



The Knitting Circle Rapist Annihilation Squad

Derrick Jensen, Stephanie McMillan

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In this darkly comic novel, the six women of the Knitting Circle meet every week to talk, eat cake, and make fabulous sweaters. The easy-going circle undergoes a drastic change when the members realize they are all the survivors of rape—worse still, that none of their attackers suffered consequences—and the group becomes the vengeful Knitting Circle Rapist Annihilation Squad, taking punishment into their own hands via their knitting needles. As the women take their revenge, groups of men issue statements against the vigilante ladies, from the Chamber of Commerce to the sinister Men Against Women Against Rape (MAWAR), plotting to stop and punish the Knitting Circle. Featuring strong female characters, this satirical piece explores love, revenge, feminism, violence, and knitting.

The Knitting Circle Rapist Annihilation Squad Details

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Author : Derrick Jensen , Stephanie McMillan

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Stephanie McMillan**

From Reader Review The Knitting Circle Rapist Annihilation Squad for online ebook

Beverly says

I loved the title of this book which is why I originally purchased it for Kindle. I thought it would be about killing rapists...which I was OK with if it had been handled in a lighthearted manner...is there such a thing for rape? So I thought it would be comic and entertaining but noooooo. It was comic alright, in a very dark way, but I did not find it in the least entertaining. There was way too much bad language, crude exchanges and blasphemy. You can certainly tell that the author is intelligent because the basic writing was good but it was certainly not my cup of tea.

Dan Schwent says

After six women in a weekly knitting circle find that they are all rape survivors and none of their attackers were ever brought to justice, the go on a rapist-killing spree. Soon, other people, both men and women, join their cause. Will the hapless police be able to stop them before their revolution goes out of control?

Sometimes, a book title will be so amazing that I simply must read the book. Too bad a lot of awesome titles are attached to books that are only average.

First off, rape is bad.

Secondly, this wasn't a bad book by any means. I can get behind the idea of a bunch of women murdering rapists with knitting needles. The humor is close to Christopher Moore in both style and intensity, from the hilarious knitters to the equally hilarious cops.

However, the humor wears a little thin by the halfway mark. Also, it's hard to feel completely comfortable laughing about a story where rapists play such a prominent role. Most of the characters are caricatures.

Still, it's a fairly entertaining little book. Three out of Five stars.

Did I mention rape is bad?

Ayla-Monic says

Not everyone will "get" this book. It's not fantastically written - my inner editor cringed pretty often, to be perfectly honest. But, if *that* is what stops you from finishing or liking this book, you are sorely missing the point. This book is not about knitting. It's about knitters who are radical feminists.

This book is a treatise against passively standing back while the patriarchy controls our lives and men and women alike police and abuse other women.

This is a book about empowerment and recognizing that sometimes talking doesn't work, and the only way to

create change is to **make** change. This book shows that both men and women can be feminists, and that both men and women can be misogynists.

This book is basically feminist tumblr on steroids.

I loved it. Don't read it expecting a literary masterpiece - that's not what it is nor what it's meant to be. It's over the top satire meant to point out how absolutely ridiculous the patriarchy is, while recognizing how real it is.

Mark says

It was the title which grabbed me first. One of Dan's finest suggestions. How could anyone fail to want to take a look?

It is funny and weird and thought provoking and unsettling all knitted together with very few stitches being dropped.

It is funny because the humour is on the laugh out loud level.

Very early on in the book I knew I was going to enjoy the silliness of it all. The first 'victim' of the squad is a lecherous and arrogant dance master who tricks the founding mother of the squad, Brigitte, to a private dance lesson. He makes her waltz and dance her way around with scarves so as to loosen up her dance technique. When this fails he comes in close and begins to grind against her.....all part of '*unleashing your butterfly*' he says.....her wonderful response

'Well, I can feel your caterpillar and I don't like it'.

It is weird because of the basic premise of a small group of raped and molested women taking up their knitting needles as weapons, quite literally, in the fight against their molesters and indeed others they hear of and encounter.

It is thought provoking and unsettling all rolled into one because of the subject matter not rape so much as its eradication. Initially it reads as a humorous and funny black comedy.....imagine Mary Poppins or Nanny McPhee partnering up with Dirty Harry or starring in a remake of '**Death Wish**' but then the authors pull the rug out from under a too easy running on of mindless violence and revenge and the knock on effect of murder and misunderstanding begins to affect healthy and life giving relationships.

The black and white easy picture of revenge and justice gets more blurred, rather like when, at the age of 8 or 9, I reached the stage where I realized there surely had to be more to this knitting lark than making **VERY** long scarves for my teddy bears. Revenge is all well and good but where does it lead.

Jensen and McMillan quite clearly abhor the vicious evil of rape, who doesn't, but they invite their readers into a challenging reflection it seems to me on the nature of violence and tit for tat brutality.

The very last sentence of the book strikes, in the context of the whole, a sinister and unsettling note. Interestingly it made me think of 'Animal Farm' where the pigs and humans had become so similar no difference could be seen:-

'For now we've put our knitting needles back on the shelf. But we remember where they are, just in case'

This book is funny, you cheer on the women in their campaign but by the end there is definitely a sinister undercurrent of cruelty and tyranny in which the victims have smilingly become the oppressors and whose churning out of their utopic trills would put North Korea's propaganda gurus to shame.

Melody (A Charles) says

so, the rape culture is over the top, and this is an attempt at over-the-top satire, but it's really poorly written. even if i'm on board with quite a few of the political rants, there's no story stringing them together. i couldn't suspend my disbelief long enough to appreciate an unapologetic "fuck you!" to rapists. there is no such thing as a cheese factory that makes a different cheese every week, for starters. gaperon and roquefort are made in FRANCE. blah blah, the attempt to make fun of mindfulness meditation and nonviolence was pretty disappointing. not to mention the likelihood that we'll have enough death in the coming clusterfuck and don't need pile up corpses to revolt. or perhaps i am just naive. anyway, annoying rather than funny.

Candis says

A lightening-fast, almost stream-of-consciousness read, this piece of satire rides a politic and holds little back. Fun, silly, yet completely clear on its ultimate aim, this was really pretty satisfying all around. The no-bullshit, take-no-prisoners approach to rape and our rape culture (as well as the media and other institutions that work to perpetuate and maintain it) featuring interesting women of all ages and in a range of relationships was a refreshing change from my reading norm. Not once did I need to exercise any willful suspension of disbelief, and I turned the last page wanting more. Thumbs up!

Samrat says

Good concept, awful execution. If you're already a feminist, you know this stuff and probably won't be tickled pink by the boring walking stereotypes and broad humor. If you're not, it all seems so over the top that the startling frequency of rape and awful responses to victims and defense of rapists might seem like part of the satire. I wanted a clever dark comedy to find gleeful pleasure in literary revenge. This is not that.

Elliot says

This book reminded me of a child who does something and it's met with laughter from adults. The child continues to repeat this, the adults growing more and more annoyed each time. This book certainly started out promising. It has a great title and a strong setup for this absurd world. When I began reading, I described it as "social justice chick lit."

Unfortunately, things took a turn.

The book became so unpolished and rushed as it went on. The dark humor and the satire went from subtle to

basically explaining why something should be funny (give your readers some credit!) and just went so over the top. There were times it was expert at weaving in ideas and criticisms, but eventually, it became too much. This book felt like it was a bunch of exercises from an undergraduate creative writing class, strung together by students who just found out about socialism and the patriarchy.

I really wanted to like this. This was something different and had its moments of fun, but ultimately, not for me.

Rebecca says

If half stars were a thing on good reads, I'd give it a half star. I almost liked it. I admit that I'm probably being influenced by what I know of the author and his work with Deep Green Resistance. Deep Green Resistance is an organization I wish I could get behind 100% but their policies that exclude transgender people keep me from being a supporter. No sign of transphobia in this particular book but DGR is also fond of using the words "slavery" and "enslavement" to talk about income inequality and capitalism, which I find to be problematic and counterproductive towards creating a social justice movement that is inclusive. There's a bit of that language used in the book. It's a shame that all of the above things plus writing that was sort of meh had to happen here. The satire was quite well done. I think someone well versed in the concept of rape culture would have a greater appreciation of the satire than average person.

Rosalie says

I reviewed this book in the latest (September 2013) issue of the literary journal *Stirring*. Here's the link.

Years ago I attended a women writers conference where a woman in our fiction-writing workshop read aloud to us from a novel she had started. As I recall, the plot involved members of a book group, all women and all survivors of domestic violence, who agreed to a revenge pact. Each one, they decided, would kill a man who had abused someone else, a man with whom she had no connection.

It was a hot, sunny day, I was a bit drowsy from lunch, I was being read aloud to. Violent men were about to meet their doom in deeply satisfying ways. What stands out in my memory is how soothing the experience was.

I don't know whether the writer ever finished her novel, but of course it leapt to mind as I read *The Knitting Circle Rapist Annihilation Squad*, a satire by Derrick Jensen and Stephanie McMillan. The title handily telegraphs the novel's plot: as members of a knitting group start confiding in each other, they find out that they're all survivors of rape, and the rapists in question (high school counselors, relatives, clergymen, ex-husbands) have never even been arrested, let alone prosecuted. The women avenge each other by killing those rapists. With their knitting needles.

There are various subplots: A female police officer is sympathetic to the knitters. The fourteen-year-old daughter of one of the knitters discovers what her mother is up to, and argues with her about the ethics of using violence to stop violence. A group of fundamentalist Christian men form a new organization, MAWAR (Men Against Women Against Rape). Best of all are the unctuous TV newsman Franz Maihem and his go-to expert, FBI agent Chet Stirling, who function as a clueless Greek chorus throughout the book

as they report on the unexplained knitting-needle murders: first they insist that the murderer is an alienated young white male; then, when the knitters send a communiqué to the FBI (“We will stop killing rapists when men stop raping”), proclaim the message incomprehensible: “We’re baffled. We have no idea what this could possibly mean.”

Avenging rape as a motive for murder is found in some mysteries and mystery-thrillers (*Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, etc.), but non-genre fiction doesn’t seem to go in much for plots that revolve around women killing men--and in the case of *Knitting Circle*, it’s *lots* of women, killing *lots* of men. I can imagine this novel making some readers uncomfortable. No doubt others will dismiss it as “political,” a novel with an agenda, although that complaint has always puzzled me. It’s also a political choice, I would argue, to create characters who are perfectly comfortable with the status quo.

The style as well as the subject matter won’t be to everyone’s taste. Don’t expect the attributes of a “straight” literary novel, the unspoken standard of literary fiction with its conventions of deep investment in characterization, meticulous attention to visual detail, and careful verisimilitude. In *Knitting Circle*, we’re in the realm of parody, not realism, as the authors demonstrate from the opening pages, when a mob is “celebrating the city’s victory in the National Chess Championship. . . . After an evening of rioting, setting small yet well-designed fires in dumpsters, and overturning police cars, the nerds howl with grape soda–induced laughter as they reenact their most impressive chess moves.”

On first read, the humor occasionally struck me as too lightweight, almost sophomoric (each time the police chief appears, for example, he’s reading a different “expert on crime”: Sherlock Holmes, Encyclopedia Brown, Hercule Poirot), but as I considered it more, I realized that Jensen and McMillan were making specific stylistic choices. The police chief is cartoonish precisely because the novel draws on a wide range of pop-cultural forms: Vonnegut and other satiric novelists are clearly an influence, but so are cartoons, TV sitcoms, *Saturday Night Live* skits, film spoofs like the *Naked Gun* series, and mockumentaries like Christopher Guest’s *Best in Show* or *A Mighty Wind*. The book’s cover blurb describes it beautifully as “Monty Python meets the SCUM Manifesto.”

Although some readers might smirk more often than laugh, there are plenty of spot-on, chortle-out-loud scenes and wonderfully deadpan whimsy. At a typical knitting circle meeting, “after a few preliminaries and pleasantries, the women get down to the businesses at hand: knitting and stopping rape.” The touchy-feely Red Moon Sacred Gyn Mill Tea House serves “wheat-free, dairy-free, sugar-free gingerbread wimmin and gyrl cookies.” Glenn Beck makes an appearance, at his chalkboard, redrawing a pair of crossed knitting needles so that they form a swastika (he also denies that rape is even possible, bless his little heart). Sentences that at first seem to meander end up packing a punch: the female police officer, Sandy Dougher, is “as beautiful as the Mona Lisa. As beautiful as the sweeping boughs of a western red cedar. . . . As beautiful as a sharp kick to a rapist’s testicles.”

And over and over again, like that kick to the rapist’s testicles, the hard truths of male violence against women are sprinkled amid the silliness. Characters discuss the abysmally low percentage of rapists who are ever incarcerated. Right after the description of the chess nerd riot, a character travels to an unfamiliar part of the city at night and “adopts the walk that all women from an early age learn to use in scary places: rapid, firm, and purposeful. . . . Appear confident. Show no fear.” Here is part of the argument between fourteen-year-old Marilyn and her knitting circle mom, Gina:

“You can’t just take the law into your own hands.”
. . . “I couldn’t possibly do a worse job wielding the law than they [police and the courts] do.” .

..

... "You're asking for social chaos."

"Marilyn, social chaos is when 25 percent of all women are raped and another 19 percent have to fend off rapes, and nothing is done about it."

When the police hold a meeting on how to stop the knitting-needle killings, Officer Dougher raises the eminently sensible question: "What if we do our jobs and stop rapists?" She is met by silence. Her police colleagues provide no answer to her question, ever.

And sometimes the hard-hitting facts and the goofy humor coincide. When the hapless FBI agent finally concedes that the knitting-needle killers are women, Franz Maihem asks him how he reached his conclusion:

"Well, Franz, they're just like every normal rational serial killer in every way, but for one bizarre, freaky exception."

"What is that, Chet?"

"It's almost unheard of in the long, illustrious history and tradition of serial killing. It's frankly horrifying."

"Tell us, Chet."

"All the victims are men."

There are other trenchant observations along the way: on religion, on diet plans, on capitalism, on the ubiquity of television. One of my favorite commentaries is by knitting circle member Brigitte on male-female relationships:

"First he comes to a [knitting circle] meeting, next he's telling me what to wear and to make him a sandwich. Gradually it escalates. . . . Brigitte gets lost and it becomes all about 'we.' 'We hated that movie.' 'We plan to buy a house in the suburbs.' 'We decided that Brigitte's soul was superfluous so we sold it.' . . . Fuck that."

The authors put some amusingly blasphemous, if improbably self-aware, dialogue into the mouth of a MAWAR member: "Where in the Ten Holy Fucking Commandments does it ever say, 'Thou Shalt Not Rape'? Huh? The answer is, it doesn't. In fact, the whole fuckin' Bible is filled with rapes that fulfill God's merciful will." New Agers come in for skewering too, in the form of a self-help guru arguing that rapists should be met with compassion: "Since I'm not really a stop rape kind of guy, and since I don't want to feel bad about not being a stop rape kind of guy, it's important to me that no one else try to stop rape, or it will make me feel inferior, like I should actually be doing something."

What's interesting to me as a feminist is how soothing the novel is. This is partly because it's structured like a happily-ever-after bedtime story: the novel opens with the now-grown Marilyn explaining to her students how the knitters and their allies put a permanent end to rape. But there are also interesting parallels to the "cozy" subgenre of mystery novels. Think of Miss Marple in her quaint village, puttering around in her garden as she solves a murder or two. In the typical cozy, the victims are unsympathetic people whom we

don't see while they're still alive. We have no access to their perspective and don't have to expend emotional energy feeling sorry that they're dead. We can forget that a terrible crime has propelled this lighthearted romp. Similarly, *Knitting Circle* is propelled by a double layer of violent acts: the original rapes, and the subsequent murders of the rapists. And yet we end up with an oddly comforting story where, after "the rage and frustration and sorrow of thousands of years of taking it and taking it and taking it," there is "the joy of finally fighting back."

Unlike most spoofs, *The Knitting Circle Rapist Annihilation Squad* raises unsettling questions: What do unprosecuted rapists deserve? When is retributive violence, or vigilante justice, called for? Should I feel such glee at these deaths? As if these weren't disturbing enough, there is a subtle parting shot, located on the back cover, right above the price, where the book's category is listed as "Fiction/Relationships." The perfect finishing touch for this strange combination of hilarity and righteous anger.

Karen says

This is a fun book. I loved it. I also am an editor and usually cringe at less-than-perfect writing, but I just enjoyed this one and its entertaining premise.

MrsJoseph says

<http://bookslifewine.com/r-the-knitti...>

Updated to include link to a recent article: An 11-year-old reported being raped twice, wound up with a conviction

This article is SO disturbing that I could not finish it all. The way this child was treated after being brutally raped is horrifying.

The Knitting Circle Rapist Annihilation Squad is a book I picked to read during my Scribd trial but I couldn't get into it. DNF at 60%.

The plot idea and the blurb all sounded extremely interesting so I decided to read it when I started my Scribd trial. I was expecting a dark comedy - something like the movie *Heathers*. Sadly, *The Knitting Circle Rapist Annihilation Squad* was more of a forced "chuckle, chuckle" than a dark comedy to me.

The Knitting Circle Rapist Annihilation Squad starts with a woman on her way to a "special" dance class offered by her dance teacher (ballroom dancing). When the character arrived at the class she finds herself alone with the instructor - apparently the "special" class was an invitation to be raped. Instead of letting the instructor rape her, the character kills him with her knitting needles - and we're off!

The Knitting Circle Rapist Annihilation Squad is funny, don't get me wrong, but the funny wore really thin really quickly. Rape is a big deal and it happens all the time. Some of the points being made by the book - the men all being horribly clueless about rape and the (male) police not focusing on the rapes (crimes against women) but trying to put as much manpower into solving the murders (crimes against men) - all rang true. Sadly true.

“This is Franz Maihem with ultraurgent breaking news. We are linking you live to our FBI contact Chet Stirling for an emergency announcement. Chet, go ahead.”

Chet stands at his desk for several awkward seconds, staring blankly at the camera as the audio delay ticks by. Then his voice crackles as he says, “We have received a communiqué from the so-called Ice Queen Killers, whom our agency has classified as the greatest terrorist threat facing America today. They are more dangerous than al-Qaeda, the Taliban, North Korea, or Iran. They are even more dangerous and ruthless than domestic environmentalists. They are our top priority and we pledge to eradicate them.”

Franz asks, “What does the communiqué say, Chet?”

“It says, ‘We will stop killing rapists when men stop raping.’”

Franz asks, “That’s it?”

“That’s it. The entire message.”

Franz asks, “What the heck does it mean, Chet?”

Chet responds with the uncertainty of a man standing waving his arms while he cries, “Where’s my ass?”: “Well, Franz, we’re baffled. We have no idea what this could possibly mean. It’s certainly shocking and depraved, but you know chicks, I mean women—they’re incomprehensible.”

“What do women want? That’s the age-old question, isn’t it, Chet?”

“Yes. We’ve done extensive research on this question, and experts concur that women are irrational, hysterical, and contradictory. They often say no when they mean yes. In fact, sometimes they’re saying no with their mouths at the exact moment their eyes, and often their tantalizing breasts, are saying yes. They are devious, manipulative, lying, cheating, slutty whores.”

Franz clears his throat. “The message, Chet?”

Chet regains his composure, such as it is, and says, “Cryptologists are urgently trying to decipher this message as we speak. As soon as we figure out its precise meaning, we’ll alert the public. Meanwhile, please remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity.”

-The Knitting Circle Rapist Annihilation Squad, page 96

The book became even more sadly true when it talked about the lack of concern that men have dealing with rape.

I discussed some of my concerns about *The Knitting Circle Rapist Annihilation Squad* with my husband and he initially didn't believe me when I said that crimes against women - especially rape - are under-reported

and under-investigated. I told him that there are thousands of rape kits that were discovered sitting unprocessed in an improper storage facility in Detroit alone and showed him a couple of articles that made him speechless.

In Detroit:

More than 11,000 rape kits that were left in police storage, some for 20 years, are to finally be tested after a \$4 million grant from the attorney-general.

The discovery of the kits gathering dust in a Detroit warehouse in 2009 has shocked prosecutors, who have pushed for the evidence to be processed and the rapists to be brought to justice.

On Wednesday Michigan Governor Rick Snyder and attorney-general Bill Schuette announced that \$4 million in settlement funds will be used to examine the kits.

*Funds used to collect evidence from more than 11,000 Detroit rape kits

*DNA matched in 136 cases already, including 32 linked to serial rapists

Country (USA):

A five month CBS News Investigation of 24 cities and states has found that more than 20,000 rape kits were never sent to crime labs and an additional 6,000 rape kits from active investigations are waiting months, even years, to be tested.

Just...being 100% aware of how rape, rape jokes and rape culture is dealt with here in America...the slap-happy jokes and heavy handed sarcasm did not reach a level of comfortable for me. It just reinforced how horrible rape is dealt with here and how difficult it is for women to get justice for rape.

I may decide to try to read this again (based off of Stephanie McMillan's resume) - but it will be quite some time.

[Read More:](#)

Thousands of 'rape kits' left in police storage for up to 20 YEARS are to be tested in new hunt for attackers
Thousands of Rape Kits Wait to be Tested

An 11-year-old reported being raped twice, wound up with a conviction

Hannah Wattangeri says

Haven't laughed so much in ages. This book takes a satirical look at a group of mostly middle-aged women

who decide to do something about rape and misogyny - and almost everything else connected to imperialist, capitalist society. It is not a book of literal genius - but it does depict the reality of our patriarchal world and what our knitting needles might achieve. It's difficult to describe how a serious topic such as a rape can be tackled in such a light-hearted way but the authors manage to both seriously condemn rape and misogyny whilst making me laugh.

FabulousRaye says

A rape-revenge novel that somehow manages to be cute, funny, and feminist. That was very unexpected.

Dorothyanne Brown says

I loved the premise of this book- a group of knitting friends who discover they have all been raped at one time or another and all the rapists have got off scot free, so they decide to take justice into their well exercised hands. With a little help from their knitting needles...

The book is crazy funny but also cuts close to reality (as all good humour must). There's a female cop who is, of course, never listened to. There are groups of men who don't believe in rape because the Bible...and enough governmental acronyms to choke several horses, even if they were BCHs (bigClysedale horses). Tongue firmly in cheek, it blasts the gormless and violent men of the world- makes them ridiculous.

The final triumph is a duel, but I must say no more...

It's a light read, sometimes over the top, but my golly it is worth the time!
