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# Lockdown: Escape From Furnace 1



## Synopsis

Furnace Penitentiary: the world's most secure prison for young offenders, buried a mile beneath the earth's surface. Convicted of a murder he didn't commit, sentenced to life without parole, "new fish" Alex Sawyer knows he has two choices: find a way out, or resign himself to a death behind bars, in the darkness at the bottom of the world. Except in Furnace, death is the least of his worries. Soon Alex discovers that the prison is a place of pure evil, where inhuman creatures in gas masks stalk the corridors at night, where giants in black suits drag screaming inmates into the shadows, where deformed beasts can be heard howling from the blood-drenched tunnels below. And behind everything is the mysterious, all-powerful warden, a man as cruel and dangerous as the devil himself, whose unthinkable acts have consequences that stretch far beyond the walls of the prison. Together with a bunch of inmates—some innocent kids who have been framed, others cold-blooded killers—Alex plans an escape. But as he starts to uncover the truth about Furnace's deeper, darker purpose, Alex's actions grow ever more dangerous, and he must risk everything to expose this nightmare that's hidden from the eyes of the world.

## Book Information

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Series: Escape from Furnace (Book 1)

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Men #97 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure > Mystery & Thriller

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 - 11

## Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up—"Beneath heaven is hell. Beneath hell is Furnace." That's 14-year-old Alex's

description of the underground prison a mile below the surface of the earth where he and other teen boys are incarcerated for life. The first title (Farrar, Straus, 2009) in Alexander Gordon Smith's new series begins when the protagonist is caught by strange silver-eyed men as he and a buddy are in the midst of a house burglary. Resigned to jail time, Alex is shocked when he's framed by these ghostly black-suited figures who pull guns and murder his pal right in front of him. Pleas of innocence are ignored and Alex lands in Furnace. Gangs bully everyone, the food is disgusting slop, bizarre guard dogs tear inmates apart, and boys are arbitrarily dragged away late at night and return as killing automatons. When all seems lost, Alex and his savvy cellmate devise an escape plan. Last minute calamities bring the plan to the brink of disaster, and a cliffhanger ending definitely carries listeners to the next installment. Using a variety of accents, Alex Kalajzic captures the teen's terrors and occasional black humor as well as the guard's monotone menace. Themes of fear and brutality are frequent and descriptions are occasionally visceral, but none of the scenes are gratuitous. Discussions about the consequence of bad choices, loyalty between friends, and prison life are among the topics that spring from this story, but male audiences will find the fast-paced survival saga most appealing. An additional purchase. --Barbara Wysocki, Cora J. Belden Library, Rocky Hill, CT (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Positing a near-future backlash against teen crime (and teens in general), Smith sets his series opener in a squalid prison for juvenile offenders built deep underground and patrolled by surgically altered supermen with vicious, skinless dogs. Framed (like a suspicious number of his fellow inmates) for a murder he did not commit, Alex is plunged into a desperate struggle for survival amid constant sirens, lurid lighting, nightmares, gang violence, and terrifying encounters with the prison's scary guardians. Smith establishes a quick pace with an opening chase described in staccato prose, closes with a convoluted but explosive escape for Alex and a handful of allies, and in between crafts a picture of prison life less raw and hideous than what is found in, for instance, Adam Rapp's Buffalo Tree (1997), but frightening enough to boost reader interest in sequels. Grades 6-9. --John Peters --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The author has an absolutely awesome premise...Creative, intriguing and something new (at least to me). A prison below ground with odd/scary creatures with death around almost every corner?

Excellent! While the premise of the book got me excited to read and listen to it, the actual book was very hard for me to get into. At first, I didn't realize it was more of a young adult thriller. If this was not geared as a YA novel, I would have rated it 3 stars because it does have that tempo and feeling of that demographic. I won't give any spoilers but if you like an interesting twist on suspenseful thrillers, I would recommend it. I was a bit disappointed but only because I failed to realize who this was geared to. I'd be very interested to read a novel by this author made for a more mature audience.

“Beneath heaven is hell, boys, and beneath hell is Furnace. I hope you enjoy your stay.” 14-year-old Alex Sawyer learns just this when his life takes an unexpected turn of events. Furnace Penitentiary, built for juvenile delinquents after the summer gangs went on a murder spree, is rumored to be the one of the worst. It was an underground prison shrouded in mystery. The place is filled to the brim with killers; forgotten about or discarded as trash by family members. But not all of them are murderers. Alex Sawyer is framed for the shooting of his best friend by strange men in suits, with black eyes and gas masks. Alex soon finds what horrors Furnace has in store for him, and realizes that the other prisoners are the least of his worries. For deep underground, in Furnace, there are hellish dogs with no skin, twitching creatures with gas masks stitched onto their faces, and a warden so purely evil that no one can stand to meet his gaze. These demons come to drag you away in the night, and the unlucky prisoners who are marked and taken, rarely come back. Or do they? Alex realizes that the only way he will survive Furnace, is by breaking out. An idea surfaces as Alex draws the unwanted attention of a gang, the Skulls. Finally, when he and a few unplanned guests decide they're ready to break free, the demons come knocking and a vital member of his team is taken. Alex sees an old friend of his who was taken as well, but has turned into something different. A monster. Alex leads his remaining friends into the escape, eager to be freed, but scarred from his experiences. The small group escapes the clutches of the guards by a hair's breath, and blow their way to freedom, but are they truly free? Or does their escape from Furnace only lead them to another obstacle, one that they might not be able to get past? Lockdown: Escape from Furnace, is a 2009 Horror Science-Fiction novel, written by Alexander Gordon Smith. Escape is a powerful theme in Lockdown, the only way Alex has a chance at life. If Alex doesn't break free from his emotional and physical prisons, he might as well just be another robotic prisoner in the monotony of his prison. In society, there are many people who are wrongfully accused. There are also a lot of people who go free when they should be in prison, or corruption in high levels of

government so the accused can't find justice. This is shown in many books, movies, and television shows, with dystopian novels and entertainment becoming increasingly popular. Books like this illustrate the defenselessness individuals feel in societies where the corruption is rooted so deep that there is almost no hope of justice. Alex witnesses this first hand. I read this book because the thought of dystopian societies and horrible creatures appealed to me. I loved the idea of an underground prison and one protagonist who wouldn't settle for a life of false accusations and slavery. I would recommend this book highly to any other reader because of the unique writing style, as well as the interesting storyline and multiple plot twists. Overall, Lockdown: Escape from Furnace, was a gripping, heart-pounding horror novel, which had the gears in your head turning and you sitting on the edge of your seat at the end of every chapter. The cliffhanger ending perfectly set the stage for the upcoming novels, which I hope are as much of a success as the first. I think that Lockdown was a wonderfully written, deep and emotional book, which kept some lighthearted and funny moments, to form a perfect YA novel. Alexander Gordon Smith succeeded in writing a gripping horror story! It comes highly recommended from me!

Combine a unconventional jail of horrors, an ancient evil force and the evil science of the third Reich and you get "The Furnace". At it's best it's as good a horror story as Steven Kings. It starts a bit slow and rivets you by book four and the conclusion in book 5. I wish there was an omnibus however these are well worth the investment in time and money. Well edited without the typical errors in many Kindle books the story takes place in England after a summer of murder by rampaging youths. Although it's rated for young adults, I'm 55 and love horror and think this book is full of graphic violence and gore. The difference is it is violence with purpose which makes it all that much scarier.

This book was so difficult to put down! I actually came across one of the later books in Barnes and Noble. I was so intrigued by the cover that I purchased book 1 from and started reading right away. It opens with a bang. You're thrown into the story as Alex is running from something horrifying in Furnace. He backtracks a little and explains how he got placed into Furnace, the hellacious prison for young criminals. After the Summer of Slaughter, a period in which young people committed horrible crimes, the government sought to cut down on youth crime. They did so by creating Furnace, the prison synonymous with hell. It was made mostly to scare kids into behaving. It partly worked, but then innocent kids started getting convicted and placed in Furnace. Alex and his friend Toby used to loot houses to get money. Though Alex was a reluctant criminal, he certainly isn't a

fully likable character, but that's what makes him interesting. He's not completely innocent, yet you want to root for him anyway because he's just a kid in a horrible situation. Alex ends up getting framed for murder by mysterious men in black suits while he's looting a house. Then he's taken to Furnace where kids are placed in cells, work horrible jobs, and get chased by mutant dogs or taken by men in gasmasks during the "Blood Watch" to be turned into grotesque monsters. It's a horrible place, and you just want so badly for Alex to escape the hell. There's never a dull moment in this book because something is always happening. Because of this, it was hard to put down. I read it in a few days, and I can't wait to get my hands on the sequel. Though some of the events in the book seem unrealistic and confusing, I think they'll be better described in later books. For example, you don't really find out why Alex was falsely accused. What's the reason the men in black suits keep falsely accusing these kids? Obviously, they want kids in the prison, guilty or not, but why? I hope to find out in later installments. Other series I've read and enjoyed: The Hunger Games, Harry Potter, Enclave (The Razorland Series), Uglies, Divergent

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