



# An Absolute Gentleman

*R.M. Kinder*

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## **An Absolute Gentleman** R.M. Kinder

This novel channels serial murderer Arthur's real voice to reveal the aberrant thought processes of a surprisingly sympathetic serial killer. Horror arises as it does in real life, in brief hints and disclosures that gradually reveal the complex nature of an all-too-human narrator.

## **An Absolute Gentleman Details**

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Author : R.M. Kinder

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## **From Reader Review An Absolute Gentleman for online ebook**

### **Asia says**

This was a whim read. I happened to find the cover intriguing and thought the story line seemed interesting. As it often happens I was completely surprised by how much I enjoyed this book. It was very well written with incredible character development. The narration is strong and well thought out. I feel like this book has a lot to offer and is quite compelling to read. The narrator/main character is so endeared to the reader and ultimately so easy to like you don't doubt for a minute that you'd easily fall victim to such an "Absolute Gentleman."

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### **Selena says**

If you read the jacket of this book, you know that it's about a serial killer. But it's easy to forget that important bit as you get into the novel, which is mostly about a creative writing professor who's starting a new job at a small college. You get to know the faculty and staff as he does, and learn more about him as he flashes back to his painful childhood. Little creepy bits start to creep into the story, reminding you in tiny ways what the book is about, gradually building toward more grisly details. I thought the book was interesting, and sometimes uncomfortable--the author does a good job of creating a likable character, and then making you question what likability is.

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### **Diane says**

Arthur Bloom is an English Professor and a author; he is a quiet sort of guy. Who would think he was a serial killer? This novel portrays, in part, the life of a serial killer and his relationships with the people around him. We learn about his attitude toward women, and his own psychological breakdown. This book does not go into much detail about the murders, and there is not a lot of violence in it either. Instead, the book focuses on the human interaction of a serial killer. EXCELLENT.

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### **Sarah says**

Most stories of serial killers are told from the point of view of the searchers – those who discover the aftermath and try and stop it from happening again. The hunters who sniff out the killer. This one is one of those rare books which manages to perfectly capture the killer himself and his inner dialogue (one of the other shining examples is “In Cold Blood” by Truman Capote). Arthur Bloom, now in prison, has taken it upon himself to tell the story of his capture and the story of his origin – painted and smashed against each other to rectify all the rumors and twisted facts that have been printed about him before. Raised by a single woman who happened to have bouts of schizophrenia, Arthur is a published author, a gentleman, and a serial killer. He tells us of his move to Mason, Missouri to teach in a temporary creative writer position at the local college. He is still sending out a work in progress manuscript that has been rejected hundreds of times by publishers. He meets Margaret, Grace, Nada, Justinia, and Paul Harper. One is vicious, one is a deviant similar to himself, one he kills. And along the way, we get to know Arthur as the person, the one who has no

grasp of why his actions are wrong.

I expected this book to be more like “In Cold Blood” than it actually is. However, the villains in “Blood” have much more soul and conscious evil than Arthur does. Arthur is one of those frightening people you see in an episode of Criminal Minds that has no motivation to kill. It doesn’t provide him pleasure, it doesn’t relieve anger, it just happens. Which disturbed me more than any other part of this book. Arthur never really becomes human to me, instead the entire book felt like it was beyond my comprehension. Which was very frustrating. Probably because I could never figure out the why – which there is no why. And especially chilling when you realize this book is based on an actual man.

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### **Alycia Olivar says**

I read this book quite a while ago, but there is a memorable part of a flash back - he runs from something and asks how can someone be a monster if they couldn't be at to watch that?

It definitely put it in perspective that everyone has their own idea about themselves... That even the evil people think that they are right in their ways... And a reminder that evil people are just like us.

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### **Bookworm says**

Once I began reading, I found this book hard to put down. It was very creepy, Arthur reminds me of Norman Bates in Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho".

Arthur is softspoken and intelligent, but he is also terrifying. At first I didn't know what to expect from this book, because I didn't want to hear details from a killer, but he doesn't go into any gory details. He actually tells his story almost politely. And believe it or not, I kind of like Arthur, he's almost a nice guy, except for the murdering of course. I felt bad for how his mother treated him, she created a serial killer.

I enjoyed this book very much.

'We may be spectacular in our dreams, but our doings diminish us'

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### **Trish says**

Uneasy by page two and hooked by page nine.

I would never have dreamed that I would be enthralled with a novel written from the perspective of a madman, but I was...I am. I find myself revisiting passages from R. M. Kinder's first and most excellent novel, An Absolute Gentleman. R.M. writes from the perspective of Arthur Blume, this self-described boring man, in such a calm and frightening way that you are not surprised to know that it is loosely based on her own encounter with a real life serial killer. If you have read Kinder's more recent The Universe Playing Strings, you know her research to be thorough and her characters to be as real as the neighbors next door. This time one neighbor is all too real!

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## Emily Liebert says

This is another book from the literary agency I'm signed with. I probably wouldn't have read this book otherwise, since it's not in my typical genre. That said, it was fascinating--I couldn't put it down. It's told from the perspective of a serial killer, only you never really know he's killing. And--the best part--it's based on the true story of a woman that dated said serial killer for years and didn't know he was killing. Read it!

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## Jason Edwards says

I came across this book in the library one day when I was searching for *Geocaching for Dummies*. I was in one of the situations where I felt like the drive to the library needed more justification than just one book that I was only going to flip through anyway. I found R.M. Kinder's novel, opened it, read a few pages to get a sense of the prose style, liked it, read the front flap to see what the plot was about, liked that too, and added the book to my "to-read" list. Then, last week, on vacation, having finished two other novels in just a few days, I started in on *An Absolute Gentleman*, and finished it in about 24 hours.

It was that engaging. R.M. Kinder's style is as gentle and stoic as her main character, choosing to titillate and horrify with what isn't written, only pulling out the stops and giving you the gory details in a few choice places. And although Arthur Blume is a serial killer, you can't help but root for him, a little.

I'm not going to give away the plot, because there isn't much of one, but what follows are spoilers of a sort, so stop reading if you want. Arthur Blume is a misogynist, less in the sense of hating women than in the sense that he simply has no respect for them. And while I was reading this, I know this was fictional misogyny... but then, only after I was done with the book, did I realize that R.M. Kinder, the author, is a woman. Which changes the tenor of that fictional misogyny. When a man writes about misogyny, he may be expressing his own opinions, or he may be asking you to judge what he feels is a horrible point of view. But when a woman does it, surely she can't be expressing her own opinion—is she describing her own experiences at the hand of a misogynist? Is she misinterpreting the experience, taking it more personally than it should have been taken?

I wish to cast no aspersion on Kinder, nor her intent, because it's all mere speculation on my part and truly I detest this kind of analysis. But I bring it up because, for me, the book changed when I found out the sex of the writer. And I find this unsettling, and I am not a little ashamed of myself. But what can I do. I thought this was a *man* writing about a horrible man, and now I find myself, unfairly I admit, wondering if this a woman writing about horrible *men*.

Why say as much? This is my plea, to myself and to you, to find a way to ignore who or what the author is at all times, when reading any novel. An impossible task-- I will read books just because they're written by authors I've read before. After all, there's so many books out there, how can we choose which one to read if we don't, to some degree, judge them by their covers?

Nevertheless, we should try to ignore the author. I need to swallow my shame and recall what I thought of the book when I didn't know who the writer was at all. Still a bit sexist of me (I thought it was a man) but at least I'm not trying to compliment Kinder by saying "she writes like a man!" She doesn't. She writes like a

writer. And a damned fine one at that.

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### **Rage says**

throughout the book, the narrator (Arthur J. Blume: unassuming writer and professor) emphasizes that his actions are not his own; he is compelled by outside forces. his relationship with Grace, a colleague, occurs because of her pursuit (Arthur has no say in the matter). he does not choose his victims, and he's sorry for what he does to them (he says). there are interludes where he describes his childhood, his mentally ill mother -- only obliquely hinting at the variety of abuses he endures.

it's only at the end of the book that we get any information about outsiders' beliefs about Arthur, because he lacks empathy and really doesn't understand other people. from his perspective, everything that he does is reasonable, and he's a gentle, likeable fellow. whenever he's provoked to feel an actual emotion, he has to reason away his actions (and he frequently leaves out or diminishes descriptions of things that he did). it's an interesting read.

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### **Pygmy says**

Told from the point-of-view of a highly sympathetic English professor, it's incredibly easy to take his well-mannered, eloquent words at face value and forget that oh! he's a serial killer. And that his opinion on how his slightly psychotic mother did the best she could while raising him and his human portrayal of her are not the most reliable sources of information!

To further this illusion, he conveniently skips over all the grisly details of how he killed most of his victims. There is simply a blank. Then he proceeds to the next scene with a philosophical segue into the animal kingdom.

His purpose isn't to shock or to explain himself. His only purpose is to show that he's a reasonable man. And ugh, he does an incredibly good job at it, so good a job that the testimonials against him at the end of the book seem almost jarringly unreal and ludicrous.

Super well-written, from pacing to presentation to prose-style, but I only gave it 4 stars because I do not think i will ever reread this book.

Also, even though I find the cover very appealing, why is it a white man on the cover? The main guy's race is never mentioned, but his mother was black. His father may have been anything but...\*shrugs\*

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### **Sara says**

This was a quiet book about a serial killer. Which is pretty great. If there are other books out there like this one, I would like to read them.

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## **Stormie says**

Holy crap.

This was amazing, from start to finish. Just an exquisite book, and one that I initially picked up because of Leslie Marmon Silko's praise of it on the cover (I enjoyed her novel Ceremony)!

R. M. Kinder sincerely makes you sympathize, and almost excuse (but not quite) a murderer. Her portrait of Arthur Blume, told in his own hand, is unsettling and addictive to read. I found myself initially waiting for hollywood-style gruesome murders, but the actual kills revealed to us in the text are somehow so much worse (I was actually wincing and left breathless by the death of a certain college busybody--how? How?). The murders seem subtle and nuanced on the surface, but Arthur is a particularly unreliable narrator in the best of senses.

Looking back through the book after finishing it, I remembered, and noted, moments throughout the chapters where it should have been all too obvious what he was really doing, or how he was coming across to other characters. But I, like many others in the book, was fooled by him for way too long.

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## **Three says**

I can't believe this author isn't more prolific. This was an amazingly, wonderful and yet creepy read. Reminded me a bit of an Erik Larson read without the parallel story lines.

I agree, I stumbled on this book at our public library's table of Missouri authors and it looked intriguing. So glad I did, it was a disturbing, compelling, well rounded read. Love the comparison to Erik Larson !

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## **Jennifer Cooper says**

Meh. The premise of the book was cool-- the life of a normal guy who just happens to be a mass murderer. I also liked that the main character was an academic. Unfortunately, the book just didn't live up to my hopes. It wanted to be TOO clever, with little snippets of text that were trying to be deep and meaningful, but just didn't do anything for me. There was a lot of talk about the bad fiction in college writing classes, which was ironic because this book seemed like something from one of those classes. Not terrible, but not particularly satisfying, either.

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