



V. C. Andrews: A Critical Companion (Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers)

Edelma D. Huntley

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This is the first full-length study of the work of gothic novelist V.C. Andrews. Andrews's ability to create adolescent characters who are caught uncomfortably between childhood and adulthood has won her millions of teenage readers. She focuses on the female adolescent experience and connects with her readers by creating characters who reflect adolescent struggles, confusion, and pain. Huntley shows that the power of Andrews's novels lies in her creation of an enthralling nightmare world, like a fairy tale gone berserk, in which the young heroine struggles with adolescent fears and frustrations in suddenly dangerous and bizarre domestic settings. Huntley locates the novels in the tradition of the female gothic, which Andrews refashioned into her own brand of gothicism: a blend of the gothic with horror fiction and the fairy tale.

Huntley's study of Andrews's novels provides close textual analysis. The discussion of each novel is subdivided into sections on plot, character development and point of view, thematic development, generic conventions, and alternative critical perspectives such as feminist and psychological approaches, which offer additional insight and help to explain the attraction of adolescent readers to the Andrews novels. The novels and series covered in this work include *Flowers in the Attic*, the Dollanganger Chronicles (*Petals on the Wind*, *If There Be Thorns*, *Seeds of Yesterday*), *Garden of Shadows*, *My Sweet Audrina*, and the Casteel Story (*Heaven*, *Dark Angel*, *Fallen Hearts*). In addition, Huntley discusses the novels written under the name V. C. Andrews by Andrew Niederman after V. C. Andrews's death in 1986. This study will open up possibilities for discussion about Andrews's work?its popularity, strange durability, and its special appeal to young adult readers. A must for secondary school and public library collections.

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