



Perfect Little Angels

Andrew Neiderman

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From the bestselling author of THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE.

"A master of psychological thrillers!"—VC Andrews

A picture perfect town holds a chilling secret.

Justine Freeman and her parents move to Elysian Fields to start anew, and the picturesque town seems the perfect place to do so. In fact, their new neighborhood seems too good to be true. Their neighbors are all polite and helpful, and the streets are eerily clean. Even the teenagers of Elysian Field are perfect. They don't drink, they don't smoke, and they are polite to their elders to a fault.

But Justine is a more typical teenager, and while the new girl in town hasn't yet learned how to behave like the teenagers of Elysian Fields, she will. Because in Elysian Fields, there are so many ways—horribly effective ways—to turn disobedient children into Perfect Little Angels.

Perfect Little Angels Details

Date : Published May 26th 2015 by Diversion Books (first published September 1989)

ISBN :

Author : Andrew Neiderman

Format : Kindle Edition 215 pages

Genre : Horror, Thriller, Science Fiction, Fiction

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From Reader Review Perfect Little Angels for online ebook

Flavia says

Cross post on my blog!

THRIFT STORE WHY: The cover! It looks amazing in person, with this weird, shiny overlay (especially on the red eyes). The art is fantastic, the name is attention grabbing, and the back copy/tagline are both really fun. I'm always keen on brainwashing plots and fake-utopias.

BACK COPY LIES (what the plot really is): A dull rebellious girl moves into a Utopian neighborhood where daily pills and radio signals make every citizen morally pure and essentially the same. Elsewhere, a semi-robot teen hallucinates for half the book.

WOULD I RECC TO READ: No. It's fun and pulpy, but there's a lot better of the type.

Review:

This was a fast and fun read, but it was hurt by a couple things.

One, the writing of the women was extremely creepy and weird- as in, you know, written by an older guy. I really don't need to hear multiple times about 15 year olds' tits! Similarly, while the main character had a bit of spunk, she was generally completely clueless and at times an idiot- missing all the beyond obvious signs that something was going on. Even when she saw visual proof of things being weird, she was very quick to dismiss it and move on. A common plot device, but one that grew extremely frustrating.

Half the book is from the viewpoint of another character (he's barely ever referred to by anything other than pronouns so I've forgotten his name fast- it was dumb. Edgar?) who is mentally unsound. This is actually at times quite interesting! He's very unsteady and off, but for most of the book (Cough) he has his own way of logic and thinking that prevents him from being another easy 'insane villain monster' stereotype. His sections were sometimes very interesting to read as you made sense of his interpretation of the world and tried to deduce what was real and what was going on, but his viewpoint is about every other chapter- at times you gain nothing, and it's a pain to read. Also, SUPER notably, there's some very unnecessarily, creepy, weird sex stuff with him as well. Uncomfortable sexualization and rape of him (and thus of a mentally ill character). Youch!! It didn't even add anything and was just there for shock value.

There's a few good tricks to the mind control element- most notably, the main character has a chilling realization when she notices her mother is painting, shadow for shadow, the same painting as their neighbor- but a lot of it was a bit lacking. You understood what it was going to be... and then it was just that: Boys couldn't be interested in sex, girls couldn't wear makeup, men had jobs and women were housewives. It was all to the vision of the villain, but we don't get enough backstory on him to really understand why. Yes, he can control this community and shape it to his will, but to what end? What does he want of it? Why is he so obsessed with this conservative utopia?

These are key questions that help make the plot and climax more interesting, but they are unresolved.

There is also pretty much nothing in terms of solid twists throughout the story. The reader knows what is

going on from the premise, the main character is slow but eventually catches on- and then there's not much else to the story. The climax is over quick and there's not much of a resolution. Instead of the story being really more explained or wrapped up, the last chapter is a full infodump about how the technology used in the book (which, also, we never technically see from the POV of a character, it's named and explained only here) is plausible. Two FBI agents talk for a long while, and then the book ends.

It read fast and was for sure engaging, as pulp tends to be. I'm happy to keep this in my collection because of the cover/whole concept, but it's not a particularly choice book. Not a hidden gem, to say the least.

Margo says

Struggled about a third of the way through this one before consigning to my "life's too short" shelf. Would have given up sooner except it was part of a reading challenge. Got it free on kindle - there was a reason for that!!!

Matt Garcia says

This reminded me a lot of the Scholastic and Point young adult horror novels that I grew up reading. While it is still an adult novel, it does have many of the traits and conventions of the aforementioned and I'd classify this as a PG-13 type of horror novel. I really enjoyed this aspect of it.

Cool concept and plot. It brought to mind the Stepford Wives but only in the most general sense. I've never read the novel but I'm familiar with the plot and this made me think of it. Nothing too original as this has been done several times but I still think it's executed nicely and it's entertaining throughout.

A very quick, "beach" type of read that has a good pace to it and could easily be finished in one day (I did lol)

The characters were fine. A bit cliche and stereotypical but they weren't badly done in my opinion with the Doctor's son, Eugene, being the most complex and arguably the most interesting. I also liked the main protagonist, Justine, as well.

The name of the community in the book, Elysian Fields, is a clever name and I think it perfectly goes with the story. Niederman does a solid job of creating this idyllic little suburb and how it can be appealing to those seeking a lifestyle change.

The book is dated in its depictions of pop culture and ideologies of the time but I find this to be charming. It's like watching a movie or a tv show that you used to watch as a kid and seeing how much times have changed.

The book is a nice mix of horror and suspense and Neiderman is able to create a good sense of tension during the more intense parts of the novel.

The book has a pretty cool cover to it.

The ending is pretty good and is open to interpretation. I had a fun time with this one.

Danica says

At first, this book had me confused when entering the mind of Dr. Lawrence's son, Eugene. His thoughts are all over the place, but as you continue reading, you realize he has experienced traumatic events which have obviously had a major effect on his being. The other main character of the story is Justine, like any teenager

who has moved to another city, she is having trouble adjusting to her new surroundings. As we proceed further into the story she learns there is a strangeness to her new community, but something deeper than just them being odd is going on. Good, quick read.

Sarah says

To start with I was slightly unsure of what to make of this book, but the further I got into it, I was well and truly captivated.

The storyline is not a very original one having watched horror films with the exact same theme, but it didn't make it any less enjoyable.

As soon as Justine and her family move to the idyllic Elysian Fields it is obvious that everything there as well as the families are just to perfect. Everyone is very friendly and happy. All the teenagers are nice, no mood swings what so ever and are generally happy to come straight home from school to study or do house chores.

Being a parent I have to admit that the thought of my children doing everything they were told without any argument is one that is very tempting. Unfortunately they are more like robots and have no personality and as much as it would make life so much easier at times, I would never want my children to be like that.

Everyone seems to be very much controlled by the doctor. The parts in the story which are set in his house with his son Eugene and nurse were very disturbing ones. I have to admit it certainly sent shivers down my spine.

Perfect Little Angels is a great mix of horror and suspense. It certainly turned out to be a very gripping read. My only issue is though I have to admit to finding the ending a bit weak. The story really seemed to be building up to something and I thought I would end the novel on a high but instead I was left feeling slightly disappointed with the very tidy ending. Otherwise than that though it's a very entertaining read.

Jennifer says

This review was originally posted to Jen in Bookland

Perfect Little Angels was an okay read. Really it is told from two points of view, one of which I loved and one of which annoyed me greatly. So it was great and not so great at the same time. Some slight spoilers ahead.

This story starts off with an amazing prologue so I couldn't wait to see what was going to happen. I loved the Eugene part of the book. They were really great and I loved trying to figure out what was going on with him. He was a wonderful character for a book like this. It is obvious what Dr. Lawrence is doing in the rest of the town, but not as much with Eugene. He is kind of crazy and it is kind of gross at some points, but in a way that I enjoy. If you don't like really horrifying things, really cringe worthy things, you probably want to skip this book.

The rest of the story is told from Justine's point of view. Justin and her family have just moved to Elysian Fields and they have to get with the program quickly. Justine knows something is up, but then she starts to be affected by everything and starts forgetting what her old life was like. She does have the one other girl in town who tries to help her not succumb to everything, but man Justine annoyed me. So like everyone in town is being controlled by the doctor, but Justine is so stupid. Once she realizes this she thinks oh I will just tell my parents. They will listen to me even though they are like zombies and totally not themselves anymore. I mean they are my parents of course they will listen to me! She was told again and again that she has to try and blend in, and she just doesn't really try very hard. Even once she is afraid of what will happen she is still like whatever. I expected more from her. If you were in her situation would you really be so blasé about it? Would you really not try very hard to blend in? Really? She was annoying. Her decision making was terrible. The way she went about things and spoke about things didn't come across as realistic to me. Even when she is affected by everything there was still something off about the way she was (and not because of her being affected by everything). I didn't believe she was becoming one of the zombie people. Then when she wasn't I didn't really believe she would be as stupid as she was.

So everything that was going on, the premise of the story, is interesting. If not for Eugene and his parts I wouldn't have enjoyed the book very much. It is a Stepford story with a crazy doctor. It was just alright. Then you get to the end and the epilogue was not the best. To have someone come and tell everyone exactly what happened, have the reader read in detail what happened in a very straightforward outlined way, well it was just not that good. If you read the book you know what was going on so...Or maybe just show a conversation between a few people with the key highlights. It just was unnecessary and made it end on an even lower note than it was. Too bad the whole thing couldn't have been as entertaining as the Eugene chapters (note the Eugene chapters are pretty messed up so you should be prepared for that).

Cindy says

I can't help it, I have a weird love of cheesy 70's and 80's horror novels and Neiderman was great at it!

Patricia says

Welcome to Elysian Field , the quaint little town where everything and everyone is perfect. The teenagers are non drinking , non smoking and perfect in every way. Justine and her parents are invited to move from New York. At first glance the town is idle and are so happy to be there. But as time goes on things aren't what they seem . How one man and his ideals of how the children should be. He had terrible and very effective ways to turn the teenagers into perfect little angels

The author tells this story from two points of view . The first is from Eugene , the son of Dr. Lawrence. He has been long suffering test subject for his father. He is a little crazy and shows it through out . He has been molested by a sick nurse and is a lab rat for his father . At first you are a little scared of him and want to know what the heck is wrong with him. But as you read you start to really feel for him an the torture he has gone through and the pain and agony.

The second point of view is Justine's the new girl in town. Her parents and her have moved from New York

and she just doesn't know what is going on. The kids are acting like stepford children . They don't do anything for fun and she can't understand why. Until she meets the doctor and start taking the vitamins . She starts to feel different and forgetting everything she likes , like her music. As she figures out what is happening she just goes along with it. She fricken drove me crazy . She was like oh if I tell my mom and dad , they will understand and fix it . Well guess what kind of hard to fix something when they are under the influence . I kind of just wanted to slap some sense into her. I mean lets not do something ourselves lets just tell our parents who in turn are going to the well basically cult leader. So what is a girl to do.

The book was a good read for me , I especially loved Eugene's story the most . I don't think I would of enjoyed as much as I did without Eugene's part. Justine and the stepford children were ok. They got a little boring after awhile. The way they acted was getting a little tiring and just a bit annoying . The grimace on the face of the character when he touched a boob was actually so funny. Then he was punished by burning his hand on the hot car engine. Was like wth ok then . The Eugene parts are really messed up and I just want you to be prepared . Trust me you will never look at

vitamins the same way again, or the color blue .

Over all I really did like reading this book, it was a good read that could be read in an afternoon by the pool. So if you want a good read about a crazy doctor , the Stepford children and one girls struggle to figure out whats going on . Check it .

Mel says

There are some spoilers in the below review, but everything mentioned occurs within the prologue and first chapter of the book.

Whilst away from home and internet-less, this was a book that had been on my kindle for a long time, and that I decided to read without access to the blurb. I found this to be an interesting approach to reading, as I never knew what I would get and I probably read a few titles that I wouldn't have done otherwise.

Initially we are introduced to a nameless narrator, who appears to be the result of some kind of scientific experiment at the hands of his Father after an accident. We soon realise that the man is there against his will, as he writes HELP on the window in his own blood and is visibly distressed.

We then watch Justine and her family move into a new home in a development called Elysian Fields, which was developed by the mysterious Dr. Lawrence. My mind immediately started whirring and I assumed this Dr. Lawrence was the Father of the man from the prologue. This was soon confirmed, but it became apparent that whilst the residents of Elysian Fields seemed to know about the son and the accident – they did not know the full story.

Once I'd started reading I thought the title could hold a clue that the vitamins developed by Dr. Lawrence affect the teenagers more than the adults and turn them into “perfect little angels”.

This definitely reminded me of The Stepford Wives where people are changed to be ‘perfect’ and had a feel of some of Peter James's earlier, standalone novels where nothing is quite what it seems.

This was very well written, with detailed description and dialogue written so that you could easily distinguish how far into Dr. Lawrence's plan a particular character was. There was also a good mix of the plot focusing on Justine and on Dr. Lawrence's son. I particularly liked Lois's character and her determination into finding out what was going on was written well and convincingly.

Throughout the plot, Dr. Lawrence held all the power, both over his son Eugene and over the wider residents of Elysian Fields. It was interesting to see the change in power from the Doctor to Justine and Lois once they started to piece the puzzle together but I'm not sure I completely understood Dr. Lawrence's aim, as a lot of the explanation was quite subtle and seemed to leave a lot to the reader's imagination. Personally, I prefer everything to be concluded and tied up nicely but the end of a book, but this would really appeal to readers who prefer to read between the lines.

SAMANTHA ANNE TOAL says

A future film maybe

I can see this being made into a film; vaguely familiar story line but with a dark ending loved it

Laura Ellis says

This is a book that I wouldn't have typically read. However, I rather enjoyed it. It was a fun read as I speculated what the reasons were for what was happening.

Erin *Proud Book Hoarder* says

The beginning delivered you right into the action and remained interesting throughout. Some supreme suspense is built in key parts, and the ending was a nice wrap-up. However I couldn't help not wanting the pace to pick up a bit at times. One irritation was that no one believed the girl but this isn't the novel's fault; it's a personal pet peeve of mine. The atmosphere of Perfect Little Angels is slightly ominous but clear-cut, and the plot itself is creative and overall well-executed.

The characters are not focused on evenly; Justine is the main heroine who comes across as a normal, likable teenager adapting to change. All people are pretty simple overall, which appeals to certain kinds of readers, while others may feel disappointed.

The boy kept in the house (won't offer spoilers) is probably the creepiest part of the story. He was an undeniably sad creature, and when he was shown in the story, it always threw me off track trying to figure out just WHAT his deal was. The pace is pretty even and most of the conflict starts at the beginning. Neiderman's trademark writing style is always clear and to the point, which enables faster reading and comprehension.

This can be enjoyed by all age levels, and what I consider "PG-13 horror." I give it 3 wheelchairs. Points deducted due to an at times slow pace that could have been rectified, the annoyance of no one believing Justine, and the semi-predictable tone.

Veronica says

This book was terrible. At least it was short. Nothing was explained like what the heck the doctor did to his son and why the son thought the random girl looked like his mom. I don't know if the book was written in another language and then translated but the language was really awkward making the book annoying to read. The ending wrapped up in lightening speed leaving quite a few loose ends, most notably "why".

Ann says

Justine and her family moved from the city to another smaller town. The development they moved into was beautiful and all the people in there were all so nice. Or so they thought. Seems everyone seemed to act in somewhat the exact way . It got to a point that she noticed the people that lived outside the development were more like she used to be. Dr.Lawrence who was the "head" of the development so to speak and soon after moving there he suggested they start talking the Good Pills which were vitamins. That was why everyone was so happy and healthy. Things get kind of weird then and hard for me to explain. Was the doctor really helping these people or just experimenting with them and brain washing them.

Molly says

So...The Stepford Wives, but for children. Holds up pretty well. I think if it were written today the ending would've been very different, but otherwise, doesn't seem terribly dated reading it now.
