



Downers Grove

Michael Hornburg

Download now

Read Online →

Downers Grove

Michael Hornburg

Downers Grove Michael Hornburg

Downers Grove is the haunting and tender story of Chrissie Swanson, a paranoid high school senior for whom graduating has become a matter of life or death. She's an unusual girl in an ordinary town. Her mother's sex life is overshadowing her own; her brother is aboard his own private Enterprise, slipping into one black hole after another; her best friend is hornier than a Prince song; leaving her eccentric grandmother as the only source of wisdom in a rapid downward spiral. As Chrissie tries to take control of the events that shape her life, she finds the events beginning to take control of her, until she is finally cornered by choices with everlasting consequences. Full of humor, wit, and the sacrilegious worldview of a savvy teenager, Downers Grove paints a searing portrait of the American dream in all its broken glory.

Downers Grove Details

Date : Published March 6th 2001 by Grove Press (first published 1999)

ISBN : 9780802137937

Author : Michael Hornburg

Format : Paperback 240 pages

Genre : Fiction, Young Adult, Coming Of Age, Realistic Fiction

 [Download Downers Grove ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Downers Grove ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Downers Grove Michael Hornburg

From Reader Review Downers Grove for online ebook

Mrs. Dicker-Deutsch Dicker-Deutsch says

Downers Grove details the adventures of a high school Senior three weeks before graduation. Her life is one of dissatisfaction. She lives with her mother (her father skipped town when she was younger) and her stoner brother. For most of the novel she seems to be searching for purpose, and finds it in pursuing her crush on the mechanic at the local gas station. There is a lot of drug use, a sub-plot that involves a curse of one student dying each year before graduation, another sub-plot that involves a search for her father, and overall, many foolish choices. In the end Cryssie ends up graduating, but doesn't seem to grow much as a person.

I rated this book a 2 out of 5 stars because despite enjoying the writing style, I found the plot to be redundant. At the end I was not convinced that Cryssie had grown as a character, and therefore the events she lived through seemed to be just another place holder in her humdrum life.

Thinking of memoirs, I wished that these weeks in her life would have shown more of an impact on her character. I know this book is a work of fiction, but it was a story that seemed to be focused on sharing a description rather than telling a story. Some pieces of writing are like this—I've even enjoyed some pieces of writing like this, but this particular book fell flat.

The quote that I would pull from the book, would be when Cryssie's friend refers to her as "Downers Grove" referencing her town as identification. One the ways the author plays up Cryssie's apathy is blaming it on the suburb in which she lives. Of course, living so close to Downers Grove, I was highly amused by the references to the Chicagoland suburb.

I would recommend this book to students who read and enjoyed *Bottled Up*, or students who are feeling dissatisfied with life—I think they may empathize with Cryssie more than I could.

Lyra says

It's not so much a problem of bad writing as some reviewers have suggested, but an inauthentic voice that makes this book maddening. The narrative voice was inconsistent and often times seemed like a stereotype of what a teenage girl should be.

As I read, I wondered who the target audience for this book was outside of people who lives in or near downers Grove, IL. The author's efforts to ground the setting with subdivision detail was just one of the many ways the author failed to make Chrissy a believable character, but if you ever drove the streets of DG you knew every building described in this book. I could go on, but why? There are other books to read.

John Gurney says

I eagerly started it. After all, I'm originally from Downers Grove! The novel, though, was a caricature of the "boring suburb drives people mad" genre. I'm sorry to say the author has inadvertently made the ordinary, middle-class Chicago suburb even less interesting by affixing its name, for posterity, to a yawner.

I found the characterizations lacking and the teenage girl protagonist unbelievable. Perhaps the author should have tried to write from a male perspective. The descriptive narrative was substandard. Don't believe the

jacket blurb: it's not funny. Funny like a nervous warm-up comic on Tuesday night at a suburban comedy club.

What found me through the wreckage to the final page was (1) looking for familiar landmarks and (2) the voyeuristic rubbernecking you can't stop when driving past a seven car pile-up on Downers Grove's I-355. The ending was dissatisfying, too. Since you probably won't care to slog through this book hunting for local insider references to the Tivoli theater or local cops, save yourself the time.

Glen says

Some parts of the story was interesting. I always find it fascinating when I read a story and dislike the main character but keep reading the story because the character fascinates me at the same time...maybe that's just a me thing.

Anyway, I enjoyed the novel overall but I feel like it lacked a more focused plot. I get where the story was going and it had a plot but some of the chapters seemed scattered. The characters weren't fully developed especially the main character Chrissie.

Overall I did enjoy the writing style and the book had its moments.

Andrew says

Good read - occasionally there were lines that blew me away in their succinct and accurate capturing of how complicated teenage life can be, however dismissive and curt adults can be about it. Though it's been many moons since I was a teenager, I was jettisoned back to my late teens through Hornburg's wordsmithing - he did a great job of relaying the sense of unrelenting urgency that plagued so much of my adolescence.

Jamie Sommer says

No good will come of Downers Grove - the book or the town.

Luigi says

Initially, Chrissie Swanson's POVs in Downer's Grove sound like Facebook statuses of a person we want to unfriend, but she redeemed herself by becoming interesting when she almost killed the guy in the neck brace. Like the usual outcasts from High School, she and Tracy are part of the hoi polloi. They don't notice it, because they feel cool, yet obviously are otherwise because like most teenagers, they are stupid.

The whole school believes in a curse that before Graduation, an offering of life must be done; Chrissie then receives a plethora of death threats just a few days before this special day. Will she attend her own funeral or spend the remaining years of her life in jail?

We like that scene in the grassy fields on a rainy night when the tears just kept rolling down Chrissie's eyes. She's running away from her mistakes and the responsibility of embracing adulthood weighs too much for her shoulders. Likewise, it reminds us of our greatest downfall, although lost, we find ourselves following the right path through a smidgen of light from passing cars.

When everybody back in High School were puffing sticks, getting pregnant and becoming zit-faced adolescents, the worst thing one could do is to get someone nearly killed. The best thing that would happen is to fall in love with a mechanic.

But then again, Chrissie's just a teenager. A permanent love story sounds fictitious or disposable—just like her Mom's.

A movie directed by Derick Martini based on this novel is coming this 2014. We are not familiar with Hornburg's Bongwater or Martini's movies, and certainly this book did not stick memorable to us too.

More reviews: <https://medium.com/@luimontoro>

Lynette says

Wow. I can honestly say it's one of the worst books I've ever read. Forgetting the fact that I've lived in Downers Grove for about 22 years, this is the most ridiculous interpretation of a teenaged girl I've ever read. Yes, most teenaged girls are annoying and mean and rude, but she's just absolutely ridiculous. And the pop culture references are beyond dated.

Going back to the part about being from Downers Grove - there are glaring geographical and spelling issues throughout the book. I went to high school around the time that the book is set, and I don't know any girls who were like Chrissie. Also, Downers Grove is not that backwater town that Hornburg paints - it's quite a rich, upper middle class suburb, and has been for a long time now. There's so much to do within even a 5-mile radius of this very large town. Heck, when I was training for a marathon, I was able to run my mid-distance runs (10, 12, 16 miles) entirely within the village limits of Downers Grove. So there is certainly nothing "small-town" about it.

The only thing that I can think of is that this takes place in south Downers, and I live in north Downers. If the kids on the other side of the tracks were like this, then I'm damn glad that I'm a north-sider!

Heather says

I gave it 3 stars because it was an easy read and I read it in one afternoon, so it wasn't horribly awful. I can't relate to the main character but it brought me back to a time period that I can relate to before cell phones and when Nine Inch Nails was playing on the radio. This novel is full of teenage girl angst written by a guy...hmm. It is a little too filled with the meaning of life and religion.

Chris says

William Morrow & Co – Fiction – 231'Du'Pages

I could have gone to the Brookfield Zoo and picked through some flamingo sh!t to yield the same amount of enjoyment as I did on this reading of “Downers Grove”. Not only is Brookfield Zoo in close enough proximity to Downers Grove to have made this a simple plan of action, but I probably could have started flinging the feces around and hopefully caused some sort of pandemonium resulting in a rhinoceros goring.

Proving once again that I’m a complete sucker easily swayed by the masterminds in marketing (much like my foray into “The Girl Who Owned A City”), I bought this book brand-spanking-new when it came out about a decade ago. How was I going to pass this treasure up? The book is called “Downers Grove”, and there’s no way you can pass up anything named after the illustrious “D.G”, a locale of ill-repute which has provided countless sluts for the strapping youths ranging from Lisle to Lombard to Lemont. Enticing. The cover boldly displays one of the more memorable landmarks of Chicago’s West Suburbs, the legendary Downers Grove water tower, and the water tower is also upside down. Incredible. The author has also penned what must be an exhilarating work called “Bongwater”. Promising. Lastly, the book claimed to concern the antics of the disillusioned youth living in the posh area I was reared near; it was obviously going to be choc full of punk-ass wanna-be-bitches glomming off their upper-class folks for money to buy smack with, the bawdy romps of the area’s high school ‘jocks’, the epic tales of juvenile delinquency spawned by the ‘skaters’, and probably some puerile assessments of life as told through the eyes of one of the areas worthless inhabitants.

I should have saved my money and gotten my asscheeks pierced.

This is the portion of the review in which I will spell out the things which didn’t suck about this book, and this ‘praise’ ends at the next use of punctuation.

As for the rest of the book; horrible. Easily one of the worst books I’ve ever had the misfortune to open. More than that, this is the worst book I’ve ever read twice.

Talentless hack Hornburg leads us through the tedious pastiche which serves as existence for aspiring riot grrl Crystal Methedrine Swanson; a flimsy and pitiful representation of a broken home, a product of DuPage county’s exalted educational system, and a moronic dingbat struggling to find her true identity. I can only imagine Hornburg and his buddies probably thought Chrissie’s name was a hell of a clever play on words, presumably while they were chugging bongwater and PBR. Then again, I’ve actually come across someone with the unlikely name of Mary Jane Head, but at least she delivered on her moniker; Chrissie isn’t interesting enough to have a riveting drug habit. Also, while I am hardly one to claim that I have even the slightest clue what is going through the minds of women, I think that Hornburg’s work with Chrissie might be the clumsiest attempt ever considered worthy of publication in all history. I found a lot of her thoughts and narration pretty inconsistent; here we have a 17-year-old girl who pigeonholes anyone with any visible signs of muscular development as a ‘mindless jock’ and openly mocks the concept of participating in any sort of athletic endeavor, but also makes countless references to sports minutia. I’m hardly going to qualify this statement by combing through this drivel again for examples, but she makes references to ‘winning the trifecta’, ‘like a bowling ball rolling towards the pins’, ‘like a baseball landing in centerfield’, and ‘getting tagged out’, along with many other bothersome references to badminton, football, jai alai, lacrosse, boxing, motorcross, rowing, track & field, swimming, diving, croquet, spelunking, squash, cricket, snorkeling, fishing, and I think she might even whip out an allusion to aerobatics and formation flying. You’d think a 17 year old chick with her preferences would say ‘like he won a date with Britney Spears’ instead of ‘like he won betting on the trifecta’ to express some clod’s glee. Basically, most of what Chrissie was saying was either stupid (most of the book) or made me think that the character was a 23-year-old dude that attends community college. It would have also been a benefit if Hornburg would have spelled Bolingbrook correctly even once within; he goes into incredibly boring detail concerning the streets and shops in the area, but the misspelling ‘Bowlingbrook’ just makes the work look sloppy and poorly researched.

So here’s the story. Chrissie is a senior preparing to graduate from high school while publishing some lame-

ass 'zine with her friend Tracy the trollop. Since the white man swindled the land from the injuns and began educating their young, every graduating class has suffered the loss of one if its members, and this year can either break the 'curse' or someone is getting iced soon. She's on edge, she's worried about the curse, she's doing crappy in school, has no idea what she wants to do with her life, her dad has skipped town, her mother has begun dating an astronaut, her brother is a junkie, her grandma is an insightful weirdo that speaks in riddles, and while at a party, some dude makes a move on her which she immediately equates with impending rape and boots him in the balls. The guy corners her and makes momentary contact with her arm and boob, and her reaction is planting a foot in his crotch. "He buckled under, screamed "Bitch!" like it was my fault or something, and crumpled onto the floor." Hmmm. Anyway, this meathead and his crew end up pursuing Tracy and Chrissie in a completely lame car chase, which ends with Chrissie wrecking their ride by tossing a car battery through their windshield. She's freaked out more than ever that she's destined to be the victim of the curse, and this feeling of dread is only heightened when the potential rapist and his crew begin showing up unexpectedly at places Chrissie is at, and they also set fire to her locker and drop some dead dogs in her front yard. Chrissie starts screwing a reckless mechanic/race-car driver in one of the most banal relationships ever put to paper, while her mom is busy letting her spaceman put his shuttle in her lauchpad and blast off. And that's about it. She also briefly looks for her father in Chicago, throws a pitiful party, and ignores her brother as filler between encounters with her new love interest and the dudes looking to kick her ass.

I hate to recommend this to anyone, but if you've enjoyed mindless crap like "Apathy and Other Small Victories" by Paul Neilan, "The Fuck-Up" by Arthur Nersesian, or anything by Augusten Burroughs or David Sedaris, this is the book for you. The only benefit to recommending this to anyone is so that you post something on GoodReads about it for me to laugh at and reaffirm to me that the human race has earned its forthcoming extinction. Be warned; as bad as those books are, Hornburg's 'writing' can only be described as Nersesian-Lite. I'd almost rather have Busch Lite than Nersesian-Lite.

David Schaafsma says

I imagine Michael Hornburg is bitter about having lived in Downers Grove, as he creates a book with NO characters anyone would ever like. No redeeming qualities. One might be tempted to read this if 1) you hated upper middle class suburbs and you were hoping for a way to tap in to your own bitterness about such places or 2) if you were actually from or near Downers Grove, but trust me, when you are done with this book you will sympathize with everyone there AGAINST both the narrator AND the author. I know the author and narrator are not the same thing, sure... but trust me, this is a hateful book from any perspective.

Emma Louise says

While at first I was really excited about reading this book and waited for it to come in the mail, it was quite a boring read to be really honest. I didn't particularly warm to the main character Chrissie, or her love interest Bobby. Their relationship could have been taken to a much deeper level but he was so using her and didn't give back. Other than that the story didn't exactly have a plot and I didn't much care for the on the side attempts to find her father, nor did I warm to her crazy grandmother who just seemed to pop into the story to give her good advice. Still, it wasn't a bad read. The writing style was good, with a few inspirational quotes which seem to have slipped my mind for now, but not really that similar to the blurb on the back.

Vanessa says

I discovered this one while weeding, and I probably could have left it on the shelf. Coming of age tales usually interest me, but there wasn't much substance or character development going on here although it moved quickly and included references to the Chicago area. The book felt like it was written with a film adaption in mind, which the book jacket mentioned way back in 1999. Entertainment Weekly recently noted that the movie will be released in 2011; I hope it's tighter than the book.

Deanna says

Loved it! Pretty much from the first page. Reminded me what it was like to be a teenager. :)

Charlotte says

4/5 Stars

I read a lot of bad reviews for this book, but I actually did like it a lot. The writing wasn't perfect but it was interesting and different from the norm.

Negatives--It glorified some stuff that nowadays would /not/ be glorified. And there wasn't much of a climax either. Left some questions at the end, like it was all wrapped up too quickly.

Apparently it's going to be a movie soon. I'm looking forward to that.

I recommend it to people who like coming-of-age stories, books from the 19??s, and romance.
