Jorgensen, L. (2015). First Gear: A Motorcycle Memoir. Toronto: Innana Publications.

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Lorrie Jorgensen's book "First Gear: A Motorcycle Memoir" is an in-depth descriptive story about the hardships she faced and her emotional road to recovery. Jorgensen writes about her past and includes vivid stories about growing up as she rides her motorcycle from Ottawa to Winnipeg. These stories are crucial in understanding that this trip is more than just a vacation, as Jorgensen discusses the abuse she endured throughout her life from a violent father, to an alcoholic mother and being sexually abused, all while also living with Multiple Sclerosis. By writing in a first-person narrative Jorgensen pulls the reader in by constructing intense feelings within them, they realize this isn't a fictional story and it brings attention to the lasting effects abuse has on someone. Jorgensen assembles her personal experiences in a way to expand the knowledge about abuse and make it more socially acceptable to be talked about.

Jorgensen recounts the vivid story of when she was sexually assaulted by a family friend named Lenny. Jorgensen went on a motorcycle trip with him for the weekend but as she soon finds out that's not all she was there for. When retelling the event Jorgenson does not hold back on the descriptive language she uses, leaving it very raw and completely uncensored. This language captivates the reader and reflects that sexual abuse isn't something censored and easy to hear. After this occurred it took Jorgensen thirty-three years to take another motorcycle trip like that. Riding a motorcycle means a lot to her and has always been part of her life, and her freedom but part of

that was taken away after that day with Lenny. Jorgensen goes on to describe riding a motorcycle as frightful for her as she trembles and tries to swallow her fear and self-doubt (p. 6). The vivid language is used again as she paints an image for us about how dangerous riding a motorcycle is and how she's constantly looking out for someone to hit her, yet all at the same time she expresses how its "soothing and caressing" (p. 7). This gives the motorcycle more meaning than just something she loves to do; its symbolic of her gaining her power back.

Many people continue to be judgemental and have stereotypical thoughts when it comes to sexual, emotional, and physical abuse. That's why it's such an important aspect in this book when Jorgensen tells her personal stories of the problems and effects it continues to have on her at the age of fifty. Jorgensen tells the underlying effects it has on her such as not being able to finish the house she started to build due to lack of motivation. She also elaborates later on in the book about the more severe effects that the trauma she faced caused. Jorgensen informs the readers that her "daytime depression would revert to nighttime anxiety. The attacks would creep in slowly, like a snake" (p. 122), causing her to have severe panic attacks with her heart pounding fast, she was only able to calm herself for a short time while reading books or instructions. These are the aftermath issues that many people don't see or understand, and Jorgensen takes the time to shed light on these situations. These are not only caused by the sexual abuse but because of her abusive father. Another example Jorgensen shares is an experience she had with a psychiatrist, she went in anxious to talk to someone about her problems, which is relatable for many readers. Jorgensen recalls telling the psychiatrist she was having problems because her father abused her when she was young and the psychiatrist replied, "and you're not over it yet?" (p. 128). This causes

Jorgenson to feel embarrassed and is the exact opposite of the kind of help she needs; all she receives is pills. This caused sympathy in readers as after this it set her back and made her feel mad at her mom and her father and wondering how her life could be different. Jorgenson takes into account all the different aspects and how they held a long-term effect over her head, as she was only young when this psychiatrist made her feel humiliated about feeling the need for help.

Near the end of Jorgensen's book, she talks about finally feeling good about her past and that it "felt really good to be part of a group of women who knew exactly what you went through" (p. 212). Jorgenson expands on how she still was a bit uncomfortable with her individual therapy sessions but that she had people to lean on and who finally understood the sexual abuse she had went through. The breakthrough that washes over Jorgenson during this time she describes as "It was so uplifting, such a relief, that I can only express it as being given the gift of forever love, a true love that will always endure, one that will never leave, one that is all forgiving" (p. 213). Which is one of the most incredible aspects, and points of this book; to let people know that effects of abuse are long lasting and its OK to struggle but there are people out there who understand you and want to get you help. Although Jorgensen tries to put out a strong front by quoting her inner dialogue "Stop whining and complaining, there are more people in the world with greater problems." (p. 89), we as readers see the inner struggle, she faces every day. Despite that Jorgenson continues to see the beauty in the little things, such as the landscape on her journey and that is a beautiful thing in her continuous recovery.

Overall, the book reflects on the trauma, and abuse endured by Jorgenson through her emotional moments. This read could be most beneficial for educators, or people personally

effected by sexual abuse. Not only would this book give everyone a real and raw sense of how much of a negative impact on someone, but how hard it can be to recover and the years it can take. The fact that Jorgensen wrote in such a vulnerable emotional way, can essentially lead to a huge impact on many people suffering from the same feelings. By those impacted reading this book it can help them in their own personal road to recovery and maybe give them the strength and bravery to see that there are people out there who have gone through the same thing and understand you. Although this book is very emotional and can help others it should be taken with precaution due to the fact that the languages and stories are very uncensored and real, for some this could cause a trigger and distress. It can ultimately shed perspective and educate many people on the topic of sexual abuse but needs to be remembered that everyone's experience is different, and no single individual heals the same way. Jorgenson created a great way to tell her story, although sometimes I feel there could be confusion when she switches back and forth a lot between present and past stories. These stories are crucial for the courageous powerful point of the book but could maybe be structured in a way that is clearer on if it's in the past or not. Other than that, this book was written gracefully about a topic that is hard to hear, and to talk about in today's society. I would recommend this read to anyone who is willing to be educated and emotionally captivated by a topic that effects a lot of people including those in the fields of sociology, psychology, women's studies, feminist studies, social policy, and social work.