



Bloody Murder: The Homicide Tradition in Children's Literature

Michelle Ann Abate

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Given the long-standing belief that children ought to be shielded from disturbing life events, it is surprising to see how many stories for kids involve killing. *Bloody Murder* is the first full-length critical study of this pervasive theme of murder in children's literature. Through rereadings of well-known works, such as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the Nancy Drew Mystery Stories, and *The Outsiders*, Michelle Ann Abate explores how acts of homicide connect these works with an array of previously unforeseen literary, social, political, and cultural issues. Topics range from changes in the America criminal justice system, the rise of forensic science, and shifting attitudes about crime and punishment to changing cultural conceptions about the nature of evil and the different ways that murder has been popularly presented and socially interpreted.

Bloody Murder adds to the body of inquiry into America's ongoing fascination with violent crime. Abate argues that when narratives for children are considered along with other representations of homicide in the United States, they not only provide a more accurate portrait of the range, depth, and variety of crime literature, they also alter existing ideas about the meaning of violence, the emotional appeal of fear, and the cultural construction of death and dying.

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