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Saint Nellie

Odal Madsen

Amazon Digital Services (2014)

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Reviewed by Jennifer Hass for Reader Views (4/14)

Oh I am not sure how to start my review of “Saint Nellie” by Odal Madsen. I think the best way is to say right away that “Saint Nellie” is a horror filled dark novel - so horrible and disgusting it is downright spectacular. I haven’t read a horror novel this great in a very long time...maybe not ever...

Mia and her mom landed themselves back in Blackwell, Tennessee for the summer after the death of her grandmother. Honoring promises made to the dying woman, Mia’s mother Caroline is making her best attempt to get back into the church to help people. Mia soon realizes that the locals are racists and since she is half Indian, all eyes are on her during the church sermons.

The preacher lights up the Sunday morning stage with sermons of hate, fire and brimstone making Mia uneasy. Caroline of course, hides behind the truth when it comes to the racial remarks and the stares that Mia gets and insists that if Mia just changed her attitude she would be treated better.

After church one Sunday Caroline offers herself and her daughter to take on the challenge to befriend Nellie McGruder, the one-eyed ‘witch’ of Blackwell. Rumor has it she is a witch and she has done awful things in her past. Against her will, Mia is dropped off every Thursday at Nellie’s house to try and help the old lady by cleaning and keeping her company. Mia will soon experience a whole new world of people and hopefully survive the terror that awaits them as she discovers the town’s nasty, dark secrets.

“Saint Nellie” is not only crude and full of racial violence but its portrayal is so “on point”, right down to the nastiest of Southern Baptists churches that people wouldn’t dare to admit exists in this world. Add a little black magic, a sweet mixed southern girl, her mother, and a witch and you’ve got one hell of a ride. I read until I was done. I could not put it down and I couldn’t even sleep that night. “Saint Nellie” by Odal Madsen is on point. This is what I call horror - 5 stars!