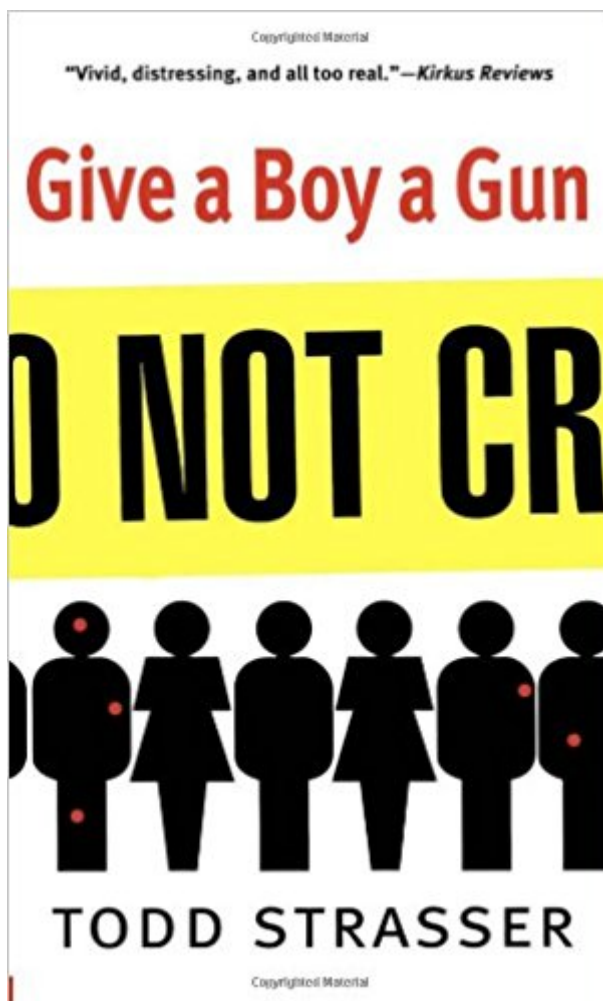


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Give A Boy A Gun



Synopsis

For as long as they can remember, Brendan and Gary have been mercilessly teased and harassed by the jocks who rule Middletown High. But not anymore. Stealing a small arsenal of guns from a neighbor, they take their classmates hostage at a school dance. In the panic of this desperate situation, it soon becomes clear that only one thing matters to Brendan and Gary: revenge.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up
Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

High school sophomores Gary Searle and Brendan Lawlor have had enough. Day in and day out, for more than two years, they have been harassed, beaten up, and cursed out by most of the jocks at Middleton High--especially by football player Sam Flach. Armed with guns they've stolen from a neighbor's collection, Gary and Brendan storm a school dance, booby trap all the doors with homemade bombs, and prepare to turn their high school caste system upside down with a violent show of force. When it's all over, Sam Flach is alive (but without any hope of a future football career), Gary has killed himself, and Brendan is in a coma, after being beaten almost to death by other students who managed to disarm him. Could this tragedy have been prevented? Who, if anyone, is to blame? Consisting of short, related statements from students, parents, school administrators, and even the troubled shooters themselves, *Give a Boy a Gun* attempts to give a voice to the countless sides of the school violence issue. Is this novel disturbing and at times difficult

to read? Yes, of course it is. But it is also an articulate, well-rounded cross section of the many viewpoints on gun control, peer bullying, and the high school social order since the traumatic events that took place in Littleton, Colorado. While Strasser readily acknowledges that there are no easy solutions to the problem of school violence, this powerful book will be a useful tool for parents and teachers alike in exploring this issue and finding some ways of resolving the tragic escalation of teen violence. (Ages 12 and older) --Jennifer Hubert --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

The author explores the psyche of adolescents who use handguns to violent ends, as two 10th-graders hold their classmates hostage. Ages 12-up. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Grade: B+In the aftermath of a school shooting and bombing, a recent graduate and journalism returns to her alma mater to interview survivors and witnesses to try to reconstruct what lead Brendan and Gary to do the unthinkable. What she finds is a history of relentless bullying by jocks, teachers and administrators who looked the other way and justified the bullying and students who accepted the status quo. Rather than a traditional narrative, Todd Strasser wrote GIVE A BOY A GUN as a series of interview snippets, a few internet chats, the boys' suicide notes and some real quotes articles about actual school. I thought Strasser's approach was a great way to give different POVs and to not only show the failure of some of the adults to address the school hierarchy and bullying, but their almost blaming the victims for being bullied. Strasser never suggests that Gary and Brendan were justified in their violence, but that their violence wasn't created in a vacuum. Could their actions have been prevented? Hindsight is always twenty-twenty. Brendan seemed to have more inner demons that preceded any bullying. Gary seemed to have been more affected by events at school. Readers will ultimately make their own judgments. THEMES: school violence, bullying, friendship, divorce GIVE A BOY A GUN is a thoughtful look at the making of two school shooters.

To tell the story of two alienated and disaffected teenagers who become obsessed with guns and bombs and ultimately vow to exact revenge on all the students, faculty members, and administrators at their school, Todd Strasser uses a quilt of voices to reflect the incomplete narrative that inevitably emerges from tragedies such as these. None of the characters in this chronicle is developed in any conventional sense and the underdevelopment of the characters, along with the hazy sense of plot, unconventional structure, and overall sense of detachment are

probably calculated and strategic risks to reflect the theme of incomprehensibility and senseless loss that accompanies the events in this novel (if this book may even be classified as a novel). Brief portions of the narrative lapse into preachy homilies about bullying and tolerance, but it's tough to object when there are no easy solutions. An unexpected and ironic development at the climax of the violence highlights the complexity of the issue, and no one escapes blame. Strasser acknowledges that we are all culpable to some extent for a culture that values violence over empathy.

It was age appropriate for a 14 year old. My daughter enjoyed the small captions which gave real statistics about guns and the dangers of allowing young men and ladies (middle to high school) to possess them. Please, be aware!

Very well written. Shivers up my spine and it kept me on my toes. This book is a tough but powerful read.

Amazing book. Makes you see the both sides of the argument. Makes you realize how much stress you can put on a teenager

It's an ok book. It's entertaining, but the story is slow in the beginning

This book begins with a graphic description of what happens when a bullet enters a brain. Like Columbine, it is the story of two outsiders who plot then carry through a grisly revenge on their fellow students who tormented them. Teachers, parents and other students from prom queens to geeks all are given space to recap the school shooting for the reader. The sense of alienation and confusion these people feel comes through clearly. It is an original way of exploring what might make two seemingly ordinary suburban teenagers "snap."

This book should be required reading for all first year teachers. We must be always aware of what can happen when no one intervenes.

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