



## **Bender**

*M. Stratton*

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Since high school everyone thought Jake Bender would end up behind bars; after all, he comes from a long line of bad boys. He spent years away from the place he called home. When he finally comes back, everyone thinks he's just a punk kid all grown up who's now running a dive bar called The Night Club. What they don't know is he heads up a special task force, which cleans up neighborhoods and makes them safe again.

Stormy Ryan has always felt more comfortable with her books than with people. She loves to spend her days within the pages of her books. When her second-hand bookstore is robbed for the third time in as many months, her employees quit leaving her to run the shop on her own. With the pressure of having to deal with her shop and people, not to mention the declining neighborhood, she is at the end of her rope.

When closing up her shop late one night, she is held up and the neighborhood bad boy saves her, putting both of them at the forefront of a psychotic's obsession.

Being bad has never looked so good.

## **Bender Details**

Date :

ISBN :

Author : M. Stratton

Format :

Genre : Romance, Contemporary

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# From Reader Review Bender for online ebook

## Cristina says

*DNF 25%*

Because it was BAD...I had zero connection to the characters, the writing was not great and the story line had so many lacks that you couldn't make sense of what the author wanted to tell you...

I tried to finish it...I really did...but...

*\*ARC generously provided by Netgalley in exchange for an honest review\**

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## Laurie says

I'm all for someone going the extra mile in their endeavors but sometimes it can go way wrong. The author just kept throwing things in for whatever reason, and you ended up with a book that felt like a bad Austin Power's movie. Unfortunately, I'm pretty sure the author wasn't going for a tongue in cheek comedy. This book was just too...much.

The bad guys were too...bad. I can get on board with a couple of guys attempting to take over a neighborhood for their crime enterprise. M. Stratton decided to go the extra mile with her bad guys though. They were whacked out crazy. Then she decided to make them rapists – even better if you can rape them while you are killing them, so she made them really sick in the head killers. The icing on top of the crazy cake was that she made them cannibals. I kept waiting for one of them to start laughing evilly while discussing his plan for world domination. One of the bad guys did treat us to this little gem...

**Bringing his thumb up to his mouth, he sucked the tear off and closed his eyes. “Why is it the tears of death’s door taste so beautiful?”**

In case your wondering why the police didn't just arrest the evil bad guys who they had ample evidence against, every cop and politician in the town was in these guys pockets, many because they were too scared to do their jobs. This made absolutely no sense to me but I guess we needed to swallow this in order for the story to work.

Stormy was just too....clueless. All her employees had quit because they kept getting mugged and beat up. Yet she would get lost in a book and forget to close the store until it was long past a safe time to close and leave. The first time you could kind of get (not really but I was giving the benefit of the doubt), but she keeps doing it even after she gets accosted by a psychopath.

**She knew she didn't always pay close attention to what was going on around her, her nose stuck in a book most of the time, but she shouldn't have frozen. She should have been**

### **able to do something.**

Almost every page she was on she did something that made me shake my head. I tried really hard to like her, especially since she had a serious love of books and owned a cool bookstore. Then she would do something TSTL. I hate TSTL heroines. My other issue was when she wasn't doing something seriously stupid, she was just too...good. Tooth ache inducing sweet. Really, she should have been named after a disney princess. I was waiting for birds to fly in and help her get dressed.

Bender was just okay (yeah, I know I'm going off the too theme). He had some alpha-asshole lines, but they seemed forced. I think he liked being a wounded bird who had pity parties since he didn't seem to want to move past all that.

**He was afraid if he stayed around Stormy, she'd fix all of the broken pieces he didn't even know were broken to begin with.**

I found myself constantly putting this book down, then finding busy work to do instead of reading. I finally just skimmed through the last of it so I could finish it. Needless to say it was a disappointing read.

Spice's Rating: 2 Stars

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### **Brandy Rivers says**

What a great story. The first of Stratton's I've read but I'll be reading more. As long as you don't mind twisted bad guys and bloody murders this story was fast paced and sucks you in.

Bender was a bad boy, now a hardass who's job is to go in and clean up the worst neighborhoods. He has his work cut out for him in his old stomping grounds.

For all her book smarts Stormy is a bit clueless. One night Bender saves her from two shady characters and the story gets rolling.

Then there's Nutter and Mick. Which one is crazier? The answer might depend on your perception.

Can Bender keep Stormy Safe? Or will the bad guys plan move forward?

Great read. As long as you aren't squeamish, I highly recommend this book

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### **?? Christine ?? says**

★ ★ ★ - A me likey, likey 3 star rating!

I am just going to dive in and go straight to my thoughts...

The premise and plot of the novel was inventive and intriguing. At times it seemed funny, dark and realistic.

However, the reason why I was on the verge of giving it a two star rating was because the novel, in different areas, was lacking.

The heroine, Stormy, was realistic but was portrayed as an innocent and very dense girl. Sometimes you felt

like wanting to hit her.

Jake was a very likable, hot and one mighty, MIGHTY fine man.

He just needed to be written more in a way that shows how extremely dangerous he is and we can actually see that physically happening in some scenes.

This then leads me to the writing style. The writing style of this novel has me scratching and banging my head at different parts. There was just something about it...

The villain... had me laughing at how cheesy he was. Seriously half the time I was like...

Now I know this is a very rushed review but I honestly have spent way too much time thinking things out, it has blown my thoughts around. If I do end up re-reading I will probably change and add more.

Overall a three star rating!! A sound and likable novel!?

*ARC kindly provided by The Harp PR in exchange for an honest review.*

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### **D.L. Gallie says**

I love M Stratton's previous work but with Bender that love has gone to the extreme. Bender is by far her best work yet.

This story has it all intrigue, suspense, hot characters, creepy nutty characters and a bad ass chick whom you definitely want to be friends with. M Stratton knows how to put the creep in creepy, the baddie's in this one are so bad that you can't help but root for them cause you actually start to like them. Their relationship is one creepy scary one but they compliment each other so well

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### **Snow says**

This was definitely a surprise read...

i didn't quite know what to expect after reading the blurb, i just have to say that it didn't disappoint in any way...

from the story you get to know 4 characters who are interwoven by the criminal action...two sick and twisted mobsters are running the town and especially one specific neighbourhood with high crime rate where their interests are now merely investment...

and the only person defying them is a young woman **Stormy Ryan** who runs a bookstore in that particular bad part of town. She's relentless and a dreamer BUT with very clear motivation. She's not fully aware of the danger that linger above her head as she is determined to fight the crime and help the children by encouraging them to read...

Those two sickos want her out...BUT not without a little sick fun they plan to do with her before they end her...

The events and the odds change when the local bad boy turned secret operative called **Bender** comes back to his old neighbourhood to clean it up...BUT before he does that he sets his motion to protect and secure the only one who's stubborn enough to put herself in danger just to prove a point...

interesting and very well told story!

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### **Izabelle says**

First, I DNF'd at 24%. After putting it down a few times. Yes, a few, not once or twice. That should have clued me in, but I blamed it on my cold. I was wrong.

Where to begin? The blurb drew me in. Well, the cover did, actually, and the fact that I saw a book friend praise it. Been there, done that. Fool me once, shame on you and stuff.

So, I started the book. The prologue seemed good but oh God, once I got to meet the heroine... I'm sorry, I read a lot too and I'm not street smart but sweet baby cherubs, how can one be so dumb? People are robbed in the less-than-stellar neighborhood she has her bookstore in; they get killed by gangs and whatnot. Her own employees have been robbed and quit because of that and what does she do? Ignore all that, of course. Yes, I too lose track of time when reading but come on. This is ridiculous.

As for the hero, Bender... We're told he's a badass. We're told he's infamous and feared. Told. Not shown. Of course, that may come, along the way but... I'm just not curious enough to read more. It's more tell than show and it feels sort of mechanical, no feelings. I don't know about others, but reading a book and feeling nothing is not for me. Wait, I lied. I felt kinda pissed at how the heroine was portrayed. Ah, and I rolled my eyes at the so-called 'villains' of the story.

Let's just say a big no from this chick and well, it's a shame. The idea was good and it's a waste of a good cover. 1 star.

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### **crashqueen73 says**

DNF at 62%

Oh my goodness?????? What the f\$#@??????? And a whole lot of laughing myself silly.

This is what I kept asking myself the whole way through this book (well, to where I just gave up anyhow).

To begin with I found the writing choppy. REALLY choppy. Like chunks of the story were missing or something. Like someone forgot to fill me in on what was going on here. But I persevered. Because I thought the blurb sounded really interesting. So I kept reading.

By page 48 (21%) it was starting to drive me a little batty to the point I had to make a note on my kindle (which I DO NOT do very often at all!) The corny and crazy was becoming irritating.

Supposedly some criminal gang (four members I was aware of to begin with) was overtaking a town. Bender is there to get rid of the rabble. The female lead, Stormy (who came into her inheritance at 35) runs a bookstore in said town. No- one except the kids go anymore because it is so dangerous? And Bender has come to her rescue. So the first thing that annoyed, other than the choppy storyline, was that he rescued her he'd just leave her in dangerous situations for hours at a time? Oh well, that's unbelievable but I'll keep reading...

I also didn't understand the whole scenario about the "gang" and why Bender couldn't just pop a couple of shots in the four of them was beyond me too.

And then Stormy. She was an IDIOT! Like I mean drive me freaking nuts STUPID! and the line "She's the smartest person I've ever met but she trusts too much" had me scratching my head and barfing in my mouth.

Then Bender was worried about her losing her innocence about the bad in life and supposedly she is older than 35??? Maybe that was an error??

Then the gang. First you have gummy main characters that make no sense at all. Then there is the two gang members (I know, I said four but one gang member lops off their heads with a sword and paints some artwork with their parts and then there were two) Nutter and Mick. At p53 I started to lose it. The crazy just got notched up a level to "Something smells delicious.... he stirred the pot and didn't flinch when an eyeball floated to the top" WTF????? and then on page 54 "having Nutter as a roommate had its benefits the fact he was a skilled chef was one of them". LOL. Oh and "he'd have to keep the killing sporadic so attention wasn't drawn to them". WTF/ OMG!!!!

There are a few pages of reprieve until the smartest person old mate knows is told "reflections are a great way to see what is going on without people knowing what you are doing". Is this for real?

And "Looking outside she saw how dark it had become. There was no way they were going to be able to read before it was dark." HUH?????

The old lady, palm reading, sexed up crazy bitch was just ridiculous and she had nothing to do with the storyline in any way. RANDOM!!!

The random, crazy shizznit went on and on and on. I laughed a lot. I scratched my head a lot and I swore a lot too.

This was so far out for me in so many ways! 1 star for the blurb. It was good. The rest definitely in my worst ever books.

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## **Melanie Marsh says**

Holy shit. This book will make you throw up in your mouth. Like seriously. I think my brain has left the building. Its soooo good. And sooooo bad at the same time! There are things I will never be able to look at the same way again. But please, don't take any of this as a negative. It's kind of the best reasons TO read this book. At least it is if you are as mental as I am!

I've said it before, and I'll say it again, no one, and I mean NO ONE does crazy like M. Stratton does crazy. Bender is a book that will make you double-check those shadows and definitely pay attention to your surroundings when you are walking alone. M. Stratton's monsters are usually the ones that you never suspect. The guy next door. The random dude in the grocery store. Everyman. In Bender, it's a much more in your face obvious monster. The crazy bastard Nutter, lives up to his name. He is a serious nut job. But I do have to give him some credit, he is a creative nut job.

Bender is a super hot guy that grew up in the neighborhood. He was always known as a bad boy around town. He has come back to do one last job of cleaning up his hometown and getting rid of the jerks that have over taken it. In the meantime, he meets Stormy and things progress from there.

Bender is essentially a thriller, with mild romance. It tells the story of a guy who really just wants to clean up his neighborhood, but is going to have a hell of a time doing it. The female lead, Stormy, made me a little crazy at times. It's like she just wouldn't listen. She wasn't grasping the concept that her life was in danger. When she's not wrapped up in a book, she is pretty cool, but unfortunately she spends too much time in her books to be safe.

I like the small tie in with Stratton's Storm Series and the protectiveness of the characters from that book towards Stormy. There are little bits throughout the book that, if you are a fan of Stratton's, you will pick up on. One of the things I love about Stratton's books is how her sense of humor shines through her stories. She's pretty entertaining in that sense.

I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a good thrilling book with some crazy ass characters. Please note that there is some pretty graphic violence, so if you are not into that kind of thing, you might want to skip this one.

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## **Shelby \*trains flying monkeys\* says**

I'm stopping reading this at 63% and if fangirls/trolls have a problem with it they can kiss it. This is one of the top worst books I've ever held in my hands.

When I first started reading this my expectations were high. The blurb for this book sounds good. I want to know who the heck wrote it because they sure didn't write this book. This writing is choppy, cheesy, corny and frigging leaves out important story pieces.

I thought for a few minutes that 2.0 was pranking me because he likes to see me get to cussing.

But, no..this book is real.



Bender grew up and supposedly became a bad-ass. Do we get the story of why and how? Well no... Then he shows back up in town in time to rescue Story, an owner of a small used bookstore that bad guys are trying to run off. He just shows up out of the blue after she has been almost mugged/raped or whatever it was..I honestly didn't figure it out. So when he offers to protect our damsel in distress by either getting her a hotel room or sharing his lodging what does she do? Oh, she heads off to stay with him. \*shakes head\* Now there is no chemistry going on between these two but we are supposed to buy their insta-lust for one another. I think the choppy, corny writing might have had something to do with that. For example:  
**"Lesson four, don't lie. I'm here to help you; and if you lie, you die, and I can't do my job."**

Then this sweet little line:

**"Do you need my number?"**

**"Lady, I've got your number." He turned and started to walk away**

Oh, and don't forget this little scene when they were out to eat in a restaurant:

**"Why are you so twitchy?" he asked her as she moved around again in her seat.**

**"I don't like my back out in the open. I feel like someone is watching me."**

**"Lady, you're a looker; someone is always watching you."**

**She frowned at him. "You know what I mean."**

**"I do, and you're fine. It's just your imagination."**

**"How can you be sure?"**

**"Because I'd be feeling the same way, and I'm not."**

Now this was just after he preached to her about watching her surroundings and being aware of danger. Guess what happens then? HE gets a bad feeling and of course his is right.

Then you have the idiots that are bad guys in this book. They kill at random..then nom-nom on the people that cross them.

Why doesn't Bender just pop them off? He is such a bad-ass instead of running and hiding every two seconds. These 2 aren't the brightest in the bunch.

The smexy times in this book are even crap!!! I can't even.

Any trolls/fangirls for this frigging book better have butterflies coming out their farts to make me think that this frigging book deserved even the one star I'm giving it.

ETA: After I opened up one of the beers from the six pack I had to get myself for this book I forgot to add a couple of things..and I know to cover my bases....

The wonderful hero of this book states that he has told our heroine more than he has ever told anyone. After he continually tells her NOTHING!!

Throw in the bad guys feeding body parts to the poor neighborhood cats and you just have a romping "not" good time with this book.

Plus one of the bad dudes tell our girl that he wants to drink from her p&\$#y...she might want to get that checked.

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**Lisa Suzanne says**

This was my first M. Stratton book and I loved it! There were surprises along the way, and Nutter was the

epitome of a crazy lunatic. Great book!

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## t'irla ~The Bookslayer~ t'irla's Talk Book Blog says

M. Stratton is a new to me author and I thank Netgalley for the opportunity to read this and offer an honest review. Possible spoilers.

I wasn't sure what I was getting when I started this book but the blurb intrigued me so in I dove and I have to say I really liked it. Yes, there were a few issues and I will detail them in a bit but over all I enjoyed the story, I liked (for the most part) the characters and hated the characters depending on if they were good guys or bad guys. I found the setting dark, gritty with an edge that really had me believing neighbourhood and those living in it were dangerous and wouldn't stop at anything to get what they wanted.

Although I found Ms Stratton's writing style a bit choppy at times with many loose ends or unexplained characters I thought the story was well thought out. Jake Bender our hero was a boy from the ghetto who was heading in the direction of so many young people today given a chance to be something more than what he is.

Question 1, Murdoch...how did he find out about Jake Bender, who exactly was he connected with...yes law enforcement of some kind but the connections were never explained and I felt that background was integral to the story.

Question 2, Bender went from bad boy delinquent to someone who wanted to protect people and save the world. We were given no background as to how this happened. How did Murdoch turn his life around. I think it would have been easier to connect with Jake and understand his character if we were given more information. I liked Bender and loved the dark, grittiness his character offered but I think to be totally believable he needed his character to be more dimensional and back story would have done this. Possible 2 books might have been better?

Question 3, Stormy, my issue is much the same as I had with Bender. Things were mentioned but never really filled in. How can she be rich from a farm especially after her parents roaming ways. I understand being lost in the world of your favourite books because well I'm a bookworm too but to be that involved that you don't know you are living in a deadly neighbourhood after employees have quit after numerous robberies, this I don't get. I also got she was scared of Nutter but from the meeting in the book store to her other confrontations with him...she just seemed to have no self preservation instincts. I kinda really wanted to smack her at times.

A few other dangling pieces were the men Bender worked with..they just appeared out of no where...no real explanations or knowing their role in this "police" type group.

I enjoyed the craziness of the badguys...they were totally over the top ..possibly too much as Nutter came off like a comic character. The intense scene between Nutter and Stormy near the end didn't play "real" for me either. Other than a mention of a scream when Bender entered the house...we heard nothing from her during the big confrontation scene. Trust me if she was conscience she would not have been quiet.

This sounds like I didn't like the book but I truly did in fact I picked the book up at 10:15pm and didn't stop reading until I was finished. I was captivated. I don't know if M. Stratton is a new writer if so a lot of what I

mentioned could be forgiven and with some good beta readers most of the details would have been caught and ironed out. I will look for me novels by this author.

I give this book a 3.5 star rating for creativity, fresh prospective and a nice fast read. A warning there are some really dark aspects of the book that may disturb some readers. If you don't enjoy graphic violence this may not be a book for you.

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### **Alisa says**

This was surprisingly REALLY good. I liked it. It was real and I loved the characters! Very good read.

I love the interaction between the two MC and the characters' development as well. You can tell hero is a great guy who just has this bad ass vibe and it's well written. The heroine is my heroine! Lol. She's antisocial and owns a bookstore (how awesome!) and she's nerdy and beautiful. She'll do what most heroines will want to do in these books.... and that's NOT taking his rules seriously for her own protection, but she'll do it in a way where she doesn't seem like she a TSTL girl.

Enjoyed the book tremendously. Especially the ending and epilogue.

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### **Heidi Ryan says**

I am a huge fan of Michele Stratton's writing. But this book is even better than my favorites of hers. One thing this author does better than any other is create creepy bad guys. Her villains are so far over to the dark side they make you shiver. This book has it all, sexy characters, great story line, wonderful suspense, everything! I read this in one sitting because I just had to know how it works out.

Stormy Ryan is a woman who is just good. After losing her family, she goes about trying to help the children in the run down neighborhood enjoy the love of reading by opening a bookstore so she can give them the books they want to read. She spends more time with a book in her hand than interacting with people. She has always been an outsider, but it has suited her just fine.

Jake Bender started out life being branded a bad guy, but he really isn't. His home life had been awful, his dad was an abusive drunk and his mother didn't survive it. Even the principal of the high school told Bender that he was worthless.

As Bender came up on graduation, things were bleak. No one had a good thing to say about him and he got in a lot of trouble. He was headed towards a life behind bars when a man named Murdoch approaches him and shows him a way to still be tough, but do some good too. He takes him up on it and spends a couple decades cleaning up neighborhoods, getting rid of the bad guys with his team. He ends up back home where his old neighborhood has become very dangerous and the police and others are in the bad guys back pockets. But there is a woman trying to do what she can to make things better, and now the worst kind of bad men have her on their radar. When Bender meets Stormy, he knows he is in trouble. He has never felt like this about anyone. There is a reason Murdoch wants him to save her and settle down, but Bender doesn't know this. Nutter, the worst kind of creep, wants Stormy for a terrible reason, and he is going to do what ever it takes to get her. He and his partner Mick are buying up all the properties in the area. But they aren't alone in their pursuits. Bender is determined to save Stormy, but she is very independent ant they don't always agree. He is scared that Mick and Nutter will get her when he is not near. But something is happening between Bender and Stormy, and neither of them are willing to ignore it. Can Bender and his team bring down Nutter

and Mick before it is too late? Can Stormy save the kids in the neighborhood? What is she hiding from them all?

This book will have you on the edge of your seat rooting for Stormy and Bender. When things go sideways, hang on tight because it is a heck of a ride that will have you gasping in shock at what happens! I am going to have to read it again now that my pulse has slowed down so I can catch all the details I might have missed when I was perched on the edge of my seat. Heck, it is so good I might read it a third time just for fun.

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## Two Ordinary says

Bender M. Stratton 4\*\*\*\*

I was given an Arc of bender in exchange for an honest review. This is the first book I have read by M Stratton and it most definitely won't be the last.

Bender is a thriller with some romance it tells you the story of bender who is known as the bad boy around town and its been like that all his life, bender didn't have a very good upbringing he's father was an abusive drunk and he's poor mother didn't survive his father. Even benders headteacher told him he was worthless and would end up behind bars or dead sooner or later. In jumps Murdoch waiting for Bender one night at his home he offers to show bender the way and try and do some but also stay tough, and not follow his father's footprints Bender gets a call from Murdoch for him to return to town and do a job to try clean up the neighbourhood up from whack jobs and nutters . So Bender returns to do this last jobs and try and save his town, but Murdoch wants bender to settle down and maybe put down roots back in his home town, bender is clear he's leavening as soon as the job is over.

Stormy Ryan after the loss of her family she's want to do good by others and share her love of books, so she buys herself a bookshop in the run down neighbourhood to try and help kids who love to read to have the chance to have the books they re want.. but stormy always has her head stuck in a book she prefers the land of words more the interacting with people, she's a loner and she's just fine with that, once stormy has a book in her hand she loses all track of time doesn't take notice of her surroundings or who is lurking in the shadows. And that's when nutter and Mick show up, yes nutter that's his name I love it because he actually lives up to the name .he is one sick twisted dude I actually like nutter he's so bat shit crazy it's funny. Anyway Mick and nutter are buy up properties around the neighbourhood ( but they are not the only ones)and they want stormy's bookshop and she not willing to sell. Nutter wants stormy and not in a good way.

Can Bender and his men save stormy and the neighbourhood from nutter and Mick?

Will Stormy and Bender get together?

Can stormy save the kids?

You want the answers?? then get one clicking. I finished this book in one sitting I just couldn't put it down it had my on the edge of my seat.

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