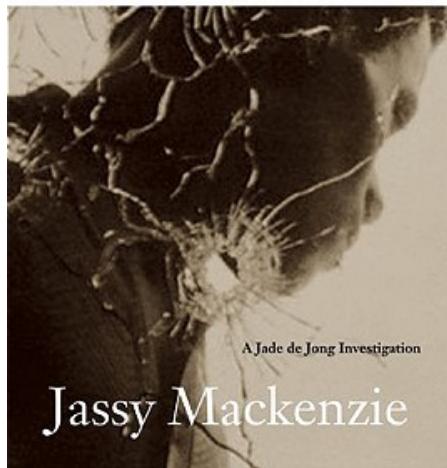




Random Violence



Random Violence

Jassy Mackenzie

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In Johannesburg prosperous whites live in gated communities; when they exit their cars to open the gates, car-jackings are common. But seldom is the victim killed, much less shot twice, like Annette Botha. Piet Botha, the husband of the wealthy woman, is the primary suspect in his wife's murder.

P.I. Jade de Jong fled South Africa ten years ago after her father was killed. Now back in town, she offers to help her father's former assistant, Superintendent David Patel, with his investigation of this case. Under apartheid, Patel, of Indian descent, could never have attained his present position. But he is feeling pressure from his "old line" boss with respect to this investigation and fears lingering prejudice is at work.

As Jade probes into this and other recent car-jacking cases, a pattern begins to emerge, a pattern that goes back to her father's murder and that involves a vast and intricate series of crimes for profit.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

Random Violence Details

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Author : Jassy Mackenzie

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From Reader Review Random Violence for online ebook

Rachel says

Beautifully plotted crime novel. Dark and disturbing, with a brilliant lead. Jo'burg and its surroundings are also vividly described - a very strong sense of place.

Kimberly says

About a year ago I stumbled across the Jade de Jong series but it took me until a couple weeks ago to finally get around to reading the first novel in the series a try. I'm always on the look out for great South African authors and I have to say Jassy Mackenzie is a new favourite of mine.

Random Violence was a fast past intricate novel with a wonderful female sleuth as the lead character. Jade de Jong returns to her homeland of South Africa after 10 years away working all over the globe. Upon her return she's met with all the changes that have happened in her country including in the lives of the one person she cares about the most.

I loved the mystery behind the slue of murders that seem to be occurring as well as the relationship between Jade and David who was once her father's right hand man and her best friend. I really enjoyed seeing the ups and downs as they got used to be around one another again after such a long time apart as well as seeing how much respect they had for one another. I have to say that Jade and David are probably two of my favourite crime solving partners after reading Random Violence. Both are intelligent, witty and savvy and they both have different skills plus the chemistry between them is great.

I thought that the fact that the author also took the time to touch briefly on the political background of the country post-apartheid with the referral of David's "old line" boss. I think that it was an important touch especially for the readers who aren't really versed in the history of the country and it plays a rather large part in the novel because of the actions and histories of individual characters mostly those of the bad guys.

I was very surprised at how enjoyable Random Violence was as strange as it might sound it was a fun read because Jassy Mackenzie kept me on my toes. There were far more plot twists that I had expected and many of them didn't even become obvious until the the end when everything came together and I was left with my jaw on the floor in shock.

Overall, I thought the writing was fantastic. The author used a perfect balance of drama, action, intrigue, deception and plot twists to create a wonderfully well written who dun it novel. In a genre that is still very much male dominated Jassy Mackenzie makes sure that her unique voice is heard and for me her gift in the genre was very well received by me. Everything fit together so well and the way she wove the story in such subtle ways sometimes was amazing and I can't wait to read the second book in the series. As first novels go Jassy Mackenzie's Random Violence is a hit and has earned a place on my favourite's shelf.

I would highly recommend Random Violence to everyone who enjoys a mystery set in a foreign country. I think the fact that it is written by a South African writer and takes place in South Africa is a unique offering in the mystery genre and the story is one that you can get wrapped up in and is a great way to expose yourself to a new writer and a new series in a place you may never have had a book take place in before.

Heather Fineisen says

Baby's face in scalding water ended it for me. Too many great series I already read to continue...

Meredith says

I choose this a summer read (because I guess I have a problem with light and fluffy and this is as close as I seem to get). It wasn't light, it wasn't fluffy but it was quick, dirty and I learned some stuff about South African history. I'll probably continue on with the Jade de Jong collection to fulfill my need for "strong character development, a decent plot, and some education" summer reading series.

Lissa Pete says

I like mysteries, police procedurals etc. but what I love most is where they take place. This particular book takes place in South Africa and its very good. It's the first time I have read this author and had just picked it up and took a chance. I would read more books by Jassy Mackenzie.

Jasmine says

So Jassy mackenzie was born in rhodesia, after some google turns out rhodesia was never a recognized country and is now called zimbabwe so that explains that.

I haven't read a lot this week cause I've been reading the hobbit, and reading the hobbit and reading the hobbit... do you understand the point. the hobbit has stalled all of my reading because the hobbit is not good. I know I know tolkien is a genius and it's a classic. everytime I read it I read three pages and want o throw it across the room and I end up making an agreement with myself if I just finish the chapter I don't have to read it anymore till tomorrow, and therefore I will never ever finish it.

so finally I got sick of hating books and I started this which I'd been carrying around to read after I finished the hobbit. It was great it reminded me of the book City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo. and I mean (view spoiler). the crime well not so much a who-dun-it since they tell you who-dun-it halfway through, but a really really nice unfolding.

after finishing it I immediately bought the next one, I will finish that before I finish he hobbit too.

Barbara says

RANDOM VIOLENCE
Jassy Mackenzie

With a main character named Jade, I expected this series to be light weight, a bit silly maybe. Instead, I was pleasantly surprised to find a tight, well-written, gritty crime novel set in Johannesburg, South Africa. Jade is a private investigator whose policeman father was killed in the line of duty.

Jade returns to Jo'burg after 10 years in England. Her best friend from her life in South Africa, is police superintendent David Patel, now a grown man with a wife and child, meets her at the airport and brings her to a small cottage he has rented for her. He is staying in the cottage next door.

The first stop Jade makes is to an old garage to see Robbie, a contact from the old days. She asks Robbie to get her a gun. Jade know that by seeing Robbie and taking the illegal gun, she is betraying David, but she needed the gun to get her through what she returned to South Africa to do – avenge her father's death.

Meanwhile David is working on a string of murders of people who have just sold their houses. There doesn't seem to be any connection, except they are all large properties, in expensive areas. All of the murders take place in spite of the houses having high security. David asks Jade to look at the file with "a fresh eye". She does a bit of probing and visits some of the properties and talks to a few people. She even meets a real estate fellow who seems to be showing up in odd places.

The book moves quickly and the different story lines follow a plausible route. The characters, including Johannesburg, are vibrant, flawed and fascinating. Now that I have discovered the "real" Jade de Jong, I will be looking forward to more adventures in this series. Barbara

Heather Pearson says

Home coming are often portrayed as bittersweet, and Jade De Jong's return to Johannesburg, South Africa, after an absence of ten or so years, is no different. Shortly after her father, a police superintendent, was murdered, she fled the country, eventually working an assortment of private security and investigative jobs. Now she has returned and is looking for revenge.

It didn't take long for complications to arise. When her friend, the new Police Superintendent David Patel, picks her up at the airport, he asks if she'll help investigate a recent murder. While the police think that Annette Botha's murder is either a botched carjacking or a robbery, Jade has to be sure. This investigation leads her into some very dangerous situations.

I liked the character of Jade De Jong. She presents as a respectable woman, successful and capable. Then I met the other side, the loyal side. She knows her father's death was wrong, and she is willing to do what it takes to get justice/revenge, though she also knows when to pull back and let things work themselves out.

This contrasts with Whiteboy, who can barely restrain himself. He is a ticking time bomb that has gone off at least several times already. His actions are brutal and are described with all the gruesome details. Not to be read by the faint of heart. At the same time, I don't think this story would read as well if the violence were toned down, it wouldn't seem real (not that we want this kind of violence to be real).

I was fascinated by Ms. Mackenzie's descriptions of the levels of security that South African's use in their daily life. Security fencing with automatic gates, armed guards at the entrances to gated communities and hired, private guards to roam neighbourhoods and answer calls for assistance. This is in stark contrast to the safety I feel here in Ontario, Canada.

I listened to the audio book version which was produced by Blackstone Audio. 8 hours 57 minutes, unabridged. It was read by Justine Eyre, who had me totally convinced that I was in Jo'burg, as Jassy calls

Johannesburg. At first I had trouble differentiating between the male and female characters, but one I stopped trying to figure that out and wait for the story to guide me, I was fine.

Jassy Mackenzie has added two further books to the Jade De Jong series. The second book, Stolen Lives is on shelves now, and the third, Worst Case was out in South Africa in August 2011, and will be released internationally under the title of The Fallen in April 2012.

James Thane says

Lately there have been a number of crime novels set in South Africa and this is another. The protagonist is Jade de Jong, the daughter of a police commissioner. Jade's father was killed ten years earlier and in the wake of his death, Jade fled the country. Ten years later, the man convicted of killing her father is scheduled to be released from prison and Jade finally returns to confront him.

The country she finds is sharply divided by race and class. The whites who can afford to do so live in gated communities with alarms, high walls and private security forces. They huddle in their homes ever-fearful of the crime and violence that seems to surround them.

Upon her return, Jade agrees to help her father's former deputy, David Patel, who is now a police superintendent, in the investigation of the murder of a woman who was killed in an apparent carjacking. It's possible that the woman's husband hired someone to kill her, although Jade doesn't believe that. Inevitably, there's a lot going on behind the scenes and Jade puts her own life at risk by antagonizing powerful, greedy and desperate antagonists who do not shrink from violence as a means of accomplishing their ends.

(view spoiler)

Matt says

Having recently stumbled on Mackenzie's work, I was drawn to both the setting and the plot idea; a police procedural set in the new Johannesburg. Jade de Jong returns to South Africa after a decade's hiatus, armed with her P.I. license and a desire to confront the ghosts of her father's death. When de Jong is contacted by Superintendent David Patel, she's intrigued to learn about how she can help, as they forged a strong relationship while Patel served as Commissioner de Jong's Number Two. Everyone's aware that the prosperous whites in Johannesburg live in gated communities, offering the symbolic separation from those they long oppressed. These gates are often the scene of car-jackings, where tempers flare and the racially-stigmatised city sees its greatest downfall. When Annette Botha is found murdered at her gate, de Jong works with Patel to determine who might have been behind this heinous act and what caused the escalation. Could her ex-husband be seeking revenge or could she be a victim of a robber who wanted more than just a car? Digging deeper into past cases with similar outcomes, de Jong stumbles upon a pattern that may help bring

justice to the mess and a cash-related motive that stems much deeper than felons. She must also struggle as a dangerous man is released from prison, his crimes so heinous that de Jong cannot stomach the possibility that he might be free to mingle with the masses. While that unsettles her, de Jong learns more about her father's death, potentially a murder, with the guilty party within her grasp. Mackenzie explodes onto the scene and leaves readers wanting more in this social commentary of life in the post-apartheid streets of Johannesburg.

Mackenzie drew me in from the start and never let me go until I finished. My only previous experience with South Africa as a setting and political platform within a novel was with Bryce Courtenay's early work. Here, Mackenzie surrounds the reader with a city (and country) that has shed its ugly skin, but is still unable to fit into the new narrative it wishes to profess. Race violence is rampant, the police is still seen as biased, and crime keeps citizens in a state of constant fear. Jade de Jong leads the reader through these alleyways and tries to navigate away from the apartheid past to show that Johannesburg has much to offer the world and its own citizens, and that crime will no longer engulf a country that has seen its share of inequality. If this is only the beginning, I am determined to see where Mackenzie takes things from here.

Kudos, Madam Mackenzie for your thoughtful beginning and I hope that the rest of the series forces me to think just as much.

Like/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at:
<http://pecheyponderings.wordpress.com/>

Bob says

An expert and surefooted first outing with a well drawn, grim South African backdrop. Strong characterizations and some terrific harrowing moments. I look forward to the further investigations of Jade De Jong.

Trish says

Took a long 1-day roundtrip to NYC and managed to read this on the way. Fortunately, it did not have gratuitous violence, though one very clever but certifiable madman wreaked his share of havoc. The main characters could, perhaps, have used a little more fleshing out. I couldn't picture them well. And the author had the disconcerting habit of changing points of view for a chapter, but not often enough for it to be part of the book's style. Either we know what's going on in the character's mind in their own words, or we have to take their actions and translate. Since most of the book is this sort of character translation, it seems odd to suddenly shift point of view, and only for one chapter or so. One doesn't trust the author for putting us in their heads. But I love stories about South Africa, and Jassy (nice name) does creditably. I see the book is dedicated to Deon, whom I assume, perhaps wrongly, to be the great Deon Meyer, who also writes mysteries set in Africa. He is a fine author to aspire to emulate.

RustyShack says

DNF chapter 9. Assumes readers will be fascinated by gory violence. Not particularly notable otherwise,

hence the dnf.

Jetty Zee says

Een overkill aan te gedetailleerd beschreven geweld in de eerste helft van het boek.

Blair says

Really, I picked this to read because of a recent interest in South Africa, not because I was that interested in the specific story or really wanted to read a crime novel. I wanted something with a modern, urban setting, I didn't want it to be too difficult or distracting to read; but I also wanted it to be somewhat educational about everyday life, culture and society in an part of the world I'm unfamiliar with, but really interested in learning about. Crime fiction is often the best fit for such requirements, and so it was with this.

I expected the plot to be predictable, but actually, it wasn't; thinking about it, this is probably because - although I tend to lump them together - I've read quite a lot of *thrillers* but not as much *crime*. It was a relief to read something that had criminals straightforwardly acting like criminals, and police investigating them, rather than the 'can you really trust your husband/best friend' type of thing that's become the bread and butter of psychological thrillers. That said, I wasn't wholly engaged by everything that happened and sometimes lost the thread of the investigation, and the climactic scene was messy and a bit daft in a way I've often found 'action' stories (films as well) to be: every major character just happens to turn up in the same place at the same time, near-miraculous coincidences abound, there's a confusing shoot-out that's hard to follow, etc.

One thing I thought Mackenzie did really well was her portrayal of the relationship between Jade, the protagonist, and David, her childhood friend/the police superintendent/potential love interest. I can't put my finger on why, exactly, I just feel like it really captured the awkward and tentative back-and-forth of liking someone who probably likes you, but encountering obstacles and not being sure how to make things move forward. Jade's feelings were well-realised as a 'crush' without it ever becoming juvenile. This element also felt very well paced - the author didn't rush into making Jade and David a couple, and the development of their relationship seemed natural and believable.

I wasn't constantly compelled to go back to this and find out what would happen next: I found I could leave it aside for quite a while without feeling much interest in picking it up again. But now I've finished it, I find I'm curious about what's next for Jade, and feel I will probably read at least one of the other books in the series at some point.
