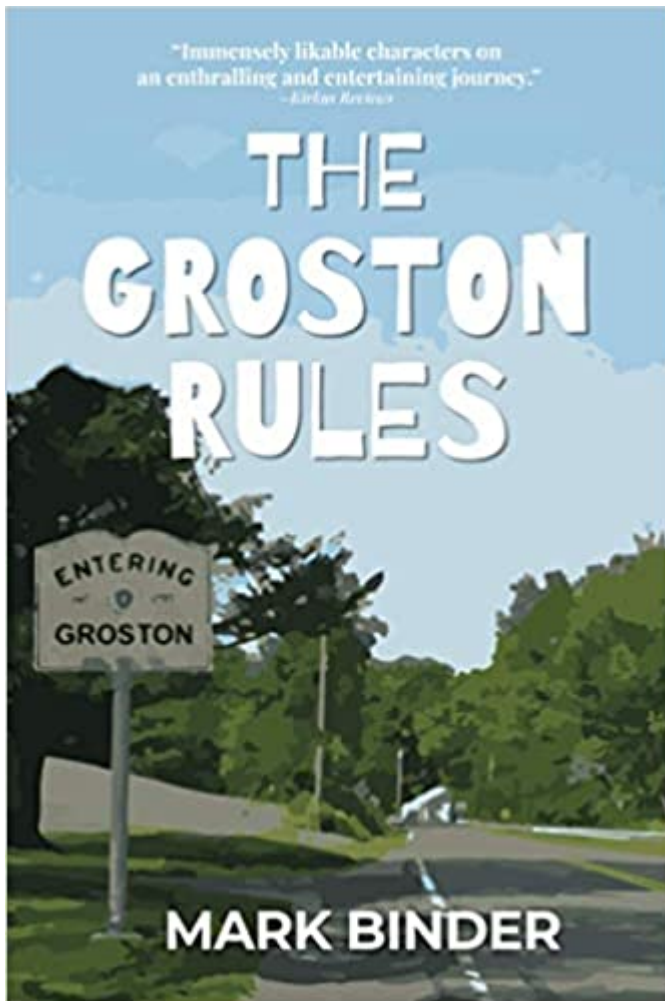


# The Groston Rules: Latest release from Mark Binder captures adolescence



Senior year of high school can be a defining moment in a person's life — it's both a jumpstart into the future and a further sculpting of the previous 17 years. In Mark Binder's novel *The Groston Rules*, Isaac Cohen and his six friends who make up "Team Bombshelter" appeared to have a more memorable (for better or worse) year than most.

The story is a first person account from Cohen, written as an assignment from school, though each of his friends has a dedicated chapter that develops their character. He is a typical senior with a potentially bright future, though he is the least successful of the group. The friends all have their own strengths that they bring to the table, each taking lead when their skills and ideas are needed most. Cohen usually stays in the background, feeling inferior to his friends, until he has a great idea for a senior prank that impresses his friends and gets the entire class involved.

The seniors of Groston are written as they would for most movies or television. The jocks (especially the star quarterback and his offensive lineman) and homecoming queen have minor but significant roles. Instead, Binder focuses on the often overlooked, average students and showcases their issues in a way that is mostly relatable. Many of their trials and tribulations could happen anywhere at any time, which

is refreshing.

Binder effectively brings back high school memories. While some of their adventures are a bit outlandish, common emotions, friendships and insecurity all run rampant throughout this book. The reader can identify with Cohen as a sympathetic protagonist and wants to root for him. He is self aware and tells the story in a way that makes it clear he might have made different decisions if given a second chance, which is an experience I share often.

My only issue with the story is an admittedly selfish one involving the senior prank. While well written and the ultimate climax to the story, the end result is something that should have been visual instead of written. It is well described, but the description doesn't quite work for me, as I'm not quite familiar with the parody of their prank. This description would work much better in a movie, which is something I would love to see.

*The Groston Rules* is a throwback to adolescence. Everything is understandable and nostalgic, with parts that will hit close to home for many people. It's a pre coming-of-age tale, as there is a lot more growth to be done. Most importantly, it's real, because Cohen's or his friends' emotions could have been experienced by nearly anyone.

The Groston Rules will be released on November 8. For more information, go to [markbinder.com](http://markbinder.com)