



The Poison Apples

Lily Archer

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We all know the stories of Cinderella, Snow White, and Rapunzel. But have you ever heard of Alice Bingley-Beckerman, Reena Paruchuri, or Molly Miller? Of course you haven't. Not yet. What these girls have in common with their fairy tale sisters is this: they are the stepdaughters of three very evil stepmothers. And they're not happy about it. They think they are alone in their unhappiness until they arrive at Putnam Mount McKinsey, a posh boarding school located in lovely rural Massachusetts. Here is where they will plot their revenge. But first they have to meet.

In her first novel, Lily Archer tells a knowing, wickedly funny story about how friendship just may turn out to be more happily-ever-after than family.

The Poison Apples Details

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Megan says

Although this book was enjoyable, I feel as though Molly, Reena and Alice were kind of pathetic in that their step mothers weren't really that bad. I mean, sure, they got sent to boarding school but what's so bad about that? Personally, I've always wanted to go to boarding school. And anyways, how old were thesea irks? They seemed like kids but they can't have been seeing as they did a lot of very dodgy things which kids should not do. It was quite funny at times though which is why I'm giving it a three star rating rather than a two star.

Lenore Appelhans says

Raise your hand if you have an evil stepmother. Alice, Reena and Molly all do. For various reasons, each girl finds herself at a posh boarding school in rural Massachusetts and each tries her best to pretend she doesn't come from a messed-up, broken family. When they find each other, they discover they no longer have to suffer alone or in silence, and the Poison Apples are born.

The book is narrated by all three teens in alternating chapters and divided roughly into three sections: the introduction of the characters and their stepmothers, arrival at boarding school, and the revenge plot over Thanksgiving break.

I loved the first section and Alice's situation was pretty familiar. Her mother died of cancer and then she spent a couple of years moping around with her father. When her father meets someone new, she sincerely wants him to be happy. But when they announce they are getting married, Alice is shell-shocked. Stepmother-to-be R. convinces Alice's father to sell his house and move into their own place – and Alice isn't welcome. Instead, her father breaks the news that she's to be sent to boarding school:

“Alice,” Dad said suddenly. “You're not going to live with me and R. It doesn't make sense.”

I stared into Dad's eyes. Dad, I tried to silently implore him. I don't want to freak out right now. I don't want to give R. another reason to hate me. I don't want you to think I'm a bad daughter. Just. Please. Don't. Make. Me. Go.

The weird thing was, I could tell Dad was also trying to tell me something with his eyes. He was silently begging me to be okay with this. To not make him guilty. To not make him feel like he was marrying a psychopath who wanted him to send his daughter away... (p. 17-18)

Reena and Molly's evil stepmothers come courtesy of divorce: Reena's story is outrageously hilarious (it involves yoga and a penguin) and Molly's is unfair and sad (it involves a lot of unpaid babysitting and a mental institution).

The boarding school section is peppered with fun wicked stepmother anecdotes and appearances but drags a bit when it veers off to explore other topics such as Reena's crush on the English teacher.

And the end. Well, the end may surprise you! I highly recommend this book to anyone who has a stepmother or is a stepmother. Or anyone who just likes reading about stepmothers for that matter.

Eileen says

The element of the ridiculous--not the fantastic, which the fairy-tale title suggests, but the ridiculous--is used really well here. On the surface this tells the story of Alice, Reena, and Molly, all of whom are saddled with newly acquired stepmothers and consequently enroll at Putnam Mount McKinsey boarding school. While initial first impressions cause a few issues, they eventually bond and form a group called the poison apples, vowing to take revenge on their evil stepmothers. Although each main character's problems are taken seriously--and for the most part, being serious problems, they should be--a deftly balanced sense of farce and underlying humor makes the necessary melodrama of teenage life not just bearable, but actually...good. It's funny! It's well done! It's light and fast! And yet the book is not shallow (though I'm not going to claim it's deep), the story is interesting, and the characters are reasonably believable. This is a difficult task to accomplish. Four stars.

Paige Bookdragon says

The Poison Apples is not a fairy tale book. It's a story about three girls who has one thing in common.

Answer: **EVIL STEPMOTHERS**

Now now, I know that not all stepmoms are awful but in this story, three different girls who were brought together in a boarding school have evil stepmothers.

Sounds like a weepy,oh-woe-is-me story?

Nah. Far from it actually. The Poison Apples is a **wonderful** book. I love that this book is not set as a fantasy book although I know that even though it will be written as a fantasy, I'll still enjoy reading it.

Here's the beauty of The Poison Apples.

1. The powerpuff girls .

I love how the main characters were so different from each other.They have different backgrounds, different family types and different characteristics. .They are also far from perfect. The author shows us that even though they're the victim in this story, they're not flawless.

2. Evil mojo

It's kinda shocking to see a variety of stepmothers in this story. You can't help but be indignant with these evil persons. And what I love about it is that, these kind of stories are actually happening in real life.

3. Lessons and churvas

Though this may be a humorous story, Lily Archer didn't fail to tell us something beautiful. The ending is perfect. I can't help but have a warm feeling after reading this book.

So if you like light funny books that will leave you a warm glow after reading it, then try reading The Poison Apples. It's wicked, it's funny and it has a happily ever after.

Kricket says

I'd call this a tween book because it involves 15 year olds at a boarding school in the mountains, but nothing particularly mature happens. Alice, Reena, and Molly all start their first semester of boarding school with one thing in common: their fathers have all just married horrible women. Eventually, after attempting to hide their freaky families from each other, they discover their common thread and form a club called the Poison Apples in which to commiserate and plot revenge.

The storyline is enjoyable, but the characters behave...bizarrely. There were so many instances where I furrowed my brow and said "would s/he really do that?" The other strange thing is that the evil stepmothers get all the blame, but none of the girls' fathers are behaving the way fathers ought to either, even though its clear that before the stepmothers came along all three had good relationships with their dads. Why not start there?

On an unrelated note, I really enjoyed the cover, and the fact that the page edges were red.

Rebecca Gatzlaff says

Genre: Contemporary

Format: Paperback

Pages: 276

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You are Invited to the first meeting of The Poison Apples To Be Held on the Roof of Middleton Dorm
October 17th, Midnight Invitation Only

This story is about three girls named Alice Bingley- Beckerman, Reena Paruchuri and Molly Miller and they have one thing in common: Stepmothers. Evil Stepmothers. They arrive at Putnam Mount McKinsey a private school and meet. The form the club: The Poison Apples and plan to seek revenge on there stepmothers. I thought this book would focus on the revenge plot instead it focused on how each of the girls coped with school and friends. I didn't really like this book. The girls were not portrayed realistaly. For example Reena had a crush on one of the teachers and she dressed in a nightgown and visited the teacher in his room. WOW! I never did that as a kid. The only character I did like was Pradeep. He was really funny and more mature. I also picked this book up because I thought it was a fairy tale retelling. Boy was I wrong about that. I might have liked this book in elemenary school. I rated it a 3 out of 5 stars

cyborgcinderella says

I bought this book in middle school and just never got around to reading it so I feel like my middle school self would've appreciated this much more than my adult self. This book was...really bad. There was basically nothing redeemable about this story and I can honestly only recall one thing in the whole story that made me enjoy it even slightly.

So this story follows three modern day teenage girls who all end up with "evil" stepmothers and they all start attending the same boarding school and bonding over their stepmother situations. I really like fairy tale retellings when they're done well but I guess one of the biggest issues I have with this book is that it didn't really have any fairy tale aspects aside from the evil stepmother part. Which wouldn't be an issue but the rest of the story wasn't good enough to make up for that.

The characters were all really annoying. This was one of those stories where it felt like the author either forgot what it was like to be a teenager or just somehow only knew the really obnoxious kind when she was one because they all felt like stereotypical teenagers. I hated that. I couldn't connect with any of them and they all just felt like cutouts. I could sympathize with them when I first got their backstories but their personalities ruined it for me after we got to know them more. I just didn't care how their stories got resolved after that.

The plot is also lacking. The part about them finding each other and joining forces against their stepmothers is such a small part of the story. The main focus is on them trying to find their way through their first few weeks at the boarding school and I just couldn't stand it because of how they treated each other and themselves. They were so mean and petty and ridiculous that I couldn't care about whether they actually got comfortable at the school. And the part about them getting revenge on their stepmothers was so small and their plans were so childish and immature that I couldn't handle it. Plus it got resolved in basically one chapter and I don't like that kind of lackluster ending. And even when it was resolved it wasn't really resolved for 2 of the 3 characters and that made me mad.

Overall this book was just so poorly written and had a really bad plot and terrible characters. The only thing I liked was the obvious cultural appropriation and the author's negative view on it. I kind of liked the romance too but it came from out of nowhere and didn't really make sense. It just kind of felt like the author thought this book needed some kind of traditional fairy tale ending but it lacked build up and thus didn't really hit me the way it was supposed to. This book was just poorly executed all around.

Rebecca says

Absolutely loved this novel! A great YA book of three 15 year old girls sent to boarding schools after their fathers hook up with the step mothers from hell. Molly is a dictionary nerd, Alice is depressed from her mother's death and the beautiful Reena is struggling to understand how her father wound up with a Yoga instructor half his age.

Lily Archer nailed the adolescent experience of young girls becoming women while their parents descend into adolescence. Highly recommended.

Milana Waller says

You know how after you've had a book for a while you kind of start to expect a certain hmmm I don't know how to put this... vibe from the book? Well and after a while you kind of think you know how the book will be? Well this book isn't what I expected but that's actually a really good thing! (I expected it to be just ok) Since , as you know, I was necessarily anticipating this book but I wasn't dreading it either.. so ... anyways I was having a difficult time picking a a book to read so I started at the end of my teen shelf and started reading a few pages of each book (I hadn't read hear books before btw) and then I picked up THIS book. And I couldn't put it down! I loved it! (and it's red pages♥?♥?♥?)

Emily Ann says

I went into this thinking it was going to be a retelling. I was wrong.

Katelyn says

This was pretty good. Surprisingly good, actually. The writing was good, the characters were written well, and the girls were relatable to, if not, real life. It was a nice read and was a bit awkward at times. Not the writing was awkward but what the character(s) did in the book. Once in a while they would make me want to slap my forehead against the wall of embarrassment for them even though I know it's all fake. :) One thing that did bother me though was that I felt like the author was more focused on building the girls' friendship and getting over themselves, which was good, but the book description described the girls plotting against their step-mothers. I like that the girls all had a strong bing but that took up nearly 2/3 of the book. Only a third of the book was spent on plotting something against the step-mothers. I have to say, though, the book was good, interesting, and a fun read.

Miriam says

First of all, this is NOT a fairy-tale retelling, so don't pick it up expecting fantasy. It is friendship story about three girls who meet in boarding school and, after some initial friction, bond after discovering that they all have horrible stepmothers. The blurb on mine implied that they join forces to get revenge, which is initially true but not really the focus of the story, which is about becoming a better friend and supporting one another. I liked that the girls have different personalities and backgrounds which sometimes leads to misunderstandings. It is good for teens to see that the person who seemed to ignore or diss them is not necessarily trying to hurt you and doesn't need to be their enemy for life.

Leanna says

This book was alright, but I didn't really realize it was a bit on the younger-aged YA spectrum for me. I think I'd have liked it more had I read it while I was 13 or 14... as it is, it kept me busy for half a day reading on the dock at the cottage.

The premise of this book-- three step-daughters with evil stepmothers want to plot revenge and reclaim their lives-- was good. There were funny parts. But the actual revenge and the Poison Apples society itself doesn't even come about until about the last quarter of the book. The rest of the book was all just leading up to that point. So, I guess what I thought was- if the book wasn't actually about the Poison Apples group, since the girls didn't even meet each other until most of the book was over, maybe it should have had a different description on the back. It was more of a book about individual girls and their families. With a reallllly light amount of revenge snuck in at the very end.

Lauren says

I had read several rave reviews of this book, so I really couldn't wait to get my hands on it. Unfortunately, it didn't deliver. While the beginning was witty and funny, the end fell flat, neatly wrapping everything up in a pretty little bow, which, I guess, some people enjoy, but I was left disappointed.

Kami says

The writing is fine and the plot pretty good, but some of the material was inappropriate for teen fiction. Several comments about popular 15 year olds having only had sex with 4 guys and trying to increase that number seemed to imply that is ideal teen behavior. None of the main characters had even kissed a boy, but the implications from other characters really turned me off. I would never recommend it to a teenager.

However, this book does address issues of having a "step mother" quite well. The step mothers in this book are outrageous, beyond what I hope is usually the norm. All the girls get sent to boarding school where they bond over the turmoil in their falling apart families.
