



A Crime in the Neighborhood: A Novel

By Suzanne Berne

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A New York Times Notable Book. Set in the Washington, D.C., suburbs during the summer of the Watergate break-ins, Berne's assured, skillful first novel is about what can happen when a child's accusation is the only lead in a case of sexual assault and murder. A BOOK -OF-THE-MONTH CLUB and QUALITY PAPERBACK BOOK CLUB selection.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

A murdered boy, a runaway husband, a family spinning out of control--Suzanne Berne's *A Crime in the Neighborhood* is no ordinary coming-of-age novel. The narrator of this dark tale of 1970s suburbia is 10-year-old Marsha, who lives with her mother and older twin siblings in a suburb of Washington, D.C. In the spring of 1972, a young boy is molested, murdered, and then dumped behind a shopping mall. That the child was not particularly likeable is just one of Berne's deviations from the expected, as clear-eyed Marsha recalls the boy's many character flaws, even as she relates the details of an undeniably horrifying crime. Though murder is the most visible crime in Marsha's neighborhood, it is by no means the only one; when Marsha's father and aunt run off together, their enormous betrayal sends Marsha's mother into a tailspin and Marsha into a strange dalliance with Mr. Green, the neighbor next door.

A Crime in the Neighborhood is a deft and provocative first novel that turns many of the coming-of-age conventions on their heads. There is nothing sepia-tinted about Marsha's recollections of her childhood--the lives of 10-year-olds are mired in the mistakes of adults and the cruelties of other children. The pitiless eye Marsha brings to bear on the friends, family, and acquaintances of her youth makes *A Crime in the Neighborhood* an unusual and worthwhile read.

From School Library Journal

YA. In the summer of 1972, a suburban neighborhood of Washington, DC, is rocked by the molestation and murder of a 12-year-old boy. Marsha Eberhardt, then 10, begins to gather clues and information. Told by the adult Marsha, the story uncannily depicts the reasoning and thought processes of a vulnerable and confused girl. As the nation sifts through the Watergate disillusionment and Spring Hill tries to deal with the gruesome murder, Marsha is trying to accept the fact that her father has deserted the family for her mother's youngest sister. Struck by the observational powers of Sherlock Holmes, Marsha decides she will begin recording facts, observations, and clues about her family and neighborhood. When a new neighbor moves in, Marsha begins to record his every movement in her "Evidence" notebook. Anyone who has suffered through a family breakup, or knows someone who has, will relate to the youngster's thoughts and decisions. Dealing with an anger she cannot articulate, the girl becomes caught in a lie she cannot stop herself from telling. The adult Marsha considers the "what if" possibilities that may have prevented an incident that haunts her life, but the child was inexorably caught in the lies that took on a life of their own. A compelling book that will easily capture the imagination of YAs. ?Carol DeAngelo, formerly at Fairfax County Public Library, VA
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From Library Journal

During the summer of 1973, as the Watergate story breaks, headlines are made in a D.C. suburb when a 12-year-old boy is molested and murdered behind an area strip mall. Not as widely reported is the divorce of ten-year-old Marsha's parents. Narrated by Marsha, this first novel maintains a nicely edgy quality as the family breaks up: Marsha's father moves out, her teenage siblings dabble in smoking and shoplifting, and her mother deals with the stresses of single parenthood in the relatively unliberated Seventies. When the boy's murder remains unsolved, and the neighborhood loses its sense of security and innocence, Marsha copes by keeping a minutely detailed journal whose obsessive details threaten to mire the story. But Berne pulls through, managing to hold the reader's interest to the end of this thoughtful first work. Recommended for public libraries. ?Reba Leiding, Rensselaer Polytechnic Inst. Lib., Troy, N.Y.
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jessica Bradsher:

Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? Book is very important thing for us to learn everything in the world. Each book has different aim or perhaps goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people experience enjoy to spend their time to read a book. They are really reading whatever they consider because their hobby is usually reading a book. Think about the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, particular person feel need book if they found difficult problem or exercise. Well, probably you will require this A Crime in the Neighborhood: A Novel.

Marjorie Ingram:

Spent a free time to be fun activity to perform! A lot of people spent their leisure time with their family, or their friends. Usually they undertaking activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic inside the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Could possibly be reading a book can be option to fill your totally free time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of guide that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the book untitled A Crime in the Neighborhood: A Novel can be very good book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Diane Worrell:

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Leslie Bennett:

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