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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 the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.2 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (439 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

"A wanton act of destruction" --- no, not a murder as such, but the way one of Elizabeth George's outraged readers described the unhappy ending of WITH NO ONE AS WITNESS, her second-to-last book: Helen, the adored pregnant wife of George's policeman hero, Detective Inspector Thomas Lynley, is gunned down on the doorstep of her London house. Mystery lovers are often habituated to tidy, let-justice-be-done denouements; sacrificing Lynley's nearest and dearest evidently violated some unspoken taboo. When Arthur Conan Doyle killed off Sherlock Holmes (he was weary of turning out stories about the eccentric detective), his admirers were so upset that he had to bring Holmes back from the dead. George, in contrast, doesn't seem inclined to appease her fans: Instead, she takes an even bigger chance in her new book, WHAT CAME BEFORE HE SHOT HER, telling the story behind Mrs. Lynley's murder. The apparent culprit is 12-year-old Joel Campbell, a mixed-race boy from North Kensington --- a neighborhood where the police are not heroes but enemies; where gangs rule, drugs and sexual violence are endemic, and there is a constant struggle to survive. Joel and his two siblings --- Vanessa, his older, troubled sister, and

Toby, a boy who seems to live in his own private world --- are all but orphaned (their father is dead, their mother in a psychiatric hospital; they've been abandoned by their grandmother and fobbed off on an aunt). Caught between painful memories of a one-time happy childhood and the perils of their current existence, they lurch helplessly down the road to disaster. Lynley, by the way, does not even appear in the book, and his police sidekicks, Barbara Havers and Winston Nkata, have only a walk-on --- another probable source of distress for George's devotees.

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