



## Project Cain

*Geoffrey Girard*

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## **Project Cain** Geoffrey Girard

Sixteen-year-old Jeff Jacobson had never heard of Jeffrey Dahmer, the infamous serial killer who brutally murdered seventeen people more than twenty years ago. But then Jeff discovers he was constructed in a laboratory only eight years ago, part of a top-secret government cloning experiment called Project CAIN. And scientists created him entirely from Jeffrey Dahmer's DNA.

Jeff isn't the only teenage serial-killer clone. Others have been genetically engineered using the DNA of the Son of Sam, the Boston Strangler, and Ted Bundy. Some clones were raised, like Jeff, in caring family environments; others within homes that mimicked the horrific early lives of the serial killers they were created from.

When the most dangerous of the boys are set free, the summer of killing begins. Worse, they hold a secret weapon even more deadly than the terrible evil they carry within.

Can Jeff help catch the "monsters" before becoming one himself?

## **Project Cain Details**

Date : Published September 3rd 2013 by Simon & Schuster BFYR

ISBN : 9781442476967

Author : Geoffrey Girard

Format : Hardcover 341 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Horror, Thriller, Science Fiction, Mystery

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## From Reader Review Project Cain for online ebook

### Nicole Rhaven says

The idea for this book was simply intriguing.

"Say what? The government takes dead serial killers and make clones? OMG! Where do I sign up to read it?!"

Yeah, but it was dull. WHHHHHYYYY take a brilliant idea and waste it!

There was absolutely no dialogue. -- How do you write a book and not add dialogue?

Did you perhaps forget? Maybe you were busy with other things like fishing or eating pizza?

I don't know and I don't get it.

Jeff is on the run with a man who doesn't like him, the end, basically. Nothing even happens in the book.

I personally didn't even care about any of the characters. Nope, didn't even care.

Really. Nothing even exciting happens.

Then the ending was flat. So, I read about nothing then nothing happens?

Well, okay.

If you want to read a book about nothing, well, here it is! The book about nothing where nothing happens!

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### Evie says

If you've known me for a while, you're probably well aware of two things. First, I am a very forgiving and easy to please reader who rarely dislikes a book enough to give it anything less than 3 stars. Second, I love creepy stories, dark and disturbing premises and unsettling plots. That being said, I have never read a book before with such fantastically blood-chilling premise and such poor execution. Project Cain had so much potential that was never realized, it would've surely broken my heart, if I wasn't so damn mad at this book!

So what's the deal here?

First of all, there is no dialogue in this book. Non. The narration is scattered, which makes the plot extremely hard to follow. It's also nonsensical and boring, filled with tons of scientific info that, while some of it genuinely interesting, was for the most part unnecessary and irrelevant. And while this alone was quite unpleasant, it was something I could still overlook and get past. What I really couldn't stand, though, was the narrator himself. We're following the \*adventures\* of Jeff Jacobson, a teenage kid who one day discovers that he's a clone of a serial killer from 1980's, Jeffrey Dahmer. What a unique and intriguing concept! I just couldn't wait to get started on this one, but boy, was I disappointed! For a book that follows a clone of one of the most dangerous serial killers in the history of the US, there is remarkably little to no exploration of the hero's psyche. Nothing about how he feels about his discovery. Nothing about any moral struggles, repressed urges to kill, dark thoughts (or their lack thereof). Non of these things are addressed. The narration is dry and emotionless. Like a mid term paper on \*the day I found out that I am an evil version of Dolly the sheep.\*

The character development is minimal. All we really learn about Jeff is his origin, there's little to no back story, and even the parts dedicated to describing his relationship with his father are very short and kept to a minimum. I expected a complex, conflicted hero, instead I got someone who was detached, passive and completely indifferent.

The simple, conversational tone assumed by the narrator resembles a diary. Jeff asks the reader questions and overuses the word "seriously". The book is filled with short, simple sentences and repetitive statements. On top of that, there are numerous instances when we have the narrator describing something in the present time, and also making a premonition about how he'll feel about it, or what more he'll learn in relation to it, in the future. All that was extremely off-putting and annoying.

The military science, genetics of violent behavior and - most importantly - cloning was all obviously extensively researched by the author. It's also explained very comprehensively and makes for an interesting read. I do, however, feel like the author felt the need to include all of his findings in the story, making it very heavy on scientific detail and resulting in a great intellectual stimulation for the reader, but no real emotional engagement in the story. All the information is seemingly accurate (can't be sure, though, don't know all the facts and statistics), it feels legit, but it doesn't make the story any better. Sure, it was interesting to learn more about all these things, but I don't need to read YA fiction for that, I can easily look it up on Wikipedia. Geoffrey Girard forgot to put the fiction in his science fiction novel.

To this day, I have no idea what was the point of this story. What did the author try to achieve by telling this odd tale? If it was about deciding whether violence is something inherited through genes or gained from environment, then I'm afraid this story failed miserably.

To sum it all up, to call Project Cain a bad book would not be fair to all the bad books out there. Bad books we read, we dislike and we put down with a dismissive shrug. And then we move on with our lives and pretty much forget about them. Project Cain, on the other hand, is a whole new level of bad. It's that kind of bad that makes your blood boil. It's frustrating to the point you find yourself looking around for someone to punch, or something to break, or - ideally - break something on someone else's face. Multiple times. It's not a book you can shrug off and forget about, it's a book that, every time you'll think about it, you'll just get angry all over again. Well, at least that's how I feel. And I honestly doubt there are readers out there who are even more forgiving and understanding than I am.

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### **Shara says**

Simply incredible. Perfect for Conspiracy Theorists. You cannot put this down. It's raw and believable and horrifying and so altogether plausible.

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### **Thea says**

Holy cow. Any book that can make me sympathize, care for, and love a clone of Jeffery Dahmer is a God in my book. Geoffrey Girard is a God.

The characters are amazing and perfect. My favourite line in the entire book, summing up the book perfectly (in my mind): "Those monsters will never harm you again." -- Castillo. Brilliant.

The only thing I'm not sure about is how Castillo escaped? I wonder if this will be solved in Cain's Blood.

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### **Liviana says**

Geoffrey Girard's debut is two pronged. There's CAIN'S BLOOD, his adult novel, which I definitely want to read. Then there's PROJECT CAIN, the YA novel, covering the same events from a different point of view. They both focus on the hunt for six teenagers, all products of the same scientific experiment.

The Cain duo has a high-concept, ridiculous premise that's quite fun. A government project cloned serial killers to try to create a group of killers they could use. Some boys were treated normally, others were abused. Nature versus nurture put to the test. I recently heard someone say that most mad scientists in stories are actually mad engineers. Well, this is definitely a mad scientist - he's got some hypothesis. And Jeff Jacobson just discovered that he's the clone of Jeffrey Dahmer and his dad is, well, a mad scientist.

(Side note: It is hilarious that Jeff insists that unlike most teens he knows exactly what his dad does, that his dad is a scientist. Like there's only one kind of scientist.)

I was partially drawn to this novel because I'm still reeling from Derf Backderf's MY FRIEND DAHMER. The other part of me loves mad science and thrillers where two unlikely partners must join forces to save the day. Girard definitely kept the pages turning, which is exactly what this book needs. I thought some events were too glossed over. I think that's because they're expanded on in CAIN'S BLOOD. But this is a surprisingly internal read. Even the dialogue is rendered without quotes, the form implying the words are how Jeff perceives them, rather than a faithful copy of the speech.

Jeff, indeed, has much to process. At time his angst over possibly being a killer made me laugh, but that's because Jeff is a bit of a weenie. From the outside, it's easy to tell that he's not going to become a killer. Also, at first his narration is quite tiresome. Everything is SAID like "this" for emphasis. I don't think there was a page without caps, scare quotes, and italics for quite awhile. Luckily, the overdramatic grammar starts backing off to let the words carry the emotion. There are still all caps and such, but less of them.

But I did like Jeff. He's numb from the shock and all the weird things happening, but he's also determined to be helpful. He teams up with Shawn Castillo, the secret ops guy sent to find the missing six boys. He keeps digging though his own head for clues, desperate to be useful and liked, like a kicked puppy. He's sweet.

PROJECT CAIN contains several infodumps, but I didn't mind them too much because the material is fascinating, if horrifying. This is a thriller, but it leans strongly towards horror, particularly in the end. (I did appreciate Girard's discretion during certain scenes.) It's not the smoothest novel, but it's ambitious and memorable. It definitely got under my skin while I was reading it.

PROJECT CAIN will appeal to fans of Barry Lyga's I HUNT KILLERS, as well as dystopian fans tired of the future and looking for something in the here and now. I do recommend pairing it with some nonfiction such as MY FRIEND DAHMER.

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## **Kate Quinn says**

This book got into my head. The way that facts (like stuff about Mendel and actual serial killers such as Jeffrey Dahmer) are seamlessly woven into the fiction (like serial killers being cloned by the government. at least I'm pretty sure this part is fiction. cause the govt would never do anything like that, right? right?) had me totally freaked out and wanting to put the book down to do some fact-checking via Google and Wikipedia (cause those sources are always correct, right?), but instead of rushing to the internet I kept turning pages, because I HAD TO KNOW what happened.

So now I really really want to read the adult version of this story (CAIN'S BLOOD) but I am a huge chicken

and am afraid that my central nervous system would not be able to take getting that freaked out. Still it is very very tempting...

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### **Jennifer McGowan says**

I was lucky enough to read an early version of Project Cain, and can't get it out of my mind. The core story is about a shy, bookish teen who must battle the monster he discovers hidden within his own DNA... and join forces with a shadowy government operative to stop a group of similarly-afflicted teens who've embarked on a killing spree. Layered in with this action is a haunting exploration of nature vs. nurture and science vs. soul - told with emotion, authenticity and surprisingly touching humor. A must read.

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### **Dana Gill-Brown says**

I am a horrible reviewer BUT I do work for a local bookstore and received this book as an ARC. I loved Project Cain and was shocked by it as well. I think that although it will not appeal to some it will appeal to the masses of boys who need books to read. It reminds me of Patterson and I also believe that if you put this book in a boys hand he sure as hell isn't going to run out and rape and kill someone. I think alot of people are put off with the idea of boys/men as being created (down to the their dna) in the likeness of serial killers. I at first was sorta of shocked and am still trying to figure out how to sell it without offending an old biddy of a mom or dad who may become offended because of the books contents. Mind you nothing in this book is any worse than your average James Patterson or even old school Stephen King (which IMHO are perfectly fine for the ya section). IMHO parents should have no right to decide what their kids read EVER. IMHO parents who hover and hope to have their kids turn out like them by influencing everything in the children's world hurts a child more than reading a scary book would. (For anyone who wants to be BITCHY and say will you don't have kids or some stupid comment like that I have 2 one a boy who is 7 and a girl who is 9.) She would love this book and I plan on letting her borrow it whenever he little hearts desire.

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### **Paul Lunger says**

Geoffrey Girard's "Project Cain" is not your typical teen fiction novel nor is it a book I'd recommend for certain teens themselves due to topic. This is the story of 16 year old Jeff Jacobson whose life is thrown upside down when he discovers that he's really only 8 years old & is the product of Project Cain a secret government project that takes DNA from serial killers (in his case Jeffrey Dahmer) & clones them in order to turn them into weapons. When Jeff's father leaves him, he eventually ends up being partnered with a guy named Castillo who tries to solve a rash of murders that have been happening by these clones & also unravel exactly what DSTI (the organization his father was associated with) was doing & why in order to prevent the clones from causing mass murders liked their original incarnations.

Girard's book is spellbinding to the point where it draws you in & forces you to keep reading as we the reader understand the depths that people would go to keep this secret & to understand exactly what it must be like for Jeff to realize who he really is. The violence at times in the book may be a bit graphic for some readers but is almost a necessity as he describes the acts these cloned killers have caused as well as the tracking of them down. The characters are also so realistic & the story is so believable that if this weren't a work of fiction you'd almost think it's based on fact especially with the references to other government secret projects.

Overall, a spellbinding book that probably belongs in the adult fiction category rather than young adult due to content & violence, but this is still a book that once you start reading that will be hard to put down after it releases in September 2013.

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## **Blythe says**

\*\* I also now have no respect whatsoever for this author. Guess what, Geoffrey Girard? You just lost MANY readers. But it's okay, guys! Just watch Dora and SVU at the same time--it's practically the same thing as reading *Project Cain*. Also, it creeps me out that the 'If there were a party of good YA books about serial killers, Project Cain would be the creepy one standing outside the window, wanting to join them' quote was said by me about this book on *Twitter*, not Goodreads, so I'm not exactly sure how he found that tweet...

I can't do it. I just can't. I read up until about 40%, and the entirety of what I read--literally, *all of it*--was one huge info-dump.

There were three to four pages dedicated to just the main character telling us the characteristics and likes and dislikes of a man. Here are some examples of the likes and dislikes of this man:

*He preferred brunettes over blondes, but his last girlfriend, the first he'd ever truly loved, was blonde.*

*His favorite band was Pearl Jam.*

*He disliked snow.*

If *any* of that information is proven to be useful as the novel progresses, I would give the author my right arm. And I am right-handed.

And then there's another three pages or so on the history of cloning.

And *why* exactly are they making teenage clones of serial killers? Which scientist thought this would be a good idea? Yeah, send him off a cliff. Like now.

And then there's some *horribly* inaccurate statistics of men and rape and death and suicide and domestic violence.

And don't even get me *started* on how the main character asks the reader questions and speaks to them directly.

I'm not five years old, and you're not Dora; you can stop asking me questions like, "*Have YOU ever felt the urge to kill someone?*", book. Ay dios mio.

I can't.

I really just can't.

DNF.

God.

## Tammy says

**In a word:** A creepy mystery that will keep you guessing, a main character with a totally unique voice, filled with true (?) facts about serial killers, cloning and government conspiracies, and yes, you might have nightmares...

Ted Bundy. Richard Ramirez. Jeffrey Dahmer. Jack the Ripper. These horrifyingly familiar characters and others like them are all in *Project Cain*. Sort of. Actually, clones of these and other serial killers are the characters in Girard's young adult debut, a decidedly creepy story filled with a slowly unraveling mystery that will keep you turning pages as fast as you can. I sort of knew what *Project Cain* was about before I started reading, but the reality was much more than I expected—in a good way. Girard's stylistic storytelling may not be for everyone, but it gives this disturbing and dread-filled tale an immediacy that grabs the reader and doesn't let go until the end.

Jeff Jacobson is sixteen when his father gives him some bad news: he is actually a clone of the infamous serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer, and he's part of a secret government project that clones serial killers with plans to use them as diabolical weapons. His father disappears after delivering this message, and shortly after a stranger named Castillo bursts into Jeff's house and more or less kidnaps him, telling him that twelve of his friends from the Massey Institute are dead—and Jeff might be next.

Castillo and the reluctant Jeff embark on a nightmarish road trip to locate six boys from Massey, also serial killer clones, who are missing and presumed responsible for the killings. But how does Jeff's dad fit into all this? And who exactly is Castillo, and can Jeff trust him? There are all sorts of questions, and the answers don't come easily. Girard's tale is filled with twists and turns, and a good dose of government conspiracy theory as well.

As each mystery is solved and each puzzle piece drops into place, Jeff becomes more and more uncertain about his place in the world. Did the government create him for evil? Or can he break free and live a different kind of life? If only he can live long enough to find out! After all, a bunch of his fellow clones are after him, and the government might be too.

Jeff tells his story in first person without any traditional dialog, which is unusual and takes some getting used to. But his voice is so distinctive that once you begin reading you can't imagine it written any other way. In fact, although I'm not into them at all, I think this book would make an excellent audio book, because of this unique style. The narrative is very linear, so the reader figures everything out right along with Jeff.

One of the themes of the story is the old argument of "nature versus nurture," and Girard gives us a lot to think about. If a child is raised in a safe and loving environment, even if he is the clone of a vicious killer, will he grow up to be a killer as well, or will "nurture" win in the end? Jeff has been raised just this way, with a father who loves him (or so he believes) and gives him every opportunity to grow up into a well-adjusted adult. So when his father leaves, Jeff is devastated and will do anything to find him. This quality made Jeff a likable character for me, even if bad blood runs in his veins.

The character of Castillo is one of the biggest mysteries, and you're never really sure about him. On one hand he seems to want to protect Jeff, but at times his actions felt sneaky and untrustworthy. What I did enjoy was the relationship that grew between Castillo and Jeff. This book doesn't have your typical teen romance, so if you're looking for that, you'll be disappointed. What it does have is an uncommon friendship between two characters who don't know whether or not to trust each other; but because circumstances have

thrown them together, they really don't have any other choice.

Girard does something else unusual in this book. He sprinkles in facts about serial killers, government secrets and cloning whenever Jeff wants to make an important point. This sort of description could have brought the action to a screeching halt, but in my opinion it made the danger of Jeff's situation all the more real. The author also includes photos of famous serial killers, an eerie reminder that these people were (and in some cases are) indeed real. There's nothing more disturbing than staring into the eyes of a crazy person!

Like all good mysteries, the author throws in a few misleads and leaves the reader wondering what exactly the truth is. My heart was racing by the end of the story, both from fear and from exhaustion. Like all good stories, *Project Cain* will make you think, and possibly question some of what you believe in. And you might want to leave the lights on next time you go to sleep...

Many thanks to the author for supplying a review copy.

This review originally appeared on Books, Bones & Buffy.

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## **Gabriela says**

You think I'm gonna read this book??

It is the readers that will make or break your possible success, Mr. Girard.

You just lost a potential reader and my respect for you.

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## **Ashley Chen says**

Original Review Posted Here:<http://firestarbooks.blogspot.ca/2013...>

Thank you Simon and Schuster Canada for providing this ARC for review. :)

First off, I want to say that I didn't know that there was this whole author/blogger drama with this book. And my rating towards this book have nothing to do with the drama that went on. I only found out about the drama after I decided on the rating and saw other's ratings and found out.

I was very excited to receive this book from S&S Canada. Who didn't like a book involving serial killers and cloning?! And wow, the cover was GORGEOUS! Everything about this book attracted me. When I started reading the first 10 pages I was like "WOW! This book is great! The plot moves so fast and everything is so intense!" I was super happy to see this book doing well. I always enjoyed a fast opener for books. Then there were also amazing pictures and drawings in the book.

[https://pbs.twimg.com/media/BR\\_P0eECI...](https://pbs.twimg.com/media/BR_P0eECI...)

Look at the details of the picture! It is awesome! Plus I got an ARC so I was surprised to see the actual drawings in them.

[https://pbs.twimg.com/media/BR\\_RApLCY...](https://pbs.twimg.com/media/BR_RApLCY...)

There were also codes.

Everything was sailing and then ~~the fire nation attacked~~ the boring, six year old writing came. Okay, let me explain. It wasn't as if the writing just suddenly became a child's writing. It was me realizing the writing style did not work! There were no conversations whatsoever in this book. It was just Jeff thinking and explaining.

This is a quote taken from the ARC:

"Castillo noted that Ox didn't seem too surprised by any of this, and Ox replied that nothing had surprised him since he was four, and then he teased Castillo for still being puzzled by such things." ~Pg 121

It sounds like a six year old listing what he did today at school. "So first I played in the sandbox. It was fun." Seriously, the book was dull and lifeless. The story moved so slow. There was no action, no suspense, no anything. For 1/3 of the book it basically was talking about the first 2 paragraphs of the synopsis. It just killed all the suspense. The narrative, like I said, was boring. If this was an audiobook, I can almost imagine the narrator trying so very hard not to yawn.

Also the book repeated stuff that was obvious such as "I discovered they'd taken all the computers and all my dad's office files. The ones from his MAIN office, not from the secret room. (Turns out they hadn't found the secret room and didn't even know it was there.)" ~Pg 21-22 from ARC. Ummm....DUH!!!

And Jeff as a character was a whiny bitch. He didn't do much and when he actually did stuff, it was stupid. He constantly thought about "I'm a monster, freak" blah blah blah. I wouldn't mind that if the book actually had a plot and went somewhere but literally the book had been pacing around square one for half of the book.

And Castillo was also boring. Just imagine John Casey from Chuck. But Casey was cute and funny in his dumb way of being a soldier (plus there were Morgan and Chuck to get the best of him out). Castillo here was just a BORE! He was so blank!

I'm sorry I didn't finish the book. I just couldn't finish it. I read more than 50% of it. I know it was given to me for review but I'm sorry.

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## **lisa Kosonen says**

I finished this book literally in 3 days.

By reading the cover, you might get the impression of a young-adult themed book. In reality, it's much more. I feel like this story had some type of deep meaning behind all the characters and settings etc. By reading this book, I've suddenly become aware of all the problems and secrets what the government might be hiding. Even tough all the theories and strategies in this book aren't real, I feel like they could be. Since I'm also interested in history and psychology, I feel like this book provided me both of them.

But, I must remind you, this is still targeted for young adults/ adults so the text is not "full" of psychology and is an interesting experience. I also loved the way the characters developed and the way "horror" was represented in this piece.

**AN ABSOLUTE MUST READ**

## **Kimberley doruyter says**

the big word of this book is creepy.  
but good, i thick i might even get cain's blood.  
just to have more of the creepy good.

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