



Gentlemen

Michael Northrop

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This debut YA novel combines the wrong-side-of-the-tracks edginess of books like *The Outsiders* and *Freak the Mighty* and the searingly honest storytelling of authors like Chris Lynch and John Green.

Micheal, Tommy, Mixer, and Bones aren't just from the wrong side of the tracks--they're from the wrong side of everything. Except for Mr. Haberman, their remedial English teacher, no one at their high school takes them seriously. Haberman calls them "gentlemen," but everyone else ignores them--or, in Bones's case, is dead afraid of them. When one of their close-knit group goes missing, the clues all seem to point in one direction: to Mr. Haberman.

Gritty, fast-paced, and brutally real, this debut takes an unflinching look at what binds friends together--and what can tear them apart.

Gentlemen Details

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From Reader Review Gentlemen for online ebook

Adam van der Zwan says

This book deceives you. The cover is very engaging, and the explanation of the plot on the side-flap makes it seem as if this is a gritty, fast-paced thriller that is dark, creepy and will keep you on the edge of your seat the entire time. Well, explanations are supposed to make you feel that way, right? ;) But reading the the story is a whole other thing.

Ok, good things first. I really enjoyed the reality of the characters. Four teenage outcasts, hanging out, living life. Drinking, smoking, having sex, all that stuff that really happens if life. I guess this is where the "gritty" comes from. Also, the narrative is from the point of view of one of the boys, and uses many words such as "like" and "dude", even outside of the dialogue. This was very real, but I felt it did take away from the story and made it slightly harder to get into.

Alright, now for the not-so-good. First of all, this book was slow. It was very boring except for a couple brief periods in which I was relieved that the story was beginning to creep along at more considerable pace. I was into chapter two and already I thought "wow..this had better pick up soon". There are whole chapters dedicated to English class, in which the boys are sitting and listening to their teacher talk about the novel "crime and punishment" (which I find very hard to believe that these students would be reading at their age). Having entire chapters dedicated to the teacher, Mr. Haberman, explaining aspects of the C&M is NOT interesting AT ALL. Who wants to read a school English lesson? This isn't school, this is a "gritty" teen novel we're talking about here!

There were also unnecessary subplots everywhere! And whole chapters dedicated to them! Some of the include when Michael, the main character, heads off to the library to check his email and see if a girl has contacted him, a completely random chapter in which Michael stumbles upon one of his friends raping a girl from school, and yes, the remedial English class chapters. None of these subplots related to anything the book had to offer. It seems as if the author was only trying to make the book longer because without all of these subplots the novel would only be about 100 pages long. It just didn't work for me.

And finally, when the book did start to pick up in pace (toward the end), I was very disappointed with how it all came to a close. No shock, no mystery, no special twist. It ended just the way I had thought it would when I was hoping that it wouldn't. Although, I will give some credit towards the end because it did seem to bring some closure to the characters even though it was a little rushed.

Overall, I would not recommend this book. Don't be fooled by the "dark, riveting thriller" that book reviews claim it to be. It's not. Sellers just want this book to be sold. It's a slow, drawn out book that could have easily been cut into a short-fiction.

But hey! The jacket cover is really nice even though it has nothing to do with the story! :)

Kimberly says

PLOT:

The book Gentlemen is about a group of high school boys: Michael, Tommy, Mixer, and Bones. This group

of friends are the kids that are found on the other side of the tracks. Everyone ignores them, either because they are scared of them, especially Tommy, or they just don't care enough to talk to them. Anyway, the boys' friendship gets tested when one of their group goes missing. At first, they thought he ran away. But, when he didn't come back days later like he often was supposed to, they began to worry.

While their friend, Tommy, disappeared, a whole other thing was coming into focus. It happened in English. Their teacher, Mr. Haberman, brought in a barrel with something in it. He made each of the students guess what was inside it. This activity coincided with the book they were about to read. It was called Crime and Punishment. It was about a guy who killed people and was at war with himself, trying to decide if he wanted to get away with his murder spree or if he wanted to get caught. This book definitely came into play at the wrong time because it filled the boys' minds with wild accusations and suspicions about Tommy's disappearance. Their crazy guessing leads them to their English teacher and what was inside the barrel; it all builds up from there. The boys' hypotheses lead them to believe that their friend is dead, and the culprit could or is Mr. Haberman. They go through the book trying to find out what happened to Tommy and if their English teacher knew anything about it. Towards the ending of the book, the group of friends make a bad decision to go to Mr. Haberman's house to get answers. After they went there and back, they had an answer, but it wasn't the one they were looking for. They did something terrible to an innocent man. And one day during school, the boys were called down to the office. As it turns out, they found Tommy, and he was just fine.

CHARACTERIZATION:

Tommy was an interesting character to follow and understand. He was gone in most of the book, but that didn't matter when the main character, Michael, talked about him and shared stories. Apparently Tommy was the one that kept the group from killing each other and kept them still friends. When he left, the boys had trouble staying close. I learned a lot about Tommy while reading. He doesn't care much about school; neither do any of the boys, in fact. Tommy likes to escape from his problems and he doesn't care that he scares his mom or any of his friends at school when he disappears. He likes to be himself, and I guess he thinks that the only way he can do that is by not going to school (running away), and being with his older friends. At the end of the book, when he came back, he was definitely transformed. He had a new haircut and a pierced ear. He also told his friends that he was gay. He finally found who he was. That took a lot of courage to do that, and I think if he didn't run away, he wouldn't be brave enough to change; he would still be his same old self.

AUDIENCE:

I think this book is suitable for middle school-freshmen boys and girls. It is an easy read, but it has some content that is more for the mature children. I would not recommend this book to any of my friends or peers because the book was very predictable, and the story line wasn't that interesting or good.

RATING:

I would rate this book a 1 or 2 out of 5. I enjoyed the book, but I definitely would not recommend it or read it again.

Stephanie says

Let's just say, I didn't like this book. Seriously. The plot was awkward with many, many unnecessary stuff. The characters weren't developed nicely. The whole thing was just a plain old mess. The only thing that slightly redeemed this novel is probably the ending.

Okay, let's start with the plot. There was one main plot that, I felt, was pretty clear and straight-narrowed and that was "what happened to Tommy". However, that's not what I disliked. What I didn't like was all the little subplots that were there as well. I mean, there's so many different things that were completely unnecessary and had no point in the whole story.

And the characters? Don't get me started. First, none of the characters were well-developed. There seemed no depth in any of them and the one with the most personality and character is Micheal. The rest of the guys, Bones, Tommy and Mixer, were basically observers from the sidelines. And Micheal is so weird.

There's this one scene where he stands and watches his friend rape a girl who was obviously drunk or she would have fought back. And he just stood there. Getting a boner. Which kind of disturbed me...and the thing is, that entire scene was completely unnecessary. Did it help build the main plot? Nope. Was there any real point in it except letting the readers know what a nutjob Micheal was? Nope.

The ending, however, was done quite nicely. It kind of made the whole book seem worthwhile but, not really. The plot for the ending was so predictable but I liked how Micheal grew. He was able to see what was right and what was wrong and was finally able to move on with his life.

Overall, Gentlemen is kind of a growing-up novel with a lot of gritty and real information.

Amy Huntley says

Wow. As someone who works daily with teens and watches them struggle to make choices, I found this an incredible look at the forces in play when the decisions we know we should make come into conflict with a whole slew of counter forces.

Rachael says

Micheal, Tommy, Mixer, and Bones are those kids, the ones that barely pass each class just to graduate, are avoided by most other kids out of fear, and are basically going nowhere in life. No one takes them seriously because they come from the wrong side of mostly everything. At least they have each other. But the disappearance of one of the friends starts to dissolve the glue that holds the rest together. Wild guesses, twisted conclusions, and unchangeable actions later, and none of their lives will ever be the same.

Gentlemen is one of the books that sounds mildly interesting at first glance but turns out to be many times below my expectations. I did not like this novel at all, probably because it was just so boring. The plot seems to drag on and on with only one every slightly exciting section in the middle that also fizzles out. I didn't enjoy reading about any of the characters either, since I couldn't relate to any of them at all and because I just couldn't understand how they function. The narrator Micheal's stream of consciousness is boring as well and at times hypocritical. On top of that, the story often felt unrealistic to me, and I had a hard time believe that a remedial high school English class would read Crime and Punishment. Other readers may be able to take away some meaning from this story, but its depressing ending killed any theme of friendship Gentlemen had going for it. This book took way too long for me to struggle through, and unfortunately, I can honestly say it was one of the worst and least enjoyable books I've ever read.

I do not recommend Gentlemen, but readers who enjoyed The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger may find some merit in Northrup's writing style.

reposted from <http://thebookmuncher.blogspot.com>

Ryan Field says

I've been on this YA kick all month and I've been surprised at how much I've loved the books I've read. It's not really my genre, but I do have eclectic taste...at times.

The latest YA, GENTLEMEN, by Michael Northrope, was just as good as the others. I don't like to review books here but I do like to mention them when I really enjoy them. And this book, trust me, has a surprise twist at the end that I didn't see coming. And that doesn't happen often. Nine times out of ten I can predict the ending of a book and that really doesn't bother me. But when I'm floored, as I was with GENTLEMEN, and have to go back and read certain parts twice to make sure I didn't get it wrong, I'm always thrilled.

But no spoilers. You'll have to trust me on this.

Mitra P says

After reading a variety of books that fell into the comedy and sports genre, I decided I should try out another genre but wasn't exactly sure what to read. Over the summer, I was at an amusement park and realized how much I enjoy rollercoasters which many people classify as thrillers. I immediately thought about grabbing a book from the thriller genre the next time I went to the library. My knowledge of authors and book is rather limited, so I picked out a thriller with an appealing cover and did not regret it one bit. That's when I picked up "Gentlemen" by Michael Northrop and began reading.

This story is about an average group of friends in high school, not too popular and not losers either. The story is told in Michael's perspectives, one of the friends, and is about his high school life with his friends who he calls Mixers, Bones, and Tommy. The friendship these boys have is very special as they do everything together. The boys are looked down upon by most of the school because of their mischievous behavior except for their English teacher, Mr. Haberman, who calls them by "gentlemen", hence the name of the book. All of a sudden, Tommy goes missing after he getting suspended for flipping a desk over and the day after the rest of the boys are singled out to help Mr. Haberman carry a very heavy corpse-like barrel into his car. Coincidence or not, the boys are "reading" a story in English class which they feel relates to their current lives so much that they all began suspecting one person. One Sunday morning, the plan to solve this mystery of where their friend, Tommy, may have been happens and everything goes downhill. The plan does not go down how it was planned which leaves Michael, Mixer, and especially Bones in serious trouble. As good as a friendship can be, tough times is where it can be put to test!

One thing I loved about the story was that it is told in the first person by one of the characters who narrated the story. This adds a whole lot to the story because it did not feel like I was reading a book, but the story of a teenager's life. I, as the reader, felt as if I were actually apart of the story which helps understand exactly what the character's situation is during the intense scenes.

I did not like the way the author passes by major events in the story without any serious emphasis. Many times I would have to reread the chapter or last few pages because I read over something important which just blended in with the flow of the story. If these key events were emphasized it would have added a little more to the actual "thrill" of the story and made it more exciting.

Karinabob says

This is a short YA book that I read through in an evening.

Synopsis:

You follow the (really *really* boring) main character and his three friends, a couple of high schoolers that are generally rough around the edges. One of the friends goes missing, and the other three boys are increasingly concerned that he may have been killed by one of their teachers.

Review:

Holy shit this was bad. Not only was the narrative meandering and meaningless (seriously, I don't need to read another paragraph about what you're eating for dinner, kid), but the main character and his friends were severely unlikable, there was an extremely heavy-handed character arc for the main dude, and it had a hugely unnecessary rape scene that was never revisited or resolved in any way. I'm fairly certain it was thrown in for shock value or to show "what a monster" one character is.

I cannot recommend this book at all.

Hannah says

This book in a word: typical.

It was simply okay. The plot was nothing special, somewhat predictable.

First off, the title is misleading. I can only remember Mr. Haberman calling the four boys "gentlemen" twice. If you're going to use a certain phrase to add a creep factor in your book, you better use it obsessively.

Anyway, I have to say that it was suspenseful. After the 'deed' was done, I could feel the characters' anxiousness. I could feel their nerves frying to a crisp. However, that suspense wasn't met with a phenomenal ending.

The ending was probably the main element that brought this book down. It was entirely anti-climatic. The way things ended with Tommy was so... stupid. The way things ended with Haberman was equivalently unintelligible. There was no twist, no dramatic conclusion. When things concluded with the two characters in question, I was like, "Really? Is that freakin' it?"

In other news, the rape scene really disturbed me. I was left with a rather dirty feeling the rest of the day. It felt like I needed to take a shower or something. But I think it was necessary for the one character's development as a monster.

Everything else -- the character development, writing style, etc -- was ordinary. It was a somewhat

entertaining read, but I neither glad nor angry that I read it.

The cover, however, was amazing. Kudos to the designer. :D

Rants and Bants says

This book was disappointing for me. I will say, the very end was pretty alright. I'm glad Michael ended up doing the right thing, and I thought the letter exchanges between him and Mr. Haberman were nice. But for the most part, I didn't really like this book.

It was supposed to be thrilling, gritty, dark, and suspenseful, but it was really just bland. There were a lot of irrelevant tangents the protagonist went on. Lots of long and drawn-out rants about things that had nothing to do with the plot (which was actually an interesting plot, the little bit of time it was in the book). I don't care about how irritated you are that your cigarettes are stale, dude. You don't need to give me every single detail about it. This isn't meant to be a diary. It felt like the actual plot was spread out throughout the book, and every time it finally got back on track, I was like, "Finally."

The writing was a little cringy as well. Not House of Night cringy, but still felt like someone trying too hard to sound like a cool edgy teenager. Too many "likes" in one sentence. I don't know, it just didn't gel with me.

Then there are the characters, who really weren't likeable at all. The only one out of the four boys who seemed decent was Tommy. So of course, naturally, he's the one we see the least. And I feel bad for him, because probably the reason he ran away was because he knew his "friends" would be assholes about him. They're kind of homophobic. Other things that make me unsympathetic is that they're animals abusers (they shot bats with a BB gun), they're arrogant in general, and they're a bunch of thugs who stalk their English teacher when they have zero evidence of him doing anything. They literally force entry into his house. Am I really supposed to give one shit about any of them?

Also, it's trying to make it out as though the reason people don't like them is because they are the "wrong side of the tracks" archetype. When in reality, I think the real reason people don't like them is because they're just jerks. If they were rich, popular, good grade-getting jerks, people would still probably not like them. Not every time are people against someone because they're poor (or their race, gender, etc.), it could be their personality.

This book was also compared to *The Outsiders* and *Freak the Mighty*...HOW? Both of those books are great books. It's like people think that as long as you have a group of teenage boys who are somewhat "rebellious", it's all automatically the same. Sorry, but not true. *The Outsiders* is a GREAT novel, and *Freak the Mighty* is too. I normally like YA that's geared towards boys, but not this time around.

Jacob Carroll says

Personal Response:

Okay so I can definitely say that I thoroughly enjoyed this book despite what I originally thought when I randomly picked it out in the library. I particularly like that the author makes the book and characters

relatable in their own ways- for example; when Michael is talking about his summer, the issues he has, and other various things like that, I feel I can relate.

Plot Summary:

The book starts off with the introduction of the four main characters, a group of trouble maker friends that aren't too good at school. It starts off how many of the books like this do in the way that it just has the character going through his/her (in this case, a his) classes and then BAM, something exciting happens. In this case it's one of the four flipping a desk when asked to answer a simple question. Later that day however, the same kid is missing; and one of the normally hated teachers has a slightly less boring class by simply bringing in a barrel that he has each of the students hit with a club, in an attempt to determine what is inside and to help along with his lesson. Eventually however various events including this lesson seem to add up to something that none of the three boys would ever expect. This leads to them interrogating one of their teachers and one of the three beats the teacher to near death with a club. The next day the lost friend comes back, everyone figures out that he's gay and he was just taking time to decide to come out about it. The three get arrested, and the main character goes to juvie. While he's there he sends a message to the nearly killed teacher and receives one in return, seemingly making up for all that had happened.

Recommendations:

I would most likely recommend this book for a person of around the middle school level, maybe 7th or 8th grade due to some more intense scenes in the book. I would also recommend this book to a more male audience because those are all the main characters.

Characterization:

The main character, Micheal, starts out this book as simply a rebel that has potential but no drive. As the story continues however you come to realize there is a lot more to this character than meets the eye and he isn't actually as tough and hard-core as he makes himself out to be, and in the end you see him actually seeming to turn himself around mentally.

Easton Groskreutz says

Personal Response: I personally think this book was edge-of-your-seat good. The adventure starts right at school with the math teacher. I found it was easy to stay caught up and not get confused with whats going on. I like mystery and murder stories but this book was not quite the book I was looking for. It did get better further into the story. I liked this book just enough to finish it and i'll give this book a three star rating.

Summary: This is a story is about a boy named Micheal and his friends: Mixer, Tommy, and Bones. Micheal is lazy, self-centered and an outcast at his school. Micheal and his friends spend their free time drinking, taking drugs, shooting bats with BB guns, and talking dirty. One day during school in Math class, Tommy got in trouble because he flipped his desk. He got angry because the Teacher was picking on him in front of the girls in the class too. After Tommy when to the office his friends never saw him for the rest of the day. They thought that maybe he was suspended from school. Then days passed where Tommy wasn't seen by any of his friends. Micheal? english teacher acting weird after the disappearance and was reading the book *Crime and Punishment* for their class book. Micheal started thinking that Mr. Haberman killed Tommy. This is where the story really started to pick up because Bones showed how broken inside he really is and Micheal showed how lost he is.

Recommendations: I recommend this book for people older than fourteen years of age. There is no sex scene in the book, but there is rape. Rape is not equal to sex in this case. I also recommend this book for boys and girls. *Gentlemen* is a terrifying book because it is so realistic and believable.

Characterization: Micheal was our narrator in *Gentlemen*. He was in high school and is a smart kid, but he decided not to be smart and becomes dirty-minded and doesn't try hard any longer. Between his three other friends, he was the smartest. Mixer was another amigo in Micheal's gang. Mixer was a fun guy who got

alcohol for his friends for free. Mixer also tried to keep Bones sane when the time came. Bones was the crazy friend who always got himself in trouble because of his hateful doings. Tommy was hardly in the story but he had anger issues in the beginning. He changed in the end.

Brenna says

Let me start by saying this book stands out...literally. The cover of the book is a boy in a body bag. But don't let the cover fool you...after all we've all heard the phrase "Don't judge a book by its cover" This book I have recommended for the Summer Reading list. It is a wonderful read. I had been wanting to read this book for a while and as soon as I read it I didn't want to put it down. The main plot of the story is: Michael, Tommy, Mixer, and Bones are pretty much the bad asses of their school. They don't take shit from anybody. No one at their High School takes them seriously except Mr. Haberman, their English teacher calls them "Gentlemen" When one of their friends goes missing, the clues all seem to point to Mr. Haberman.

One of the greatest books! I loved reading what was going on with this tight group of friends. I loved how "Crime and Punishment" was tied into the story. I felt shivers run down my spine as I continued in the suspense of what was going on. This book really leaves you away with something. We see this great group of guys who have been friends for as long as they can remember. But what makes them friends? "an unflinching look at what binds friends together--and what can tear them apart." ("Gentlemen")

Ethan says

Gentlemen by Michael Northrop was a very strange book to say the least. It started out lethargically and stayed that way until the near middle-end of the book. Then it became somewhat interesting and near the very end, it went back to boring. I found that the whole plot followed the character Micheal (yes, it is spelled like that in the book) and his thoughts through the decisions he made throughout the book. I think this book had potential but, Northrop just didn't capture us with it.

"So now I was repaying him this way, because I realized one other thing, too, at just about the same time: Bones was a damn psycho" (Northrop 231).

Micheal, Bones, and Mixer were a group of misled kids who never thought logically. Especially Bones. Even though they were a closely knit group of friends, friendships can still come to an end instantly. They were delusional and didn't realize that beating a teacher was a bad idea till they did it. Of course, Bones still never realized that. Even though they went to Haberman's house to question him, Bones ended up beating the innocent man. Mixer and Micheal stood around while a psychopath beat him to a pulp. They kept making mistakes over and over again until it was too late for them. This book is based around respect and of course, it's never shown throughout its entirety by these so called "Gentlemen". If only they had stood up for someone who was in distress could they be called gentlemen.

Gentlemen was a somewhat interesting book that had potential but just couldn't deliver. If someone was so inclined to read this book, I would expect it to be a person with interest with mystery and that's about it because the whole novel just didn't click for any other genre. If someone is bored, I would recommend just reading it a little while having another book to read that is more interesting. Overall it wasn't too bad, but it could have been better.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Jennifer Rummel for TeensReadToo.com

Michael and his friends are treated like Gentlemen by the one teacher in school who might understand them. They're a bunch of misfits who dislike school. One of Michael's friends gets himself into trouble during class. He disappears from the classroom - and from town.

No one can find him and he's not picking up his cell phone.

The boys are worried - especially given the lesson from their English teacher the day before. He brought in a heavy barrel and invited the students to lift the barrel and guess the item inside it as a precursor to the new novel they'd be reading. He never revealed the barrel's contents and the boys came to some of their own conclusions.

Could it be possible that Tommy's been murdered? How can they discover the truth behind his disappearance?

GENTLEMEN is a chilling novel that starts out a little slow but ends with a bang. The cover alone will draw readers in, but the story will make them linger even after the book has been finished.
