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What Came Before He Shot Her



Synopsis

A kind and well-loved woman was brutally and inexplicably murdered. The pregnant wife of a respected police inspector, her death has left Scotland Yard shocked and searching for answers. Perhaps most horrifying of all, the trigger of the weapon that killed her was apparently pulled by a stranger . . . a twelve-year-old boy.The anatomy of a murder, the story of a family in crisis, What Came Before He Shot Her is a powerful, emotional novel full of deep psychological insights, a novel that only the incomparable Elizabeth George could write. --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bestseller George (With No One as Witness) departs from the usual investigative nuts and bolts of her Thomas Lynley and Barbara Havers mystery thrillers with this searing examination of the lives of one horribly dysfunctional family and their immigrant London milieu. Switching uncomfortably at times from dialogue in a rough patois to exposition in a language both formal and sociological, George delivers a stinging indictment of a society unable to respond effectively to the needs of its poorer citizens. Kendra Osborne, a 40-year-old woman with modest ambitions and plans to achieve them, has no idea how to cope when her mother "dumps" her sister’s three children on her doorstep and heads for Jamaica. Fifteen-year-old Ness, 11-year-old Joel and seven-year-old Toby each have a wealth of problems exacerbated by their mixed-race heritage. It’s no accident that George refers to Dickens on the first page of this earnest but perhaps overly didactic novel, which focuses on the burdens borne by Joel as he’s swept by forces he can neither understand nor control into a fatal encounter. 8-city author tour. (Oct.) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

Scotland Yard detective Thomas Lynley is all but missing from this novel, and critics aren't sure what to make of his absence as well as that of most of the other popular series characters (only two of Lynley's police sidekicks appear—as minor walk-ons). The majority of critics cite this psychological crime novel as a deeply disturbing and unrelenting, yet illuminating, portrayal of a dysfunctional family and of the ways its members can go tragically astray. Two reviewers, however, cited a disconnected narrative, an overly complicated plot, too much detail, and a bleak, hopeless tone as major faults of the novel. There are, of course, no surprises about how the novel ends: Elizabeth George has already told that story in With No One As Witness. Copyright Ã Â© 2004 Phillips & Nelson Media, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

It is inappropriate to include this as an Inspector Lynley novel; since the regular characters really don't appear; and in my opinion, the greatest strength of this series is the finely crafted characters. That said, I was halfway through before I figured out it was at best, tangentially related. I found it overall very dark, with few redeeming characters. I felt rather swindled, actually, believing it somehow furthered the stories of Lynley, Havers, Nkata, St. James, etc... I have been trying to read the books in order, and considering that Ms. George does tend to go on and on and on, my will to finish out the series is waning. This book was a real buzz kill.

It took me nearly three years to finish this book because I disliked it so much.The ending of the previous book in her series, With No One As Witness, was so unexpected, and so powerful that I actually wept over the death of a fictional character.As this one, What Came..." was to be the backstory of that earlier work, I was eager to read it. Pretty much from page one, I was appalled.Don't get me wrong. Elizabeth George has done her usual superb job of plotting and characterization. Everything in this complex novel fits together logically, characters develop consistently, and there is a stunning, and very sad, twist at the end, to wit: Stanley Hynds' (The Blade's) longterm revenge plot against Vanessa Campbell.Not many authors can sustain rising action which takes this long, and then truly satisfy at the end, with a moving, horrifying denouement. Kudos to Elizabeth George's talent!I hated this because the characters, the setting, the language and the plot were so unremittingly grim. Far from being an entertaining read, this was an entrÃƒÂ©e into the chaos, hopelessness and tragedy of modern life in London.Purblind adults, overwhelming social decay, crass and selfish human nature all combine to crush a twelve-year-old in spite of his Herculean efforts to escape.I slogged through this, chapter after chapter, hoping for some glimmer

of light, only to slide further and further down the slimy slope into the tunnel of darkness which debouched onto Helen Lynley’s doorstep - and her senseless death.Great writing - very hard to read

Wow. Absolutely heart-wrenching! I am a huge fan of Ms. George and love every, single novel she has written. Some how, I’ve put off reading this one, but I’m so thrilled I did. Like all of her novels, this one will stay with the reader for a very long time. I’ve no idea how she does it, but her novels always take a little space in my heart and a large place in my mind. I absolutely love her writing! Any author who can leave such an indelible mark will always keep me coming back for more!

"What Came Before He Shot Her" Elizabeth George.Friends, this was a very hard book for me to read. A 12-yo boy, his 15-yo sister, and his 7-yo brother, and how they fall through the cracks, in addition to being mixed-race.I identified with the children. I could not read the entire book. I skipped lots of pages. Don’t get me wrong, Ms. George gives a clear statement of the treatment of these children; it’s a good book, but not for me.

I wanted to give this book no stars. After suffering through 10 chapters of sex, violence, child abuse and filthy language, I started jumping from chapter to chapter & found more of the same in all 28. No Lynley at all and only a brief glimpse of Havers & Nkata. What a disappointing book from an author I have usually enjoyed. Forget it!

Compelling. A page turner. The author offered me, the reader, hope for awhile, but it was taken away in a raw and devastating fashion. The end left me wanting more. I want the rest of the story. I’ve started the next book in the series but doubt I will get satisfaction. Stay tuned.

I was not happy to have been thinking I was getting a mystery in the Lynley series and instead inside the cover is a character evolution leading to a murder in the previous book. It was way too long as well - usually I don’t mind if its a good book, but this really dragged on. If you like to read about how poverty and broken homes can lead to very troubled kids you might like this, but if you really just want a good mystery, this will not bring happiness.

I read some of the more critical reviews of this book and I must say I disagree. No, this is not the usual Inspector Lynley story but if you read the blurb you would know that so if you’re not interested

in the killer’s history and background you can decide not to read it. I thought it was artfully done with the author’s usual flair for using words creating depth of character. There is a sense of impending doom throughout the story; while the older sister Ness is heading for ever more trouble, the responsible middle sibling Joel appears to hold it together until the story gets to a point where the tables turn, with Ness appearing to make good (well, better anyway) and Joel hurtling towards disaster. I think it was a gutsy undertaking and the fact that the author is an upper/middle class white person doesn’t appear to have stood in the way of her being able to paint a very raw and bleak picture indeed. Food for thought, even if some people will never change their "lock ’em up and throw away the key" point of view...

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