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Acid Row is a crime-infested housing project that exists by its own laws. When news comes that a child has been kidnapped, the frustration and anger that has been seething on the streets of Acid Row is ignited. And no one will be safe.

Acid Row Details

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Author : Minette Walters

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From Reader Review Acid Row for online ebook

Julie says

Walters is at her best in exploring the banality of criminal activity and intent -- and in this book, once again, she shines. In pursuing the leads to find a missing 10-year-old girl, the reader is led into a maze of inter-connections which is at once astounding, predictable, and tragic. I don't know how Walters manages to weave all three into one mundane little crime, but she reveals herein she has a masterful grasp of the depraved indifference that men and women often demonstrate towards each other. Clever little book -- which sneaks out from the reeds and pounces on you unawares. At first glance, her novel may seem quite pedestrian, but think about it a little, and you'll see she's absolutely brilliant!

Fiona says

This is really a 3.5.

I enjoyed this book as a good suspenseful ride but I can't put it on the same level as a four star crime novel. Although I enjoyed it I was not really transported into the character's lives.

Walters knows how to handle the pacing in her plot, she keeps things moving always at the right speed. Not breakneck speed, she knows when to apply the breaks but there was very rarely a slow moment or a time when the storyline did not progress.

The characters were well written, but they still felt a bit flat or impersonal I guess. It felt like seven eighths of a novel and one eighth police report. It is told from the viewpoint of hind sight - and she keeps giving cryptic warnings during the narrative about what will happen next. (If only so and so hadn't done this or little did she know what would happen to so and so when she walked into the room.)

In a way that was an interesting take on it, in another way I think it helped flatten out the characters and storyline a bit.

What really interested me about this book is that it is actually set near where I live. Portisfield, where this story takes place is actually Portsmouth and the paedophile riots actually did happen and I remember reading about it all in the news. I don't believe it was half as violent or as atrocious as the scenario represented in this book - she took some dramatic license there!

However, a couple of 'police reports' at the beginning were actually based on true life cases (the girl tied up in the bath) which unless you're from the UK and read it in the news every day you may not be so aware of.

I will definitely be reading some more Walters in the future, she is a good author and if I want some guaranteed enjoyment I'll know where to turn. But nothing that really lit any fires under my bones.

Heather says

After having adored other books by this writer, I was saving Acid Row for a treat. Each book she writes is different, but reliably excellent in terms of pacing, structure, characters, and plot elements, and there is always a very satisfying payoff. This book was a major disappointment in each of these areas and more. I couldn't believe Minette Walters wrote it.

Interesting characters (good and bad) were created and set aside. Intrigues were established and never developed. Paragraphs were wasted on second-string pasteboard types who didn't do much, and what they did was not credible. The police involvement in both story lines was highly unrealistic. Race and class characterizations were extremely clumsy and simplistic, as were the criminals themselves. Some jarringly anachronistic media/culture references played a significant role. Also: Walters usually adds a leavening of grace, humor, romance, or beauty. If they were here, they were atrophied. All were missed.

Instead of introducing a moral dilemma and plot points to lead the reader to a logical conclusion, one point was made by ham-handed hammering, and the other was unbelievable. (It might have been believable if a certain clarification had been made, but none was provided.) Many of the psychological points were either incorrect or poorly made, leaving the high-toned moralizing unsupported. Unforgivably, serious topics (hot trigger issues) were handled in a blithe, callous fashion. But even someone not specifically vulnerable might loathe heavy-handed moralization and flippant attitude. Content aside, the storytelling itself was inconsistent and hard to follow. (Sorry if this sounds muddled; this is technically a mystery, so I'm trying to avoid spoilers.)

Usually, one would build a situation and allow it to simmer over time. Here, most of the events occur over a few hours. The riot (mentioned on the cover) is not clearly described and turns into a confused slog. Because there is not enough groundwork before the riot begins, no tension is created. We also haven't had time to make an investment in the characters, and so we have no reason to care about their outcomes. At best we have mild curiosity, and dogged hope that the story will soon start to coalesce in a way that makes us care. It never does. It doesn't help that the two main story lines are only related by accident -- literally. Making the *lack* of overlap a plot point is a mistake; instead of being an interesting twist, it's merely a diversion from the main action. It's just so many more dead ends and pointless beginnings and characters we don't care about. Two half-told stories don't make a novel.

Worst of all is the utter lack of payoff. The many minor open threads and possible intrigues are left unresolved. The characters we know best are abandoned, except for one who is given a tired, unrealistic final scene.

This book is hundreds of pages of confused fragments in search of a story. Trade this stinker back to the bookstore and get one of her earlier mysteries, which are brilliant, re-readable classics.

Charmie says

Acid Row is a place in London, associated with "slums" but is legally tolerated by the police. This place is where they dump single mothers, teenagers with drug activities, gangs, handicaps, etc. That is what I've understood. Correct me if I am wrong.

The whole book is crazy. The riot is realistic but the lack of activity by the police is not. Well, there is a very dignified reason behind it but I find it really unrealistic. (It's really hard to write a review without you, getting spoiled.) The novel consists of different events occurring in a day. I understood all the 400+ pages of

the book happened in just one day. And it's really a challenging read. You rarely read things like that, you know.

But don't fret, Walters is really good in transferring the reader from one dimension to the other. It's detailed, but I've noticed how some of the events weren't resolved in the end and characters were indeed abandoned. It's as if, just because the main character finally found resolute, Walters left the others in the desert to rot. It's tempting for criticism but I also came into the realization, that those characters left in the desert, were insignificant at all. It's better to leave the unnecessary behind, to bring the readers into the more important matters.

It's a good read, yes it is. I went, "ooh" and "ahh" and frowned. Never really read the past mysteries of the author but reading some of the reviews for this book, makes me think of her as a good crime writer. Others say, this book is nothing like her other books, and that I should read her past mysteries for me to satisfy myself with her writing. It's like people expect her to be like this and that. It's hard when people expect, and people label you because of what you did in the past. What if this is something new? It may suck or not but it's her writing.

I'm so bias. Because for a first time reader of Minette Walters, I really like Acid Row.

Hamsterking says

This is a great book with loads of suspense. The characters are interesting and all have a floars. The main characters are deep and they all seem real. Great book.

Bettie? says

Read by Claire Higgins

blurb - Minette Walters has shaped a fascinating tale of poverty, of desperation, and of the lengths people feel forced to go, when living in neglected, government housing, under conditions of inhuman proportions.

Acid Row is a crime-infested housing project that exists by its own laws. When news comes that a child has been kidnapped, the frustration and anger that has been seething on the streets of Acid Row is ignited. And no one will be safe.

Without missing a beat Minette Walters has portrayed these people and the events that push them over the edge, with every syllable arranged in a well-paced rhythm. This is Walters's eighth novel, and she has reached even loftier heights than ever before.

Nothing here for me; let's find something more endearing (shouldn't be hard).

NEXT!

Butterfly2507 says

Habe es nach ca. 50 Seiten abgebrochen. Die Charaktere waren schwach, Dialoge kaum vorhanden und die Story eher mau.

Asghar Abbas says

You can read it today, especially in America, and it still be relevant.

Bev Taylor says

brings crime uncomfortably close to home

acid row - the name the inhabitants give to this council estate where there is no law and the strongest win

it is a powder keg waiting to erupt and this happens when it becomes known a paedophile has moved into one of the houses

sophie is a young doctor who is called to the house of a new patient just because she happens to be nearest. this is the start of her nightmare as she becomes trapped in a terrifying siege with the paedophile and his father. who is worse?

but violence erupts for other reasons and things rapidly get out of control as they barricade themselves into the estate so no police officers can get by - even if they would have made a difference

added to this a young girl has gone missing and the estate believe that she is being held by the paedophiles despite there being no proof, only rumours that r quickly fabricated

so the mob unleashes it's hatred - against authority, the law, the 'pervert' and anything else their drug and alcohol fuelled minds can think up

yes, the essence of this novel rings all too clear - how social services fail, police r powerless and the only people who can truly help r those within the community

one thing did not ring true - no way would a police officer enter the estate on their own, least of all a woman. they always work in pairs. also rather co-incidental that 2 cell mates r linked

bev

Ching-Bing-Ping says

For a long time I was hearing that Minnette Walters is THIS and THAT i.e. her books were a tour de force in the world of crime writing. Though I had 3 of her books in my to-read shelf but they were far away from where I was currently. So when the opportunity arose, where my mind was reluctant to continue with the book which was next in line, I, without any hesitation picked up the Minnette Walters that was closest to my hand, Acid Row.

Frankly speaking the title was intriguing but the blurb wasn't. The book was supposed to be about a day in the lives of the resident of a housing society graffited in to Assid Row from Bassindale Row, where an intended peaceful march against suspected paedophiles turns out into a violent mob thereby jeopardising the residents and anyone caught up in the situation. For me this kind of blurb means a boring book, where there is hardly any kind of crime, so no criminal, and so no cat and mouse chase.

Thus with heavy heart, and expecting another P.D. James phenomena, I opened the opening lines, and within first few bars I was being treated to the high tempo beat of bebop jazz, instead of a serene classical concerto which I had come to expect. The book is really an eye opener, with nothing confirming to the set standards of crime writing the book held my attention till the last page. There were scenes which made me sit right on the edge of my seat, and brutality that made me keep away the book for a minute in hope of removing the image created from my mind. Coming to brutality, Walters showed me that just like, one doesn't need to be crude to be erotic, a crime writer doesn't need to spill brains, or pluck out eyes to be brutal. The book was filled with scenes which had zero blood spills, but were brutal enough to make a man squirm. Thanks to her writing skills. The plot was neither a whodunit, nor a howcatchem. Though there is a subplot of child abduction, but the main pillar of the book never strays from the happenings on the Acid Row.

Summing up, I feel it's very difficult to write a crime novel where the plot doesn't revolve around a dead body or a criminal activity in general. The book becomes tough, and readers like me get uneasy thereby resulting in unfinished tag. But, this one here, despite having the same features came out as a brilliantly plotted, fast piece of crime fiction. This book will go down as a must-read for any crime lover who is in search of speed, plot and believable characters.

Mark says

Another pot boiler from my new favorite author. Ms Walters is able to manage multiple concurrent streams of narrative and keep the reader vitally involved in each thread. In this one, a word spoken in anger at a most inappropriate time leads to an expulsion of violence directed at a pedophile that was recently moved into a poor neighborhood. Unfortunately for all, the pedophile in question had nothing to do with the incident that incited the mob. But the mob psychology takes over, the neighborhood becomes an armed fortress, the police are kept at bay, and tragedy ensues. Meanwhile the DCI assigned to the case of the missing child is desperately trying to track her down before any harm comes to her. Suspicion focuses on the girl's father and

on his business associate who has demonstrated a certain liking for women who look like young girls, many of whom resemble the missing girl. Throw in a policewoman injured in a routine police call and who is trapped inside the aforementioned fortress, and a visiting health practitioner being held hostage by the paedophile and his equally perverted father, and this becomes a real nail-biter. This reader finds it easy to insert himself into the story as an interested observer. A most enjoyable read.

Elaine says

Set in 2001 at a time when the News of the World was threatening to print names and addresses of all paedophiles in the country, trying to make us believe that we didn't really know who our neighbours were, this is a story about mob psychology. When residents of a sink estate get word that a newcomer is in fact a convicted paedophile, coupled with the fact that a local 10 year old girl is missing, tempers soon start to flare. The actual storyline is pretty good, it really kept me interested and gripped me. We know fairly early on that there will be three deaths in the story, and I really wanted to know who was and who wasn't going to survive.

I did have a few reservations about it. I thought the depiction of Melanie, the smoking and drinking pregnant single mum of two with a heart of gold came just a little bit too close to being patronising to be true. I would have liked to have seen her character toned down just a little bit. Some of the dialogue was just a little bit "off", and didn't fit the characters and their upbringing at all. As for Barry and Kimberley, the stereotypical clinically obese fat teenagers, well at least they weren't in it that much!

I have seen a lot of 1 star reviews for this book and whilst I did have issues with it, I don't think it was "that" bad. I certainly enjoyed the storyline anyway.

Deborah Pickstone says

I love Minette Walters but this one doesn't work, for me. The concept is an unstable foundation to begin with and it goes to hell in a hand basket from there. Very readably but - the characters don't work, the storyline doesn't convince. The abduction is bizarre (why have 2 of them in the flat - are we supposed to have to decide which is worse, the paedophile or the fascist woman hater?). Topped off with the unbelievable child abduction story running parallel. The police are not credible.

Something went horribly wrong for MW with this book. As I said, it's very readable, oddly. Nothing wrong with MWs pacing! I think that shaky, unclear premise that tried to tie too many things into the story is the basis of the problem and opening the story with the wooden, stereotyped 'old maid' Health Visitor. Sophie didn't invite my sympathy, either; she had about as much sense as a thing with no sense at all!

Ah well - even a favourite writer can produce a book that is less than perfect!

Paul Bryant says

Ow, avert your eyes. Such very bad dialogue! Such cardboard characters! Quite shocking. Here we have a

novel which tries really hard to turn today's headline into a fast-paced insightful, gritty yet ultimately inspiring novel but drastically fails on every page. Minette Walters does not appear to have first hand experience of how the unrespectable working class actually talk, whether black or white, so she makes it up... It sounds more like an Ealing comedy, if they were still making them in the 1980s. And there's page after page of it.... That must mean the author, her partner, her agent and her publisher all thought this stuff was okay. She's surrounded by idiots! Minette, save yourself! Leave them all now!

Where do you begin with *Acid Row*? Every scene we've seen before - the angry crowds, the hostage taken, the subtle police interrogation, the crisis which brings out the best and the worst in people...and every character is a huge cliché the size of a dirigible with the word CLICHE written in shocking pink on the sides - the frail old woman who turns out to be feisty ("You've been a very bad influence on me, Jimmy. I'm swearing, I'm party to crimes, and I haven't felt so useful in years!"), the misunderstood paedophile, the low-life teenagers. But there's one character who isn't a cliché at all. You never came across anyone like him. It's that not so very reluctant hero Jimmy Jones, the giant black guy, very large, friendly in a deadpan sort of way, and willing to have a go at anything - running back into burning houses to rescue known sex offenders, carrying unconscious people across his shoulders, and all the time being sensitive to old folks and little kids.

The "Two months later" chapter at the end puts the tin hat on the whole thing, where Jimmy and the feisty old lady have a good chuckle about their crazy wild adventure, just the way they used to in the last scene of any American TV show of the 60s and 70s. A few wry comments, a few lessons learned. Here's the lesson I learned : steer clear of Minette Walters!

Any Length says

I was really impressed with Minette Walter's writing skills.

This book requires the author to have so many balls in the air, so many people in various roles in various locations, speaking in different ways about different things, coming from different backgrounds dealing with different problems. A true writing master only can write this book.

The characters are well built and stick to their personality.

The book itself gives one a lot to think about other than the fact that there is a missing child and a paedophile having been rehoused into a low social economic area brimming with small children and undereducated, underemployed youth.

The various social problems are well portrayed and the plot plays out as one could have expected, being at a somewhat "eagle eye" and "on the ground" perspective in turns.

I was very impressed and quite disturbed at the same time.

This is a book I'd like to see read and discussed in high school English or literature classes. It would make for interesting classes.
