



Any Man: A Novel

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In her blazingly original and unforgettable debut novel *Any Man*, Amber Tamblyn brings to startling life a specter of sexual violence in the shadowy form of Maude, a serial female rapist who preys on men.

In this electric and provocative debut novel, Tamblyn blends genres of poetry, prose, and elements of suspense to give shape to the shocking narratives of victims of sexual violence, mapping the destructive ways in which our society perpetuates rape culture.

A violent serial rapist is on the loose, who goes by the name Maude. She hunts for men at bars, online, at home—the place doesn't matter, neither does the man. Her victims then must live the aftermath of their assault in the form of doubt from the police, feelings of shame alienation from their friends and family and the haunting of a horrible woman who becomes the phantom on which society projects its greatest fears, fascinations and even misogyny. All the while the police are without leads and the media hound the victims, publicly dissecting the details of their attack.

What is extraordinary is how as years pass these men learn to heal, by banding together and finding a space to raise their voices. Told in alternating viewpoints signature to each voice and experience of the victim, these pages crackle with emotion, ranging from horror to breathtaking empathy.

As bold as it is timely, *Any Man* paints a searing portrait of survival and is a tribute to those who have lived through the nightmare of sexual assault.

Any Man: A Novel Details

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From Reader Review Any Man: A Novel for online ebook

Krystin Rachel (Here's The Fucking Twist) says

Blog | Bookstagram

This book is unlike anything I have ever read, and I am utterly emotionally ruined by it.

Seriously. This book has fucked me up.

I started reading this in the morning and I didn't put it down until I read the last page that evening. I was completely obsessed, completely enthralled and emotionally enamoured.

I've taken a couple of days to think about this review because I want it to be coherent and not preachy, but I'm definitely about to go on a rant of epic proportions filled with long quotes, so buckle up buttercups.

This is the story of five men, all of whom have been the victim of a serial rapist known as Maude. It is the story of how the media handles rape, how society handles rape. How we speak about it, how we shame, how we lay blame. It's about the questions we ask, how we ask them and the assumptions we make. How we try to make ourselves feel more comfortable in the presence of someone else's trauma. How the survivors grapple with their new reality, and their upended perception of themselves, their relationships and the world around them.

It's about gender equality and gender roles and gender assumptions. It's about the groups we align ourselves with, the lines in the sand we draw as tribes. The hate we have. The resentment we have. How women feel about our social history and how it doesn't matter until it happens to a man. It's about how blind we are to our shared wants and needs. And how if we just worked together we could change things.

It's also creepy with elements of suspense.

All things combined, it became a work of art that was literally intoxicating. At one point my husband said, "are you going to stop reading soon?" I look at the clock – I'd been reading for 4 hours and I didn't even realize it.

Good evening, I'm your host, Melissa Hope and thank you for joining me on BCN's number-one primetime television talk show The Melissa Hope Hour... [Guests], what do you make of these specific cases and the controversial circumstances surrounding how, in particular, they occurred?

Jennifer: Listen, no one deserves to be the victim of a sexual assault, but doesn't this bring up another issue... I mean, shouldn't people engage in some kind of behaviour so as not to put themselves in a vulnerable position?

Melissa: There are no mitigating factors when it comes to sexual assault, Jennifer. All right, Meryl Pichette, your chance to tick-tock on the Melissa Hope clock. Jennifer brings up an interesting point regarding being made to penetrate... Meryl, tell me what you're reading on social media about this SHOCKING story.

Meryl: Well, Melissa, our readers definitely have a lot to say here: the word MAUDE has

been trending on Twitter for three days straight... A lot of Americans want to know, how, like literally HOW exactly, this could've been rape. I mean, from a purely logical perspective, wouldn't a man have – and I just have to ask this, with all due respect to the victims – wouldn't a man have to get an erection in order to be made to penetrate?

Melissa: ...More like Maude to penetrate!

This is not a narrative novel in the typical sense. There are no scenes of a detective on the hunt or setting the scene of a restaurant or characters, or even really time, with descriptions. It is abstract in its prose, but its in this abstract style that you are hit with so much raw, unflinching emotion that it becomes impossible to look away and impossible to stop reading.

The book is woven together with poetry, prose, journal entries, radio shows dialogue, tweets and dating app chats and monologues and erratic thoughts. You live within the characters as they speak; you watch the news, you read the tweets, you see the texts.

This book places you on the outside of society, looking in. Taking you away from your timelines and newsfeeds, and forcing you to see how we behave as a group from a clearer, more distant perspective. How our behaviour looks from a macro perspective, instead of the micro that we are so used to seeing in our own little bubbles.

Conflicted about #MaudeToPenetrate Why was this married father of 2 drinking w/ a random woman in the first place? -Meghan McCain

I'm just going to say it: Men, enjoy a taste of your own medicine #Maudsters -Laura Marie

When it comes to violence against men, some people are actually saying what many have been thinking: Men are getting what they deserve. Inside the bizarre world of #Maudsters - Bitch Magazine

This #Maudsters shit is the scariest witch hunt of them all. -Feminist Bullshit

Can a man be raped? Some say not possible. Join the #MauderToPenetrate debate tonight on Facebook Live @ 11:30 p.m. EST -Facebook

Yes, men can get raped. There is no #MaudeToPenetrate, only rape -Teen Vogue

Yo dudes CANNOT GET RAPED. Trust. Not possible. Someone is lying #HateMaudeToPenetrate -Kanye West

Simon & Schuster acquires Sebastian White's forthcoming memoir, Revenge Rampage, for historic seven-figure deal -Publishers Weekly

Pray for the sins of the #MaudeToPenetrate men with us. -Westboro Baptist Church

Don't worry! We are working with the greatest to catch monster Maude! Disgusting! America has best most amazing experts! -President of the United States Donald J. Trump

46-year-old Michael Parker of Shelburne, Vermont, is the latest victim in a string of

unsolved violent sexual crimes by a female perpetrator -BuzzFeed

Everything you need to know about trans criminal Michael Parker, formerly Michaela Parker -Christian Daily

Trannies are mentally ill people who need psychological help, not your sympathy #MaudeToPenisRape -Gavin McInnes

There is a special place in hell for people questioning Michael Parker's honesty based on his sex assigned at birth. Very special place -Roxane Gay

Maude's all "I'm not going out tonight I'm just gonna stay home, Netflix and rape." - Whitney Cummings

This is nothing less than an outstanding, emotional journey that is both devastating and eye-opening, and a powerful teaching moment about rape culture if you are open to it.

What I think is absolutely brilliant, is that the book uses male victims in the story to create a powerful point that is two-pronged.

One. When a man is raped is gets attention. But when a woman is raped, it is expected.

Two. When a man is raped, he is ridiculed. When a woman is raped, she is doubted.

This is not a "feminist" diatribe in paperback. It is an honest, rational look at the way society has conditioned us to approach sexual assault and sexual assault victims.

Each character receives their own "part" of the book, and although there are no labels or titles to let you know who is speaking, the voices and the styles applied to each is so unique and perfectly crafted that you know exactly who is speaking each time. There are characters who are just like you and me, and then there are characters who are obviously inspired by real-life figureheads who perpetuate certain aspects of how society is currently functioning.

Like Sebastian White, a gay Libertarian opinion writer who hates feminists and liberals and goes on and on about what a unicorn he is being a gay man in the alt-right movement. Sound like anyone you know?

There's so much to loathe in this world, wouldn't you agree? Islam. Welfare leeches. Rachel Maddow. Liberals. Sean Penn! Anything with beets in it. Beet are vile. But more than any of that, as you know, I loathe feminists. It's no small miracle that all feminists in America haven't been stoned to death by now. I'm just telling you the truth. Feminists are pollution, taking a stance – against what exactly, no one in their right mind knows.

It's ironic that this character would then go on to be raped. What are feminists taking a stance against? Well, the way this character, and those before and after him, are treated after their rapes, for one.

The culture in which a raped man is questioned about having an erection at the time is a patriarchal one that feminism seeks to dismantle in order to replace it with one where a male victim of sexual assault is not asked about his boners. Where a woman gets the benefit of the doubt. Where rape kits don't sit untested for

decades. Where victims are not asked about how much they had to drink, or what they were wearing. Male or female.

There is a poignant moment in one of the scenes where men are in a bar, sitting around joking about the victims, and then a woman walks in and the men push their alcoholic drinks away and instead sip at their water.

Knowing. Scared of this random woman.

It's not something men think about very often. Or ever. What it's like to walk through a parking garage by yourself. Or to the store across the street at night. #notallmen was a popular hashtag for a while because all men didn't want to be lumped together as pigs, as rapists, as assholes and douchebags who think they can treat a woman any damn way they please.

And I get it.

I'm not religious, but my mom is Christian and she hates that when people hear she's a Christian they assume she probably doesn't like gay people, or that she's probably against immigration. Or that she's probably a little bit racist. Because that's what the loudest, most awful religious voices have conditioned outsiders to believe by way of their behaviour.

My mother is not any of those things, by the way. I know it. But because *I know her*.

I don't know all men. What I do know is that one of those most fundamental differences between men and women is that one can easily hurt or kill the other with just their bare hands. And that seems to happen a whole hell of a fucking lot.

It used to be acceptable. It used to be that you hit your wife for corporal punishment like you would a child, and every one ran a household that way. It was the assumption that men were in charge and women were to be agreeable and if they weren't, they were punished. Women couldn't even get a bank loan without a man co-signing with her.

Women have been fighting back against that kind of shit for a fucking long time. Men have joined the movement. But good men joining the fight against the status quo doesn't erase the history. And it doesn't erase the present issues. I myself was in an abusive relationship. He was really nice when I first met him.

So, I'm sorry. I know, rationally, that it's #notallmen.

But it's a lot of men. And if I don't know you and we're alone together at a cross stop or on a jogging trail, yes I'm going to have my guard up. All women are going to have their guards up. That's not a personal indictment. I'm not saying I think you'll hurt me. I'm saying I have been conditioned to be concerned for my safety around men. I'm telling you I don't know what you'll do because *I don't know you*. You'll probably do nothing. But you could grab me and hold me down. You could slap my ass while you're walking by. You could flash me.

This shit happens. All. The. Time.

What I believe makes this book so powerful is that this is not about women being raped. We as a society are slightly numb to the idea of women being the victims of sexual violence. Hell, my favourite genre to read makes a pretty good living thinking up new and exciting ways to kill women, put them in cages or chain them to walls or stuff them in freezers. It's all for the entertainment, right? God-for-fucking-bid someone says "fuck" on TV or shows a nipple! But don't forget to tune in at 9 pm for a new *SVU* episode – this week

another woman is fucking abused!

Hey, I have no real issue with this. Obviously. I do think books and shows, done right, are an extra source of light to shine onto the issues women face. I think that's important. The #metoo is one of those lights. Showing that as women, we are not alone in our experiences and we are sounding the alarm to stand together and say we're not going to take this anymore.

Funny enough, the complaint I hear the most from men is that they don't "feel safe" approaching a woman to flirt anymore.

Once again, women are saying "hey! this fucked up shit is happening to us!" and instead of men (not all men) saying back, "you're right! that is fucked up! I'm sorry you have to deal with that!" Men are whining about how this affects their ability to hit on women.

Omg, let me hit something!

This book is so fucking important. IT'S SO IMPORTANT.

It's not only a work of art, it's a work of societal importance. And it's also pretty creepy.

This is my favourite time of year. When everything begins to die without choice. When the great mother begins her grand death-sentencing. But I am the greatest mother of all. And while I'm not a murderess, I do love a good ending to a man's mind, especially if I've written it. It's not revenge. It's not payback. Nothing was done to me. It's just something I like to do now and again.

Maude is a faceless void. You literally know nothing about her, except that she could be any woman who walks into a bar. Any woman you pass on the street. Any woman you ride in an elevator with.

Just like for women our "Maude" could be any man who walks into a bar. Any man we pass on the street. Any man we ride in an elevator with.

What could be better about her?

Why are her arms shaped like that?

Do her arms remind you of your mother?

Do your mother's arms remind you of a daughter?

What do you want to do to her?

If you could do anything you wanted to, what would you do?

Play with her? Penalize her?

Hit her? Rape?

Beat her? Cry on her? Cum on her?

Take her body away from her? Cut off her hair? Give her to your father? Give her to the government? Close her legs? Close her lungs? Burn her in public? Take away her children? Take away her abortion? Give her a miscarriage? Give her life? Would you cut off her clitoris? Cut off the parts of her face you don't like? Cut out her carbohydrates? Inject her with something? Explain something to her? Show her how something is done? Teach her? Fuck her? Make her white instead of brown? Does crying make you uncomfortable? Does talking make you uncomfortable? Does looking into eyes make you uncomfortable? Would you live with her? Share a house with her? Give her your last name? Treat her with respect? Cheat on her? Cheat on her with someone younger? Someone's daughter? Lie to her? Curse at her? Call her a good girl? Call her monster? Can you trust her? What if you can't trust her? How will you feel if you can't trust her? How will you behave if you can't trust her? What does it say about you that she can't be trusted? Is she beautiful? Can you have her? What if you can't have her? How will you behave if you can't have her? What does it say about you that she can't be had? Will you make her pay? Will you let it slide? What if she's ugly but you need to fuck? What if she smells but you need to fuck? What if she's gay but you need to fuck? What if she changes her mind but you need to fuck? What if she's a child but you need to fuck? What if she's your child but you need to fuck? What if she's in pain but you need to fuck? What if you're married but you need to fuck? What if she lets people die? What if she likes war? What if she ungrateful and unkind about it? What if she asked for it? What if she runs for president?

How would you feel if she did the same things to you?

< Maude has left the chat. >

< Maude is offline. >

This is, far and away, the only book I have read in literally a decade that has made me this emotional and awe-inspired.

Next time someone asks me my favourite book of all time, I'll have a hard time not saying this one.

5 stars x infinity.

Trevor says

A haunting & riveting read. ANY MAN is an intense look at the aftermath of male rape.

This is a short read, more so bordering on novella level, & the writing style is quite eccentric. Poetry, prose & social media commentary (mostly Twitter & OkCupid) combine to tell the story of 5 survivors. It kind of annoyed me that there were no chapters marked with who's POV it was, but each character is so unique that it's easy to distinguish their voices. I actually wasn't sure if I would be finishing the book because it took some time to get used to the style, but am glad I didn't give up on it. It's clear this book has an agenda, especially when you see the hashtags & Nancy Grace resemblance. Media & rape culture at its finest. Cleverly written, ANY MAN will make you think, will make you feel, & will perhaps make those who are contributing to the shameful tactics of victim blaming ("But men can't get raped!" & other nonsense) see life through another's lenses.

I also want to note I really respect Tamblyn's decision for Maude's intention- it's not as simple as you may think. The fact that she didn't choose the easy way out, or provide a simplistic one-dimensional answer to make things easier to swallow makes this debut even more harsh & raw. She doesn't provide a way for readers to feel empathy for the perp (as they very well shouldn't, but it happens), thus solely focusing on the survivors. Interestingly enough, Tamblyn chooses to not specifically seek out any "type" of man. ANY MAN is filled with society's clichés, yet doesn't rely on those clichés to set the storyline forward. Although the attacks are a huge part of the story, we begin to see the MCs start the beginning stages of healing. Told in short chapters, I flew through ANY MAN in a couple of sittings. I know this will leave a lasting impact on me & I am looking forward to Tamblyn's next work. Also, apparently this is classified as thriller? It is very pseudo-thriller in the sense that the hunt for Maude is on & leaves things with no resolution, but that's the extent of it. I haven't had the chance to listen to the audiobook version, but I imagine that it is even more moving to hear the narratives come to life, so please pick that one up if you can. A necessary & highly recommended read.

**"I am in a body. It is not the one
I came here with, but it is the one
I'll leave here in.
I will take care of it. It belongs to me now.
My pain, I will take care of it. It belongs to me now.
My heart, I will take care of it. It belongs to me now.
My story, I will take care of it. It belongs to me now."**

Andrea says

Wow—talk about intense! The audiobook version of this is unbelievably well put together. I'm still reeling from getting to the end. It's short but it packs a hell of a punch.

Samantha Irby says

FUCKED ME RIGHT UP WOW

Melissa Rochelle says

I struggled through the first few pages, but once Tamblyn introduces Maude's second victim I couldn't put the book down. I read it in just a few hours and was entranced. It was interesting how she flipped the narrative -- made the victims men, the rapist a woman. And instead of following Maude and her actions, we follow the victims and their reactions.

Jourdain Searles says

It lacked insight. It felt... false. Snapshots, monologues, obvious social commentary and no real story. And it obscures the rapist. It turns the rapist into an almost cosmic figure. A ghost. To juxtapose the over-the-top

nature of this rapist with realistic stories of trauma and survival... well, it doesn't quite work. The book felt more like a social media commentary and pop culture than a novel. Every character felt like a symbol. No one felt real, no matter how much they monologued. We rarely experience full conversations. Women as a whole feel obscured. Men feel like mouthpieces. The pacing is all over the place. The time jumps are jarring. And in the end, the killer just ends up being a mouthpiece for a very stereotypical approximation of female anger.

Blake says

This is the best book I'll never read again. It took all the feelings of guilt and shame of being a survivor of sexual assault into words that I hadn't been able to find myself. It was insanely triggering. I broke down numerous times. But that's ok, because the journey I went on was like a cleansing fire. I suffered and so did these characters, and Tamblyn shows the very difficult task of trying to move past the stereotype of being a man who was raped. I can't thank the author enough of this amazing, powerful, and important book.

Sara says

When I was in my twenties I was attacked, assaulted, groped.

I don't know what word to really use for it.

I was on a bus that was full of people. The subway was broken down and I had to stand. I was facing the windows and leaning over some old woman who wasn't making eye contact because you don't do that on NYC public transportation if you can help it. I didn't see his face. At first I just assumed it was because there were so many people. The trains and the buses get super crowded, especially in summer. I could feel him against my back and my ass. When he started moving against me, grinding (there I said it) I told myself it was just the bus swaying back and forth. He wasn't doing it on purpose. Nothing was happening. What every fucking fiber of my being was telling me was happening was definitely NOT happening. I took a step forward. He took a step forward and then I felt, or maybe I just thought I felt, his hand on my leg. It was very hot and I was sweating and I was awash with these terrible feelings of fear and guilt. All the things I swore I'd never feel if something like this happened to me crashed in on me all at once.

I shouldn't make a scene, I was blowing it out of proportion, this wasn't a big deal, he wasn't hurting me, I'd be able to get off the bus soon, it was my fault, I shouldn't have worn a dress to work that day, what would I even tell a cop?

I don't even have the pleasure of telling you that I got him in the end. I didn't elbow him in the crotch or slam my foot down on his or even make blistering eye contact with him as he got off the bus. I never even saw his face. The bus stopped and he disappeared into the crowd and I wouldn't have been able to pick him out of a line up even if I had found a cop.

That was almost twenty years ago. You can't shut me up about the shit I got up to in college but I've only just started telling that story. I think I've been ashamed for a long time that I didn't do anything to stop him. Like where was my self respect? Or that "I'm gonna mess you up if you even think about giving me any grief" attitude everyone I've ever known will tell you I wear all over me like a goddamn badge of honor? Where was that? Logically I know how stupid that is. Logically I know that it doesn't matter what I was wearing or doing or not doing. I could have been naked on that bus and he still would have had no right to do what he

did. I had every right to scream my head off, punch him in the face, call the cops and have him arrested.

But I didn't.

Just like I didn't do anything about the homeless guy who jacked off next to me on the subway that time or the hundreds of men over the years who've called me a slut or asked me to "give me a piece of that ass" from a passing car or told me to smile "cause you're so pretty" or whistled or blown sloppy kisses or grabbed at me in a bar because "whoah sorry I almost tripped ha ha ha" or followed me down a dark street when I was careless enough to walk home in the early evening through a bad part of town with my roommate.

Because I live in a world that's taught me from the cradle that my body is not my own. It is the property of a society that sees my breasts and my pussy before it sees me, Sara, the human being with a mind and a soul and a heartbeat that's just as strong and vital and important as that fucking asshole on that bus and all the assholes before and after. I live in a world that has told me and my sisters for generation upon generation that we are lesser. We must submit. We must endure. We must acquiesce. We must lie back and think of mother fucking England. We must be sexy. But not too sexy. We must be mothers, that's what we were built for! But we musn't let ourselves go. We must watch our carb intake and never miss an episode of American's Next Top Model and follow all of Cosmo's beauty tips. But no guy likes a girl who doesn't want to eat a quarter pounder! We must be patient and kind and understanding and supportive. But we can't expect guys to read our minds or understand our feelings because they're so different from ours! We must control ourselves and what we wear and what we say and how much we drink and where we go at night. We can't expect men to control themselves. Its different for them. They're wired differently, built differently, they can't help it, its instinct.

Its our fault.

That's what this book made me think about. That's what this book made me want to talk about. It made all the anger and guilt and bullshit kind of rise up and turn into a sort of righteous feeling of pride. I know that doesn't make much sense. I mean this is a book about a woman who is a monster. It's called Any Man because it doesn't matter what kind of man it is, every now and then she chooses one. It could be a boy, an old man, a gay man or a straight one. She chooses one and she rapes him. She takes away the thing that defines him as a man. And then she vanishes.

This book is about those men left behind who struggle, and die over and over and over again, and move on or don't, and become inspiring leaders or hopeless, wasted husks of who they once were. They become victims of the vicious, catty, fucking evil social media twenty four hour "news" cycle zeitgeist. They're turned into the pet causes of celebrities and the punchlines of viral twitter jokes. They're vilified and adored and questioned and disbelieved and held up as role models.

And something about these crimes that have been present in our world since we climbed up out of the primordial ooze being put into this context, putting them on men, made them real for me. They were unique instances of horror and violation that felt more believable because they happened to men. And yes, in a way that's horrible. My own experience became more valid to me because I looked at it happening to people who aren't usually the victims, who to my mind shouldn't be the victims, and felt all the horror and anger and lust for justice.

I'm not smart enough by half to start giving some intellectual social commentary on this book. I can't talk about the feminist mystique or empowerment or use any of the buzz words. I can't even really talk about what I think Amber Tamblyn was trying to accomplish with this book.

I can tell you that its astoundingly well written. That the voice of every victim is unique and terrible and beautiful. I can tell you I couldn't put it down from the second I picked it up. I can tell you I hated and feared

the woman who haunted these men just as much as I've ever hated the men who usually take her place. I can tell you that this isn't some uber feminist manifesto of revenge that's calling to every woman to rise up against her oppressors.

But I do think it is a call to action. Its a call to rise up not against each other but against the world that made us what we are now. We have to recognize that we have the power to make this a different world that isn't ruled by social media trends and how many "likes" your stupid vacation photos got or what you wear or how much you drink or what you do for a living or how much money you make. We can't keep thinking its enough to add #metoo to a tweet and consider that "being part of the movement." We can't share a baleful nod with our neighbors about the fucking horrors in Texas and consider that "being part of the conversation." We can't let loose our rage on the world and then leave others to pick up the pieces and find the solutions. WE have to recreate the world. We can't keep sitting around assuming someone else will do it for us. Because when we do that THIS is what we get. This thing we're trapped in now is what we get.

I refuse to be that girl on the bus anymore. I fucking refuse to stand there silent while some stranger rubs his dick against me. I will take the guilt and the second guessing and the fear of people staring and wondering what I did to make him do that and I will tell it to fuck right the hell off.

We need to take our stories and our pain and glorious rage and turn it into a better world. Because no one else will do it.

Raeleen Lemay says

This book is insane. It's been a while since I flew through a book as quickly as I did with this one, and for good reason. There is absolutely no down time in this book, it just made it impossible for me to put it down!

It obviously tackles very real, raw, and intense topics, rape being the main focus. But not only that, it discusses recovery, suicide, eating disorders, among many others. I really loved how Tamblyn spoke frankly about all of these things, and her sometimes very poetic writing style really worked well with the story.

I'm still processing, but let's just say this is not a book to be missed.

Drew says

6 out of 5.

I read and loved Tamblyn's Dark Sparkler a few years ago, and I was excited to see what would happen when she turned her attentions to full-length prose. ANY MAN does not disappoint.

Fair warning: this book is fucking brutal. If you have a penis, you're going to squirm. And that's kind of the point. Tamblyn takes the potentially-cringeworthy concept of a female rapist raping men and makes it potent because it doesn't so much focus on the perp as it does the victims. The survivors. The media frenzy. It gives voice to a male victim not because men need another place to be represented but because sexual assault happens across gender lines and one way, potentially, to get a man to understand the reality of surviving sexual assault... is to put him in the place of a man who has survived it. In that way, Tamblyn's book is critical because it believes so wholeheartedly in the most fundamental power of art: to awaken minds by evoking empathy.

Plus, Tamblyn's a killer writer. Crossing forms and styles, she makes each voice unique and distinct and the book almost compels you to read it. I had plans on this Saturday evening and instead I sat home and read the whole damn thing. And while I crossed my legs a couple times, I also moved quickly beyond the physical OOF of it all and into a space that I realize I'd never been before, a new understanding of the mind of a survivor.

By all rights this should not only be an instant classic, it should be added to every high school reading curriculum. It should be the OneBook for the whole country. A dumptruck full of copies should be left on the South Lawn of the White House. Read this book, now, when the minds it can change might be the ones to tip the scales.

Nadine says

4.5 Stars

Any Man is a gender-bending story about the survivors of a female serial rapist named Maude. The novel alternates perspective as each of the men deal with the effects of their sexual assault right after and years later.

I can't say that I've been a super fan of Amber Tamblyn's, but I enjoyed her performances whenever I seen them so when I found out she wrote a novel I knew I had to read it immediately. Any Man is like nothing I've ever read before yet reflects the real world perfectly, so, in a way, I've seen everything depicted in this novel play out numerous times before.

The way society views rape and treats its survivors depends on a lot of factors that shouldn't matter, like gender, race, ethnicity, and the facts surrounding the assault. Blame is shifted and twisted on everyone and anyone but the perpetrator when women are raped. Any Man spotlights this as each of the men are shamed in different ways.

Tamblyn's writing is what makes this novel a success. The novel alternates between prose, poetry, journal entries, online messaging, and tweets. These differing formats help the reader immerse themselves in the characters and the picture Tamblyn is painting. It's a writing style that readers will either love or hate.

Overall, Any Man is a realistic depiction of how sexual assault and its survivors are treated by reversing the gender to spotlight the changes we need to make as a society.

Emily May says

Interesting concept. Stylistically too odd for me.

Chandra Claypool (wherethereadergrows) says

You ever start reading a book and know immediately that it was going to be something different than what

you've ever read before? That you know you're going to get gut punched and deepen that line between your eyes from the intense face you make as you turn each page? Yeah, that's what happened here.

Amber Tamblyn uses a variety of writing styles here to bring you a story that's not about the victimizer, but about the victims. She takes us deep into their minds in the aftermath of their horrible incidents and we see how they try to feel whole again. We are taken into their random thoughts... how these situations occur and then she takes us further in showing how society and the media help to perpetuate the rape culture in America. All of this is done in a various styles: poetry, tweets, chat boxes, interviews, journal entries, emails.... and every single one of these hits you right in the solar plexus.

We hear ALL the time how a woman shouldn't have worn that short skirt or dressed herself up like that if she didn't want the attention. How she was just asking for it. In this novel, we hear about how he shouldn't have gotten drunk at the bar while his wife was at home with the kids. What was he thinking? STOP VICTIMIZING THE VICTIMS FURTHER. How many of you think men CAN'T get raped? Why do we, as a society, blame the victim, use them as the story of the day and then toss them aside when something more horrifying comes along?

This book puts you into the mind of the survivors. How they will have to live with this for the rest of their lives and how by using each other as a support group, you can eventually, hopefully, move forward. I went through a roller coaster of emotions as I read this. It hit me HARD and left quite the imprint.

Equally horrifying, eye opening and heart breaking, this book is INTENSE. Tamblyn clearly knows how to write and this debut will leave you reeling. This won't be an easy read for some readers, but it's a necessary one.

★★★★★

***TANYA* says**

Unlike anything I've ever read!!! It was macabre, twisted and so unique. It's not for the faint of heart. I loved the writing style, at one point I forgot this was fiction, needless to say I was very impressed with Amber Tamblyn.

JV says

TW: Rape, suicide, self-harm, gore, and violence

With a flair of unorthodox writing, Tamblyn creates a provocative debut novel that is befuddling in its narrative style and experimental format, but still sears with an irrefutable verity about rape culture, sexual assault and aggression, the effects of patriarchal masculinity on men, and the way by which we feast on this ruckus in various media as it upends the lives of survivors, who in turn, commit atrocious acts that might eventually lead to self-mutilation, suicide, and even murder. This is due to the concentrated gaze and vitriol we exude — doubting, humiliating, blaming, silencing, and/or punishing them for something they never wanted to happen, i.e., a complicated situation that is against their own volition. Jarring and haunting, Tamblyn introduces a gender-bending novel with a female serial rapist preying on innocent men. That goes to say that anyone in our society, regardless of gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation, can be a victim of sexual violence; and any sexual behavior/contact that is non-consensual in nature is considered as a sexual

assault.

Honestly, Any Man reads like a social commentary more than a novel itself. The victims' harrowing accounts are also narrated in unconventional formats (interviews, tweets, online chats, apps, radio calls, etc.). While this might sound alluring, it can also be confusing to traditional readers who would prefer a linear narrative instead of a disjointed one. I empathize with the survivors. Amidst the shame, guilt, anger, violence, and helplessness, they're able to come out of their cocoon and overcome this traumatic experience with renewed hope and vigor as well as their indomitable will to live with the loving and wholehearted support of family, friends, and community.

Overall, this novel delivers its messages well along with an interesting premise, but still with its minor flaws.

"Tell me how you prove coercion? How you prove the difference between being hit on and hunted? How you prove your arms were held down? Your body was touched? Your life was threatened if you ever told anyone? For people who have suffered violent sexual crimes, proof—the very act of proving—is more than just a burden. It is boundless bearing. An eternity of futility."
