

# ACCELERATION

GRAHAM MCNAMEE

## READER'S NOTES

### Synopsis

*"This is a nightmare.*

*"Working at the Toronto Transit Commission's lost and found. Nine to five. Monday to Friday. A little slice of death, one day at a time. For me it's a two-month sentence, July and August. I would have been happy bumming around till September, but Dad called in a favour to get me in here. And at least I don't have to wear a uniform like my bud Wayne over at the Dairy Barn. Wayne's planning to torch the thing (the uniform, not the Barn) before we head back for our last year of high school.*

*"So I'm here under protest, a political prisoner of the capitalist overlord otherwise known as Dad."*

So begins *Acceleration*, a strikingly believable and seamlessly crafted YA thriller packed full of laugh-out-loud scenes and hysterical one-liners.

Duncan is bored out of his brain, until he finds a little, brown leather book. It's a diary that details the dark and twisted secrets of an emerging psychopath who's hunting women on the subway, searching for the perfect victim to be his first. When nobody else believes him, it's left to Duncan to do something. Racing through a city in the grip of a heat wave, he scrambles to find the hunter, before it's too late.

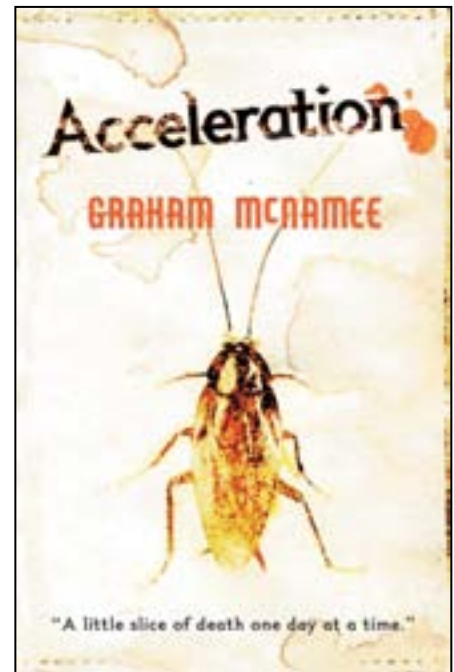
Duncan is haunted by the drowning death of a girl he witnessed the previous summer. He's eaten up by guilt at not being able to save her, and jumps at this chance at redemption. But everywhere he looks for this subway stalker turns into a dead end. Until the man shows up at the Lost and Found looking for his diary. Duncan trails him home, waits and watches, fearing time has already run out and this psycho may have already captured his first victim. So when the hunter leaves his house, Duncan enlists the criminal skills of his best friend to get him inside. He finds a basement lair and an empty closet-cell waiting for a captive. Then the man unexpectedly returns, and Duncan has to fight his way out of there. Duncan is chased through the rain-slicked streets to the subway, where he intends to escape. But the hunter is too quick and too strong. Their fight ends on the subway tracks, with the death of the hunter and Duncan gravely injured. After his recovery, Duncan makes his peace with the memory of the drowned girl he couldn't save, and finds a small measure of redemption.

### Author Biography

Graham McNamee. Born in Toronto, Canada, in August of 1967, during the Summer of Love. Graduated high school, barely. Took one creative writing course in high school, got suspended for being "overly confrontational", and failed that. Worked the graveyard shift in a couple of factories. That sucked. So I got a job in a bookstore. That didn't suck. Now I work in a library—back to sucking again. Got lucky when I entered a novel-writing competition. I didn't win it, but I came in second and they published my first book in five countries. But all that's ancient history. What's new is—*Acceleration*.

### Motivation for Writing this Book

Why did I write this book? Well, I've always loved suspense novels, the kind that lunge for your throat and won't let go. And, being something of an expert on dead end jobs, I decided to give the main character one. I'm fascinated by the science of criminal psychological profiling—as developed by the FBI's Behavioural Sciences Unit—and wanted to make that the key Duncan would use to search for the psychopath. So I wrote my own little thriller, set where I grew up. From the slums of Toronto to the subway tunnels to the quiet suburban streets where evil lies in wait, here's my tour of the dark heart of the city.



## **Educational Applicability**

Discuss the significance of the title and the cover image

Create a character profile for the major characters

Write a section of the story from another character's point of view

Write a newspaper editorial article about Duncan—set at the end of the book.

Examine the language used by the author and look at what sentence structure etc makes the book such a fast, exciting read.

## **Discussion topics can include:**

- The origins of evil (nature vs. nurture)
- Acts of redemption
- Criminal Psychological Profiling
- The nature of empathy, and its absence in the psychopathic personality.
- Friendship and trust