



The Gospel of Winter

Brendan Kiely

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

The Gospel of Winter

Brendan Kiely

The Gospel of Winter Brendan Kiely

A fearless debut novel about the restorative power of truth and love after the trauma of abuse.

As sixteen-year-old Aidan Donovan's fractured family disintegrates around him, he searches for solace in a few bumps of Adderall, his father's wet bar, and the attentions of his local priest, Father Greg—the only adult who actually listens to him.

When Christmas hits, Aidan's world collapses in a crisis of trust when he recognizes the darkness of Father Greg's affections. He turns to a crew of new friends to help make sense of his life: Josie, the girl he just might love; Sophie, who's a little wild; and Mark, the charismatic swim team captain whose own secret agonies converge with Aidan's.

The Gospel of Winter maps the ways love can be used as a weapon against the innocent—but can also, in the right hands, restore hope and even faith. Brendan Kiely's unflinching and courageous debut novel exposes the damage from the secrets we keep and proves that in truth, there is power. And real love.

The Gospel of Winter Details

Date : Published January 21st 2014 by Margaret K. McElderry Books

ISBN : 9781442484894

Author : Brendan Kiely

Format : Hardcover 304 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Fiction, Contemporary, Sociology, Abuse, Realistic Fiction, Religion

 [Download The Gospel of Winter ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Gospel of Winter ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Gospel of Winter Brendan Kiely

From Reader Review The Gospel of Winter for online ebook

Russell Sanders says

Oh, how I wanted to adore *The Gospel of Winter*: its complex main character, its setting among the very rich in Connecticut, its flawed parents, its eloquent prose. I began reading with such high expectations, and for at least three quarters of the novel, I was “buying it,” despite seeing the book’s flaws. But that last quarter, when I wanted the story to propel to the end, I got bogged down in the author’s verbosity. Lovely verbosity, but verbosity nevertheless. The protagonist, prep school Sophomore Aidan, is intelligent and tortured. He tells the story, and that’s where I was stymied. His vocabulary and syntax are so far above what I, in my thirty year teaching career, encountered in even the most intelligent teens that I just didn’t buy it. For example, in a fantasy about his girlfriend, he says, “I wanted to cinch up the knot in my tie, kiss her on the brow, and tell her to enjoy her day.” What teen would even think of that, albeit a fantasy? Of a snowfall, he waxes, “Beyond the trees, nothing broke through the deadening, washed-out expanse above.” To describe a dog: “A dog with a slow baritone barked.” This is a young man with the vocabulary and skill of a fine writer. The author Brendan Kiely is just that in his word combinations, but his characterization, to me, is way off. I simply can’t picture any of the thousands of teens I’ve known who would speak this way. And I can only picture a handful of those teens sophisticated and knowledgeable in literary fiction to enjoy this novel. It is supposed to be a young adult novel, but it strives to be Fitzgerald or Hemingway. I can only hope that its author moves on to adult fiction and finds his niche in that genre. A side note: although I fully understood the teen characters smoking, pot use, prescription drug abuse and liquoring up as character development tools, I got weary of it. Yes, they are upper class, wealthy kids from a prep school, but are we to believe that all kids of this ilk are drug and alcohol addled, that the only tools to fight their angst are illegal substances? As a YA writer myself, I’m not above using these tools, but they were so pervasive in this tale, that it really bothered me.

Mrs. Krajewski says

Quiet, loner, Aidan Donovan may come from money, but he is struggling to stay sane. His father recently left for good, and his mother has more important things to worry about than to pay any attention to him. So Aidan turns to Father Greg, the only person that truly listens to him. At least, that’s what he thinks. At Christmas he meets up with Josie, Sophie, and Mark, who are three other teens that go to his private school. It’s their adventures that lead him to start thinking about what’s really going on in his life. It’s only then that he begins to see the darker, more sinister, side of “love.” A tough topic to read about, but wonderfully written!

MeggieBree says

Wow!

This is a powerfully written book. I applaud the author for telling this story. It was hard to read at times because it was pretty raw, so I can imagine that writing it must have been tough. It was very well-written, and while the characters were flawed, they were not unlikeable, just real. I think he did a great job at portraying teenagers and I was brought back to my younger years when my conflicting desires to be normal and to stand out, or be myself, were constantly at war.

My favourite quote from the book:

"The problem is that you don't always get to write your own story. You get written into some stories, and if you ask why, there isn't an answer. You don't have any control, because the forces at work are too large to confront, and sometimes too large even to understand."

I received this copy from a Goodreads giveaway, thanks Goodreads!

Edward Sullivan says

A tough, powerful, moving story about betrayal and healing. Overwritten at times but quite an impressive debut nonetheless.

Wendy says

"The Gospel of Winter" which I won from Goodreads Giveaways is a compelling and emotionally-charged novel that deals with a sensitive and complex subject with stark honesty and realism. As the story opens sixteen year old Aidan Donovan, a boy from an affluent family fractured by betrayal and separation is struggling to make sense of the abuse he suffered at the hands of a local priest; someone he expected guidance, security and assurance from. Haunted by the shadow of evil, lies and secrecy that have deformed his life, and afraid to reach out for help, Aidan has found a crutch in drugs and alcohol. In his deteriorating world he struggles to find a sense stability and normalcy, and clings to his friendship with Mark, Josie and Sophie only to find the darkness of the past creeping in and threatening the newly forged bond.

Boldly, Brendan Kiely deals tactfully and candidly with an explosive issue that has been headlined in newspapers repeatedly. The plot is well-developed and narrated from Aidan's viewpoint; a boy struggling with the degradation of abuse, the sting of losing his trust and faith, and the uncertainty about his future. This is a riveting page turner marked by graphic language as Aidan and his friend Mark, tormented by a shameful secret, unable to open up to their self-centered parents, each seek a way to deal with their fear and suffering. This is not a story of religious faith gone awry, but a burning lesson that in this secular world and even in anointed positions in the Church there are unscrupulous, sick men who use love and scripture as a weapon to dominant, control and abuse. In this powerful story Brendan Kiely adroitly not only tackles the destructiveness of clerical abuse but touches on the violence and aggression associated with bullying and the fear of homophobia. But even in darkness there is a light of triumph which he blends in with elements of friendship, courage, forgiveness and deliverance.

The characters are well-developed, complex and realistic. Aidan Donovan shattered not only by abuse but the brokenness of his home life is reclusive, morose, fearful and lacking in self-confidence. With the help of his friends he begins to change gathering courage and strength to confront not only his fear but the truth. Gwen Donovan, his mother is a self-absorbed social butterfly struggling to build a life after her separation and ignorant of her son's problems until jealousy over Aidan's love for their devoted and affectionate housekeeper brings an abrupt awakening. T.J. (Old) Donovan his father is a selfish, cold, indifferent workaholic who betrays his family. In a blossoming friendship with Mike Kowalski, Aidan finds a kindred spirit. A popular co-captain on the swim team, Mike seems confident, cool, and self-assured, masking a soul broken by abuse and traumatized by a controlling, manipulative father. Josie Fenton is a young woman with

a strong personality and a warm, caring heart, while Sophie Harrington is a little wild, overconfident and cynical. Into this mix add the blatant acceptance and insensitive cover-up of an old priest and the cruelty and sickness of a sexual predator.

All these characters bring passion, intensity and reality to an intriguing and captivating, debut novel which I couldn't put down and rate highly.

Craig Allen says

A very powerful story about a young man betrayed by his priest and how it changes his outlook on everything he knew to be true. Aidan, the central character is from a wealthy family with an absent father and a dramatic mother. He has always found comfort in his church, but soon begins to realize that the affection shown by Father Greg towards him is not only very wrong, unlawful, and awful, but also directed at other boys in the church. Aidan's acceptance of this truth and his dealings with the other characters is great--really enjoyed this book and it's portrayal of how things aren't always as they seem to be and the meaning of masks we ALL wear amongst the people in our lives in what we put out into the world.

Stephanie says

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this novel from the publisher in exchange for an honest and unbiased review.

My Summary: Aidan is living in the midst of what some would describe as their worst nightmare. With his already unstable home life crumbling more and more every day, Aidan begins to self-medicate. However, the alcohol and drugs can't fill the hole inside his heart, so Aidan begins talking to Father Greg about the demons that haunt him.

But when Father Greg's true motives for befriending Aidan are revealed, he attempts to escape the memories of what happened through a group of friends who offer more support than he's ever gotten from his family. And although he may try to hide it, Aidan can sense that Mark may know just what he went through... and together, they may just be able to help each other heal.

My Thoughts: This novel was so hard to put down. The second I stopped reading, I was plagued with questions about what would happen to Aidan and had to pick it up and continue.

Aidan was such a likable character, and you couldn't help but sympathize as you watched him struggle to navigate the obstacles he faced - those of growing up as well as those due to the situations he'd been put into. The writing was incredibly honest while also flowing like prose. I liked that you were placed right in the center of the plot right from the start - I was hooked within minutes.

The topic of clerical abuse was dealt with very gracefully in this novel. The focus was not so much on the abuse or abuser but on the healing process, and how important support from loved ones is in getting on with your life - in my opinion, it was a great approach to dealing with a usually taboo subject.

Final Thoughts: Definitely check out The Gospel of Winter if you're a fan of contemporary literature or are just looking for a novel that hits your heart in all the right places.

April says

Well, this is one of the toughest books I've read since my term finished on Amelia Bloomer Project. That reading exposed me to so many powerful stories of women and girls overcoming horrible abuse to find the empowerment of their voices-- and this book deserves equal attention. The Catholic priest sex scandal was/is gut wrenching in it's long-spread, long-term effects, and the author here very bravely puts out a story filled with tough images, tough characters, and thankfully enough resolution in the very last pages to keep the reader from feeling *completely* despondent. As with other stories like this, we just hope it gets into the right hands at the right time. We should spread the word so caring adults know this title exists.

Porcelain says

This book had such a rough start that I will openly admit to not finishing. The characters are extreme stereotypes. The situations they encounter and their dialogue have a contrived feel versus a realistic one.

Bella says

{originally posted on my blog: Ciao Bella}

P R O S

+ *Gripping, relevant story on a topic not often seen in YA* The movie Spotlight recently snagged the Best Picture award at this year's Oscars ceremony. The title was well-deserved, as the acting was phenomenal, the directing superb, and the story both true and engrossing. When I picked up *The Gospel of Winter*, I hadn't realized that it focused on the same event, the Catholic church sexual abuse scandal first reported in Boston, but a few chapters in and I was immersed in the emotional, saddening storyline, just as I was with the film. Abuse, loss of innocence, and secrecy are not unknown topics in young adult literature – in fact, I'd argue they're common elements in gritty contemporary novels – but I've yet to see them threaded in the same setting as Kiely's debut. Snaps there.

+ *Gut-wrenching and fully developed themes* In a similar vein, Kiely doesn't lose the importance of exploring various themes throughout the novel as he crafts a disheartening atmosphere. *The Gospel of Winter* is very much a literary novel, that is, prose and messages are emphasized over the action of the plot; read a passage, and you'll come to the same conclusion. It's a novel that deserves to be read twice for this reason alone – Kiely allows the themes of betrayal and tradition and intense hurt to define the story and with it, the audience's reactions. Such controlled use of themes is difficult for even a seasoned author, so it's a promising sign for any of Kiely's future publications.

+ *A compelling, well-drawn cast of characters* Of course, characters are just as significant of elements in a book, a fact Kiely recognizes as he develops the protagonist, Aidan, and the individuals in Aidan's life: his mom, who keeps a facade up for the rest of society; his housekeeper, who struggles to choose between what she believes and what is right; his newfound friends, all of whom have problems of their own that plague them. I have a soft spot for characters from highbrow society – I find the culture fascinating to read about – but even my bias doesn't discount the alluring nature of their respective stories. Aidan's narration isn't perfect, but it does invite you into the plot and offers a method in which to experience his pain, faith, and

eventually, hope.

C O N S

+ *Story often weighed down by sophisticated vocabulary and structure* Where my enjoyment falters is in the book's language. It's verbose, oddly refined for what is supposed to be the voice of a teenage boy.

Unfortunately, the jarring nature – what is written versus what is expected – can pull the reader from the story; you're less focused on Aidan's haunting narration as you are on deciphering exactly what is being said. Fortunately, however, after reading Kiely's *All-American Boys* {a novel he shares with author Jason Reynolds}, I've come to think it was a skill that only required some practice – and one that is sure to be further improved in his third release, *The Last True Love Story*, when it hits shelves in September.

Katharine Holden says

Not believable. Main character is supposed to be a teenager, but he sounds like he's a 45 year old professor. All of the characters are one note. Plot development is limited and contrived.

Kirsten says

I picked up this book because the cover was beautiful and the title intrigued me. Sadly, those were the only good things about this book. It was obvious within the first three pages that this was the author's first novel, and that was largely because the book just jumped between major plot points without any of the rise and fall you might expect and, quite frankly, hope to find in any well-written book. In light of the heavy, morose subject matter, I feel this was exceptionally poor planning on the author's part, as the heaviness and reality of the protagonist's situation didn't really hit home until like, the last page. Also, the whole "addicted to Adderall" thing really didn't add anything to the book, and merely served as another thing I had to remember than real character development. Actually, no characters were really developed, and it felt like I was being injected into the middle of a poorly-thought out idea rather than reading a book that had been developed from start to finish. #woof

Hugo says

O Aidan é um rapaz de dezasseis anos de classe alta, com pai ausente e mãe indiferente, que para lidar com os seus traumas, se refugia na toma de comprimidos e na presença consoladora do padre Greg. Para um livro com um tema como os escândalos de abusos sexuais no seio da Igreja Católica de Boston em 2002, conseguiu ser incrivelmente banal, um *young adult* com vários dos problemas habituais de livros desse género, nos quais se incluem a previsibilidade da narrativa e abundância de personagens estereotipados, com uma complexidade mínima. Ainda não vi o filme *Spotlight* que lida com o mesmo tema, mas estou curioso.

Larry H says

Wow. This is a powerful, emotionally moving, and fantastic book.

Sixteen-year-old Aidan Donovan has always existed on the fringes of things. A loner more content to snort

Adderall and read by himself, as his wealthy parents' marriage disintegrates, he's more comfortable with Elena, their housekeeper, than his parents or friends his own age. He doesn't have any patience for the dishonesty or non-genuineness of the community where he lives.

"Nobody ever said I don't know or I'm afraid, and they acted like the masks they wore were their real faces and that they could sustain themselves forever on their own self-assurance—like they really believed they didn't need anybody else. What was that John Donne poem we read in Weinstein's class, 'No Man Is An Island'? Not here. We were a goddamn social archipelago that called itself a community. Why did I feel like I was the only one who lived in a nightmare? What was worse was that I knew people did have fears."

The only place Aidan truly feels comfortable is at his church, Most Precious Blood, as Father Greg, the local priest, is the only person who seems to care about or listen to him. As he starts making friends with a trio of his classmates—Josie, the charismatic girl on whom he's had a crush for some time; Sophie, the wild but friendly girl with a reputation; and Mark, the swim team captain with issues of his own which mirror Aidan's in more ways than he knows—Aidan starts to feel a little more comfortable in his own skin.

As Aidan balances the comfort of his new friends with his discomfort about his home life, he starts to realize that Father Greg's affections are not just directed at him alone, and while he mourns the feeling that he is no longer special, he also grapples with the reality of what the priest has done. What does that make him? Would telling people, admitting what has happened, make those in his community blame and think less of him, as the priests have led him to believe? Can he just pretend that nothing happened?

Aidan's community—and the nation—begin confronting the revelations about sexual abuse by priests, and people want to know if Aidan was affected, what he knew, but he'd rather ignore the whole thing, despite the toll it takes on his own psyche and those around him. Only as he realizes the true consequences, and what could lie ahead for him depending on the path he chooses, does he realize that there are other people who care about and love him.

"I thought about how people like Old Donovan and Father Greg and teachers and even Mother and Elena tried to give me advice about who I was supposed to be and what kind of person I was supposed to become, but looking at Josie, I wondered if it didn't all come down to something simpler: Are you the kind of person who is there for people when they need you, or not? Isn't it in those moments when you have to work harder than you thought you could to reach out to another person, and you do, that you finally find the you who's been hiding behind the mask all that time? Is it there, finally truly naked, and reaching for one another, that we create the chance to hold one another again? And what about the chance to love again? Do we get to create that possibility too?"

This was a phenomenal book. Its subject matter was difficult, but Brendan Kiely's use of language and his storytelling ability captivated me completely. I loved Aidan's character and felt so much pain and hope for him. I could definitely identify with some of his thoughts and fears and hopes, as I remember feeling similarly as a teenager. I devoured this book, reading nearly the entire thing in one day. It was just such a beautiful, powerful, painful yet hopeful story, and I hope this gets the attention—and the readership—it so truly deserves.

Mientras Leo says

Terrible, magnífico y con mucha clase sobre un tema muy controvertido
Reseña completa aquí

