



Peyton Place

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The Work

Peyton Place explicitly describes diverse sexual misconduct, sexual abuse, and violence in recounting the rise of a naïve and idealistic young woman writer. The name “Peyton Place” has passed into general American usage as a term for places and groups exhibiting similar conduct. The novel’s principal character, Allison MacKenzie, and her story reflect author Grace Metalious’ life and her own home town, Gilmanton, New Hampshire.

Shortly before Metalious published her novel, her interview with Hal Boyle was published. Reporters immediately invaded Gilmanton, aggressively questioning everybody. In reaction, Grace’s husband, George Metalious, lost his position as principal of a local school. Public retaliation included threatening phone calls and letters, a death threat, and persecution of her children.

After its publication, *Peyton Place* became a best-seller, attracting widespread condemnation as obscene. Metalious further enraged opinion by denouncing small-town bigotry and bohemian conduct. Her book was banned in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and was blacklisted by the Rhode Island Commission. The Canadian Revenue Commission prohibited its importation as “of an indecent or immoral character.”

A heavily revised film adaptation in 1957 met Hays Code standards for general release. An even more heavily revised television series ran on network television from 1964 to 1969.

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