



Adam and Eve and Pinch Me

Ruth Rendell

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With consummate skill, Ruth Rendell pulls the colorful strands of this harrowing story ever tighter, increasing the tension page by page.

Jock Lewis was supposed to have died in that terrible train crash at Paddington. Minty, his girlfriend, received a letter from Great Western telling her so. But, curiously, the police haven't been in touch. And Jock has borrowed all her savings . . .

Zillah also got a letter from the railway company, informing her that her husband, Jerry Leach, was dead. Something about the letter struck her as suspicious, but she chooses not to mention her doubts to the up-and-coming Conservative Member of Parliament who has just proposed a marriage of convenience . . .

Fiona, a successful banker, met Jeff Leigh before the Paddington crash in August. Although he never seemed to have a job, and borrowed money from her, she is utterly devoted to him—and can't understand why he suddenly has disappeared . . .

As this novel gets under way, it is not immediately apparent how the lives of these women might be connected, or how they may figure into a series of vicious stabbing deaths that have shocked and terrified the citizens of London. With consummate skill, Ruth Rendell pulls the colorful strands of this harrowing story ever tighter, increasing the tension page by page.

Adam and Eve and Pinch Me Details

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Author : Ruth Rendell

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From Reader Review Adam and Eve and Pinch Me for online ebook

Bandit says

Another terrific psychological suspense drama from the author. Several interconnected stories tied together by the murder of a womanizing opportunistic cad. You know who and how and why, but it's still such a compelling read. There is a timeless quality to Rendell's characters, sure the reader can date the time the story takes place by the outside factors, in this case movies, since there's quite a few cinefiles in the bunch, but aside from that the small sadness or sad smallness of their lives is ageless indeed. Everyone does the best they can in their relatively confined and fairly bleak environments, it's the perpetual gray territory of good intentions and muddled executions. So very much like real life itself. This time Rendell also throws in some psychological disorders, food related ones and OCD for starters, handled in the proper British manner of polite ignoring for all the good that does. This might be the longest book I've read by the author thus far and it's great to see that the quality holds up no matter the word count. Very enjoyable reading, very well done. Highly recommended.

Sam says

Although I did enjoy this a little more than some of Rendell's other works I still found myself getting somewhat irritated by her characters as they were rather weak and let themselves be dragged along by the whims of the men in their lives. The story itself was very good showing the damage that one man can do if he were so inclined and how the smallest things can escalate out of control and end in a murder or two. Of all the characters in this book the only one I really felt any compassion for was Minty, whose obsessions with cleanliness get out of control and result in hallucinations from which she is unable to escape, despite drastic measures. Rendell's writing is of a good quality and it does bring her stories and characters to life, unfortunately her characters are just not for me.

Renee says

I've heard wonderful things about Ruth Rendell for years -- decades, even -- but had only read one of her books until a few weeks ago. Even this one was rather a happy accident -- I needed books to "bring with me" to NYC on my Kindle, and this book was actually available for electronic loan from my library. I can confirm, once again, that Rendell is a master of her craft!

Honestly, though, I'm not sure that I'd have kept reading if my only other choice was James Patterson (who, also honestly, wasn't that bad). Part of why this book was so magnificent was that the skill with which Rendell painted unique characters, including those things that torment their every waking moment. At points, the book was painful to read -- beautiful, but painful -- and I had to keep convincing myself that Rendell wouldn't condemn all of her characters to tragic ends. I'm glad I kept reading, not least because Rendell brought everything together in a way I wouldn't have wanted to miss.

Emily says

Not really my cup of tea: in general, I'm not as much a fan of mysteries where the tension lies in knowing whodunit and wondering how/when/if he or she will be caught. Here though, there's simply not a lot of tension to begin with: Araminta's condition steadily worsens and it's pretty easy to see how the main murder will occur and the three main female characters' lives intersect with that event. Although Minty is a large driving force of the novel, I grew bored pretty quickly with the detailed descriptions of her ritual cleanliness and lonely life, preferring the short snippets of Zillah and Fiona.

Marfita says

This was a good read. Instead of figuring out whodunnit, we are taxed with whosolvzit. We have an omniscient view of the murder from soup to nuts. We see the situation forming, we see the murderer and the victim do their dance until they inevitably come together and the murderer spins away to get on with life. Then we wait while we wonder if the murderer will be discovered and we sort of hope not. Like most cozies, the victim seems to have deserved something, if not actual death. Rendell has manipulated our feelings and, in fact, one of the characters unwittingly discusses the the core at the center of the nub of the gist of this story: when is murder not murder? When is it not a sin? When does a murderer not deserve punishment? Is this even possible?

We also see how a murder investigation destroys the social fabric. Neighbors no longer trust each other. There's an amusing side-story of a closeted gay MP who tries to get himself a "beard" but the murder affects this as well. As in any good cozy, true tragedy is skirted, the gore is limited, and the world is righted in the end.

Barbara says

It would be inaccurate for the reader to classify this book as a mystery, because one can observe the actions of the characters throughout. The proper genre would most aptly be one of suspense. The mystery to me is how Ruth Rendell, unarguably The Queen of the Crime Novel, is able to produce such a broad array of psychopathology in her writing. Bewildering, it often is, but coupled with her brilliant style of story telling, her books are compelling.

The stories of these characters and their actions, all for the sake of self preservation vary widely. The panoply of traits that are observed are obsessive compulsive disorder, anorexia, gluttony, superstition, larceny, bigamy, confidence games, vanity, narcissism, arrogance and pomposity- to name a few. I actually failed to mention murder! Of course this is all in one book! Rendell, as ever, has woven together these strands of seemingly unrelated attributes, activities and people to produce a tension filled novel which sustained my interest throughout. The title is enigmatic until you delve into the narrative.

Perhaps when reading this, it may be deemed by some as "not much of a review". Yes, there are many descriptive nouns here and I have not introduced the actual characters; but this book delighted me and confirmed my admiration of Rendell. I hope that my enthusiasm will lead others to explore it. (I am elevating my rating to **4.5 !**)

4/21/2016

I was saddened to have learned of her passing, but there remain many of her books left for me to read!!

Pamela says

The only reason I managed to muddle my way through to the end of this piece of crap is because I am a fan of Jasper Fforde and his Thursday Next series. After the first third of the book, the purpose of reading it was not to find out what happened (that was fairly obvious from the beginning) but rather to imagine it as a book needing Thursday's attention. A book invaded by other characters--in this case characters from nursery rhymes.

Let's see....there's Jack Sprat who could eat no fat, his wife who could eat no lean. And there's Georgie Porgie who kissed the girls and made them cry. There was also a group of unknown characters who mumbled around in the background...the original characters these nursery rhyme's had shoved offstage?

I kept checking for footnotes--Thursday's method of communicating with her superiors at the Literary Detective's Division about what's going on--but unfortunately found none. Pity. If Rendell had included these, she may have been on to something. As it was, she only succeeded in embarrassing herself.

Tony says

ADAM AND EVE AND PINCH ME. (2001). Ruth Rendell. ***.

This would have been a terrific book rather than just a so-so book if only Ms. Rendell had managed to tighten up on her descriptions. It takes most of the pleasure out of reading when I find myself looking ahead to see how many more pages I've got to get through before I reach the end. The story is a psychological thriller that contains three sets of protagonists. The focus is on the female of the couple in each case – though don't let that fool you. Ms. Rendell has managed to take ordinary people and put them into extraordinary circumstances, even when they are trying to do their best. A key occurrence in the story is a train crash at Paddington Station in London, where several passengers were killed. As in any disaster, the choice of which passengers die and which don't is pretty random. We soon learn that some of our key players were on that train and are presumed dead. What does this do to the survivors? Life must go on, but the resources of each survivor are different. You will find that each survivor was kind of an ordinary person, but ordinary in different ways. They will each react differently to their new circumstances. Enough said. This is a good mystery, but could have stood a tightening up.

Kate says

Wow! This is a perfect book to read in Halloween season (as I happened to have done) because it's wonderfully weird. We begin with a sweet young woman who's been seduced and abandoned-- and gradually realize that her behavior isn't exactly normal, never mind the fact that her house is haunted. The other characters in the book are sympathetic and repellent by turns. And talk about turns-- the plot is crammed full of surprises. (And I'm not offering any detail because I want you, Dear Fellow Reader, to enjoy them as much as I did.)

This is the kind of book that I didn't want to set down because I could hardly wait to find out WHAT HAPPENS in the intermingled lives of these quirky characters-- but I forced myself to go slow because I didn't want the reading experience to end too soon. GREAT fun.

Kaustubh Dudhane says

This has been my blind date with a book after a long time. I had picked it up from a used bookseller in Fort, Mumbai. The characters are strange (which is good.) The plot is a good one but it fails to amaze after the midway. Adam and Eve and Pinch Me is a okayish yet frustrating book at times.

Daria says

I stopped reading this book. I love Ruth Rendell because her stories are so quirky. This one was just too disorganized with too many oddball characters floating around. They never seemed to jell. After awhile I just questioned why I was continuing to read it as there are so many good books out there for me to enjoy. Not worth my time.

F.R. says

The aptly named Jeff Leach is a rogue. An immoral ladies man, he finds attractive women with their own property and moves in with them, gets them to give him 'loans' (and sometimes to take out fresh mortgages on their homes) and then dumps them to disappear with his next conquest. In the background are the wife and two kids he's also abandoned, but who he does drift back occasionally to see – even if he offers nothing in the way of support. His is a complex and difficult to follow life, which touches many others and leaves a lot of bad feeling and grudges. So that when he's murdered in the Odeon Marble Arch one afternoon (at a showing of *The House on Haunted Hill*) there are a lot of avenues for the police to explore.

One of the best things about this highly entertaining tale of deceit and murder, is how unpredictable it all is. The normal crime novel will have a brief introduction of the characters, a dreadful murder will take place, there will be red herrings and possibly other deaths, until the least likely suspect will be revealed as the killer. 'Adam and Eve and Pinch Me' differs from all of that. It actually starts out as a ghost story, as we meet poor Anaminta Knox, or Minty – whose sheltered life and repressed emotions are manifesting themselves in extreme cleanliness. She thinks she sees the ghost of her dead fiancée, and although at first glance she'd appear to be just a strange little thing in a strange old house, tragic events arise from those visions.

I do enjoy a book which takes its own path, where it's impossible to predict what will happen next. I also like a book which populates itself with an array of interesting characters, who are built up over the course of the plot so that they are more than just a sum of their flaws and neuroses. It isn't a perfect novel – wouldn't, for instance, Minty have seen Jeff's face in the newspapers at least once? – but it is one of the most interesting and entertaining crime stories I've read in a long while.

Selva Subramanian says

Among the best psychological thrillers that I have read. Imaginative and compulsively readable. Best of Ruth Rendall that I have read so far. I don't ever remember rooting for the protagonist so much as I did with this book. At least, not in recent memory. Recommended.

Joy Perry says

This book was just not up to Ruth Rendall's usual standards. It meandered here and there, casually linking the lives of three women who knew the murder victim by various names.

You knew from the beginning who the murderer was but the book rambled on for 400 some pages.

I like a tight, suspenseful mystery, and this was not it. The most suspense was created by the editor who wrote the notes for the back cover.

Arachne8x says

This book had some good potential, but ultimately fell flat.

Minty, an reclusive clean freak with other OCD tendencies, finds out that her boyfriend Jock has died in a Tube accident. But Jock has more than one name, more than one love, and has told countless lies. Things start to unravel when some of the women he's conned come into contact with eachother.

I found this book easy to get through, but when it was said and done, I wasn't satisfied. I think the author did not do a good job of making Minty all that attractive to the reader. It is easy to feel pity for her, but she is schizophrenic enough that it was hard for me to feel real empathy for her.

It's an ok read to pass the time.
