



Your Own Worst Enemy

Gordon Jack

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Three candidates, three platforms, and a whirlwind of social media, gaffes, and protests makes for a ridiculous and hilarious political circus in Gordon Jack's second highly satirical novel. Perfect for fans of Andrew Smith and Frank Portman.

They say that with great power comes great responsibility. Unless you're student body president at Lincoln High School. Then you get all the responsibility but none of the power. And the three candidates running for president know all about that.

Stacey Wynn is the front-runner, but she didn't count on Julia Romero entering this race. Julia is challenging Stacey for the title while also putting the moves on Stacey's campaign adviser and only friend, Brian. And then there is Tony Guo, the way outsider. Tony is usually oblivious to the school's political campaigning, as he's oblivious to anything that isn't about getting high and drinking all the Space Cow chocolate milk he can stomach. But when his favorite beverage is banned at school, a freshman political "mastermind" convinces Tony to become the voice of the little guy. But what kind of voice is that, really?

If this were an ordinary high school election, the winner would be whichever candidate was the most popular. But this year, each candidate may have to sink to a new low to win an election that could change the course of...very little.

Your Own Worst Enemy Details

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From Reader Review Your Own Worst Enemy for online ebook

April says

Another winner from Gordon Jack, high school librarian by day, master novelist by night!

The characters in this book are so engaging and endearing, even when they're making bad choices. They're in competition with each other, but you can't help rooting for them all. The author's perceptiveness about human nature, and teenager nature in particular, makes the story realistic and touching, even in the madcap moments. I laughed out loud and didn't want it to end.

Writer another one, Gordon Jack! I'm waiting!

Mary Taugher says

At a time when we all need a respite from ugly national politics along comes *Your Own Worst Enemy*, a hilarious satire about a high school election. I adored this book and could not put it down. Gordon Jack is one of the funniest and talented YA writers out there.

The characters vying for class president include Stacey, the frontrunner and traditionalist; Julia, the newcomer with a secret who throws Stacey off what was assumed to be a clear path to victory; and Tony, a stoner who just wants chocolate milk in the cafeteria. The hijinks start right away with a vandalized campaign banner, and as in real life we read that this might be a false flag ploy by the candidate whose banner was defaced. The chapters are told in alternating points of view, which I found fascinating as we got multiple perspectives on the same event. I also appreciated the structure of this book; its sections were labeled with titles like Endorsements, Opposition Research and Attack Ads, giving us a behind-the-scene look at what it takes to run a political campaign in high school — and it's not just cupcakes and banners.

One of the most endearing characters was Brian, Stacey's closest friends and her campaign manager. Brian is torn between his long friendship with Stacey and his budding romance with Julia, and his situation only gets more fraught when his younger brother, an avid Tony supporter, stoops to espionage. Aside from dirty politics, the books deals with important issues such as racial and sexual identity as well as socioeconomic differences and white privilege in what seems to be a fairly affluent public high school. The outcome of the election is a mystery until the very end, and I won't spoil it. But I have to say that thanks to many laugh-out-loud moments and clever plot twists, *Your Own Worst Enemy* leaves you feeling lightened and hopeful. If teenagers can find a way to navigate a bitter election and come out stronger, more engaged and more tolerant than before its start, then maybe there's hope for some sort of renewed civil discourse in these divisive times.

Robie says

I loved Gordon Jack's *Boomerang Effect* and am thrilled to report that *Your Own Worst Enemy* shares the uniquely hilarious and honest take that made the first book stand out from other YA novels. He goes deeper in *Your Own Worst Enemy* making it an even more satisfying read. Stacey, Julia and Tony are delicious characters whose raw, funny and painful moments kept me turning pages, ignoring the clock well into the

evening. Jack's clever parallels to the last election are also terrific. The book's honesty and creative genius touched me and also had me laughing and smiling ear to ear. Five stars! Now the long wait until book three. Ugh.

Stacy Feters says

**"Here's some change I can believe in.
Make America baked again."**

I devoured this book in less than a day. I could not put this down. It was clever and witty that I found myself laughing so hard that tears formed. But it also contained some serious subjects that made you look at the real world and what we're currently dealing with. This was still a really fun read.

It makes you reminisce about the clown show we had to deal with with the last election. This was a lot more enjoyable since this was fictitious. The banter between the opponents was hilarious and a tad bit out there. But they were all enjoyable in their own way.

Tony has to be my favorite character. I mean, come on! I'll never look at the bear-shaped honey bottle the same way ever again.

Gordon Jack is a genius. To take something that is still a tough issue to discuss and brings this creative pieces into our lives is beyond astronomical. And to perfectly get Stacey's attitude and personality onto paper was amazing. We are quite the special species and this book will fill you in more.

With more boner jokes than you ever could imagine and a deep heartfelt look at unity, this book is definitely a must read. Maybe people will learn how to be beautiful human beings towards one another.

Annie says

A hilariously satirical novel about a high school election. You can read my full review and enter a giveaway for a copy of the book [here](#)!

Diversity Rep: mixed-race main character; Asian-American main character; POC and LGBTQ+ side characters

Warnings: microaggressions; some comments that are racist/fatphobic; vandalism of a poster with an anti-immigrant slur; teenage drinking & drug use (Please let me know if I missed any!)

Thank you to Fantastic Flying Book Club for including me on the blog tour and for providing me with a review copy! This did not affect my opinion of the book in any way.

Sheila Grau says

I loved Your Own Worst Enemy. I came for the 2016 election spoof, but this book was so much more than

that. It was genuinely funny, but also insightful and honest. The author didn't take the easy route of creating caricatures to make fun of, or stoop to school election clichés.

Jack has created three very real characters vying for the position of student body president. Stacey represents the old guard – work ethic and tradition. Julia offers a voice to the previously overlooked members of the student body, questioning those very traditions. And then there's Tony. Tony just wants the cafeteria to bring back his chocolate milk.

The story is fast-paced, alternating between these different points-of-view as we learn about what motivates these characters and what's at stake for them. I flew through the book, thanks to Jack's hilarious narration and the hints of mystery surrounding the candidates.

Susan Kennedy says

I didn't hate it, but I didn't love it. It probably wasn't the best time for me to be reading this book. Politics has gotten under my skin and I all the whining is really annoying. So, more of that in a book was just additional, annoying whining.

However, I did love the diversity in the book and I did love a lot of the characters. Julia was probably my favorite character. Coming from Canada after making a huge mistake, she does come and really start over. I love that she accepts her faults and faces up to them. She is a great character.

Stacey was a bit of a good girl and overachiever, but she wasn't a bad character either. I loved that she befriended Brian when he was an overweight freshman. She is a bit pushy, but overall you just see she isn't a bad person. She has her faults, but she is another strong woman character.

Then there is Brian; he is an amazing character that I would have loved to have befriended. He is kind and loyal; he stand by his best friend Stacey through everything. He falls for Julia and tries to keep that relationship going without hurting his best friend. He is just an all around great guy with a twit for a younger brother.

Brian's younger brother is the tool of the book. Kyle is manipulative and seems to just want to make life for his older brother terrible. He is in therapy, which I'm not sure is working at all. He seems to manipulate the therapist too.

Then there is Tony, he is the third person running for ABS President along with Stacey and Julia. Tony is just an idiot. He is always high and gets manipulated by everyone so easily. I feel sorry for him because of his home life and it makes you understand why he is the way he is. It is just a sad situation with him.

This is mostly about the campaign going on for President. You see what each of their platforms are and how they are all playing the game during the running. You also see friendships bloom and the relationship between Brian and Julia grow. There are quite a few underlying stories going on during all of this and it definitely keeps you reading. I was a bit annoyed by some of the stabs taken at our current regime. I just think I'm annoyed at elections and politics as a whole. Everyone is really whiny and it really grates on my nerves that everyone is trying to bring everyone else down. I think I've just had enough, so I'm glad I'm finished with this one. With good character development, well written and easy to read, it was just okay for me.

Lyn says

We all need a good laugh right now, and thank goodness someone's delivering. Gordon Jack's newest book brings the hilarious and ridiculous sides of politics to light in a novel about high school elections. If you loved the movie Election, this book will be 100% your cup of tea.

What Jack so brilliantly mocks is a system that brings out the worst in us. Human nature, whether you're 17 or 77, finds all kinds of new ways to scheme and lie and cheat. Stacey, Tony, and Julia are three candidates for student body president who forget their better angels while vying for the highest office in the land. Instead of their bad behavior leaving you worried about the fate of the free world, you're more likely to crack up and release some cathartic sighs in the realization human nature has always had this problem. We're not exactly breaking new ground with today's headlines, much as it might seem that way. The characters show us every kind of motivation for declaring candidacy--self-righteous altruism, manipulative curiosity, vaulting ambition, and a desperate need for chocolate milk.

Jack also takes on the fraught politics of multicultural school communities, exploring aspects of identity that so readily get politicized in the wrong kinds of ways--not because identity and political action are problematic, but because human nature loves to box people in, permanently ("colonize," in Julia's words). Jack deftly tackles white privilege and complex racial and ethnic dynamics in a school where power is shifting every second. This is a place where we seriously need a laugh someday, partially because racial politics in this country are so bad, and partially because *The Young People Will Win*, as David Hogg likes to say. They'll win with their fresh perspective, their humor, and their open-mindedness. They think outside the boxes adults would keep them in. And they are breaking new ground with their activism. But they are fortunately the stuff of our nonfiction, today, and too good to skewer. What we need to mock is our worst devils and how elections seem to find all those gremlins, stat.

I can't think of a more perfect book to arrive in time for our insane midterms. Read it, America. Because you seriously need to chill.

Namera [The Literary Invertebrate] says

I'm not sure if a DNF is actually the appropriate shelf, because I did read the ending.

It's just that I skipped about 30 chapters to get there. It wasn't a bad book, but I got bored - as my friends can attest, I get bored very easily, and I usually require at least some romance to keep me interested.

[Blog] - [Bookstagram]

Samantha (WLABB) says

This was what I was hoping it would be. Jack showed the highs and the lows of the political process, putting

a hilarious spin on it all, while also including ideas of friendship, family, identity, and romance.

I had featured this book as one of my Can't-Wait Wednesday picks. I had been expecting something along the lines of the movie Election, where the whole political process was depicted in a satirical way, and Gordon Jack definitely delivered that in Your Own Worst Enemy.

What seemed like a sure thing for Stacey turned into a cutthroat political race, which included false accusations, mud slinging, and even maligning by the media. Both Tony and Julia came out of nowhere to challenge Stacey, and to stop her rise to power.

I must say, I really liked all three candidates, even Tony, who was pretty ridiculous and really hilarious. Jack did a great job creating these characters, because though they were each crafted in a way to represent a specific type of political voice, they were still very human. It was their flaws, which helped me empathize with them, even when they were running off the rails a little.

It was easy to pick out all the current issues and ploys from the current state of American politics. However, because Jack was depicting all sides of just about every political hot button topic out there in an exaggerated manner, it didn't bother me. In fact, because he was showing all these things to the extreme, it showed how ridiculous we are about some things, while still shedding light on particular issues.

One thing I can tell you is that I laughed, a lot. This book was really funny, even hilarious at times, but it was also kind of deep and thought provoking, in a good way. Some truths are easier to digest when served with humor, and I found Jack's examination of the the political process and the current issues facing Americans to be quite palatable.

Overall: A hilarious and pretty honest look at American politics that left me laughing and thinking.

*ARC provided in exchange for an honest review.

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Avid Reader and Geek Girl says

FTC DISCLAIMER: I received a complimentary copy of this book from Harper Teen through Edelweiss+. Opinions expressed in this review are completely my own.

4 stars

I really enjoyed this satire of the election process. It had a great diverse list of characters, LGBT-wise and racially diverse.

We had:

Stacey-long time politician, I didn't really like Stacey until almost the end of the book, she's a perfectionist who can be a bit mean and self-centered at times, but she finally comes around to a better personality at the end of the book.

Julia- the new girl with some big secrets, including her unknown heritage, trying to atone for her sins, she

was one of my favorite characters of the book.

Tony- the Asian stoner and obvious Trump of the book, who really isn't fit for office.

Brian- the sweet guy stuck between his new love and his best friend.

Kyle- Brian's little brother, who seems like a misogynist to me, and who hates the corrupt system.

Lance- the tabloid-like reporter and creep.

But for all of them they wanted parental approval and the acceptance of their peers. It showed the large differences but the underlying commonalities of them all. Stacey and Julia had the most character development, I was happy to see Stacey realize she wanted to be like her dad not her mom, who was just evil and self-centered.

The rotating POV really worked well for this story, if it had only been told by one of the MCs you wouldn't have liked anyone probably. The characters were perfectly flawed, which I really loved.

It didn't pull me in until near the end, that and a few too many unusual words is why I rated it down a star.

Lily ?? says

The feeling, when you get sent an email approval for an ARC from Edelweiss, without having requested the book. ??

Thank you to the publisher for providing an ARC via Edelweiss in exchange for a spot on the blog tour and promotion of the book.

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Susana Herrera says

I gobbled up Jack's *Your Own Worst Enemy* in the same way I devoured *The Boomerang Effect*, in just a few sittings, forcing myself to slow down enough to savor the last few morsels of the surprise delicacies found in the form of a hilarious climax. Jack is a master at building tension with humor and wit. He expertly develops each of his diverse high school students, giving voice to characters we don't ordinarily see in dystopian novels. I found myself rooting for each candidate against my own will, which is part of the point, exactly...This YA novel is a salty satire on America's politics; Jack asks each of us why we vote the way we do: Is it race, class, resistance to a previous group in power or is it simply the right words at the right time to the right people who are actually motivated to go out there and vote? In this case, we examine the student government teens and then we must examine ourselves. What happened in 2016? Well, here's one way to look at it that will actually make you laugh. And we laugh because it is true.

Kristi Housman Confessions of a YA Reader says

RTC for blog tour.

Thank you to the publisher for giving me a copy through Edelweiss for review.

Vicky Who Reads says

4 stars

I was definitely really excited for this as I was going in, and it ended up being just as good as I expected.

I'm always a sucker for satire-novels, and one endorsed by Mindy McGinnis is sure to make it on my list. This didn't disappoint, balancing ridiculousness with truth really well.

I can't tell you how many times students in my own school have been so competitive over a class office position, and although *Your Own Worst Enemy* takes it to a whole new level, it was still wholly relatable in the way that yes--students can get this competitive.

Plus, I still found the satire part funny and a little bit silly in some of the characters and their motivations. I think Jack did a really good job of using stereotypes to emphasize something, but not overusing them and losing depth in his characters.

Yes, Stacey draws on basic overachiever white girl, but she also has other things going on at other times. And yes, Julia is the stereotypical underdog, but she also struggles with the fact that she doesn't actually know if she's Latinx (oh, the irony). And Tony is not a stereotypical Asian, but a pretty stereotypical stoner, and the fact that he's being controlled by a freshman mastermind adds to the novel.

But my favorite character would have to be Brian, who was honestly the root of a lot of the problems. He has connections with each campaign in a different way, and sorting through all of these is what I feel this book is really about. Brian has a lot to learn about friendship and love (and did I mention he's bi?) and family, and I think Jack did a really good job with the friendship and love part.

Yet, I still really wished Brian and Kyle's relationship was explored more. I think there was still a lot to go into with their relationship, and their ending together was so unsatisfying. Everything else wrapped up really well, but this was one of the most important relationships in the story in my opinion, and it just wasn't done justice (hence, the 4 stars).

I also thought some of the racial elements weren't done badly, but I also feel in some ways that what wasn't included could have been done. Yes, this is a satire, and Jack has to talk about race, since it's really critical to the political atmosphere at their high school.

But Stacey I felt like was still low-key racist at the end (in the sort of "don't discriminate against me because I'm white!!!" sort of way that isn't actually discrimination) even though she managed to make amends with

Julia.

Also, I do wish that Jack featured more of non-Latinx minorities as well, though I did think it was nice that we got to see such a wide spectrum of Latinx characters.

Overall, this was a goofy and a little bit silly and exaggerated satire read about student politics, and one I definitely enjoyed and could relate to given my own time in high school. I'd definitely recommend if you're looking for a fun novel to just take your mind off of things!

Thank you so much to The FFBC and Gordon Jack for sending me an advance reader's copy in exchange for an honest review!

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