



Whatever.: or how junior year became totally f\$@ked

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It's like the apocalypse came, only instead of nuclear bombs and zombies, Mike gets school participation, gay thoughts, and mother-effin' cheerleaders.

Junior year is about to start. Here's what Mike Tate knows:

His friends are awesome and their crappy garage band is a great excuse to drink cheap beer. Rook Wallace is the devil. The Lemonheads rock. And his girlfriend Lisa is the *coolest*. Then Lisa breaks up with him, which makes Mike only a little sad, because they'll stay friends and he never knew what to do with her boobs anyway. But when Mike finds out why Lisa dumped him, it blows his mind. And worse—he gets elected to homecoming court.

With a standout voice, a hilariously honest view on sex and sexuality, and enough f-bombs to make your mom blush, this debut YA novel is a fresh, modern take on the coming-out story.

Whatever.: or how junior year became totally f\$@ked Details

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Author : S.J. Goslee

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From Reader Review Whatever.: or how junior year became totally f\$@ked for online ebook

Laura says

4.5 Stars

I can't decide if I want to smack Mike Tate upside the head or hug him tight. Maybe both!

Mike's school year is shaping up to be a real clusterf.... *cough*. Sorry. Let's break it down. His girlfriend, Lisa, just dumped him, even though according to her, they weren't really dating anyway. Ouch. Somehow he's gotten himself roped into school politics, intramural baseball, and homecoming. Whatever. It's junior year. OH, yeah. Mike might be into guys too. He might even be falling for his arch-nemesis! That's the way Mike's "cookies have been crumbling". :D

I'm not sure how I fell for Mike, but I did. Hard! This knucklehead slacks off, stays out late, drinks until he blacks out, and is absolutely clueless most days. I mean the kind of clueless that calls a past hookup for advice before going on a date with another guy! *smacks* Mike upside the head* But he won me over. Mike's voice is real, raw, and powerful. You'll know this guy. He could sit next to you in homeroom. Walk by you in the halls. Or remind you of someone from your past. Mike says and does ridiculous things, but his heart is always beating away in the right place. He killed me! The time he shares with his little sister could be the most adorable, real life big brother moments in YA! Come on, Mike. You know you love building forts just as much as Rosie. Haha... And his friends! Mike's group of tight-knit friends felt like a family. You will feel it in every stupid stunt, shove, and word said or unsaid between them. I adored the whole gang!!!

Meckles, Cam, Omar, Jason, and Lisa formed a family. They've grown up together. Seen each other through good, hard, and embarrassing times. Their history is evident in everything they do. They move and talk with ease and humor. The jokes and sarcasm fly back and forth non-stop, but you can see the love and care underneath it all. Listen to how Mike describes Cam.... "part of Cam's special brand of charm is the screwed-up mystery meat that masquerades as his brain." Their chemistry propelled this story along from school to band practices to parties. You feel included. In the gang, in the trouble, and in the laughs. From music debates to fanny packs! You never know where their shenanigans will take them. Then we have Rook Wallace.....

Rook! What a name. Isn't it the perfect arch-nemesis name?! :D Wallace and Mike have a sorted past. Wallace used to beat Mike up after baseball every chance he got when they were kids. Mike hates Rook! Or does he? Wallace's smile, confidence, broad shoulders, and curls begin to make Mike nervous, sweaty, and.... Wait. Is Mike gay? Bi? He's suddenly freaking out! Confused and scared! How can he be attracted to his arch-nemesis? Ms. Goslee balances this coming out story with humor and heart perfectly. Tears to laughs to attraction!

"Wallace leans in again, tilts their foreheads together and breaths; Mike can feel the rapid trip-skip of Wallace's pulse against his thumb."

"Trip-skip"! I love that. Wallace and Mike have heat! Serious heat! Ms. Goslee knows how to capture tension on the page. I love her tone and style. She puts a lot in this little book. We have realistic guy/dude talk, obvious bonds of friendship and history, humor, and a sweet possible romance brewing away. Her words and voices are simple, sincere, and beautiful in a real world way. Like this description of a

snowstorm—"hushed pings of snowflakes on snowflakes as they fill up the ground" or this very distinctive odor of "weed and broken hobo dreams". LOL! This book introduces a voice that will make your heart remember, smile, and ache. The emotion sneaks right up on you. One minute you're calling Mike a doofus and the next you're rooting for him to open up his heart and go for it.

Whatever is a winner! A read with huge heart and characters you'll want more of. I wonder what Mike and the crew are up to tonight. Is it too soon to beg for a senior year?

Recommended read.

Quotes taken from ARC

Tess says

4.5 stars

So much quirky good fun - I adored this!! If you like your MCs quirky and kinda clueless, you're going to love Mike. I was smiling through most of this - following along with him as he comes to terms with the fact that he's bi, deals with a myriad of odd friendships, comes out and realizes on an unlikely crush. This is YA but on the older end of YA where the characters are doing things like drinking, smoking pot and being horny a lot of the time. Kinda like I remember high school. At the same time, the romance was really quite sweet. I just had one little issue on the romance side(view spoiler), other than that it was pretty perfect.

I recommend to anyone who loves YA M/M romance, especially when it falls on the older and quirkier side of things.

Eve says

Objectively this might be a 4 star book, but it just exuded happiness the whole time I was reading it, and I enjoyed it so much that I'm giving it 5 stars anyway. I really enjoy the author's breezy writing style, which managed to be fast-paced even though this is written in third-person present pov, and I usually find that emotionally fraught. The author handles some tough issues (coming out, bullying, acceptance of differences, learning who you are) with a light touch. Mike is a super likable, pot-smoking, binge-drinking teenage slacker with a really good heart who's going through something of an identity crises. He's so easy-going that his friends get him to do all sorts of things, and so gentle that it seems nobody can get angry with him, but he's kind of a confused mess inside. Which is probably an accurate description of a lot of teenage boys. I enjoyed this thoroughly, and it wasn't so much with bated breath about the romance, as just enjoying spending time with Mike and his crazy friends and family.

? Todd says

This story felt a bit like **a modern day interpretation of a John Hughes movie**, but with the protagonist **coming to terms with his feelings for guys**. And, more specifically, with those surrounding his long-sworn enemy.

The constant humor of the story was off-the-charts epic; however, there is a *lot* of internal dialogue, which I found simultaneously charming and a bit tedious.

I didn't dare skip a word, because, for the most part, it all did actually add to the story, but just didn't flow along quite as quickly (or smoothly) as I'd have liked.

But **Mike's character was written amazingly true-to-age**, with tons of insecurities and confusion, which we've all experienced during our high school years.

I enjoyed the story immensely, mainly due to the funny situations and well-developed MC, but didn't really get more than a surface-deep sense of several of the side characters, including the secondary main character.

This was also **not a sexy or overly romantic read**, as those aspects mostly consisted of one short back seat groping session and lots of internal pining and processing feelings internally.

And even though the story ends with only the most tentative of **HFN's**, I'd still recommend the book pretty highly and rate it at **4 stars**.

Anyta Sunday says

Awesomeness. Love it! Funny, honest YA, with a bit of a clueless dude MC.

Self discovery. Great friends. Sweet first time romance on the side.

annie says

invented ya literature, invented gays, invented this ass

Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says

Whatever by S.J. Goslee is a hilarious and honest YA coming out story and it's in many ways unlike anything I've ever read before. It's not a romance by any usual standards, but it can be painfully romantic and endearing at times. It's a heart-warming story with so many laugh-out-loud moments and unparalleled honesty in dealing with subjects like self-discovery, bisexuality and coming of age.

Our protagonist Mike Tate is so easy to fall in love with, despite (or because of) his many shortcomings. He drinks, he smokes weed, he challenges his friends to do insane things. He is really a fairly typical and pretty obnoxious 16-year-old boy with wild hormones and plenty of time on his hands. At the same time, though,

we see him caring for his 6-year-old sister, being secretly (and sort of reluctantly) kind to his friends and putting himself into danger to save a younger boy from a sure beating. Even when he's being insufferable (which is often), there is such potential shining in Mike that it's easy to imagine him becoming a wonderful adult.

That being said, teenage Mike is often kind of an idiot, prone to lashing out when he's hurt or when he's feeling insecure. Even though this isn't a romance, there is a clear romantic interest, albeit one that Mike has a hard time processing. Through Mike's relationship with Wallace, Goslee shows us that we never know what happens inside a person. The relationship was built realistically and brilliantly, which can also be said about other relationships in this book.

This is a story that teaches us, first and foremost, about the process of coming out and how intensely personal it is for everyone. Even when someone isn't exposed to homophobia, even when judgment from friends and family isn't forthcoming, they have a right to choose their own pace and come out (or not come out) when and how they see fit. Mike uncovers his own sexual identity slowly and reluctantly, preferring to not make waves. His mom is completely accepting, his hilarious grandmother has her own way of dealing with things, his friends are mostly open, but Mike just isn't ready to face things. It should also be said that homophobia sometimes comes from completely unexpected directions. Preparing yourself for this careful and slow process isn't a small matter at all. We follow Mike as he learns new things about himself and slowly finds his footing. His journey is poignant, honest and funny, painful at times, but so worth it in the end.

I loved every second of this book and I was so very grateful for its honesty and its authentic voice. Hopefully we won't have to wait too long for Goslee's next novel.

Erin says

I absolutely love it when books surprise me. This is a book that definitely surprised me in the best possible way. Admittedly, when I first started reading, I had my doubts. We're first introduced to Mike as he's coming out of a stoned stupor after partying with his bros. He had that dude voice that, while authentic, drives me completely nuts and I was ready to give up right then and there. But I decided to keep going and I am so glad that I did. Mike never really loses his dude voice, but for some reason he makes it wildly endearing. In addition to this, the relationships he has with his mom, his little sister, his friends, his ex-girlfriend and the burgeoning attraction between him and the love interest [no spoilers!] are extraordinary and so wholly real that each interaction while seemingly laid back oozes with meaning and authenticity. I also loved the way that Goslee handles Mike's discovery of his sexuality. There is a lot of confusion, emotion and frustration but at the same time it doesn't feel overly dramatic but rather quite funny as Mike provides hilarious asides as he justifies his appreciative eye for the male form. Additionally, Goslee is never insensitive in her depiction of Mike's self-discovery, but rather she provides an excellent balance of humor AND heart making this a great choice for teens who may have questions of their own. I can definitely continue to sing the praises of this delightful debut, but one of the most important things that stuck me about this book is that it is an absolutely spectacular dude book, and there really aren't enough spectacular dude books out there. Can't wait to see what this author comes up with next!

georgia ? says

4.5 stars

screams because this was probably the cutest thing i've ever read and i'm pretty sure i smiled the whole way through

there was just *so much* i loved about this- mike, cam, wallace, serge, jason, j.j etc and yes, i did just name pretty much every character in the book, but what the hell, i adored them all. the writing was great, the plot was entertaining, it was funny in all the right places and i had so much fun reading this one.

it's definitely not perfect (there's some bisexual erasure and i didn't like how the author wrote lisa and her attitude towards mike + mike's relationships) buuuut i did love it a whole lot anyway, once i got past those two things.

1st read: october 2016

2nd read: march 2017

Jay says

This whole review will be filled with spoilers, and boy oh boy, do I have a lot to say. This book is extremely biphobic, homophobic and it's filled with *girls* fetishizing the main character and his love interest. That's not even my problem. The thing is, none of these things gets called out, *ever*. Instead of wasting my time explaining everything, let's just jump into some lines from the actual book, shall we?

Lisa says, "You need to be my running mate." Mike laughs.
"You're on crack, no way am I running for vice president," he says.
"You have to!" she says. "We can sell you as gay, it'll be edgy."

This one is right from the beginning, where Lisa is quite aware Mike isn't straight, and continuously pushes him into coming out so it'll help *her* and her campaign when he's confused himself, and hasn't even stopped to think about his sexuality once.

"You and the little sausage man, remember?" She crosses her arms over her chest, smug. "Last month at Cam's end of the summer blowout. Full-on making out, with tongues, and hands in private places." Her eyes go hazy and she licks her lips. Gross.

This is from the very next page, where Mike tells her he is not gay and she keeps on pushing him, throwing on his face that he made out with a guy at a party when he was drunk. Needless to say how gross she is with her hazy eyes and lips-licking.

"I'm in the running for Homecoming King," Mike says.
"Yeah, that's a little weird."
"You think?" Mike finally finds his bike, but it's under a couple precariously perched boxes.
He can't remember the last time he's used it.
Lisa says, "You could run for Queen, but I don't think you're ready for that."

Isn't Lisa so funny?

"Why are we even friends?"

Mike knocks over what looks like pretty much every kitchen gadget in creation trying to unearth the bike. He kicks boxes aside in a huff; he's going to be late for work.

"Because I let you see my boobs."

"That's a lie," Mike says, walking his bike out into the dying afternoon light. Touch them, yes, but Mike has never ever been allowed to see Lisa's boobs, even when they were dating.

"Oh, that's right, because it would've been a *waste*."

I love this bisexuality erasure.

"Your mother tells me you're queer now."

"She did *not*," Mike says, horrified. He slumps back against the wall, palms catching at the slightly textured wallpaper. His knees feel weak.

"She used the term bisexual," she narrows her eyes, "but no grandson of mine is going to be indecisive."

"I don't think that means I'm in—"

"Michael Allan Tate," Nana says. Mike swallows hard. Maybe he shouldn't be concentrating on terminology now, since his seventy-five-year-old grandmother is confronting him about his sexual preferences. He brings a shaky hand up to rub his dry lower lip. "Yes, ma'am?"

She clasps her hands in front of her chest and says, "Are you, or are you not gay?"

I could move past this scene, given that she is old and grew up with different values bla bla bla, but then, in the next page, she outs him to the entire family:

"Of course I'm not harassing Michael, Allison. He's just being ridiculously closemouthed about his boyfriend."

Because, according to her, and I quote: "You don't decide to be gay without a boy, that's just poor planning." Later on, around the final chapters, we have yet two more scenes where girls fetishize over Mike and Wallace;

"We had sex in his car and then went for ice cream." It's still awesome in retrospect, but he can't shake the feeling that if it hadn't happened, maybe Omar would still be talking to him. Christ, he hates himself.

"You had—oh Jesus," Lisa says. He can hear a hint of horrified amusement in her tone.

At this point, Lisa was just completely annoying. She's controlling of Mike in a way that she forces him to do anything he wants, and he *does*, and more than once he admits himself he lets her get away with it. But that's not what we're discussing here. Anyways, two pages later we have;

Dotty narrows her eyes. "Wait."
Mo leans forward, hands gripping the edge of the table, and hisses, "You and Rook."
"No way, seriously?" Lenny squeals. She sounds delighted. She sounds like all her dreams
have come true, because she's clearly demented.
Mike buries his head in his arms. "I don't want to talk about it."
"Too bad, you totally have to talk about it," Lenny says.
"Or we could just ask Rook."
Mike jerks upright. "No."
Dotty grins evilly. He seriously hates cheerleaders.

I don't even know what to say. I'm actually laughing. We have a bunch of girls pushing a bisexual character into sharing *personal* details of his life with the guy he's dating. As if it wasn't bad enough, we're talking about his *sex life*. And no, they don't *ever* get called out on their disgusting fetish. Neither does Lisa, as she is, in fact, one of Mike's best friends.

This book has many other issues (bad writing, no plot, main character leaving his love interest so his *homophobic* friends wouldn't get hurt by seeing them together, etc), but, honestly, if they were the only ones, I'd never even bother with a review. But the constant homophobia, girls fetishizing the two boys without ever getting called out and the author herself fetishizing them in the more explicit scenes made me too uncomfortable to simply let it go. It sends a wrong message that it is okay for girls to do this very same thing, and it's not. Women fetishizing mlm content will never be okay, just as much as men fetishizing wlv never will either. It saddens me that this still needs to be said in 2017. It's 4am and I read this book in only 6 or 7 hours, and I'm sure this review is all over the place, but I'm disappointed to say the least.

Line says

Bahahaha, seriously; this book!

Great humor! Great characters! And great story!

Mike is not the quintessential 16 yo (soon 17). Yes, he spends time with his friends, and yes he does A LOT of stupid things. But he also spends a lot of time with his baby-sister (Rosie) and he is actually sort of thoughtful.

Mike has been dating Lisa for quite some time, he's in a band with his best friends and he has an archenemy, who used to beat him up after baseball.

Mike works at his uncle's cheese shop, and is trying to be in school with the least amount of work. He is not stupid, but he is lazy and all-over the place.

Mike's mother is an author of children's books and she gives Mike and Rosie a lot of leeway, but is there for Mike when he fucks up.

Then Lisa breaks up with him, but they stay friends. And when Lisa decides she needs to be a more well-rounded character for college applications, she 'blackmails' Mike into running along with her. Her blackmail-material: Mike had a PROPER snogging-episode with J.J., a guy from another school.

What follows is Mike's awakening, both in regards to himself, but also in regards to friends and family.

I can't imagine coming out is easy, but this book takes great care with the subject. Yes, Mike is totally confused and yes he should have opened his mouth in a few situations, but he is a 16-17 yo guy, who drinks and smokes too much weed.

And even though there are things he doesn't care about, there are things he cares a great deal about; like his friends, who have been there his whole life.

Rook was a great character, I thought he did the whole 'jock'-deal and in the closet/but not-thing great justice. Also he was FREAKING adorable at times.

I was laughing and snorting and chuckling throughout this book! It was so SO funny, and I adored ALL of the characters (most were batshit CRAZY)! If I could change two things it would be a proper apology from Rook, for the shit he pulled years back AND an epilogue 15 years from now, telling me that Mike and Rook were going strong...

I know, I know, they're young and blah-blah-blah... But I had a friend in 9th grade who's still with her boyfriend from then, so let me have my dreams!

A definite re-read for me!

Jon says

An über awesome book about coming out as bi, teenage angst and being yourself. It's way too early to post a review of this badboy, but know that it's incredibly good and humorous in a laugh out loud to the point where everyone in your vicinity thinks you're nuts kind of way.

Larry H says

I guess it was only a matter of time before the high school stoner comedy genre got a little more depth. S.J. Goslee's **Whatever.** is just like your favorite pothead—it makes you laugh and roll your eyes sometimes, you get a little frustrated, but in the end, you enjoy spending time with it, and even think it's pretty sweet.

Mike Tate is about to start his junior year of high school. He has a great group of friends, with whom he plays music in a crappy band, drinks beer, watches one of them attempt one crazy stunt after another, and spends a lot of time getting stoned. He's known his girlfriend, Lisa, for a long time, and she's more like his best friend than his girlfriend a lot of the time. (So what if he doesn't know what to do with her boobs?) But still, he's totally surprised when she breaks up with him and says they were never really dating anyway, and he's even more surprised when she tells him why she broke up with him.

Suddenly Mike finds himself in completely new territory. He's not sure about what he's feeling, or how his friends and family will react. Because Lisa has suckered him into running for vice president of his class, he's now in the midst of student government—and even worse, homecoming. He's even been nominated to the homecoming court. Why can't things just go back to normal. And more importantly, why is Rook Wallace, who terrorized him when they were younger, suddenly smiling at him all the time? Is he trying to subdue him so he can attack him when he least expects it?

Whatever. is about coming to terms with who you are for perhaps the first time in your life, which may feel uncomfortable or strange. It's about friendship, infatuation, confusion, man crushes, fear, and love, as well as a healthy dose of mischief and stupid stunts. And it's about saying the things you want to say even if you're afraid to, even if not everyone will like what you have to say.

I enjoyed this book a lot, and thought it was sweet and funny and thought-provoking. Although I liked

Mike's character, and thought that he had a good heart, at times he frustrated me because of the things he didn't say (as well as some of the things he said and did), but I know so many of his actions were realistic. While there isn't much surprising in this book (there were a few things I thought might happen, but they didn't), it's still a tremendously appealing story, and it definitely took me back to my high school days, where fun, confusion, and insecurity reigned equally.

Goslee really captured the teenage voice well, particularly those of teenage boys. This book is just another example of how far YA fiction has come since I was young (there really wasn't any beyond The Hardy Boys back then), and how much the world has changed for the better.

See all of my reviews at <http://itseithersadnessoreuphoria.blo...>

Caleb Roehrig says

Short version: I loved this. It's adorable, heartfelt, laugh-out-loud funny, and frighteningly relatable. The internal and external conflicts the MC faces with regard to coming out were beautifully and accurately rendered, and the romance depicted is swoony and so, so shippable. (And the MAKEOUTS. The makeouts are...[fans self]) Totally recommended.

Natasha says

UH, YES PLEASE?
