



Bloody Bloody Apple

Howard Odentz

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Every fall, when the orchards ripen and the leaves begin to die, there are murders. We know it, and we accept it. It's the price we pay for living in Apple, Massachusetts. Our town carves up and spits out a few seeds each year. We all approach autumn with dread because nobody wants to be a seed.

Now, there's another body in the woods and we are the unfortunate ones to find it—me, Newie and Annie.

The discovery of a murdered girl propped up against a tree on the path between the high school and the middle school, plunges Jackson Gill and his friends into the center of a decades old blight that has cursed the town of Apple for almost sixty years.

As the next forty-eight hours unfold, the underbelly of their lives and their town are exposed. Family ties are tested and the truth of what is really happening begins to bubble to the surface.

Death swirls tightly around Jackson and his friends as they traverse the narrow tightrope between adolescence and adulthood. Caught up in the maelstrom of murder, they can't help but dance ever closer to the horror that has plagued their lives for so long.

After all, they have no choice. They live in Bloody Bloody Apple.

Bloody Bloody Apple Details

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From Reader Review Bloody Bloody Apple for online ebook

Lisa West says

Brilliant...again

Mr Odentz has a keen mind for the the way young adults think. The characters are true to their friends before themselves. I will tell you now that this book is creepy, frightening and will leave you horrified at what we know humanity can do to humanity. This is not random, gratuitous horror, oh no, there is a plot, a story to tell and a mystery to solve. You will be compelled to read. Thank you Author!

Lisa says

This is one of the better books that I've read all year. It was a very quick read, as the characters and storyline was so good that I didn't want to stop reading. I'm not going to get into the storyline, as every other reviewer has done. I'll just say the 3 main characters come from damaged, broken families, yet they will find their way into your heart. The end was a complete and utter surprise. Yep, I'd recommend this book and author. I won this book on Goodreads/First reads. What a heck of a deal!

Marie says

This book is doing nothing for me and it is probably just me as I have seen that it has received great reviews, but I just am not able to get into the storyline. Giving it two stars as I don't feel right giving it one star as it probably is a good book, but it is just not for me.

Anne says

I found this a fun read. The narrator, Jackson, is well written and his voice feels like a true young boy of today. He's funny and insightful. The story drew me in from the start, I mean yearly, gruesome murders? And that's just the start. The families of the three main characters are very disturbing but it just gets more and more so. This was a good one!

Peter says

Apple is a small town that is located in Western Massachusetts. For the last sixty years, in the autumn, strang and brutal murders have taken place. The police force of Apple, don't have a clue to who the murder is. The town people learn to accept it. Jackson, who is an angry teenager, who has to take care of his mother, who suffers from depression, a grandfather, who is wheelchair bound and has a fading memory, a father, who is a religious fanatic, who spends in night in his workshop, making crosses and a sister Becky, who is locked and chained in the cellar, so she can't escape. Jackson thinks that his sister might be possessed by the devil.

Annie, who is Jackson girlfriend, is abused by her father and Newie, whose father is the town sheriff. The three of them, have their plates full with the strange family that they are surrounded by. The three are the best of friends and walk to school together just about every day. One day, when they were walking through the woods, they discover a body of a classmate. The eyes have been removed from this body. Later the girl is identified as Claudia Fish. Her murder was the third one this year. When Jackson returns home, his sister Becky, seems to know some of the details of the murder. Can Jackson and his friends discover who the killer is and end the bloodshed that surrounds the town of Apple? *Bloody, Bloody Apple*, is a fast paced book, that you don't want to put down. Odentz development of the three main characters, is done very well. This makes the story even stronger. This is the first book that I have read by Howard Odentz and it won't be the last. I highly recommend this book.

Meagan says

There was so much that I loved about this book. I actually don't know where to start. I guess I can start with my rating 5 stars!!! I rarely give fives so that says it all right there. I randomly chose this book as my second read of the new year and went into it with very little expectation. This is partly because I don't often choose to read horror books, and also because I think that no one can write teen murders the way that R.L. Stine did back in the days of *Fear Street*. This is why when I found myself devouring the pages of *Bloody Bloody Apple*, I knew I had found something special. This is not a book for children, but also not for adults. It floats the line between Stine and King, and pushes the boundaries of teen fiction by not holding anything back. The murders are grisly, with enough detail for you to see and have nightmares about the crime scenes, and the crazy characters in the book are so crazy. Jackson's voice is very strong and we learn just how messed up the town of Apple really is. This book was absolutely delicious and deserves each and every one of those five stars.

Kimberly says

BLOODY BLOODY APPLE, by Howard Odentz, was a captivating, fast-paced read right from the beginning. When we are first introduced to the small town of Apple, there is no sugar-coating the rough and beaten way of life there. This is one of those stories where you want to reach in and yell at the characters to do something differently. However, the scene and emotional pull of the novel is so well set that--as a reader--you realize that had these been "*real*" people in the same situation, a change on their parts wouldn't be enough to make a difference in a town like this.

It is simply the way it was *meant* to be.

"... Turning the other cheek is cake. Doing something about it sometimes seems too hard."

In the Autumn, there are murders in Apple. Every year without fail--unsolved, often brutal, murders and mutilations. The residents have come to accept it as "just the way things are", and for the most part, simply block it out of their consciousness.

"... Sometimes the stories we tell ourselves ... seem so real, it's sad ... "

The characters Odentz portrays are so vivid, so full of personality, that even with the town's universal apathy

regarding the yearly murders, each person comes out as a clearly defined individual.

Jackson, whose family life is so "*wrong*" to the readers, has it bad--but then we realize that they **ALL** do, their problems and family lives are just manifested in different, toxic ways. Throughout the novel, the theme of death and decay pervades the entire atmosphere. Even in a rare tender moment, there is no escape from it.

"... Some things are just too damaged to be fixed. No matter how normal they appear on the surface, they'll always be broken underneath . . . "

Enjoy your visit to Apple--just don't let yourself get too attached to anyone there.

I would have gone with a 4.5 star rating, rounded up, if not for the very end of the story. A single sentence, that just didn't seem to fit in with the narrative at that point. This is only my personal opinion, and I honestly felt that everything preceding it was all-consuming and flowed perfectly.

Recommended!

Kylie says

Not too bad, far less gory and graphic than I'd have hoped for, but a pretty good story nonetheless.

I thought I was going to hate this book because there wasn't an active line in finding who was doing all of this killing, but it turned out ok. You do find out in the end, and it's quite satisfying in the world of books!

It appears there's an additional book that follows this one, and I will definitely be picking it up.

Tinky Weisblat says

"Apple, Massachusetts is rotten to the core," announces the cover of "Bloody Bloody Apple."

This novel from Howard Odentz of Wilbraham is seriously good and seriously creepy.

How good is it? I had so much trouble putting it down that I was almost late for a professional appointment the other morning.

How creepy is it? Odentz's previous novel, about a zombie apocalypse, seems cheerful in comparison. People became zombies fairly quickly in "Dead (a Lot)." And that book's youthful hero was resourceful and hopeful.

In contrast, the protagonist of "Bloody Bloody Apple" is trapped by his town, his family, and menacing evil. The people who are murdered in the town—and people are murdered there every fall, in apple season—die gruesome deaths.

Jackson Gill is a high-school senior who lives in a three-generational household in Apple, a medium-sized town in western Massachusetts. Both the town and the family are dysfunctional.

No one ever seems to leave Apple, and everyone lives in fear. Jackson's family exemplifies the town's uneasy pathology. His father barely speaks to the rest of the household. He holes himself up in the garage and carves crucifixes to ward off whatever it is that haunts Apple.

Jackson's mother suffers from severe depression that renders her almost catatonic. His grandfather is wheelchair bound and is losing his memory. Most unsettling of all, mentally ill sister Becky fills the house with screams and menace.

Teenage Jackson has to be the adult of the house, making sure that everyone in the family eats and takes medication, that laundry is done, that life is as normal as it can be in this home and this town.

Walking home from school one crisp autumn day, Jackson and his best friends discover the town's latest corpse. One of their classmates has been, in Jackson's words, "decorated by death."

When Jackson gets home, he discovers that Becky—who is locked in the basement and never leaves the house—seems to have special knowledge about the crime.

The sorrow and the murders keep coming as Jackson tries unsuccessfully to keep his family safe and to plan his eventual escape from the town of Apple.

Odentz has previously written two eerie musical comedies as well as "Dead (a Lot)." He is a deft plotter, and he knows how to keep his audiences and readers on the edge of their seats.

"Bloody Bloody Apple" is full of action, but it also raises important questions about family dynamics, cycles of poverty, and the resiliency of evil. Its twisting (and slightly twisted) ending left this reader thoughtful ... and a little scared.

David says

While the main premise of *Bloody Bloody Apple* is the gruesome killings that take place there every year, once the author dives into the lives of its inhabitants, including the first-person narrator, Jackson, Apple becomes a place in which a serial killer leaving body parts littered about may not be the grimmest thing in town.

Howard Odentz is doing a bit of Stephen King here, writing small town local flavor in which deep, dark secrets aren't so deep, every family is dysfunctional, and being a teenager is pretty horrific even without people randomly dying around you.

Apple, Massachusetts is apparently cursed with a serial killer, except since the killings have been going on for sixty years, it's become something that the town just accepts. The police are completely incapable of doing anything other than picking up the pieces (literally), and since this is a horror novel, the FBI never shows up and somehow a small town that has multiple spectacularly bloody murders every year never makes the news.

Jackson, your typical angry young high school student, has more reasons than most to be angry. His mother is almost catatonic with depression, his grandfather is wheelchair-bound and senile, his father has become a

brooding religious fanatic, and his sister... is locked in a basement, having gone completely insane. (Or, according to their father, possessed.)

His girlfriend Annie and his best friend Newie, whose father is the police chief, don't have much better home lives. But they get dragged into Apple's bloody tradition when they discover one of the bodies, and then Jackson's sister Becky starts whispering things that only the killer could know.

There are a few red herrings laid out in this book, particularly with regard to whether or not there is actually anything supernatural going on. The ending, in which the killer is revealed in a climactic, bloody, and improbable finale worthy of any *Scream* installment, makes sense given the clues, though once you put everything together, there is a major suspension of disbelief required.

But *Bloody Bloody Apple* is pure grade-B horror novel, working all the tropes and playing them straight, so don't expect strict realism. While there is a touch of King in the small town East Coast vibe and the evil in the hearts of ordinary people, much stronger influences were clearly *Scream*, *Friday the 13th*, *Halloween*, and every other teen slasher movie ever.

Jackson is about as likable as any teenage boy - which is to say, not very - but his situation and his temperament is as believable as it can be given the premise. This is not a particular clever or subversive take on the genre, but if you like the kind of bloody thrillers where the big questions are both "Whodunit?" and "Who's gonna get it?" then this is an entertainingly bloody read.

Really a 3 star book, but the writing was competent and it was a quick page-turner and I had an unhealthy fondness for slasher flicks when I was a teen, so I'm giving it 4 for popcorn appeal.

Suzanne says

Wow. I did not want to put this book down because I needed to know what was going to happen next!

Diane says

I can't help but think what this story could have been in the hands of a better writer.

Apple, Massachusetts is a small, dead-end town full of misery and wasted lives. The young people want out, but the older people have given up hope of ever escaping. The atmosphere is depressing and miserable. To make matters worse, every autumn a serial killer preys on the people of Apple, indiscriminately killing about half a dozen in brutal fashion before vanishing, only to emerge the next autumn.

The story is told through the eyes of Jackson Gill, a good kid trapped in a bad situation. His mother is severely depressed and unable to do much more than sit and smoke cigarettes all day. His father spends his days making wooden crosses in the garage. His grandfather, who lives with him, is apparently senile and not of much help at all. And then there's his older sister Becky - who is kept in the basement. She suffers from what used to be known as multiple personality disorder. You never know when you'll be dealing with Becky or Not-Becky, her insane alter ego. Of course, the Gills' solution to this problem is to lock her up in the basement as if she's some sort of monster. Okay.

Jackson's friends are also struggling with miserable lives. In fact, **everyone** appears to be miserable. This is repeatedly emphasized to the point that it becomes tedious. It's one of my sore points with this book. A few more issues:

- * Becky in the basement. Seriously? Do I need to point out how absurd this is?

- * The timeline of the murders is variously described as 80 years, 60 years, and later, by my reckoning, about 50 years. Despite the fact that Apple is a small town, no one has idea who has been committing these crimes. I find that very unlikely. The local law enforcement cannot be **that** incompetent. No one is going to get away with brutal murders, especially ones out in the open like these, without leaving some clues that even a small town police force find. Believe me, the killer behind all this is no genius.

- * Why was the FBI not involved? A serial killer who has been active for such a long period of time in a small town would certainly attract their attention. If the local police couldn't handle the crimes, why not the FBI? It's their specialty after all.

- * The only real character is Jackson. The others are cardboard, two-dimensional, and often stereotypes - jock, party girl, outsider, etc.

- * The "twist" at the end is totally unbelievable and feels tacked on. I can't say much without spoiling the end, but in light of the character's personality and development during the story, this is also very unlikely. I was ready to give the book three stars for at least being entertaining in a shallow sort of way. However, that final sentence just killed it for me and I notice I'm not the only one. I think two stars is more than generous.

This is definitely one author I will **not** try again. He needs to work on his characters and stories and lay off the cheap exploitation.

WendyB says

[Were there two killers in the town or did Jackson decide to take over where his grandfather left off? (hide spoiler)]

Shawn says

I loved Howard Odentz's first book, Dead (A Lot), which was a quirky zombie tale with a teenage view point, but I loved Bloody Bloody Apple even more! Apple is like The Exorcist with a teenage view point, just a great scary story! It's been a long time since I've read a book that made me slightly afraid to take my dog out in the backyard for his nightly constitutional.... this book is scary good!!

Debbie Landry says

From the start of this book I was pulled in. I enjoyed the history of the unexplained murders which occur each fall in Apple, Massachusetts. The story unfolded unexpectedly and kept you moving and guessing along with it. Give this one a try...I am thankful it was shared with me by a friend.

