

**Title:** *Gideon Green in Black and White*

**Author:** Katie Henry

**Genre:** Mystery, Humor

Reviewer Name and Grade: Arnav A., Grade 8

Date Reviewed: August 12, 2023

Gideon Green - A 16-year old “retired” detective, whose life has taken a strange turn. After his mother passed away when he was 6 years old, he decided to start his own detective agency, working to solve San Miguel’s cases, along with his best friend Lily Krupitsky-Sharma. Except... no one was going to hire elementary school kids to solve a robbery. So, when Gideon was 10, he hired himself, to figure out what happened to his neighbor’s missing jewelry. Miraculously, his unique mindset led him to do what even the police department and Chief Hank O’ Hara couldn’t even do. In the police’s “gratitude”, they had a televised “ceremony” for him. However, by the time that Middle School started, he decided to stop. After all, his fun little children’s game was now being perceived as a ridiculous hobby, and everyone, including Lily, moved on. Nonetheless, Gideon continued to keep wearing his fedora, and watching his film noirs. Fast forward to the present, and Gideon Green is continuing life as he has been since he started high school - he wakes up, wears his trench coat, goes to school, sits at the same lunch table, and when he arrives home, watches his beloved film noirs while his had cooks at dinner service in his restaurant - Verde. That is, of course, until the day that Lily, who stopped their friendship years ago, suddenly appears at his front door. Lily had joined the Herald (the school paper)’s writing committee, and she wanted to write an article on one of San Miguel High School’s students (Luke Dobson), getting arrested for vandalism. Naturally, Gideon should have been upset. After all, Lily had betrayed him, and now she wanted his help? However, the detective side of him, as well as his curiosity, led him to beckon for her to enter the house. He decides to help her, and joins the Herald as a cover - this also pleases his dad, who was getting upset over his routines. Gideon grows to like the Herald’s community, and actually finds pleasure in his time there. However while life takes a turn for the better following him joining, the case starts to take a much more serious and larger significance than once assumed. Now, will Gideon be able to take the benefits of his actions, or will his big result in even bigger consequences?

*Did the plot (for fiction) or presentation of information (for nonfiction) keep you interested?*

The plot of the book kept me mildly interested throughout the story. During the story’s course of events, the revelations and actions seemed to bounce around a lot, affecting the story in both good and bad ways - A positive outcome was that is kept me going, wanting to find out what happened next, but it never really lived up to the excitement, and seemed to drown away my interest at many occasions. Overall, the book needed to work on its timing of events and presentation, but still can keep the reader going.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?*

Throughout much of the book, things seemed to be happening on two different levels, corresponding to the two major conflicts throughout the story. For Gideon’s personal life, including his own struggles in school and at home, the book moved a bit slowly, and frankly, became slower as the book went on (something I personally dislike). As for the case he needed solving with Lily, the book went to fast, rushed key moments. Considering all of this, I think Henry needed to balance the book a bit more.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?*

I believe that this book is appropriate for any student from grade 7 onwards. The book discusses topics that may be difficult to understand for younger students, such as the events that occurred at the high school. In addition, older students may connect more to the book, giving them a better understanding of what happens.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to?*

I would recommend this book to anyone that likes a combination of realistic fiction and mystery books, as *Gideon Green in Black and White* is a combination of both. As I discussed previously, the book runs on two different levels, and each corresponds (in a way) to the respective genres.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?*

While most of the information is explained clearly in the book, it is important for teens to know that this book takes place in San Miguel (part of San Diego County) in California, and is not as close to the beach as you may think - the latter detail becoming important later in the story. In addition, Gideon's mother died when he was 6, and his father is a chef.

*Rating - 3 stars: It was okay; I had hoped for better.*

I have given the book a rating of 3 stars because of the way the book was written. Earlier, I mentioned how some parts were too fast, and some parts were too slow throughout the story. Well, this made it hard for the reader to fully comprehend and enjoy the book, as good of a storyline it was. In addition, the book has too many patches where it felt quite bland, and didn't interest the reader at all. Nonetheless, the book still was quite entertaining at many moments, as well as comedic. For example, the author often molded jokes into the dialogue, making for some funny moments that you may not find in other pieces of literature. To summarize, the book had good and bad elements to it, and I would recommend the book to anyone looking to try something unique.

Reviewer Name and Grade: Avani H., 8th Grade

Date Reviewed: 3/16/24

The mysterious blockbuster *Gideon Green in Black and White* written by Katie Henry follows a boy known as Gideon Green facing challenges between relationships, his detective dreams from previous years, his unique but very humorous personality, and the case he is solving throughout the story alongside his ex- best friend Lily. Gideon and his father hit some rough patches throughout the story to say the least but overall the father and son love is sprinkled throughout, and speaking of love, the very cute editor-in-chief known as Tess takes a shine to him adding a very enjoyable romantic plotline. His personality consists of his dry humor, his impulsive thoughts essentially taking action, his talent for noticing little details and putting things together like puzzle pieces in a way, which obviously made him a great detective, and his struggle to figure certain things out added to the beautiful blossom of the story. As for the plotline, the story involves an old friend known as Lily reaching out to Gideon asking him to help her with a case. Although she did ghost him previously, he is shown to not be the one to turn down a good adventure, plus he was also one to be somewhat petty when he was turned away from his classmates and father, plus he could fulfill his detective dreams. As the story progresses, the case obviously uncovers increasingly, but essentially too much in a way. Their case is focused on the crime rate in their city, San Miguel California, and what was thought to be a somewhat low case turned out to be very high profile especially after a murder was uncovered. Although, in the end, Gideon Green ends up solving and not spreading the case from going too far along with tying loose ends between his father and him and Lily, and getting his romantic ties with Tess.

*Did the plot keep you interested?*

Yes, any mystery book is shown to have an essentially fast plot considering the crime solving and multiple storylines which in my case is perfect for me.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pace of the book was at many times quite fast because, as said before, the added characters and storylines and whatnot but in my case fast paced books I find very enjoyable so the pace was just right for me.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?*

This book seems to be appropriate for a twelve year old or older considering the gruesome truths along with the advanced vocabulary and fast pace of the book. Also, with the main characters in the book being teenagers it could add a sense of relatability in a way.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to?*

I would recommend this book to a reader who loves mystery books with a twist in it. The book obviously centralizes suspense and of course elements of problem solving and whatnot so this would be a perfect book with someone who loves reading about all of these traits.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?*

Information that would be helpful for teens to know about this book is that obviously the book does contain elements of violence and what could even be considered as abuse so that should be taken into consideration.

*5 stars: I'm really glad I read this book; it was awesome!*

I loved reading this book for a wide range of reasons. This novel provided lots of humor along with the mystery and suspense filled scenes, and of course the romance plot, and in all honesty, there wasn't really anything bad about the book. Gideon Green is known to be a witty, fun character with quite a bit of spirit to him which had very much helped him with his case. The other protagonists such as Tess and Lily also added quite a nice line to the story as well. Both characters helped illuminate the story with their different abilities, considering Tess being the smart, cute newspaper editor-in-chief and Lily being the spunky best friend. The plotline was also extremely interesting considering the major twist involving murder that was developed. So overall, this story stood out to me and was one of the best I've read because of the interesting and diverse characters along with the captivating plotline.