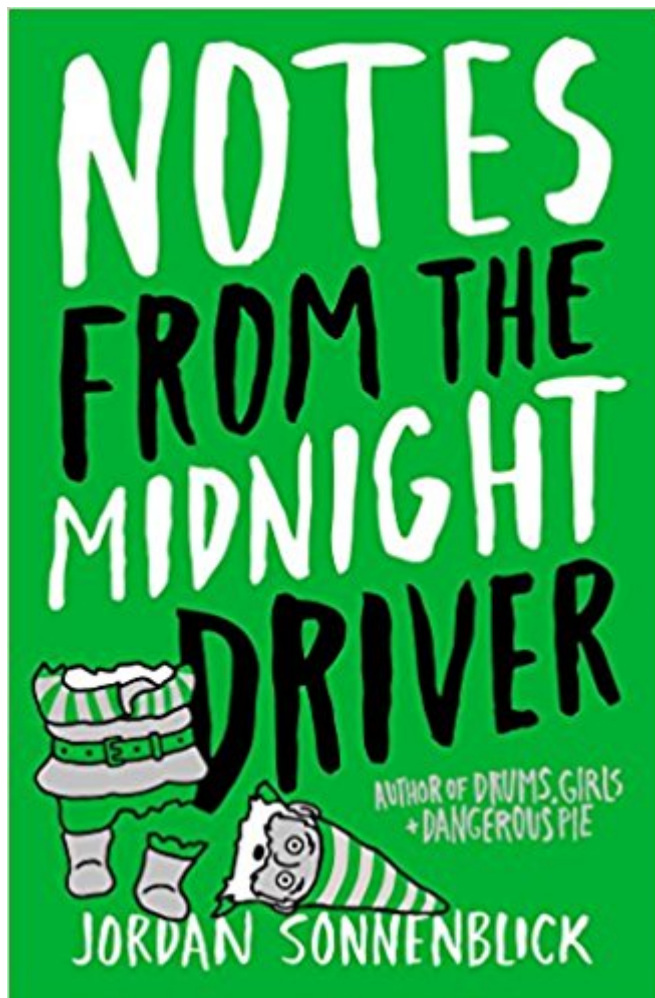




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# Notes From The Midnight Driver



## Synopsis

"Alex Peter Gregory, you are a moron!" Laurie slammed her palms down on my desk and stomped her foot. I get a lot of that. One car crash. One measly little car crash. And suddenly, I'm some kind of convicted felon. My parents are getting divorced, my dad is shacking up with my third-grade teacher, I might be in love with a girl who could kill me with one finger, and now I'm sentenced to babysit some insane old guy. What else could possibly go wrong? This is the story of Alex Gregory, his guitar, his best gal pal Laurie, and the friendship of a lifetime that he never would have expected.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 850 (What's this?)

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Scholastic Paperbacks; Reprint edition (October 1, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0439757819

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Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 5 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 74 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #79,373 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #20 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Performing Arts > Music #64 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Parents #125 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Humorous

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 8 Up After drinking some vodka and taking his mom's car for a spin to his father's girlfriend's house, who just happens to be his former third-grade teacher, 16-year-old Alex Gregory finds himself on his neighbors' lawn with police yelling at him and a broken gnome under his car. It is hard to believe that Alex would do anything like this; most of the time he hangs out with his friend Laurie, a sassy petite karate expert, and plays guitar in the school jazz band. He is also trying to get over his parents' recent split. For drinking and driving, Alex is sentenced to 100 hours of community service at a nursing home with Solomon Lewis. Sol is a difficult, crotchety, eccentric old man with

emphysema who lashes out at Alex in strange Yiddish phrases. Soon Alex grows fond of Sol, who teaches him something about the guitar, respecting the elderly, and taking responsibility for his actions. Alex's voice is fresh and funny, but doesn't downplay the serious situations. The other characters in the book are well defined and add interesting touches to the story. Fans of Sonnenblick's *Drums, Girls & Dangerous Pie* (Turning Tide, 2004) will be pleased with this follow-up book in which Steven and Annette make a few brief appearances. --Shannon Seglin, Chantilly Regional Library, Fairfax County, VA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** While his mother is out on a first date, 16-year-old Alex decides to get drunk, steal her car, and drive to his father's home, hoping to catch him romancing one of Alex's former teachers. His goal? Revenge. Reality? A damaged car, a decapitated gnome, a drunk driving charge, and community service. He is ordered to serve his 100 hours visiting Solomon Lewis, the meanest, crankiest resident at Egbert P. Johnson Memorial Home for the Aged. Alex discovers that Solomon is also witty, intelligent, and a fighter--an old man who has lived all the joys, sorrows, and regrets of a long life. Sonnenblick has created a memorable cast of characters: acerbic Sol, a former famous jazz guitarist who is now dying of emphysema; narrator Alex, a budding guitarist with a tendency to make excuses rather than assume responsibility; and Alex's best friend Laurie, a tiny, pixielike karate master whom Sol refers to as Alex's "wife." Even minor characters, such as Alex's parents and the judge, take on a heft and weight uncommon in YA literature, and teens will easily connect with Alex's epiphanies: "You can't just throw someone out of your life when they displease you," and, "We're all free to choose some people to love, and then do it." It all adds up to a funny, bittersweet tour de force. Frances Bradburn Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

How many times in our life, we have been forced to do something we hated. And how bewildering it was to accept that those turned out to be some of the most defining moments in our life. I had a couple of such events, so it was easy for me to identify with the turmoil of Alex, a mild mannered boy. How he was pissed off with his emerging life, his maiden attempt at confrontation which ended with a mandatory social service. Life sucks. But wait, it gets worse when the person he is supposed to assist turns out to be a pretty vicious character, out to destroy whatever spine was left in him. And that is where Alex develops a deeper understanding about relationships, the futility of carrying a grouse through the life and the meaning of true forgiveness. Yes, he gets a harsh tutor, but he

manages to bring out the best in him, makes him a much more sensitive and caring human being. Towards the end, one gets confused as to who was supposed to assist whom, and brings out the true character of symbiosis. This is the first work of Jordan I read and was quite touched by his style of writing. He nimbly moves from humour to pathos, seemingly merging the two. He manages to touch me deep inside but did it in quite a flipping manner. His sense of humour was just right, not too much over the top. It was very refreshing indeed. I would highly recommend all to give this a try, while I go over to read his other works.

This was a quick read and sweet story of sixteen-year old Alex, who has to do community service at a nursing home after a drunk driving incident involving a neighbor's garden gnome. He is assigned to crotchety Sol, who loves to insult others almost as much as he loves to play practical jokes on them. While their initial interactions make Alex want to run for cover, a bond forms between the two, and Alex begins to think of more than just finishing his "hard time." This is my second Jordan Sonnenblick book, and this one actually has appearances from both Steven and Annette of "Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie." I preferred "Drums" slightly more, but "Notes from the Midnight Driver" was also very well done. Fans of Gary Schmidt, R.J. Palacio, or Fiona Woods should give Jordan Sonnenblick a try!

My 14-year-old son who is NOT a reader chose this from his assigned summer-reading list because he knew it was about a young guy taking a drive. My son SO wants to drive!!! He and I started reading it together, he reading from his paperback and me following along on my Kindle. First of all, I must say that the first words out of his mouth after he read the last words of the book were, "That was a good book!" I nearly fainted...with joy, of course, not just because he read an entire book and enjoyed it (although I was ecstatic!) but because he enjoyed reading a book with such substance. This book is not about sports or music. Well, actually it has a music aspect too which he certainly found interesting...but this book touches on some very pertinent issues facing young people today---dealing with divorcing parents, under-age drinking, taking care of and showing respect to the elderly, taking responsibility for our actions as well as accepting the consequences of them. It was written in such an inspiring yet humorous way that I wish every young person could do what we did and sit down and read this book together. It naturally led us to talking about these topics and more. If I had tried to bring up under-age drinking on my own, I doubt that we would have had such a calm and honest dialogue. I intend for my 11-year-old son and me to read it together also. Thank you to the author for writing it and the Literature teachers at my son's high school for choosing such a great

book! "Gotcha!" (You have to read the book to understand that one!!(By the way, this is the first book review that I have ever written even though I read a lot!!)

Had to buy this for a school reading assignment and it actually ended up being a really good book. And it was delivered fast!

This was a book for our middle school all school read - initially, I did not like it but as I got into it, I couldn't put it down. Quick read with a really good message.

Ever wait a couple days to publish a review about a book in order to look like you read books slower than you do? Yeah...me neither...This author is just fantastic and this book did not disappoint! It starts with a teenager going through a difficult time with his family. As a result, he makes a stupid decision that changes his life. He grows and meets an elderly man through his community service, which ends up being hard lessons that turn into blessings.

I really loved this book. It included characters from two of Sonnenblick's previous books, including Drums, Girls & Dangerous Pie and its sequel whose name escapes me for the moment. Having just watched my daughter and HS classmates doing a production of Band Geeks, I really appreciated the band geekiness of it! And it included a twist that I really should have seen coming... But that's all I'm going to say. If you want to find out more about the story, read the description...or better yet, read the book!

He's such a good writer, so easy to read that the sometimes difficult story line just keeps breezing by. I read this book after reading Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie because it was so good I had to have more. You should read this book because it's a lovely experience.

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