

**Title:** *The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue*

**Author:** Mackenzie Lee

**Category:** LGBTQIA+

**Name and Grade:** Serena C., 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

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1. *What is the main plot of the book?*

After being kicked out of one of England's most prestigious schools, Henry Montague, "Monty," is given one year for an educational tour of Europe before he must return home and help run his father's estate. Though he hoped this year to be his last year of fun and excitement, his expectations are quickly changed after his father assigns a man to look after Monty, his best friend Percy, and his sister Felicity while traveling. Monty's father also warns that this is his last chance to accept responsibility, stop fooling around with men, and win back his favor. While in Paris, Monty, looking to cause trouble, steals a small box from a high ranking official. Later on in their trip the group is attacked by highwaymen who demand they return the stolen item. During the chaos, Monty, Percy, and Felicity are separated from everyone else, and begin their own journey. As they travel, they learn more about the box and the people who are tracking them down. In addition, Monty and Percy begin to finally reveal their long standing attraction to each other.

2. *Which character did you most identify with and why?*

In my opinion, the most relatable character was Felicity. Felicity was an avid reader who often acted as the voice of reason. Sometimes, the book had scenes where Percy and Monty were frightened over the smallest things. For example, at one point, Felicity had a large cut on her arm and had to stitch up the wound herself. Percy and Monty were horrified by the sight of blood, even though Felicity assured them that it was not a big deal. I think that, in these instances, Felicity was the most rational of the group, which is why I found her the most relatable.

3. *What do you believe is the main message of this book?*

Since the story took place in England during the 1700s, many people in society were homophobic and viewed same sex relationships as a sin. The main message of this book is that being attracted to someone of your gender is not something that one should have to hide or feel shameful about.

4. *Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across as too "preachy"?*

I think that the author did a good job of effectively integrating the theme into the story. Monty often thought about his love for Percy and his insecurities, and the reader was able to see the progression of his thoughts. Over the course of the novel, he went from being afraid to confess his feelings to beginning a new life with Percy.

5. *If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?*

Monty's first person point of view was the only perspective presented in this book. He often discussed his feelings for both men and women. I liked that the author told the story from the point of view of a bisexual person, because she showed Monty's confusion over his contrasting feelings. I think this was

an important topic to write about because some people may find similarities with Monty and be able to relate to him.

6. *In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about a topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?*  
This book reaffirmed my beliefs that LGBTQ+ people should never be ashamed of who they are. I think that Monty and Percy were both great characters to reinforce this theme, as they both struggled with their feelings for each other for a long time. However, the book's happy ending showed that love between any two genders is possible in even the most difficult circumstances.
7. *What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?*  
I do not think that this book needed another perspective to enhance the story. However, I do think that it would have been interesting if the author told the story from Felicity's point of view. Since there were three main characters, Felicity often ended up as an outsider among the trio. I think that it would have been a bit more entertaining to read if readers were able to see the situations from her perspective, but I do not think that it was necessary to make it a great book.
8. *Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through more reading, research, action, etc, and if so, how?*  
Yes, this book inspired me to learn more about the rights of LGBTQ+ people in England during the 1700s. I learned a lot about the topic, and I really encourage others to read this book and do independent research as well.
9. *What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, etc.) would you suggest this book to?*  
I would suggest that any reader who enjoys reading coming of age action novels should read this book. Also, I think that the book is appropriate for anybody older than 12.
10. *What other book(s) have you read that you think would make a good addition to this category of the Perspectives Bibliography, and why?*  
*The Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller and *The Bane Chronicles* by Cassandra Clare, Maureen Johnson, and Sarah Rees Brennan would make great additions to this category of the Perspectives Bibliography. Both books are of the LGBTQ+ genre, and explore themes similar to the ones presented in *The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue*. Particularly, *The Bane Chronicles* is interesting because the main character, Magnus Bane, is bisexual. Therefore it may be more relatable to readers who are specifically looking for books similar to *The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue*.