



One Mad Apple

A DARK COMEDY FEATURE - BASED ON A CRAZY TRUE STORY AND BOOK



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Feature Length - Dark Comedy, based on a true story and book of the same name

After a man moves to small town to care for his aging parents, he embraces the community and his new life as a stepfather and husband, until the local looney challenges him in a school board election and makes him look like the crazy one.



the world

On the surface, Paso Viejo (a fictional town, based entirely on a real one), appears to be a quaint Northern California paradise, an homage to its gold rush roots, but anyone who moves here, soon discovers that the local bar is where secrets are spewed, and the school board meetings are where they are weaponized. Outsider logic and reason are as incendiary as the region's frequent wildfires, and as our protagonist Jake Prescott is about to find out, just as destructive.







C H A R A C T E R S

JAKE PRESCOTT is a clean cut genuinely nice guy. At least that's how he is when he first moves to Paso Viejo. As an insurance underwriter, his clients own anything from expensive art pieces to classic cars to anything that would be considered of value. He is a risk assessment specialist in life and in work. Those who know him, including his new wife Kate, consider him a doer. He moved here to do right by his parents and help them as they struggle with their later years. But it's a moniker that rubs Jake the wrong way as if he's no fun. But his actions prove otherwise as he sees holes in the school board that he knows how to address and therefore adjust; genuine solutions around this small town that he can't help but offer suggestions as to how to deal with. Despite the fact that nobody wants to hear them. Particularly the town clown, Barbara Ann Collins.



C H A R A C T E R S

BARBARA ANN COLLINS

Barbara Ann was a lifelong elementary school teacher until she got fired for killing the classroom pet in front of a room full of students. She has a history of going off the rails, but nobody knows that it's because she's bipolar and she often skips her meds because they create unwanted bloat under her flashy wardrobe.

She sees the school board as an opportunity to get back to her profession in a way that she can still make a difference without scaring the children. She also would like to get back to the principal who fired her. So when he announces his retirement just after she's elected to the board it about fizzles her brain. That combined with Jake's common sense is enough to send her into a tizzy. Nobody knows what happened to her husband. Some say, she shot him with his own gun collection, which she still has, but the more popular myth is that she poisoned him with her apples that she grows on her land. She neither confirms nor denies any of the allegations which only adds to her legend. Everyone in town understands that Barbara Ann is a little off-center but when push comes to shove, she is still one of them, so even though Jake calls her out for what she is, they support her as a local with roots (and roots showing) more than the newcomer from the big city. More than anything, Barbara Ann really just wants to be noticed, and loved; the first is hard to believe considering the way she dresses and acts, she can't be missed, but the second is harder to achieve, and deep down Jake recognizes this in her and she knows he does.



C H A R A C T E R S

KATE has lived in Paso Viejo all her life, she's a local girl and quite the catch since her divorce. Her kids are smart and funny. She puts her good heart to work at the retirement community; as such she already knows all about Jake before he shows up. She is all too familiar with Barbara Ann's antics, but she also is of the belief of everyone else in town that Barbara Ann is her own worst enemy and deserves a break when she tries to make amends. In other words, the more Jake takes on Barbara Ann, the more he pushes Kate away.

RON AND MARGARET PRESCOTT make it their mission to fix Jake up with Kate, and once that is accomplished, Ron encourages Jake to take on Barbara Ann with a vengeance for what she put Margaret through. Margaret wants this too, but her health is declining fast and she doesn't want to be a bother. When she passes, Jake vows to put Barbara Ann in her place, while helping his father cope. Ron is the shit stirrer that good boy Jake needs and insists that Jake has his great Uncle's skill at public service (his great uncle was a notable congressman dealing with his own controversies).

DEREK AND PAULA are good kids, but that doesn't stop them from telling it like it is. They know how to manipulate Jake into wild excursions in an effort to be "dad." But they also are quick to come to Barbara Ann's defense when she gifts a new kitten (for the cat Jake thinks she killed), and helps Derek with his homework. This puts Jake in an even more awkward position when he has to do what is right by the school board in regard to Barbara Ann's behavior.





The Story

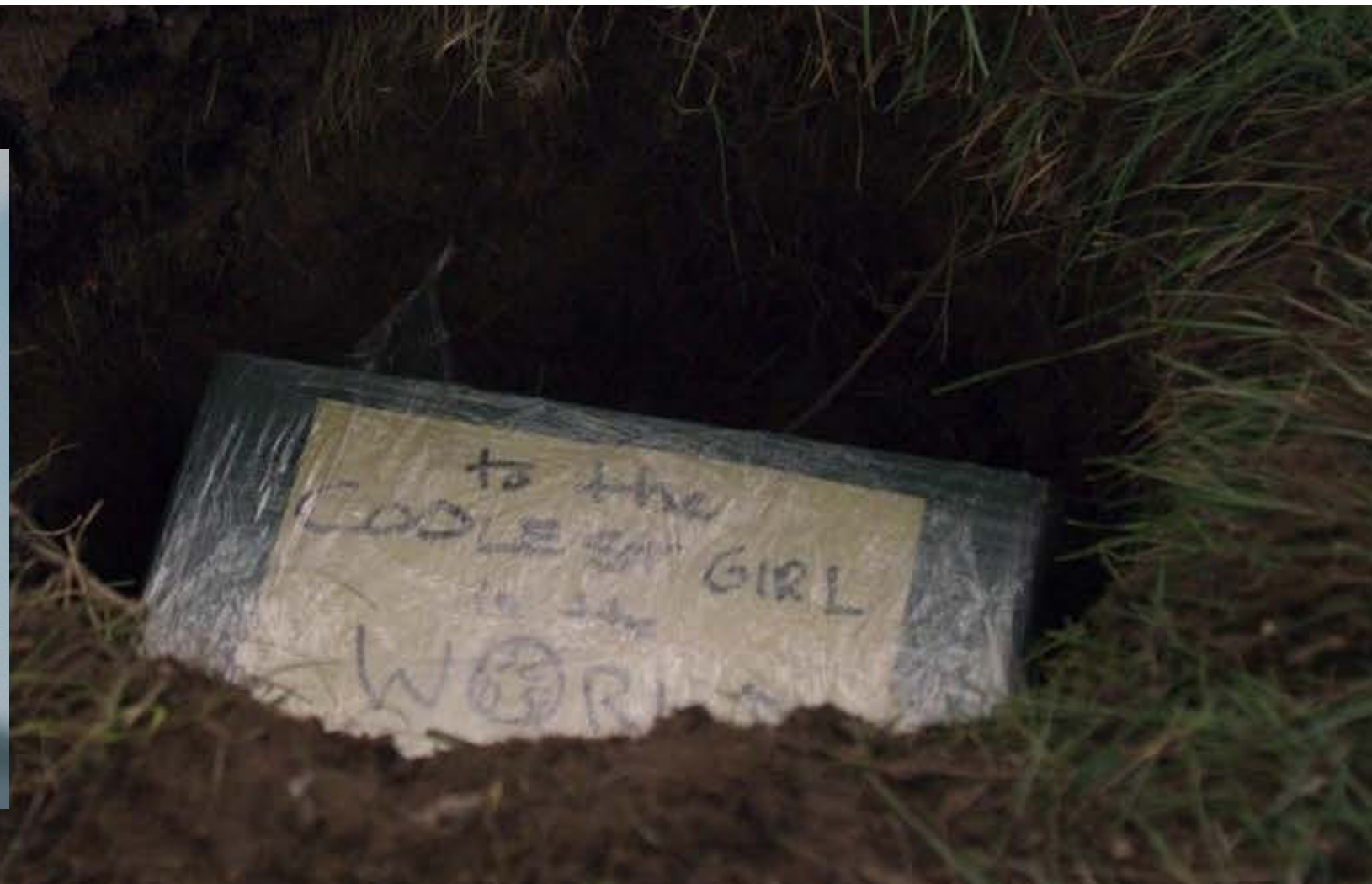
We meet Jake Prescott just as he arrives in Paso Viejo. He's an insurance underwriter who has packed up his big city life to be near his aging parents, particularly as his mother's health dwindles. His rental has no AC which is problematic with the raging heatwave sparking wildfires in the region. For relief he goes into the quaint downtown area where he decides to join a group tour. The tour guide is Barbara Ann Collins, former school teacher and a bit off her nut. Her and Jake immediately get off on the wrong foot; he raises his hand to request a name badge and the ensuing debate reveals her marijuana stash in her bag. The tour ends at the Outpost bar; a throwback from the gold rush era, where we get a sense of the locals' less than sophisticated nature. Barbara Ann hits on Jake; he's so stunned that his denial comes off a bit abrupt. We pick up with him having dinner with his parents at their retirement facility and as he rehashes the bizarre day he learns that his ailing mother and Barbara Ann have an unpleasant history. Things finally take a turn for the better when Jake's parents introduce him to Kate, a local single mom of elementary school age children. Back at his place, Barbara Ann shows up with a basket of apples as a peace offering, and flips out when she sees Kate there. When the dust settles, Jake reflexively picks up an apple to eat and Kate forcefully stops him; rumor has it that Barbara Ann killed her husband with poisoned apples.



The Story

Cut to, a year later, and Kate and Jake are married. Jake drives the kids to school and can't help but be surprised by the school board election signs. He was a school board member in New York and they always had these things sorted before the school year started. The drop off line becomes an assault line as Barbara Ann campaigns for a seat, and no one wants to hear it — especially Jake. Later, at the back-to-school event some issues are exposed and Jake is convinced to run for the school board.

This sends Barbara Ann into an all-out political attack dog. It all starts when she shows up at Jake and Kate's house in a fury, she assaults him with apples and destroys the yard. Jake goes on the defensive and it's not a good look in front of the kids, so he has to bite back his anger. But when their beloved cat ends up dead in the yard, Jake suspects it ate one of Barbara Ann's apples, and he gets zero support from authorities and even Kate, to try and arrest her. The town is all too familiar with her antics, and just figure this too shall pass. Meanwhile, Barbara Ann seems to know that she's untouchable and continues to push Jake's buttons at every turn. She even uses the kids against him, by gifting a kitten and helping the eldest with his math homework. All of which do nothing to garner support as Jake grows weary and furious at the antics aimed at him.



The Story

She ends up rigging the election to win by a few votes and Jake looks like a fool when he tries to prove it. But when another member has to quit, Jake gets the empty seat, setting up a battle on the board with Barbara Ann. His mom's health eventually gives out, and he and his dad vow to get back at Barbara Ann as a promise to his mom. Luckily a reporter from Barbara Ann's past shows up and gives Jake photographic proof of an affair she had with the local bartender in his classic car that is a head turner out on Main Street. Jake shares the pictures with Barbara Ann as a false flag — hoping it will get her off his back. She snaps and destroys the car and ends up getting put away.

Cut to the next school year and everyone assumes Barbara Ann learned her lesson; an edible arrangement is delivered to her door, and she snacks on it while she marches along the drop off line. Jake tries to ignore her, but when she gets in his face, she starts to choke. Jake is the only one in a position to help her — but he's in no hurry considering the pain and suffering she put him through. In reality there was nothing he could do to help her. In fact, she stipulated that upon her passing, he be the one to deliver her eulogy.

As he wraps it up, a man Jake doesn't know shows and chats him up — turns out Barbara Ann's ex is very much alive, and has had the last laugh.



Why

Despite the comedic tone, the story offers a realistic peak into mental health and how those who suffer jeopardize more than their own well-being by trying to cover it up.

It also highlights the impact of local elections to everyday lives, without coming off as a political soapbox.

In short, despite taking place prior to our country's current division along party lines, the story world of Paso Viejo is a microcosm of America, and illustrates how we got here, in a fun and eye-opening way as it depicts the undebatable allegiance of a community with deep-rooted beliefs and fear of acceptance of those who are not like them.



The Reviews

The book is widely available and has garnered terrific reviews.
The screenplay is double recommended and has won over 20 festival awards

Tokyo Film and Screenplay Awards - Selection (2025)
Oxford Script Awards - Selection (2025)
Thriller/Suspense Festival - Winner (2025)
Toronto Tamil International Film Festival - Winner (2025)
Carmel International Film Festival - Honorable Mention (2024)
Los Angeles Movie and Music Video Awards - Honorable Mention (2024)
Cambridge Script Festival - Finalist (2024)
Berlin International Screenplay Festival - Selection (2024)
Art Film Spirit Awards - Nominee (2024)
Palm Springs International Screenplay & Pitch - Semi-finalist (2024)
Brussels International Film Festival - Winner (2023)
Atlanta Screenplay Awards - Finalist (2023)
Chicago Script Awards - Selected (2023)
Dark Comedy Film Festival - Selected (2023)
Scriptmatix True Story - Finalist (2023)
Los Angeles International Screenplay Awards - Selected (2023)
Screencraft True Story & Public Domain Competition - Semi-finalist (2023)
Search for New Blood Screenwriting Contest - (2022)
San Francisco Fall Book Festival - Honorable Mention (2022)

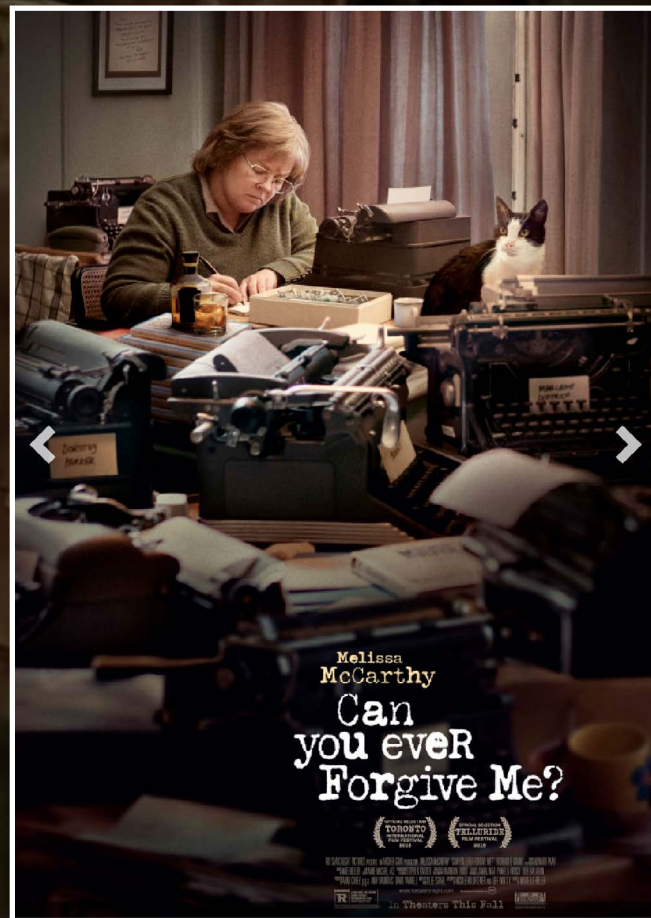


 Teri D. Winton
★★★★★ **Good Read**
Reviewed in the United States on October 24, 2024
Verified Purchase
This book is a casebook study of a personality gone amuck. It shows how one person's disintegration can affect a whole community.
One person found this helpful
[Helpful](#) | [Report](#)

 kim rosenberry
★★★★★ **Fast paced and entertaining read!**
Reviewed in the United States on February 16, 2022
Verified Purchase
One Mad Apple was a fast paced and fun novel to read. I enjoyed the quirky characters, especially Jake! I hope Mr Pratt will be putting out more entertaining books in the future.

Comps

"The events depicted in this film took place in Minnesota in 1987. At the request of the survivors, the names have been changed. Out of respect for the dead, the rest has been told exactly as it occurred". This opening statement plays in front of both the movie *FARGO* and the inspired series. The wildly popular and darkly comedic world that chronicles deception, intrigue and even murder that all lead back to the quaint frozen town of Fargo, North Dakota. This is perhaps the best comp for the world and potential of *ONE MAD APPLE*. In fact a series spin off that starts with Jake's downward spiral is in development with the second book installment.



CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME
Melissa McCarthy's foray into the darker side of comedy and truth stranger than fiction



FARGO (MOVIE)
Considered one of the greatest films of all time, certainly the greatest dark comedy.



FARGO THE SERIES
Ran for 10 years, with each season being another storyline, but all roads pointed back to the lives of this twisted, frozen town.



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