



The Thief

Ruth Rendell

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What you do in childhood may come back to haunt you.

Stealing things from people who had upset her was something Polly did quite a lot.

There was her Aunt Pauline; a girl at school; a boyfriend who left her. And there was the man on the plane . . .

Humiliated and scared by a total stranger Polly does what she always does. She steals something. But she never could have imagined that her desire for revenge would have such terrifying results.

The Thief Details

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Author : Ruth Rendell

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From Reader Review The Thief for online ebook

Meowkel says

This is nothing but a book of frustration, stupid characters, and grammatical and typographical errors. I wouldn't pick this book if it is not sold for a cheap price.

The story revolves around Pollie and how she managed to escape the mysterious man's revenge. The story is full of filler scenes, probably trying to make the book long enough to be published. And by filler scenes I mean boring and non-sense stuff that has nothing to do for the development of the story. What really frustrates me is its lack of conclusion, like it is trying to have its own unique style, but failed. The story is stupid enough for it to have no definite ending.

Novel-wise, nothing can be justified here. Yes, she was a kleptomaniac when she was a child, but we can all see that she changed for the good. Saying that she deserves what happened to her is absurd, because she knows herself that what she did was wrong, and she is ready to change that. You cannot fully blame her for doing that stuff again. She did not do it voluntarily. She tried to act nice and keep her cool. But that mysterious man triggered her and pushed her to her limit to take her revenge. And for me, she does not deserve the thing that happened to her in the end.

See! There's nothing relevant in this novel. No lesson to be taught. I don't even know why this book is made. Maybe one good thing about this book is its interesting conflict and synopsis. And that's it. Hafta find a better book to read next just to replace this frustration I got in this one.

Plum-crazy says

An entertaining quick read in which Polly finds that her lies come back to bite her...ouch!

Akylina says

Many different emotions rushed through me in the short period of time it took me to read this book. Curiosity, anxiety, a sense of suspense, frustration, pity and disappointment are a few of them. While the story started off as gripping and with an interesting premise, I couldn't help but feel that I didn't want to keep on reading. I knew something unpleasant would happen, and even though at the beginning of the book I thought something unpleasant would be more than fitting to this self-centered and arrogant protagonist called Polly, this feeling of anxiety wouldn't go away. The moral of the story became pretty evident, but this story just wasn't for me. I felt like wanting to get inside the book and scream at the stupidity the characters' actions were led by.

What stayed with me after finishing reading this was that, ultimately, human nature is impossible to change, no matter how much one strives for it.

Gary says

This is my first experience of the writing of Ruth Rendell and I was quickly taken by her style already planning to read more.

A fast paced novel that reminded me a little of the programme 'Tales of the unexpected' with it's rather quirky plot. The lead character Polly is impulsive and struggles to control them. When she is angered her impulses take over and she is driven to seek revenge by stealing their possessions and destroying them. These impulses threaten to take control of her putting everything she deems important at risk. My one criticism is that I thought the climax could have been a little stronger.

Karl Marx S.T. says

Stealing something from people that upsets Polly is something she does quite a lot. And what you did in your childhood may come back again to haunt you is the premise of one of Ruth Rendell's standalone novella. Polly avenges on some people like her Aunt Pauline, a girl at school and a boyfriend who left her. But then one day she met the man of her dreams and promises herself to behave and cut her childhood habit. With her husband's virtues and good intentions and for the things he continuously showers Polly with, comes to a decision that her actions and impropriety must come to a stop. And there was the man on the plane.

Humiliated and degraded by a total stranger, Polly once again does what she does. She steals something to avenge her dignity, and never had imagined that her revenge for something would have caused her such terrifying results.

I've read a lot of reviews about the novel and the negative ones usually came from Polly's being afraid to defend herself against the stranger. Well, she does promise herself to behave accordingly, and I guess the inevitable will come into action if she fights back and that's what she is avoiding. I think it is safe to say that some of our childhood habits remain subconsciously in our minds and is just waiting to be performed again, and that's what drives Polly to perform her scene, this time promising it'll be the last.

As part of the Quick Reads series -to promote and encourage reading to people who do not often read and to discover the joy of books- The Thief is an exciting and fast read from a writer I admire for years. Even though in just 20,000 words, Rendell still manages to put her signature story telling and creepy narratives to make you read the novella in just one sitting (and it's not just because it only contains 86 pages). One can predict that the consequences of the protagonist behavior will end in tragedy –for Polly, lessons are learned in a hard way to make her realize her actions- I am much saddened by Polly's fate, and thus it makes her unforgettable. Well, one should learn something life-changing from their fallacious actions right?

A riveting and an entertaining fast read from the master of psychological suspense.

Opening Sentence: The first time she stole something Polly was eight years old.

Ending Sentence: She lay there, unconscious, her arms stretched out and the diamond on her finger winking in the dying light.

Bandit says

I've read Rendell's novella and short stories, now this...a novella. A story about a young woman who steals as a means of revenge and happens to be a pathological liar. Until she meets the right man and wants to give up her lying stealing ways. Until she meets the wrong man to steal from. This wasn't as dark as some of Rendell's psychological fiction, but it certainly has most of familiar traits, especially the innate, occasionally crippling so, British politeness. It is that precise quality that gets our protagonist into her predicament in the first place, her impotent rage over a man's rudeness gives way to nabbing his luggage to spite him, leading on a terribly destructive path. Some of Polly's actions were definitely straight out of the WTF bin...washing of the stolen clothes for instance, but then again she isn't meant to be a criminal mastermind, just an average person with some particular predilections. Interesting in the way of culture clash contrasts, can't imagine a cripplingly polite reticent American. Entertaining quick read.

Lady Delacour says

Ruth Rendell always
has unique characters.
You will meet one
by the name of Polly,
in this short adventure.
Listened with TTS.
Clean with two
Foul Words.

Janet says

2 and a half stars

Mind-Spa Lotusbloem says

Begon goed, werd steeds wat slechter. Na drie pogingen weet ik het zeker. Ruth Rendell boeken zijn niks voor mij.

Joann says

This is a short story and I enjoyed it for the most part. I really disliked the ending though and thought it could have been a bit more thought out. Just an OK mediocre read for me. Nothing to get excited about!

Kimberley says

Ik vond het boek niet heel diepgaand, maar het las lekker weg.

Shrenik says

finished in about an hour. it is a short story with kind of a message in it(what goes around comes around like "karma")

writing is fine nothing confusing. nothing surprising or suspense in the plot. no nail biting moments. just easy read for an hour.

cheers

Natasha says

When the tables turn on Polly she learns some harsh life lessons.

Selene says

This book was a pleasant surprise! There was a little suspense, a little mystery, and the protagonist was a kleptomaniac and compulsive liar. The ending was abrupt but this was a great read!

Adam McPhee says

Got me through a sleepless night. A great build up of tension but without the cathartic release of a good ending. Also got me thinking about how I don't like these kind of Boy Who Cried Wolf stories because they seem to value honesty over the truth, which is absurd.

Added it to my list after seeing it on a list of short crime novels and novellas from CrimeReads, I think.
