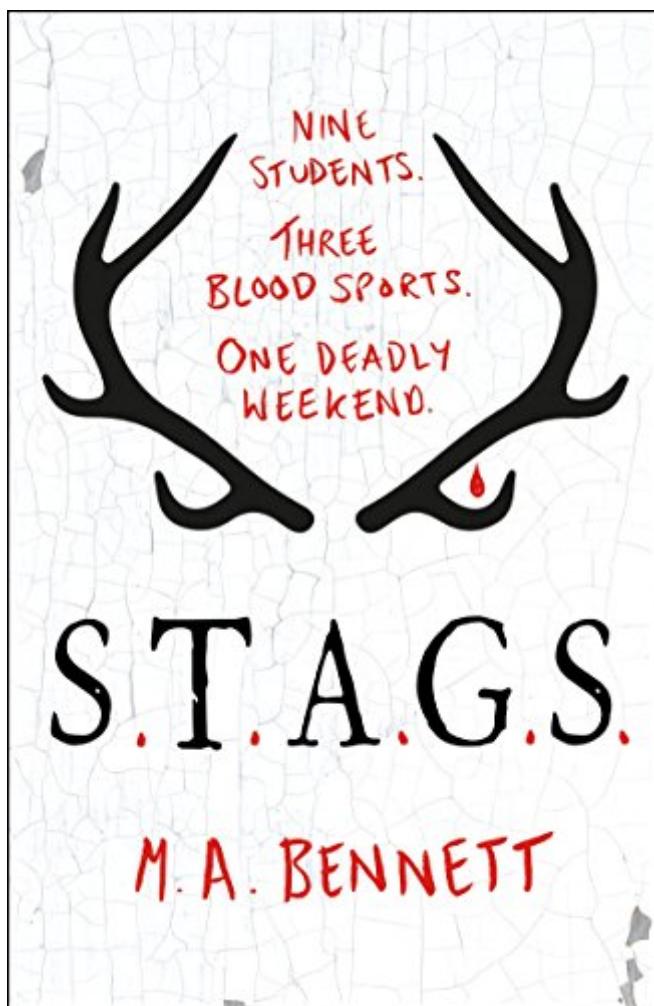


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STAGS: Nine Students. Three Blood Sports. One Deadly Weekend.



Synopsis

Nine students. Three bloodsports. One deadly weekend. A twisting thriller for fans of Looking for Alaska. It is the autumn term and Greer MacDonald is struggling to settle into the sixth form at the exclusive St. Aidan the Great boarding school, known to its privileged pupils as S.T.A.G.S. Just when she despairs of making friends Greer receives a mysterious invitation with three words embossed upon on it: huntin' shootin' fishin'. When Greer learns that the invitation is to spend the half term weekend at the country manor of Henry de Warlencourt, the most popular and wealthy boy at S.T.A.G.S., she is as surprised as she is flattered. But when Greer joins the other chosen few at the ancient and sprawling Longcross Hall, she realises that Henry's parents are not at home; the only adults present are a cohort of eerily compliant servants. The students are at the mercy of their capricious host, and, over the next three days, as the three bloodsports - hunting, shooting and fishing - become increasingly dark and twisted, Greer comes to the horrifying realisation that those being hunted are not wild game, but the very misfits Henry has brought with him from school...

Book Information

File Size: 2139 KB

Print Length: 304 pages

Publisher: Hot Key Books (August 1, 2017)

Publication Date: August 1, 2017

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B06X99TN3J

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,194,254 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #42 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Literature & Fiction > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > Country Life #87 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Literary #727 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Literature & Fiction > School & Education

Customer Reviews

"S.T.A.G.S." written by M.A.Bennett is a superb story that was such a different read to my normal books, yet still in keeping with the thriller genre. I knew as soon as I started reading this that I was going to enjoy it and I wasn't proved wrong. With twists and turns right to the very end, readers will love this book - so easy to follow with brilliant characters (I could certainly see the attraction with Henry!) and a seriously captivating plot. Greer MacDonald has won a scholarship at the very elite and prestigious St. Aidan the Great School in Northumberland. She doesn't make many friends at the school due to not being the wealthy and socially acceptable student all the others are. When Greer receives the much coveted annual invitation to join a group of 'Medievals' (unofficial prefects of the school) at Longcross Hall, she accepts the "huntin' shootin' fishin'" invitation in the hope she will make new friends and be socially accepted. However, things aren't as they seem in the invitation and things start to go disastrously wrong once the deadly weekend gets underway. We know from the start that a death has occurred - quite possibly a murder - and we are taken on a twisty turny journey that Greer relates in great detail, keeping the reader engrossed in a tale of medieval history, traditional blood sports and the power of long established well to do families. Living myself beside the hauntingly beautiful counties of Northumberland and Cumberland, I could really relate to the areas the school and Hall were located, the descriptions were truly spot on! I also particularly enjoyed the little references Greer made relating to movies incorporating film scenes where that situation was occurring, and the fact it was written in the first person means we get to hear Greer's doubts and feelings first hand. "S.T.A.G.S." could easily be made into a movie, there's a huge audience of all ages that would enjoy this story and I highly recommend the book - I thoroughly enjoyed it and I would happily read it again. 5 stars

The Medievals are just six students from a prestigious boarding school at first glance. Yes, they're all extremely wealthy and good looking and you can trace their families back as old as the ancient school they rule but they're just normal teenagers, right? No, they definitely are not. The Medievals are always the utmost elite group with more power in the school than the friars (teachers) and the Abbot (principal). Their family bloodlines run deep and their roots are tangled into knots with this school full of tradition so old that a building built in 1550 seems modern in comparison to the rest. They take an extreme pride in their lineage and tradition to the point where they talk like they're from another time, shun all electronics and hold weekends away for huntin', shootin', and fishin' and always with invitations for three outsiders from the school. Greer

MacDonald is the scholarship student outsider from the moment she arrives at STAGS and shunned because she's nothing like the Medievals in a sea of people trying to imitate them. She pretends to be aloof to the allure of the mysterious group but she's just like everyone else when the invitation comes from the Medievals for the infamous weekend away hosted at the home of their leader, Henry de Warlencourt. Even after an odd warning to stay away from Longcross Hall and the Medievals she can't resist the feeling of being included and wanted from their elusive group. Her roommate that has been ignoring her up until the invitation arrived is suddenly envious of her and if she succeeds at impressing them over the weekend she could be a future Medieval. From the first page, Greer explains to the reader that she's a murderer and someone dies in this book. Technically it was manslaughter and it wasn't just her but several people who caused a death they didn't actually intend to have anything to do with. You soon find out who they had a hand in killing but you won't see it unfold until later in the book so you're left guessing and wondering when and how the whole time! I love books like that because you're assured that there will be this big event sometime in the course of the book so you have something to drive you to keep your eyes glued to the page. This book went even better than that though because there were so many crazy, dangerous parts all throughout that kept my breath catching and my heart jumping. The author captures suspense and tension spectacularly with so many high pressured situations that it was like I was watching a dainty teacup spin around and around on the very edge of a table almost slipping off each time. I loved the experience of reading S.T.A.G.S because as you're reading this book there's a constant foreboding feeling that nothing is normal or as it seems and that something deadly could be happening before you've even begun to suspect the next big shock. It's told in retrospect as Greer takes us through the events and marvels at her innocence and blindness to what was really going on but she doesn't lay it all out for you. You'll still have to read along to find out what Greer got herself into and knowing there's something huge to be discovered in this book makes you unable to put it down until you finish it. I enjoyed this book so much and I'm really glad to find such a thrilling and suspenseful book that is also YA!

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