



## Masterminds

*Gordon Korman*

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Gordon Korman

**Masterminds** Gordon Korman

**The first book in the action-packed trilogy from *New York Times* bestselling author Gordon Korman is perfect for fans of *Stranger Things* and James Patterson.**

Eli Frieden has never left Serenity, New Mexico...why would he ever want to? Then one day, he bikes to the edge of the city limits and something so crazy and unexpected happens, it changes everything.

Eli convinces his friends to help him investigate further, and soon it becomes clear that nothing is as it seems in Serenity. The clues mount to reveal a shocking discovery, connecting their ideal crime-free community to some of the greatest criminal masterminds ever known.

The kids realize they can trust no one—least of all their own parents.

## Masterminds Details

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Author : Gordon Korman

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## From Reader Review Masterminds for online ebook

### **Yasmeena says**

It's so good as always

UPDATE: my friend told me she read it and she loved it (mission accomplished)

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### **Ms.Patterson says**

YAY! It's conspiracy fiction for kids and sooooo much fun. I don't want to say too much but I giggled out loud in glee when I got to the key aspect of the conspiracy. Kids are going to love this. I'm ready for the sequel right now!

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### **Sheila Beaumont says**

This is a totally riveting page-turner of a conspiracy thriller for kids, in which several young teens living in an isolated, seemingly idyllic community find out that they have a shocking link to some notorious criminal masterminds. I was halfway through this book when I decided I must get hold of the two sequels immediately.

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### **Michele Knott says**

Loved this book. I would have loved this as a kid, and I loved it as an adult.

Mystery, suspense, adventure, hi-jinks, twists and turns. Korman has written a book with a Dan Brown-feel to it. It's smart and thoroughly enjoyable. Do you need to suspend belief? A bit but the fun of the book outweighs the disbelief.

This goes on my summer recommendation list for students for sure!

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### **William says**

Ever lived in a idyllic community, these kids have. Only, the community is not so perfect? This book is an action packed mystery book. This is a very good book that has you anxious about what is going to happen next on every page.

This book takes place in an idyllic community, meaning peaceful and happy, called Serenity. This is a very small town with a population barely over a hundred. Everybody that lives there have a swimming pool and a basketball hoop. All the adults have a job and nobody is homeless. Perfect place to live in right? Wrong.

When one of the kids, Randy, leave unexpectedly the whole town, especially the kids are sad. Then one day Eli and Tori find a note from Randy saying that some of the kids are special and that something screwy is going on in the town. When Tori and Eli told a boy named Malik and he gives them some information about the cargo trucks sending out the Traffic Cones from The Serenity Plastic Works, the biggest building in Serenity. Malik says that the cargo trucks are the same three trucks, with the same cones in them, and that they don't even go anywhere. This leads all three kids to believe that the Plastic Works don't make any plastic at all and is just a big cover up for something much bigger. They make a big plan and they meet up at night by the plastic works and Malik's friend, Hector, follows him there and he gets dragged into this whole situation. Eli takes his tablet and they find out that they are tampering with the internet and only the Plastic Works has real internet. There they create a plan to break into the Plastic works while avoiding the Surety (the security guards for the plastic works). When the four kids break into the plastics works they find out that they are being watched very carefully and they are part of a secret project called project Osiris. Project Osiris is a project that makes exact clones of criminal masterminds in real life to see if they are born evil or their surroundings affect their thoughts. This is why the peaceful town of Serenity was created. Project Osiris was shut down by the government but the head scientists went on with the project making a city in the middle of nowhere that nobody know of. This is where the kids learn that their parents aren't really their parents and that all the adults have been lying to them their whole lives. They decided to try to escape from the town so that they could live there lives. Tori tells her best friend, Amber about it and she agrees to go too. They make a plan to escape from the town and they leave on something called Serenity day. They succeed and find some train tracks and hop onto a freight train headed to Colorado to find Randy. In Colorado they go to the private school and find Randy at the private school. This is where the story ends then continues onto a new book. The conflict is person vs person, because in the book five of the children are rebelling against the adults who the children found out was their enemy. The theme of the book is that nothing is perfect, because in the book the supposed perfect town of Serenity was nothing of what it seemed to be. It was the exact opposite and turned out to be sort of a prison for the cloned children.

The setting adds to the conflict because Serenity is supposed to be a peaceful place where the moral codes are about honesty and integrity. This adds to the conflict because it make the kids even more enraged that Serenity is all about Honesty and the adults have been lying to them the whole time. The 1st person point of view affects the story because every chapter is a different character being the narrator. This is important in the story because it helps you understand the character more and their thoughts rather than a narrator just telling the story.

I was surprised when the kids broke into the Plastic Works and found out about Project Osiris, because I had no idea that Serenity was a fabricated town. This caught me with a major twist and it added more interest to the story. I was angry about how the adults have been lying to the kids their whole lives even though they have taught kids and honor honesty. This angers me because it is hypocritical and I felt sympathetic with how the kids in the story were feeling.

I rate this book four stars, because it was a great book but I did not like how it ended in a cliffhanger that continues onto another book. Otherwise the book is great and would be rated five stars. I would recommend this book to people who enjoy mystery and action books. Remember, even if something seems perfect, it never is!

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### **Leigh Anne says**

This book is classic Gordon Korman! It is an adventure story with a plot twist you would never imagine. If

you have not read this yet, I highly encourage you to move it up on your list. Brilliant...just brilliant!

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### **Barb Middleton says**

This is one of those books that most people liked and I couldn't remember the title two days after I had read it. When that happens I sort of wonder if I was having a bad-book-reading day or jet-lag brain. I had been on a plane traveling for 20 hours so maybe the neurons were short-circuiting? Whatever the reason I found it hard to get into the beginning with all the multiple points of view, was reminded of Haddix's "Running Out of Time," in the middle and figured out quite a bit of the plot, and then was plain ole pissed at the cliffhanger ending. I'm not a fan of cliffhangers except if there is some sort of resolution. This end left me with more questions than answers. I wanted to take a bite out of the back cover and spit it out like a Doberman Pinscher. As you can see, that is NOT a healthy reaction when done reading a book.

Eli Frieden lives in the town of Serenity where there is no dishonesty and everyone is kind. The thirty kids that live there have everything they want materialistically and socially, but not everyone is emotionally healthy or content. Malik thinks the town is too happy. Amber tries too hard to be perfect. Hector gets into trouble following Malik. Eli wants to explore with his friend Randy. When Randy takes Eli to see a sports car, he falls mysteriously ill ending up in the hospital. When he wakes up, Randy has moved away leaving a cryptic message as Eli uncovers the mysteries of Serenity with his friends.

The beginning character development has many different points of view. I thought this sacrificed depth keeping me from identifying or caring about any of the characters. Eli seems to be the main one I was supposed to get hooked with but he was sort of boring and his internal thoughts too few and far between. Normally, I like Gordon Korman's character development. I think it is a strength of his, but this crew was too forgettable for me.

The plot had some twists, some conveniences, and some unbelievable parts. The start was slow as all the characters are introduced but then the action picks up and goes gung-ho. There is an adult that helps the kids, but it is unclear how much she knows about what is going on in Serenity. She added an interesting element to the plot that isn't resolved in the end. The main twist is a great premise and once that was revealed toward the story's end, I was really interested. I think the sequel will be much more engaging because it will address the origins of why the kids in Serenity are "special." At least that seems to be the direction the plot will go.

Gordon Korman is coming to our school next week. I am going to quick read, "Swindle," so I can gush about a book. The students love that one and "Gifted." This one fell short for me, but I am interested in the sequel. Although if it is written with a cliffhanger ending... well, just picture me chomping on the book.

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### **Rick Riordan says**

As usual, Gordon Korman delivers a fast-paced, well-crafted adventure full of creative twists and surprises. Eli lives in Serenity, New Mexico, which is so perfect it seems too good to be true. Everybody has a nice house. The schools are great. There is zero crime and zero unemployment. Eli has never left his hometown, but one day he discovers something that shakes his world. Serenity is not what it seems. He and his friends can't trust anyone – not their neighbors, definitely not their parents. This perfect little world hides a dark secret linked to some of the world's most infamous criminal masterminds. Hooked yet? You should be! This

is a perfect summer read for mystery and adventure lovers.

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### **Lindsey says**

So, Masterminds by Gordon Korman, an introduction to dystopia for 10-13 year olds, seems like a good idea, or not. Keep reading for the big, angry, but still important rant about a huge issue in this book, but first, a quick description. The kids in this book live in a secluded, idyllic community called Serenity in New Mexico. Every one is honest, trustworthy, law abiding and loyal. The kids study meditation and do contentment projects. And then a group of kids start to figure out that things aren't quite what they seem and their research leads them to a dark revelation. And, I mean really dark, as an adult pondering these kids' realities, I was disturbed to think about what that knowledge would do to a kid that age. I asked my almost 11 year old what he thought of it and he said he liked it, but that it was also creepy and he didn't understand it all. I'm kind of glad it didn't all really sink in for him. I know I'm being vague, but I don't want to spoil the big reveal of the book. This was the first in a new series, and while, as an adult, I did find this concept fascinating and I do want to know what happens to these kids, I cannot condone continuing with the series due to the impending rant. Ready for the rant? My #1 issue with this book...its handling of a girl and her weight. Amber is a type A personality, always doing exactly what is expected of her and living rigidly by the rules. She makes a to-do list each day of what she needs to accomplish and every day it includes at least an hour of ballet. This girl is clearly very driven. Her personality characterization is very complete, without adding her attitude toward her weight to demonstrate it. This girl is 13 years old, and she is not characterized as being petite for her size, so I have to assume she is an average height 13 year old. She on multiple occasions references being 2 pounds from her goal weight, which is irritating in itself, as no healthy and active 13 year old should be worrying about losing 2 pounds. But then, when it is revealed that she weighs 101.5 pounds and she wants to get down to 99 pounds, I about hit the roof!! I know a slim and athletic, very healthy, 13 year old girl who weighs 105 pounds. When you have that frame of reference it demonstrates even more how out of line those weight details are. I am completely flabbergasted as to why Korman felt the need to include this in his story. It is so irresponsible and I do not want a single tween girl to read this book for fear she will get ideas about her weight. Shame on you, Mr. Korman! Please think twice before you ever consider using a girl's weight for character development again!

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### **Matthew Largo says**

Masterminds was a good book overall. It had action/adventure and mystery to the book, which I really like. The story takes place in a peaceful town in New Mexico called Serenity. There is no criminal activity in Serenity-it is always peaceful. One day Eli and his friend Randy go out bike riding past the Serenity border-line and Eli gets pretty sick, but Randy doesn't. This leads to Randy's departure, him leaving Serenity. Randy leaves a note behind saying something screwy was happening in Serenity and there were "special kids." This leads to Eli, Tori, Malik, Hector, and Amber to figure out where Randy was departed to and what was screwy.

Eli is doing his Serenity day project on the Boston Tea Party late at night during a thunderstorm. He reads on an article that the British people and Americans sit down, have tea, and discuss matters. Lightning strikes around his house, and when he looks back down on his iPad, he sees a whole new article saying that the Americans dressed as Mohawk Indians and dumped tea into the ocean, which leads him to thinking that they are not being told everything.

When Eli, Tori, and Hector break into the Plastic Works Factory, they find that they are not human, but clones of evil mastermind geniuses. They then find out that their parents are not their parents and there are some not "special kids" in town. They soon try and escape and get horribly sick again, which leads them to believe there is a chip inside them that sends a wireless signal whenever they get past the border of Serenity to make them sick. Then they think of an escape plan.

I would recommend this book to people who like action/adventure and mystery.

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### **Anthony Ryan says**

I think that the book was outstanding it was intriguing and unpredictable. Gordon Korman was very good at explaining what was happening where it was taking place and how it affected everyone else in the story. The balance of action and suspense was also incredible. This book was an easy 5 stars for me.

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### **Jillian Neyhart says**

I really liked this book that posed an interesting question and experiment. I don't want to spoil the plot, so I'll just say that it made me curious to find out what is going to happen to these kids. I can't wait for book 2!

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### **Ms. Yingling says**

So, so good! Edelweiss has a digital ARC. review to come, but thought it was brilliant! Korman rocks!

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### **Gayatri says**

That was rly good. Cant wait 2 read the next one

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### **Violet says**

This is hands down probably my favorite novel of all time. The book is written so well, and THE CHARACTERS! I could go on and on about these characters as if I know them in real life. My favorites though have to be:

Tori (I could relate to her so much)

Hector (How could you not love this sweet little cinnamon roll?)

and Amber (I don't know why, but I really like her scary, crazy, impulsive side)

If you are a fan of Gordon Korman, The Truman Show, The Giver, Divergent, or The Maze Runner, then you'll love this book.

THINGS THAT GAVE ME FEELS (Yeah...that's gonna be a thing now):

- ELI'S DEVASTATION WHEN RANDY MOVES AWAY
- TORI COMFORTING ELI AT THE GOING AWAY PARTY
- AMBER AND MALIK'S ARGUING
- HEEECCCCCTOOOORRRRR (FROM THE VALUABLE TO THE DEATH SCENE)
- TORI WANTING TO HUG ELI, BUT STAYING BACK
- ELI AND TORI FINDING RANDY'S LETTER
- ELI AND MRS. DELANEY'S FRIENDSHIP
- AMBER CONFIRMING THAT TORI IS BREWING A CRUSH ON ELI
- THE KIDS LEARNING ABOUT PROJECT OSIRIS
- MALIK CRYING WHEN HE THOUGHT HECTOR DIED
- AMBER PUTTING A HAND ON HIS SHOULDER WHEN HE WAS CRYING
- RANDY SMIRKING AND SAYING, "Hey, I see you've found my note."

OKAY, OKAY I'll address the issue some people have been having with this book:

Amber being obsessed with her weight

I think maybe the reason I don't have a **HUGE** problem with this is because she wants to lose weight, but she's going about it in the right way. I would have a really big problem with it if she was starving herself to lose weight, but she isn't. She's eating right and exercising.

So, uh, yeah...

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