



Peeled

Joan Bauer

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Something's rotten in the heart of apple country!

Hildy Biddle dreams of being a journalist. A reporter for her high school newspaper, *The Core*, she's just waiting for a chance to prove herself. Not content to just cover school issues, Hildy's drawn to the town's big story--the haunted old Ludlow house. On the surface, Banesville, USA, seems like such a happy place, but lately, eerie happenings and ghostly sightings are making Hildy take a deeper look.

Her efforts to find out who is really haunting Banesville isn't making her popular, and she starts wondering if she's cut out to be a journalist after all. But she refuses to give up, because, hopefully, the truth will set a few ghosts free.

Peeled is classic Joan Bauer, featuring a strong heroine, and filled with her trademark witty dialogue, and problems and people worth standing up to.

Peeled Details

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Author : Joan Bauer

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From Reader Review Peeled for online ebook

Jodi says

I thought it was disjointed & stereotypical (characters' names especially!). I didn't understand the whole "fear" aspect. If the author would have focused more on the effects of a bad economy on a small town, that would have been one thing, but instead we're supposed to believe that most of the community is crippled by fear -- by a "haunted house" and ghostly presence, nonetheless. What's so scary about some trespassers putting signs on a door? I didn't get it. Another thing that bothered me -- I got the idea this was a small town, probably less than 5,000 people, yet they had a Toys 'R Us. I've yet to see a Toys 'R Us in a small town.

Jenna says

Cute. Amusing.

Too many characters to keep track of but the humor was good.

Likeable characters. I loved the color code system she had w/her best friend. (ie. black=what's going on?, red=danger, etc...)

As an adult, it was a good read, since it's geared towards the YA audience. I would say middle & high schoolers. Kids who like a mystery.

People who've worked on their school papers.

I wondered about all the ex-boyfriends who cheated on her that Hildy had. It would make me smile but is that something that really happens w/teens these days?

And just how many boys are in this town since it seemed like she'd dated them all??? J

Cecily Kyle says

The apple theme was really strong in this novel, I was surprised how many things could be turned into a pun about apples. I was pleasantly surprised with the story overall but it was a little slow in the plot and not enough character development, but I liked what the book stood for.

Decent, quick read!

JJ says

"Peeled" is about a high school reporter named Hildy Biddle. She waits and waits for a shocking story for the chance to prove herself as a solid reporter. She finally finds one when a ghost starts to haunt the town. Will she succeed? Read the book to find out!

Brooke Shirts says

A story of intrepid high school reporters going against their hometown's yellow rag of a newspaper? A

haunted house? A murder mystery? An absolutely adorable apple valley? What's not to love here? This story is the kind of thing I fantasied about when I wrote for my high school paper: an *actual story that matters* to follow! A hardboiled experienced journalist for an advisor! Classmates on the paper staff who ACTUALLY CARE about writing!

Ah -- I love that the protagonist of this book is named Hildy. I can't help but suspect that she was named as such in homage to the Rosalind Russell character in that great old newspaper screwball comedy *His Girl Friday*. Bauer infuses a bit of the same brassy/classy banter from 1940s cinema in the dialogue of her characters. Fun stuff.

Melanie Dulaney says

I am such a fan of Joan Bauer's books and while this one did not tug on my heartstrings and loosen the tears like some others, it warmed my heart and left me happy with the outcome for another teen faced with a serious situation. Enter Hildy Biddle, daughter of a deceased newspaper man, part of a agricultural family, and a budding journalist. Her town has two standout features--its history of fine apples and assorted other fruits and vegetables plus a deserted, and supposedly haunted, mansion. That mansion's ghostly reputation is getting a boost with disturbing signs popping up all over to warn residents of the evil to come, a break in and murder on its boundaries, and some unusual new townspeople, as well as a local paper that predicts doom coming. Hildy and her friends operate the high school newspaper and must strive to research the facts and thwart the ghosts and villains that threaten their town's farming roots. As in all her books, the story feels real and the reader becomes completely enmeshed in the troubles of a diverse and fully developed cast of characters. And this particular Bauer book also adds a bit of inspiration with stories of Poland's women who led a revolution for freedom. Readers of both genders in grades 5-8 will enjoy this story of journalism, revolution, determination, loyalty and friendship.

Pratham Longia says

I liked the book because it was realistic and realatable.

Kit says

OK, I pretty much know what I'm getting when I get a Joan Bauer novel, and that's fine with me, because the package includes a smart, gutsy teen protagonist (almost always female) with:

- loyal, quirky friends and family
- an ability to wax poetic on her favorite job or hobby, whether it's photography, history, or selling shoes
- budding romance with a truly nice, caring member of the desired sex
- an extended community worth fighting for
- some outside threat whose butt is ultimately kicked by teamwork and staying true to your beliefs.

Peeled isn't the absolute best of them (I'd give that honor to *Rules of the Road*), but it's definitely worth reading - and then looking up all the rest of Bauer's books.

Laura says

Hildy Biddie wants to be a journalist, not just any journalist, but a Good journalist. She strives hard to get all the facts straight and get every angle of the story before she publishes it. She writes for her high school newspaper and is waiting for the perfect moment for her work to shine when interest about the old haunted Ludlow House starts creeping up. Pretty soon Hildy is caught up in a story that she must crack.

I enjoyed reading this book, Joan Bauer is one of my favorite authors. Her writing is very comical and at the same time has elements of surprise and sweetness thrown in. While this was not my favorite book of hers to date I still thought that it was definitely worth reading. I absolutely love the cover of this book, it beautifully portrays the two main elements of the story. I also thought that this book had some helpful tips on journalism.

*Taken from my book reviews blog: <http://reviewsatmse.blogspot.com/2008...>

Julianna Icenhour says

“Peeled” is a book about a high school newspaper team who wants to give their readers nothing but the truth. Throughout the book they face problems regarding their freedom of speech, but eventually uncover a plan endangering the whole town. This book is a quick read, but at times can get really slow. Mostly because they have to plan what to write, what to publish, and check over their facts; which takes along time. The book doesn't really skip days it goes on like real life, so if nothing happens then the book will say so, then go on to Hildy's, the main character, and Zack's really slow development of a relationship. It took a very long time for the plot to reach the climax, which is understandable considering the fact that the characters had to figure out what was going on first. The book did have very relatable characters, and did a very good job of creating a setting. Lastly but by far most important, this book would be enjoyed by anyone who enjoys the underdogs winning, mystery books, or just quick relaxing books. It has it's flaws, but it truly was overall “Peeled” was a good book and I enjoyed reading it.

Mokamonkey says

I'm sorry I listened to this book, rather than read it. The book focuses on another of Joan Bauer's strong, independent, hard working girls - this one a journalist - as she works to solve a mystery and save her town. The problem I had was that the narrator's voice was very dull, so I didn't connect with the story. Halfway through, I couldn't remember who some of the names referred to. So...read it, don't listen!

Heather says

Hildy Biddle wants to be a reporter more than anything and her time working at The Core, her high school paper, is just the experience she needs. Hildy lives in Banessville, a quiet city known for its apple orchards and, unfortunately, the creepy Ludlow house. The Ludlow house has always been a legend since Mrs. Ludlow and her boyfriend were found murdered in the garage and Mr. Ludlow wasn't convicted, going on to

become a curmudgeon who never left the property until he died in the orchard.

The mystery of the Ludlow house is starting to overtake the beautiful tranquility of the apples though. Strange signs have been appearing on the house, accidents are starting to occur near the property and residents of Banesville are getting scared. The local paper, The Bee, has taken to printing some pretty sensational stories about the events and Hildy is ready to tackle the issue with some investigative reporting to make sure the citizens are hearing the truth.

Her pool of informants include the creepy fortune teller new to town, Madame Zobeck, the survivor of Polish World War II, Minska, the self assured and under researched editor of The Bee, Pen Piedmont, and the rough around the edges former reporter turned newspaper advisor, Baker Polton.

This book would appeal to both genders and would be great for someone interested in newspaper writing.

Grace Boster says

Cute! I love Joan Bauer so much. I read her first book, Rules of the Road, when I was nine and ever since then, every new book by her that I see I have to read! Joan is unique as an author because her characters are all girls from hard background who have one special talent that carries them through. This is so awesome. Even though at times her books are painful and difficult to read, the message that they ultimately get across is priceless. I would recommend not only this one but all of her others!

Kassandra (A Spectacular Reader) says

This is a ten year old's fantasy. This is where people say cheesy things in every sentence, where houses coincidentally break down right when everyone needs to, and outcasts in the normal world become popular. Maybe it has something to do with the tone - it tried to come off as amusing and casual but ended up sounding immature more than anything else. *Middle schooler* would've been more appropriate for our narrator. This book might fall into the "contemporary" genre, but it was anything but realistic.

It's also where amateur journalists magically write better than newspapers who have been printing for a few decades. This part irritated me the most. Even worse, it was something that started from the beginning of the book. Imagine a Harvard student graduate journalist who's so good at writing that the person sounds like a professional. Rare, but not impossible. But that person writes better than New York Times? Really? *Really?*

Town newspaper, which you'd *assume* have legitimate reporters who have experience/studied in journalism, even though the only person mentioned is the editor. (Or does he have ghosts writing for him...?) To write the book, I'd assume one would have to research exactly how many people work in a newsroom.

And pray tell, *why* would someone who's never had any experience in the journalism industry start a newspaper? Forget the fact that teenagers write better than town newspapers, the town newspaper itself writes like a ten year old, which our narrator has the brains to oh so obviously point it out. Common sense, but no matter *how* many ads that newspaper has, writing like that would have everyone in real life tossing their newspapers down in disgust thinking, *This is the work of a professional?*

The *real* (poorly executed) plot doesn't start until the last quarter of the book. And so you end up with an equally worse conclusion to the story: Someone wants to build a haunted house theme park, but the house it's

based on coincidentally breaks in a half so, oopsies, no theme park. (...? The company couldn't have just rebuilt it?) Instead of focusing on all of the character and town drama, if the book focused it's energy on the plot, the plot at least would've been somewhat better.

The slow pace if the book annoyed me to no end, so I found myself skipping through the pages to get to the end. I just wish I'd stopped reading when the warning bells started ringing at the beginning of the book.

Judah says

Technically this would be 2 1/2 stars, but I'm not given that option.

'Peeled' is a YA mystery appropriate for ages 12-17 according to the back of the audiobook. But from reading the book, I would say the book hugs the lower end of that range tightly.

Our lead character is a 16 year old high schooler (though you can only tell because the fact she drives) who's a feature writer for the school paper 'The Core'. Things start going strangely when the old house at the end of town starts to show signs of ghosts...or does it?

Honestly this book shattered the sense of disillusion that her world is real, or that I care. The biggest problem is the town. Bainsville is a small apple growing community in rural NY. It probably has a population of less than 5,000 but yet has a Toys-R-Us, a Polish Revolutionary immigrant who runs her own polish-themed cafe, and an OBSESSION with apples. I kid you not, the cutesy puns and references wear thin. The school paper is 'The Core', Our lead Hildy Bittle has a dog named Macintosh, there's an Apple Blossom Queen, the taxi service is 'Big Apple Taxis', almost every meal or food item seems to have an apple ingredient (save Orange Chicken...).

It's to the point, you really start looking for them.

Secondly, the plot is a bit hard to swallow. A whole town of 5,000 get frightened to death (and reportedly spend hundreds on security systems, and personal safety devices that even the gas station stocks extra pepper spray) over unverified ghost encounters? Sure I'd be more apt to believe it in 1890... Maybe even 1932, but 2007? Really now, a refuse to think these characters that stupid. The local paper covers it like a 'Weird US' book, and a phony psychic moves to town and few if any adults seem to think reasonably. Those who do, are seemingly ignored for no reason other than it solves the plot too easily.

Honestly, the book tries to cover too much (Romance, Mystery, Slice of Life, young Journalism) and ends up satisfying none of those topics. I guessed the end 2/3 of the way in, but dragged myself through. When the mystery solving does kick in (75% the way through) it feels already too late, and it's solved way too quickly and easily.

The sad thing is, I wanted to like this book. I always have wished for a 'mature' YA mystery series (like a fleshed out ND/HB case-file). Veronica Mars without the downside of Noir and some class.

This is definitely how to do it badly.

Now someone try to get it right.

I'll be waiting over here to review it when your done.

Christa says

The main character of the book is Hiddly. And her passion is journalism. But when the town news mentions something about a ghost baiting the town it make her career a lot more difficult to understand. Hiddly is very smart and very persistent with her work! Hiddly throughout the book was very interested with the "ghost" story the the news talked about. Personally the book was amazing and I recommend this book.

Thomas says

Ugh. I hate it when an author writes an amazing book, and then writes a so-so one. Bauer's Newbery Honor work *Hope was Here* showed her expertise in making a lame premise interesting. In *Peeled*, the lame premise remained... lame.

The story is about Hildy Biddle, a high school reporter who is always searching for the truth. Her high school paper, The Core, hasn't been receiving as much attention as she would like. When mysterious hauntings and ghostly sightings enshroud the Ludlow house, Hildy takes it as a chance to prove herself and dispel the false rumors printed by the local newspaper, The Bee.

Undeveloped characters, slow plot, and a boring story are the main downfalls of *Peeled*. While there are some helpful facts about journalism, the overall "appeal" of the book is weighed down by a shallow cast of characters and less than average writing. Nice cover, though.

Julia Klot says

As a high school news reporter for The Core, it's not always easy for Hildy Biddle to capture the facts, especially when The Core's competitors at The Bee play up the community's fears with false articles about creepy occurrences. As The Bee continues to publish, their subscriptions increase and they thrive, while The Core, desperate to uncover the truth, heads downhill. However, Hildy is determined to discover what's really going on, and as her newspaper struggles to be heard, she tries to find a way to make the townspeople listen.

I really enjoyed reading this book-- it has an engaging plot and characters that are easy to relate to. It was especially interesting to read about the struggles of a news reporter and in general, the press. I definitely recommend this book to all realistic fiction readers.

Linda says

Fun and interesting with "ghosts" and a mystery. The focus on newspapers makes you wonder about the future of newspapers in our society.

Steph (Reviewer X) says

As of finishing *Peeled*, I have to say, without a doubt, it's getting some big smiles la Steph. It appealed to me tremendously to begin with, because of the journalism element and the fact it's set in the country. No need to say more—I love tranquil stories and nothing like a little country haze to get effect.

Onward. I'm going to try this new thing where I'll say the bad things before the positive, so I can end this review on a good note. (After all, I'd hate to go the other way and have a bittersweet ending; this is supposed to be a positive review.)

The character development was a little off. I'm not one to get all judgmental about showing and telling and all those perceived be-all-and-end-all writing rules¹ but I do think Joan Bauer could've expanded some scenes in order to achieve a cast filled with defined, distinct voices. (This is especially true with Zack—I'd love to know some more about him.) Consequently, because of the shift between drawing on some traits instead of letting the characters grow into them, their interaction also suffered.

That said, I really loved Hildy. She was strong and knew the true feeling that often accompanies bravery is uncertainty, not confidence. She was interesting by her own virtue and her own conviction, because of what was inside of her. It was refreshing to see a character who didn't curse, who didn't drink, who didn't smoke or snort up crap. A character who, when presented with a social problem that threatened her entire town, did not turn onto herself and cause internal damage but rather fought for the values and life she was given.

Which brings me to the plot. Could this be any more pertinent to us teens? I would love to see some more thoughtful and thought-provoking stories such as this one. I won't give away any of the setup—the book description says enough. All I'm saying is: If you're looking for something that touches on politics and social dilemmas, this book = perfect for you.
