



The Puppet Master

Abigail Osborne

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Manipulated by fear and love...could you cut the strings and take back control?

Billie's hiding from the world, believing it to be the only way to take control of her life as she lives in fear of the man who nearly destroyed her. But what she doesn't realise is that she's exactly where he wants her; isolated and afraid. A chance meeting with budding journalist Adam sparks a relationship that could free her from the terror that controls her. But will Adam be able to see the real Billie buried under her terror and pain?

Adam knows exactly who Billie is and is determined to expose her and get justice for the lives she ruined. But first, he needs to convince her to open up to him but as unwanted attraction and feelings blossom between them, Adam is forced to realise that all is not as it seems.

Most of their lives have been unknowingly governed by the desires and needs of someone who considers himself their master. He has influenced and shaped them for years, meticulously weaving a web of lies and control around them. Can Billie and Adam survive the betrayals in store and cut the strings that bind them?

One thing is for sure. The master wants his puppets back – and he'll do anything to keep them.

The Puppet Master Details

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From Reader Review The Puppet Master for online ebook

Anne says

Abigail Osborne has tackled some dark, serious subject matter in this debut novel, and has done it incredibly well. Her cleverly structured story is both engrossing and chilling in equal measures, and the short, sharp chapters leave the reader hanging on for more.

Billie leads a lonely life in a spartan flat with just her cat for company. She works in a mundane job and occasionally ventures out to the cafe in a nearby bookshop. The author reveals very little about Billie and the reader is left to make their own decisions and their own judgements on her.

Adam is a reporter, he's ambitious and determined to find a story that will make his name. When he spots Billie, sitting alone in the cafe, he recognises her. Not only could Billie's story earn him the fame that he's hungry for, but he could make her pay for the things that he know she's done in her past.

Again, the author does not reveal exactly what Adam is accusing Billie of, but it's clear that he is angry and out for justice. As Billie and Adam's relationship progresses, it is only the reader who is aware of Adam's motive for friendship.

Alongside Adam and Billie's growing friendship, the author introduces an anonymous voice. A voice that is terrifying, a voice that belongs to someone who knows both of them. A voice of a person who is controlling them. The voice of the Puppet Master.

The reader is taken on a journey that reveals disturbing and quite chilling secrets around every corner. This author has an excellent insight into the human brain, and how the effects of incidents from the past can impact on the present.

As the truth is carefully and cleverly revealed, the full horror of the miscarriage of justice and the hidden secrets are exposed. It is both shocking, although not totally unexpected.

The Puppet Master is an intelligent and well crafted debut. There were tiny bits in my original copy that could do with tightening up, and a re-edit, but I've been told that Bloodhound Books have dealt with that in the latest version. Despite this, I found it a chilling story, with characters that are built slowly and very lifelike.

A recommended read from me and I'll look forward to reading more from this author.

Claire says

The Puppet Master is a chilling story of deception and secrets on all levels. A lifetime of manipulation. A lifelike portrayal of abuse of the worst kind. The reality of grooming in close quarters. The use of fear and coercion and flattery.

At the start I was intrigued why Billie was so frightened, even scared of her own shadow. A grown woman having been to university working in a busy call centre shouldn't be so paranoid and constantly looking over her shoulder. But the more I read as the book jumped back and forth between the present and the past, the more I understood why Billie was like it.

Now then Eric, he's a man who manipulates people. He makes them believe it's for their benefit but really it's for his own means. He uses every trick in the book to get what he wants. The epitome of evil!

This is a cracking debut from Mrs Osborne. The tension she creates in her writing, you could cut through with a knife. I will be interested to see how she follows this thriller up!

Big thanks to Bloodhound Books for my advanced copy of The Puppet Master.

Kim Nash says

This was SUCH a great debut novel from a very talented author. She weaves a tale which was VERY twisty and turny and extremely cleverly intertwined. I found myself desperate to know what Billie had done and didn't know whether to love her or hate her, trip her up or protect her. And I had no idea whether Adam was genuine or not. And Eric! Well, I don't even want to speak about him!

I loved the way that the story was told from three different perspectives. It was really well written and easy to follow. This book had me questioning how I would behave if such a similar situation arrived and really got me thinking.

And the ending. Wow! I found myself getting really emotional. I really invested time in these characters and really wanted to help them and hoped that they could find a way through the horrors they'd had to live. Well, everyone except for Eric! And then the epilogue blew me away! It didn't tie everything up in loose ends and if there is to be a book 2 I want to read it and I want to read it right now!

Cathy Ryan says

The story, set out in three parts, beginning in the present day, followed by flashback chapters from the past, before returning again to the present. Chapters alternate between Billie's and Adam's perspectives, with the occasional diary entry from an anonymous, shadowy figure who obviously knows Billie and is stalking her. This approach defines the characters and their innermost feelings, building the suspense. Billie lives alone, with only her cat for company, avoiding contact with other people as much as possible. Something terrible has happened to her in the past which has had huge repercussions on her life.

'Billie stole down the street avoiding all eye contact and people. Once a week, on Sunday, she braved the world to visit the bookstore not far from her flat. One Upon a Time had thousands of books and a quaint little cafe; it was her haven.'

Adam is a journalist, determined to expose Billie and exact revenge for the lives he believes she ruined. He seizes his chance when an unexpected opportunity arises and sets about trying to win her confidence, using all his charm to break down the barriers and gain her friendship. It's an uphill struggle, Billie is very vulnerable and terrified of forming any sort of relationship. Very little information is disclosed about either of their backgrounds at this point in the narrative and the reader is kept in the dark for quite a while, which

works well. I wondered what on earth Billie had done to cause such a reaction in Adam.

'As he walked towards her, a plan formulated in his mind. His instinct for a story was awakened and he knew he had the opportunity of a lifetime. This could be his ticket to a better career and, more importantly, he could get justice.'

Billie suffered through a traumatic childhood with little to no support from her family. The lasting effects are her self-imposed isolation and panic attacks. Young Adam was devastated when he lost his mother. His father was unable to cope, neglected Adam and started drinking heavily. Adam was raised by his uncle, who became the young boy's role model.

This is a story which revolves around the power of manipulation, how the manipulator controls by either friendliness, fear and/or deviousness, and sometimes leading by example. The debilitating effect on Billie and her conflicting emotions as she becomes closer to Adam are portrayed very well. The middle section of the narrative was less engaging and not quite as believable as the beginning, even as it shows how the chilling unscrupulousness of the manipulator breeds fear and repulsion and the reason for Adam's fixation on Billie begins to become clear. It picks up again towards the end and I enjoyed how it plays out. The lack of suspects, twists and false leads, means it's not hard to realise who the antagonist is. The book does convey very well how children can be betrayed by those they should be able to trust implicitly and disturbing subjects are covered without being gratuitous. I'll be interested to see what the author tackles in her next book.

Colette Lamberth says

Readers seeking a creepy, make you squirm in your seat character need look no further than The Puppet Master. Not a word I use often but he is vile. After a long lead in, the middle part is titled The Past and was uneasy reading at times but was in my opinion the best part of the book covering the early lives of Adam and Billie. The other two parts were more focussed on the romance and while I didn't out and out dislike Billie, I grew weary of her repeated mental monologue of questions.

My thanks to Bloodhound Books for the copy of The Puppet Master.

Ellie says

The Puppet Master is an extremely intriguing story which Abigail Osborne has written absolutely superbly! I was completely gripped right from the start – the story begins in present day and we get to know Billie and Adam and the blossoming of their relationship. Throughout the first part of the book I was desperate to know what Adam was up to and the terrible things that Billie had done years ago! The story then flipped back to both characters childhood and then the story really starts to unravel, page by page...

The chapters of the book are alternated between Adam and Billie's perspective and we learn how they're both being manipulated in complete opposite ways by the same evil man. I must say, the title of this book matches the story absolutely perfectly!

I often find with the ever-growing genre of psychological thrillers that some books under this category aren't actually psychological thrillers, they're just normal thrillers with no unstable psychological state of the characters (that's just my opinion, you may disagree). However THIS book should be the absolute definition of psychological thriller!!!

I don't think I've ever read a book with so many out-loud 'ohhh' and 'OMFG's'! The way this book is written and how the story is slowly revealed is truly phenomenal, whilst all the way through the tension increases and I was just dying to know what would happen in the end! I certainly wasn't left disappointed, the ending of this book was just perfect. I loved how all the ends were tied up and I was left with all my questions answered at the same as clutching my kindle with white knuckles on the edge of my seat!

The Puppet Master is an incredible, gripping story which deals with some very disturbing issues, involving child abuse, mentally and sexually. The author seriously made me hate the 'puppet master' with every fibre in my body and feel so sorry for Billie, I just wanted to embrace her and tell her I was her friend and that I believed her right from the very start!! This book deserves all the stars in the world out of 5 and I will be recommending it to every single one of my book-loving friends, I'm already part way through my mission and many of my friends have purchased and began reading!! I LOVE spreading knowledge of good fiction! I can really see this being one of my top reads of 2017!

Joanne Robertson says

What a fabulous debut novel this is from Abigail Osborne! I don't know what I was expecting but it definitely wasn't this emotional love story twisted around a creepy chiller that pulled me in from the first page.

The Puppet Master has one of the most vile and creepy villains I have come across in quite some time. As you can tell from the title, both Adam and Billie are being controlled and manipulated by this shadowy figure that we only meet at the start through his diary entries. Billie, though, was a character that I took to immediately with her sweet nature although I really wanted her to grow a bit more backbone as I hated to see her hiding away from the world. But as the plot progressed I could see exactly why she had retreated into her own little world with only Bobby the cat for company.

I liked the way that this was told in alternating viewpoints, from both Billie and Adam, as it often told the same events from their differing perspectives. And as the tension started to increase those chapters got shorter and sharper until a ferociously shocking climax which didn't exactly play out the way I thought it would. Some of the scenes were difficult to read at times due to their emotional intensity but the author doesn't hold back in her punchy plotting to get her story told. There was one small chapter towards the end that didn't quite work for me but that's only a little quibble for me personally and it certainly didn't deter from my eagerness to finish the final few pages.

For a debut novelist Abigail Osborne has done a great job of making the reader care about her characters and I can tell she felt very connected to them. She has a natural flare for storytelling and has drawn a lot from her personal emotions so I can't wait to see where she goes from here!

Sarah says

The Puppet Master is a story that alternates between the main characters Billie and Adam.

From the start it is obvious that Billie has gone through something traumatic in her past that she is trying to escape. She is keeping her head down and is literally just existing. She is set in her mind that she will always be on her own and never be happy, but that changes when she meets Adam.

Adam seems to good to be true. Most people would probably just give up when someone makes it obvious they want to keep themselves to themselves, but Adam is determined to get through Billie's brick wall that she has surrounded herself with and find out who the real person is that she seems to be to scared to reveal.

There is a connection between these two that seems to grow as the story goes on. As the pair get to know each other, there is a definite spark that starts to grow.

I won't say to much about the man that seems to hold the strings to these two characters, but without a doubt he is one seriously evil and deceptive excuse for a human being.

The story starts off in present day, then going back to when Billies life started to change for the worse and leading back to present day again. I enjoyed how this was done as right from the off the author grabs the readers attention and draws us in. Then the story starts to build up in tension until wham! We're back in present day.

The story certainly has some surprises in store for the readers and it held my interest throughout. At times an uncomfortable read but a definite must read for fans of psychological thrillers.

My thanks to the author for a copy of this book. All opinions are my own and not biased in anyway.

Alexina Golding says

I was first introduced to this novel through Blogger Joanne Robertson from My Chestnut Reading Tree, she did a feature on Abigail, and the book was at the time free to download, I found the premise of the story intriguing. I like to try new authors, especially self published ones.

I was so pleased when Bloodhound picked it up, and with some editing, new cover, but keeping the storyline the same it is improved and even tenser than before. I have fully read both editions.

Deception is the key to this novel, with the puppet master pulling the strings of the players.

Abbie has written a story that kept me on my toes, my heart in my mouth, and gut squirming just to add to the tension. Especially the more I read on. It was difficult to believe that this was a debut novel.

The book is set in three parts, with considerable thought to the way the story unfolds.

We see Billie and Adam, who they are individually and as they grow together in a new relationship.

However they both have a past that they aren't fully revealing to each other, but their emotions are taking them on a journey neither expected.

We get to know why Billie is how she is, in the second part of the book, it gave us a great insight in to the characters and how they grew to be who they were.

Then there is the puppet master to take in to consideration! The full scale of the damage the puppet master has left in their wake is designed to make you feel helpless, sickened and increasingly frustrated as you read on. This is one of the most manipulative characters I have read in a long while.

This is a fantastic debut novel, that took me on an emotional roller coaster of a journey, like a scab I could not leave it alone. I kept on reading, the beginning part had me intrigued in wanting to find out Billie's past, what made Adam dislike Bille so much.

Part two, left me feeling saddened, there are difficult subject matters to get your head round, but as difficult a read as this is, it is too compelling and twisted to miss out on.

Part three gives us the conclusion, but is it the outcome that we want?

There were heart in the mouth moments, and I really felt for Billie and hoped the outcome would be positive, must read if you want to find out.

A story to stay which will stay with me for a long while, for an array of reasons. I really am looking forward to what Osborne brings us next.

Mairead Hearne (swirlandthread.com) says

Rating 3.5*

'Manipulated by fear and love...

could you cut the strings and take back control?'

The Puppet Master is the debut novel from blogger and author Abigail Osborne.

Manipulation and manipulators seems to be a recurring theme in a few books I've read recently. It has started me wondering about the extent of manipulation in the world I/we live in....

Abigail Osborne has tackled it in a rather unusual manner in *The Puppet Master*

A Puppet Master or Puppeteer is defined in Wikipedia as:

'a person who manipulates an inanimate object that might be shaped like a human, animal or mythical creature, or quite easily might be any kind of object to create the illusion that the puppet is "alive." The puppeteer may be visible to or hidden from the audience. A puppeteer can operate a puppet indirectly by the use of strings, rods, wires, electronics or directly by his or her own hands placed inside the puppet or holding it externally or any other part of the body- such as the legs.'

In Abigail Osborne's book the puppets are very very real as is the master...

Billie and Adam are trying to live their lives the best they can. Both have had very traumatic childhoods, both have lived shattered lives. What both are completely unaware of though is that their lives have been tied together for many years, manipulated and controlled by one rather disgusting character.

Billie is a very sad individual. Always hiding in a corner, unable to deal with people in a close fashion, she is a product of a childhood no child should ever have to experience, Left alone now to fend for herself, her life exists around her cat and her books. Panic attacks have become part of Billie's life and her only form of protection is to isolate herself from a society that let her down.

While growing up, for reasons I found difficult to fathom, Billie's mother, grandmother and sister all seemed to abandon her. There was no adult that Billie could turn to when she needed help to protect herself from the one person she had trusted. Billie's mother is portrayed as a very selfish lady, undeserving of any sympathy from the reader. As a mother, she is so obsessed with herself and her own happiness, Billie becomes a very damaged and lonely young girl.

Adam as a character takes awhile to warm to. At the beginning, his motives for wanting to get to know Billie are muddled. He has his reasons and as a journalist, his instinct throws him a curve ball.

Adam has also lead a tragic life. His beloved mother passed away early in his youth. His father, unable to cope, took to the drink. Adam's salvation came in the form of his uncle, a man Adam adored and aspired to. Adam grew up under the protection and guidance of his uncle, almost to the point of adoration. An incident

in Adam's life resulted in a life-changing experience and Adam has felt it his duty to discover what really happened and expose the person responsible for it.

What Adam and Billie were completely unaware of is that they were both being used – manipulated by an evil, despicable individual who has no compunction in ruining lives in order to achieve his goal.

Wikipedia Definition ~ Manipulation

'The process of manipulation involves bringing an unknowing victim under the domination of the manipulator, often using deception, and using the victim to serve their own purposes.'

Abigail Osborne has portrayed this notion to a frightening degree in *The Puppet Master*. However, at times in the novel, I did get extremely frustrated and cross as there were certain scenes I felt I had to suspend my belief a little. Except for Billie, I didn't particularly like any of the characters.

The Puppet Master is a very interesting debut from Abigail Osborne and I don't doubt that we will see plenty more from Abigail in the future as her writing develops further.

Janet says

I have read lots of thrillers, but this was something else entirely. A romantic thriller perhaps? Grabbed from the first chapters this had me enthralled, the voice in my head shouting for Billie, willing her on and hoping she'd make it through. I rarely find a book that both makes me so angry and yet so hopeful. This is both dark and very disturbing but yet there's a softness too, those romantic moments creep in and suddenly you're hopeful again. So very well written, I was investing myself in Billie's life, willing her to see that she could have a life, happiness and love.

I will wait with bated breath for your next book Abigail Osborne because this was fabulous.

Bookread2day says

Wonderful written. Some of the story takes place in a book shop. Adam rushed into the bookshop at breakneck speed. He hadn't finished his article for his fortnightly column. The bookshop was his last hope of making his deadline. It's nice to know that the author Abigail has the same passion like me and you for reading. She has in fact got over 1000 books and she can't wait to hit the 5000 mark. This is Abigail's first novel and right now she is working hard on her next book. I wish Abigail all the best with her next book xx.

Shell Baker says

Well I couldn't wait to get stuck into this beauty and I seriously can not believe this book is a debut novel. *The Puppet Master* had me gripped from start to finish I devoured it in one afternoon, it is totally disturbing and unputdownable....I freaking loved it!! And I have been dying to tell the world what I think because I loved it so much. This is one of those books that gets in your head and stays with you along time after reading it.

So the story starts off where we meet Billie and is set from the present day to 2018. Billie is off to visit the

bookshop where she goes every week. From the author's description we get a feeling something isn't right and is clearly portrayed that she is afraid with her thoughts. But then soon enough we are introduced to Adam, who sparks a relationship that could free her from the terror that controls her. knowing who she is after convincing her to open up but soon realises that all is not as it seems. Most of their lives have been unknowingly governed by the desires and needs of someone who considers himself their master.

One thing is for sure. The master wants his puppets back – and he'll do anything to keep them.

This is a very twisted story that will have you on the edge of the seat. The author certainly knows how to keep the reader on tenterhooks that's sure. It is extremely well crafted building up a story that is wrote in two parts. The first part is set from the present day through to 2018 and part is the past and all the way through the chapters alternate between the two characters Billie and Adam. Then boom the whole story between the two characters falls into place where found myself saying OMG.... NO WAY. But it doesn't end there, with more twists and turns all I can say is you're in for an absolute treat. This story took me through lots of different emotions, from emotional to anxious has if I was feeling the same as Billie. Seriously this is a corker of a story and this is most definitely one of my favorite reads for 2016.

I highly recommend this giving it 5 well deserved stars. I can't wait to read more by Abigail.

Donna Maguire says

<https://donnasbookblog.wordpress.com/...>

For a debut novel this book is fantastic! The writing is superb and the plot is set at a brilliant pace for the storyline, I was hooked from the beginning and having seen some of the other reviews of the book I knew that I would be in for a real treat - and I was not disappointed!!

The book is creepy and full of suspense, plenty of twists and turns and you really are left guessing about what is going to happen next - definitely one of the best books I have read this year of this genre from a debut author! I have given the book five stars and recommend it to any one who loves a well written psychological thriller - it really is an excellent book!

Susan Hampson says

Billie has lost everything that meant anything to her, she is worthless, disowned by her family and has no friends but more than that she is petrified that 'he' will find her. It isn't a matter of if, it is a matter of when. No-one believed her before because he was so clever, everyone likes 'him', and no-one would believe her now. So Billie watches, Billie is careful, Billie is well and truly broken.

When Adam shows Billie a little kindness she feels conflicted. She never lets anyone near her anymore but the poor girl has been starved of genuine human kindness and contact for so long. Can she trust this stranger that is nibbling away the wall round her she has built?

To begin with this story is told in alternating chapters of present day and the past by both Billie and Adam and it soon becomes clear that they have someone in common in their pasts. The same bloke, but whoa there, because it sounds like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. My skin began to crawl and the little hairs that come up when danger is about began to rise, then came the shiver that went through my body like a Mexican wave. This is a brilliant read. It is raw and honest and it tells this story from everyone's side. It was a little disturbing to be inside one particular mind knowing where the story was going but boy did the author nail it!

Each character was perfectly captured in each scene that played out and I just loved how the dynamics changed as the story progressed. A superb debut novel.
