

*The Genius Files: Never Say Genius*

Dan Gutman

Reviewed by: Annie, 24

Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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This is the thrillingly fast-paced second installment in *The Genius Files* series. The heroes, thirteen-year old twins Coke and Pepsi “Pep” McDonald, continue to face deadly obstacles as they travel across the country in their parents’ R.V. Originally selected as Genius teens (Coke has a photographic memory and Pep is an exceptional cryptographer) to save the world, they are now pursued by a fellow teen-genius. The villain, called Arnie Clone because of his uncanny resemblance to the comic character, appears at stops along their road trip and, unbeknownst to Mrs. and Mr. McDonald, attempts to fry them in a vat of boiling oil, freeze them in a giant tub of ice cream, and other attempts on their lives. The twins must rely on their wits to evade Arnie Clone while they face close call after close call.

Dan Gutman sucks readers in through the interactive instructions with the real locations the McDonald family visits. Using Google maps, Coke and Pep’s journey comes alive and gives a lesson in United States geography. Gutman includes fun state trivia through the quirky museums and exhibits the family visits for their mother’s blog about hard to believe things. I enjoyed learning about all of the weird things that become tourist attractions, like the biggest pair of shoes and the largest out house collection.

This is really a book for parents as much as it is for their children. It illustrates hilarious truths about the relationship parents have with their children. The whole family will laugh out loud and draw them to the next book in the series.