, you should keep your mouth shut. Van Hull surprised me with her classy:

*Tent City is a self-published novel. If you enjoyed the read (and even if you didn't), please consider leaving a review on Amazon or Goodreads. The most valuable asset for an indie author is their reviews.... Writing is our passion and seeing your thoughts (good or bad), is the best feeling in the world...*

THIS IS WINNING SO MANY POINTS FROM ME. Wow, it is so refreshing and such a relief to read this at the end of an indie book, I can tell you. Extra points to Van Hull. So classy.

**I got this for free on my Kindle by just browsing through Amazon, they were having a special. This was entry #11 in Carmen-Downloads-20-Free-Ebooks-Onto-Her-Kindle-Day. More widely known as March 3rd, 2015.**

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## **Raquel Valldeperas says**

This book. I don't even...I don't know.

\*I received a copy in exchange for an honest review.\*

In fact, the author was absolutely adamant about the honest part, and I had no problem with that. Often times I read something in exchange for a review, and then I feel bad when I don't leave five glowing stars. That doesn't stop me from being honest, however, but it's nice to do it without a guilty conscience.

The blurb for the book sounded good. It was well written, which is the first thing I look for, and it grabbed my attention. I went into it not knowing what to expect, but with an open mind. And that open mind of mine?

## **Mind. Blown.**

Here's a breakdown for ya:

### **Characters**

Dani- I liked her from the very beginning. Even though she seemed to be pretty sheltered throughout her life, she was able to look at things from different perspectives. At times she acts like the seventeen year old she is- emotional, stubborn, scatter-brained. But then there are times when she's able to make decisions with a level-head. It's like she's a real person, someone I could relate to and see myself actually meeting. She really jumped off of the pages.

Kit- I didn't like her at first. At all, in fact. She was reckless and annoying and a little bit of a contradiction. Dani describes her as a free spirit, but then she bunks down and doesn't want to leave their little hideout. (view spoiler) I see a free spirit as someone who goes where the wind blows them, doesn't want to set down roots, blah blah blah. Kit ended up being pretty much the opposite, but she's a good friend to Dani. Loyal, trustworthy. I can say that I liked her by the middle of the book.

Jack- Hot and cold. Mean and nice. Bad and good. I don't even know what else to say about him except that he's all over the place, just the way I like my book boyfriends. I was scared to fall in love with him, fearful he would break my heart, but it happened anyway.

Bentley- Hate the name, love the boy. I am totally team Jack, but Bentley put up the best competition out of any of the books I've read. I love his leadership skills and his willingness to throw a few punches and get shit done. Seriously, he was pretty badass.

The kids in the story really add another level. They allow you to think about the burden they create but also make you wonder what you would do to protect them. Being a mother myself, I could totally relate to the situation and the problems they face.

### **Plot**

I LOVED the originality of the reason why everything has gone to shit. It was just refreshing to read a post-apocalyptic book that had a twist without being completely unbelievable. You definitely have to be somewhat lenient with the realism of it, but it's not so far-fetched that you're scoffing the whole time. I loved the religious undertones, so subtle you wouldn't really think they were there.

I would have liked some more description of emotions, and maybe even the scenery. Having never been in an area like that, so far north, I was hoping for more to be able to create the space in my head. Some pretty precarious situations arise throughout the book, and while I got the gist of the severity, I feel that it could have been expounded upon more. That's honestly the only negative thing I can think of.

The twists were so well placed and thought out that they weren't even twists at all. They just happened...and then I was all like, *Did that just happen?*  
And that ending.

!#@#%&@^@#

Grammar wise, Tent City was nearly impeccable. Besides a few misplaced commas and misplaced and/or missing letters, it was flawless. Even the few mistakes don't take away from the book. I only noticed them because I'm a stickler for grammar. The writing flowed and really sounded like a young girl's thoughts.

Needless to say, I will be eagerly awaiting the second book and I encourage anyone with this on their TBR lists to bump it up and get it on! Seriously, it was great. Bravo, Kelly Van Hull!

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### **J.D. Spero says**

Van Hull creates a convincing dystopia with her intriguing premise about what would happen if our world

was devastated by the 10 deadly plagues. I felt sympathetic toward this gutsy, complex heroine. Lots of action, suspense, and an irresistible love triangle makes this a must read. Page turner, for sure! I cannot wait for the sequel to see how these characters navigate the unexpected development at the end of this novel.

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## **Rose says**

Update Oct 26/15 - Enough time has passed since I read Tent City that I thought a re-read was in order before I moved on to Red River. As it turns out, the copy I originally read (which the author provided me) was not the final book that was published. It threw me off a bit while reading and it ultimately changed my view on the story. I still liked it, but there were some not-quite-super powers added which took away from what I thought was a really good read.

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Original review May 9/13 - First, you should know the author provided me with this book for an honest review.

Second, you should know that I feel guilty about this because it's a book well worth paying for!!

It is a young adult book, with a Government-is-out-to-get-us theme. It also has a bit of a religious aspect to it. The writing was smooth and it was edited. It was a very easy read - I only started it this morning. My only complaint was on about 5 or 6 occasions throughout the book, it went from a regular font to a large size all in bold print for about a paragraph. This threw me out of the story a bit...like the author was yelling at me.

(view spoiler)

You are given bits and pieces throughout the story that don't mean much until the last chapter. That's where it all comes together and the book changes from good to fantastic.

I'm sure this author will be one to watch having done such a great job with her first book.

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## **Amanda Peake says**

<http://208.97.171.5/tent-city-by-kell...>

Author: Kelly Van Hull

reviewed by: Amanda Peake

After a devastating plague, introverted 17-year-old Dani Campbell and her family find themselves living in a very different America, one run by a cult-like leader, who forces children to move to "safety camps" designed to protect the human race. Encouraged to flee by her parents, Dani and her five-year-old brother seek refuge in the Black Hills of South Dakota. On the run with danger around every corner, Dani must fight to ensure their survival in this new world while trying to unmask the mystery of how it all came to be

Kelly Van Hull provided me this book for an HONEST REVIEW... So here we go...

The setting of this book is suppose to be mostly simple yet it's very complex too. The world in which the characters live seems dystopian to an extent but more current than most. So the Religious Government has employed it's military to round up the kids so ages 5-18 time to do your job for our country/government. Like any good mom and dad Dani's parents say NOPE take your brother and go. I need to stop here and say everyone one is starving. There is not enough food. I'm not going to give up any more of the story line. Instead...

The Characters in this book grew on me. I honestly got to several chapters in thinking I was going to dread finishing this book. WRONG...

Danielle (Dani)- Starts the book out really whiney and overwhelmed. Some people say she seem realistic however if you were tasked with surviving and keeping your younger brother alive too I don't think you would be thinking about going on Jobs or bikini's. Hey that's just me... She grows and changes throughout the book. By the end I loved her character. She is selfless when it comes to Brody. She also does what needs and has to be done. My only confusion with her seems to be that I as a reader didn't understand how some of the changes took place.

Kit- Seriously girl needs to GROW UP from the very start she shows up to leave with a light backpack, bikini, and chap stick? Though during the first few chapters she does help make the trip easier by reading a map. She also leads them into messy situations too. I really kind of like her attitude about things. Yet once they get to TENT CITY she just fades out. Other than having her around for the first chapters I don't know why she was included.

Jack- Dude is awesome. He is selfless, helpful, and his relationship with Brody I loved. I'm not a fan of love triangles when there's no point in them. So that leads me to ...

Bentley- He's harsh, demanding, violent for not apparent reason, and an outstanding LEADER. I don't know why he needs to be an a love interest too however he is. I like his character just not as a guy for Dani.

Brody- I wanted to take him home with me. I hope in later books we get to know him more.

This is obviously a first novel in a series for Ms. Hull, I think with time and another book the story will really take off. I'll be reading the next one with high hopes. I give this book a 3.5 with a lot of potential.

I have read a lot more books and way underestimated the value of this book. It is one that in my head I now compare other books too. I highly Suggest you GIVE THIS BOOK A READ!!! Updated 10/10/2013 Get's at least 10 out of 10 stars and more for helping me through some others.

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## **Jennifer Beving says**

I was at the SD Festival of Books when I saw this attractive book cover and display. So I was drawn to the book. I knew immediately after reading the back cover that I was going to buy this book. It was the only independent that I bought at the festival.

I was not disappointed. I won't go into details because I hate spoilers, but the main character Dani finds herself living in a tent (obviously) along with her little brother after society has begun to collapse (there is explanation for the downfall of society which I like, I hate it when you're left hanging as to why stuff has hit the fan!). The story is about her struggle to adapt, survive and protect her brother.

There are some supernatural elements that lend a distinct voice to Tent City as opposed to other dystopian/survival novels out there. And yet they're not so far out there that people (like myself) who don't have a great love for the supernatural will be distracted by them.

Also there is a romantic element that is believable and interesting.

The end left me wanting more and I find, as I drive through the forest and hills that I live in, imagining Dani in a tent somewhere out there.

The writing is good, clear, concise and well edited.

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## **Miranda says**

### **I was given my copy via the author for an honest review.**

This is one of those books I search for and never find when I desperately need them! Its fast paced, there's great character development, you can actually see the main protagonist grow and even though it was only during a five months span she flourished near the end. It was rewarding to take this journey with the characters. Some I didn't quite care for as much as others Brody her little brother is amazing for some reason I was expecting him to be a bit more whiney about leaving the mother but he wasn't which in many ways throughout I found a bit sad. You sort of feel as though he grew up a tad too fast in that five month period away. Kit drove me insane she was this light bubble character who without Dani probably wouldn't have lived past her front porch! The guys Jack and Bentley have been made swoon worthy, its not a cliché love triangle either so it was a bit of a fresh feel for it. Sure they both had an interest in her and both in subtle but there hints at flirtation. I went in to those to relationships thinking to myself "Great this is where I'm going to want to stop its going to drag on and I'll regret this entire book..." But it wasn't like that she NEVER made their relationships or friendships seem more important then what was actually going on in the horrid world around them and for that I loved it! Still I'm sorta leaning more on team Jack. :) Think the only thing that really grinds my gears is the ending... Did it have to end I cannot wait for the second installment and will definitely be getting copies of these books to add to my bookshelves. This was completely worth reading. Little romance, action, great descriptions, and a very flow worthy story line. Honestly what more could I want from a book. The genre dystopian is growing and Kelly Van Hull has wrote a book that many ages can read and love.

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## **Amy Queau says**

### **4.5 Stars**

An amazing story. One that I will reread. Extremely visual without over-doing it.

The characters in this story are extremely real to me. I enjoyed the narrative, and although sometimes seemed a little choppy, it never slowed me down. I read this book in under a day.

I'm completely in love with Jack. Oh, Jack! And, who doesn't have a friend like Kit? There are so many characters to keep track of, and at one point I had to ask myself, 'Wait, who is Jess again?', but overall, I would highly recommend this read. But you have to be paying attention, because this book is packed with



things you need to remember later on.

A very impressive work. The author didn't leave any stone unturned and answered any question I had as soon as I had it. Loved the present tense, loved the first person perspective. Tent City is well-written and timeless. The ending was a little abrupt to me, it is definitely a cliffhanger. But I wasn't mad at all - all I could do was smile.

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### **Laura says**

This story is AMAZING!! Kelly did such a great job. I loved the ending, it was so cool, I actually said "OOOHHHH WOW!" outloud! So I hope Kelly, who is a mom & wife, continues with the story soon, as I need to know what happens next! I am interested in all her characters, even the "minor" ones. I am interested in the "love triangle" and wonder how Dani will ever ever choose, they are both such great guys. Get to work Kelly! I need to know what happens next!

I will be giving my copy of this great book to my friend Chloe, who is also on Goodreads, I know she will love it too.

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