



# Shoot the Moon

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## **Shoot the Moon** Billie Letts

From one of America's best-loved storytellers - the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller WHERE THE HEART IS - comes a tale of a small Oklahoma town and the mystery that has haunted its residents for years.

In 1972, windswept DeClare, Oklahoma, was consumed by the murder of a young mother, Gaylene Harjo, and the disappearance of her baby, Nicky Jack. When the child's pajama bottoms were discovered on the banks of Willow Creek, everyone feared that he, too, had been killed, although his body was never found.

Nearly thirty years later, Nicky Jack mysteriously returns to DeClare, shocking the town and stirring up long-buried memories. But what he discovers about the night he vanished is more astonishing than he or anyone could have imagine. Piece by piece, what emerges is a story of dashed hopes, desperate love, and a secret that still cries out for justice...and redemption.

## **Shoot the Moon Details**

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Author : Billie Letts

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## From Reader Review Shoot the Moon for online ebook

### Cait S says

I'm realizing recently that this is my favorite genre. This small town, buried secrets, serious drama murder mystery. The books always go so fast and I get entirely wrapped up in the storyline and how it's all unfolding.

This book was great. I wasn't as taken with some of the characters as I usually am but the mystery itself made up for it in this case. I just went through Billie Letts' list of works and I wish she had more books! I would pick them all up after reading this one.

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### Donna says

A fellow literary lover lent me an entire bag of books to read and I selected this one to read first since I recognized the author's name. I was not at all disappointed by this story. I quickly came to care about the characters and wanted Mark, or Nicky Joe, to find out all about his mother, and then who killed his mother. Just when I thought I'd figured it out, the author threw in another curve ball that kept me wondering who all was involved in this and what their motives were. I like a story that keeps me guessing and Letts can certainly tell a good story. This book had some suspense and a little bit of a love story and lots of family history. It definitely kept me interested and I really enjoyed it. Thanks to Pam for allowing me to read this great book.

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### Carol Waters says

Nah, never happened. Too many quantum leaps. Oh, good, she's not my cousin.

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### Rickey says

I chose this book because it was once a #1 New York Times Bestseller and because the author, Billie Letts, is an Oklahoman. Being an Okie author myself, I wanted to get a feel for what it takes to be a New York Times Bestseller. Shoot the Moon was an enjoyable read. It was easy to get into the story, was a quick page-turner, and had some unexpected twists and turns.

The story begins when Mark Albright, an upscale Hollywood veterinarian, learns that he is adopted and returns to Oklahoma to discover his roots. When he gets to DeClare, Oklahoma, he is shocked to find that his mother had been murdered some thirty years earlier. At the time it was presumed that her ten-month-old baby had also been murdered even though the baby's body had never been found. He believes he is this baby. It is an unsolved crime that Albright is determined to solve. He is also intent on learning who his biological father is. Some in DeClare, however, are not happy to see him return and do not want this crime reinvestigated.

Lett's description of life in small-town Oklahoma seemed authentic and her characters were well drawn. I thought the racial prejudice regarding Indians in the late sixties was exaggerated. Growing up in Oklahoma, I

didn't feel there was much racial tension between Indians and whites. Of course, your perception of how much prejudice exists is a very personal experience depending on your viewpoint. I grew up near a town that had a military base, and different races and religions were more easily accepted. If I had lived in a different part of Oklahoma, perhaps I would have been more aware of this prejudice. I do know that there was a prejudice against Indians in the late 1800's and early 1900's, but I didn't think it still existed in the sixties and seventies.

One incident in the story that caught my attention was when Albright was shot in the leg and the bullet goes completely through his leg. As Lett's describes it, it "didn't involve bone, artery or nerve. Even missed muscle." I think most would find it hard to believe that a bullet could go completely through a person's thigh and not hit anything unless that person were quite obese, and Albright is described as being slender. Also, Albright, a veterinarian seemed quite unschooled in some of the basics of medicine. For example he seems to have very little knowledge of blood types and DNA tests. I think most of us by junior high school have already learned something of blood typing.

The diary inserts were a stroke of writing genius on Lett's part. Through these pages scattered throughout the book, you gradually get to know the private thoughts and feelings of Albright's murdered teenage mother.

The ending of the book came across as being rushed. It seemed as if Lett's was in a hurry to tie up all of the loose ends and get on to her next book. I wish that Goodreads would allow us to give half stars. My actual rating for this book is 4 ½ stars because of this rushed ending, which also seemed a little too contrived as it tied up all the loose ends. I enjoyed the book - a recommended read that includes romance, mystery, action, and gives the reader a true-to-life feeling of small town Oklahoma.

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## Hyouten says

The first thing that I see people talk about this book is its small town Oklahoma setting. Having lived in a small town myself (though not as small as DeClare, but comparable), I appreciate the simplicity of its institutions as well as its residents. In terms of writing, I think it's a smart move. It keeps your character count small and confined conveniently in one small town.

Don't be fooled, however. I did not like Shoot the Moon. If I were to sum up my thoughts about this book in a few words, I'd say it was boring. Not just because nothing exciting really happened, but the writing style itself failed to engage me.

Shoot the Moon sells itself as a mystery novel with some romance sprinkled here and there. When I read the synopsis, it was intriguing. I was hooked. The excitement stopped there, unfortunately, because the events that our protagonist Mark Albright went through were predictable, save for one revelation at the end. This big revelation that you spend the entire book reading about is indeed unpredictable, but the way you find out about it is so anti-climactic that you're left with disbelief. There could have been a lot more plot twists and shady characters that could make the story a lot more sinister, but I guess Letts decided to play it safe.

As for the writing style, I also found it boring. Letts tries to be descriptive but falls short of her attempt, and immediately after said attempt, the subsequent sentences were un-descriptive. I'm not sure if this is her writing cadence but it's definitely jarring. The characters' personalities are also quite uneventful. They're like robots, simply acting within the set parameters and never showing any dynamic.

Overall, Shoot the Moon had the potential to be something more. The premise is very interesting and there

are a lot of workable possibilities to really keep the reader on its toes. Unfortunately, Letts chose the vanilla route, leaving the book as interesting as a town whose residents know each other, with Walmart as its main commercial hangout spot.

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### **Rebecca McNutt says**

Set in Oklahoma and filled with intensity, suspense and Seventies nostalgia, *Shoot the Moon* is an unforgettable blast from the past steeped in murder and mayhem.

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### **korey says**

Although not as good as "Where the Heart Is", this book should be on your must read list. Billie Letts is an incredible writer. Her characters are so well defined they just bounce off the pages. You can actually "see" them, and what's fun in this book, is that she holds off on giving you all the details of some characters, you make assumptions of what they might look like, and you're wrong. I love when she does that.

This book is a crime mystery, but in a very personal way and not spooky or gross. It takes place in Oklahoma and captures the true light of the midwest. Very much like Carson McCullers writing. Walmart is mentioned a lot! It reads just like "Where the Heart Is", easy and fast. That's my only complaint about Billie's writing - it's just so damn easy and conversational I go through the book too fast! She always leaves me wanting more - just one more chapter!

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### **Bark says**

read this as an unabridged audiobook and though the reader did a great job with all of the voices (and there sure were a heck of a lot of characters!) and kept up a nice casual pace which didn't put me to sleep, I found the book to be disappointingly average.

Shoot The Moon starts out describing life and gossiping about the inhabitants of a small town that is shocked when a young boy goes missing and his mother is found dead. The boy "Nicky Jack" is never found but his pajama bottoms are ominously located. The book then fast forwards to the present day when the child, now a grown man, heads back to town to learn about his mysterious past.

Mark is now a successful veterinarian and has always had the very best that money can buy but when his adoptive parents die he finds evidence that maybe his life wasn't meant to be lead tending to pampered pooches in California. When he arrives in Oklahoma his appearance opens a great big moldery bag of worms.

Mark or "Nicky Jack" as he's known in Oklahoma is alright as characters go and the cast full of small time folks are okay as well. Unfortunately, it's all pretty average. There isn't a lot of spark to hold this little mystery tale together and I have a feeling that if I were reading this as a regular book it would've been far too easy to put down. It needed more life, more humor, more something . . .

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## Crystal says

It was a smooth read with some great unexpected turns along the way. Teaches the importance of motherhood and the special role a mother has in a child's life, no matter what. Also a little brutal in parts.

Summary:

This book was based on an adopted child that searches for his biological mother as an adult. It was unexpected to the Californian Veterinarian to find back in Oklahoma, that his mother was murdered, the adoption clearly beyond her control. Get to know the town personalities while you investigate this murder mystery of an orphan. In the end she was murdered by an unexpected character in the book. Just when it seems so obvious who the killer seems to be-a confession gives light to the true killer. There actually is a lot of death in this book, but that is not what I took from it. Topics include: Small Towns, Murders, suicides, The Good-Old-Boy-Network, adoption, love and motherhood.

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## Connie says

The people of the small town of De Clare, Oklahoma were shocked by the murder of a young mother and the disappearance of her infant son in 1972. Thirty years later a man comes to town looking for his birth parents.

The book was part murder mystery, and part love story. The plot featured several unwed pregnant mothers who had to decide what was best for their children. Characters included mothers who were struggling to raise their children, and an adoptive child searching for his identity. Discrimination against Native Americans was a minor theme in the book. The mystery was fairly predictable except for an event at the end. This was a quick read full of quirky small town characters.

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## Melinda says

Waiting for my book order to arrive, knowing I had another few days, and a blizzard that made traveling to the nearest bookstore more than I wanted to take on, I found this book in the back of my bookcase. After reading "Where the Heart Is", I had followed up with "The Honk and Holler Opening Soon". Ms. Letts' characters charmed me in the first book, but by the second, they began to wear thin and even border on annoying, so this third acquisition had gone unread. I forced myself to begin reading, and found this book to be a nice surprise. The characters are still poor, colorful, small town residents of Oklahoma, but this time involved in the brutal murder case of a young mother and the disappearance of her baby, which makes for more balance against the quirky town and its people. The diary entries of the young soon-to-be mother are at first simply facts the reader can use to solve this crime, but by the end of the book, one grieves for the girl who wrote the entries. Good mystery, good romance, good entertainment.

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## Corina says

A rare book. I am so glad that I stumbled on to this one. It's a complicated story, simply told. It has the feel of the author sitting down with a friend and telling the story.

It's the story of Nicky Harjo who is ten months old when his mother, an unwed teen, is brutally murdered and

Nicky goes missing. After days of searching, the baby is presumed dead. A suspect is arrested and although there is little, if any evidence against him, he kills himself before trial. And so the case is closed. However, 30 years later, Mark Albright, upon the death of both of his parents, discovers that he was adopted when he was ten months old. He travels from California to Oklahoma to confront his mother about why she didn't want him. When he arrives in the small rural town, he finds out his mother was killed and her ten month old baby was taken, a most likely, murdered as well. What follows is the story of Mark/Nicky investigating not only the murder but who his mother really was and discovering who he is.

Excellently written.

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### **Annie says**

Good mystery. As someone from Oklahoma, I did shake my head at the cousin trope. ?

Summer Reading Challenge - A Book A Friend Has Read - Book Club Read

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### **L says**

This is a sort of Hallmark card of a story. The cover promises "a little bit of mystery, a small piece of romance" and that's what you get. It's the sort of thing you're gonna like if you like that sort of thing. It's not a great story, but it's a story. If you like absurdly happy endings, don't mind absurdities & reading about Wal-Mart as THE place to shop, and can deal with simplistic characters grab some Billie Letts.

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### **Benjamin baschinsky says**

Really a 3.5. The killer was concealed cleverly. Entertaining, fast read.  
A change of pace .

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