



A Room Full of Killers

Michael Wood

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‘DCI Matilda Darke is the perfect heroine’ Elly Griffiths

The third book in Michael Wood’s darkly compelling crime series featuring DCI Matilda Darke. Perfect for fans of Stuart MacBride, Mark Billingham and Val McDermid.

Eight killers. One house. And the almost perfect murder...

Feared by the people of Sheffield, Starling House is home to some of Britain’s deadliest teenagers, still too young for prison. Now the building’s latest arrival, Ryan Asher, has been found brutally murdered – stabbed twelve times, left in a pool of blood.

When DCI Matilda Darke and her team investigate, they uncover the secrets of a house tainted by evil. Kate Moloney, the prison’s manager, is falling apart, the security system has been sabotaged, and neither the staff nor the inmates can be trusted.

There’s only one person Matilda believes is innocent, and he’s facing prison for the rest of his life. With time running out, she must solve the unsolvable to save a young man from his fate. And find a murderer in a house full of killers...

A Room Full of Killers Details

Date : Published February 17th 2017 by Killer Reads

ISBN :

Author : Michael Wood

Format : Kindle Edition 373 pages

Genre : Fiction, Mystery, Crime, Thriller, European Literature, British Literature

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From Reader Review A Room Full of Killers for online ebook

Helga says

Are killers born or created?

A Room Full of Killers is the third in Matilda Darke series and my first from author Michael Wood.

Starling House is a prison for juvenile criminals. Matilda and her team are called to investigate the murder of Ryan Asher, a convicted murderer who had just arrived there the previous day. The other seven criminals were locked away in their rooms while Ryan was killed. Is one of the staff responsible for the murder? Who is guilty and who is innocent? What secrets are buried inside Starling House? Is Ryan's murder a one-off case or the beginning of a serial killing?

A Room Full of Killers is one amazing and gripping mystery/thriller. It starts with a bang and continues with subtle twists and turns till the end!

Thank you Andrea for the recommendation. This really was un-put-down-able!

The Book Review Café says

You can find all my reviews at <http://thebookreviewcafe.com>

A Room Full Of Killers is the third book in the DCI Matilda Darke series and in my opinion Michael Wood's writing goes from strength to strength with each book he writes. It may sound cliched but it's definitely the best book to date in the series, it's much darker and definitely more disturbing than his previous books. The first thing I must mention about this book is that at times it makes for an disconcerting and uncomfortable read, so be warned! Although fairly graphic at times it is in keeping with the plot, and certainly makes for a frighteningly plausible read.

Starling House is home to some of Britain's most dangerous teenagers, when a young boy is found murdered it's up to DCI Matilda Darke and her team to find a murderer in a house full of killers. Matilda is fast becoming one of my favourite fictional detectives in A Room Full Of Killers Matilda is very much haunted by a cold case where the mistakes she made in the investigation led to a young boy never being found. Without going into spoilers this leads her to making unwise decisions that put members of her team in serious danger and her career at risk. The complexity of Matilda's character add an edge to the plot, as you are never quite sure what she's going to do next. Michael Wood also expands on the characters in Matilda's team and the dialogue between them makes for light relief in this very dark tale.

Personally I found the Chapters told from the boys POV made for a spine chilling read as it vividly describes the events that led up to them being incarcerated in Starling House, each boys story sadly makes for a credible read in today's climate. Their reasoning behind committing such shocking and deplorable crimes made my blood run cold. The graphic descriptions of violent events in the boys past add authenticity to the plot. This book could have just been another average crime thriller, but for me this book has depth due to the subject matter. It begs the question what turns a child into a killer? background? upbringing? It certainly gave me food for thought.

Thanks to the authors descriptive writing Starling House very much comes alive, so much so I had nightmares about it, I kid you not! This is a building steeped in malevolence, it's bleak, claustrophobic and chilling to say the least, there's a permanent sense of foreboding that never lets up. Fill a building with killer teenagers and it's the stuff of nightmares, but highly original at the same time, which made this very much a "heart in your mouth" read. Michael wood very cunningly delivers a troubled and tangled tale which literally had me shaking my head as I tried to get one step ahead, fortunately the author never reveals too much so I found myself constantly on edge. Uncomfortable, shocking, and totally compelling, I would highly recommend you put this one to the top of your to read pile.

Christine says

Wow, another wonderful new series for thriller lovers that keeps getting better and better. A Room Full of Killers is #3 in the DCI Matilda Darke series, and as the Brits say, it's a real cracker of a read.

Seven teenage murderers are hidden away in Starling House, an old gothic mansion used as a detention center in Sheffield, England. A new inmate Ryan Asher is admitted. By the next morning he is dead. All the inmates are locked in their rooms overnight. Who killed Ryan? How? Why? And will there be more victims? If so, who?

Matilda is back with her team of Christian, Rory, Scott, and Kit Kat-loving Sian. Assistant Chief Constable Valerie Masterson is also still at the helm, hoping to wield a tighter rein on Matilda (good luck with that, Val). Matilda continues to be oppressed over the death of her beloved James and the botched effort to save little Carl Meagan.

There are several reasons why I loved this book. There are further inroads made in our understanding Matilda, and we learn more about all the team members, especially Rory. Mr. Wood is growing by leaps and bounds as a character developer. Not only are the team members more fleshed out, but each of the eight teenage inmates of Starling House get their own chapter. These chapters are grim, but give us great background on each murderer, helping us to perceive each boy as an individual rather than one of a big group.

The air is sinister what with much of the story taking place at the eerie Starling House, and the dreary weather, including a massive storm on a night when much evil is unfolding. The story is full of false leads and true clues with Mr. Wood daring us to tell them apart. The pace has a load of giddy-up making this a difficult book to put down. I read this book in tandem with a paperback written by my favorite author. I was only starting the Wood book as something to read while on the elliptical where it is impossible to read a paperback. I actually finished this one first! That's how hard it was to tear myself away.

And that ending. The last sentence of the book sent a terrorizing chill up my spine.

If you have not read Michael Wood, you are truly missing a gem of a series. Fans of Angela Marsons and Robert Bryndza will fall in love with the DCI Matilda Darke series. I highly recommend the books be read in order. Book #1 is For Reasons Unknown (5 big stars from me), only \$1.99 at amazon.com. Go for it!

Eva says

I am a huge fan of the DCI Matilda Darke series and this third installment is an absolute corker! Dare I say, the best one yet!

Matilda's new case leads her to Starling House, a home for some of the country's deadliest teenagers who are too young to be sent to prison. When someone is murdered, it's up to Matilda and her team to figure out if the killer is one of the teenage boys or someone from the staff. Can any of them be trusted?

While Matilda gets distracted by various other things (a case from the past, grieving over her husband's death and the belief someone at Starling House may actually be innocent), her colleague Rory is intent on finding out what makes children killers in the first place. Will Matilda's distractions put her team in danger?

This is one dark and gruesome read. The prologue alone seems to come straight from some horribile horror movie and the backstories of the boys at Starling House make for some uncomfortable reading. Food for thought, for sure. And maybe also a nightmare or two.

Needless to say I was gripped from page one. I couldn't turn the pages fast enough. My smug self thought she had it all figured out and was proven wrong. So wrong.

If you like a great crime procedural, this one is definitely for you. Although I would recommend you read the previous two in the series first. You won't regret it.

Mary says

Dear Reader,

Matilda Darke is my kind of person!!

She's hard working, resilient, doesn't suffer fools gladly and is someone I would dearly love to have a chat with! (The fact that we both admire the author Val McDermid and love her crime novels has little bearing on this!).

Yes, she's had her fair share of trials and tribulations, is still grieving her husband's death, but with the unfailing strength and support of her friends and fellow team mates, she'll survive!!

The reason for informing you of such is because I feel that this wonderfully depicted character, in this, the third book in this series, is a real life person!!

Indeed, such is the wonderfully descriptive manner in which she and her team are portrayed, their sparkling vitality, human frailties, bravery and stoicism in the face of death, you could be forgiven for believing that this fictional compelling, intriguing and deeply satisfying story is in fact real!!

Oh! How I loved this totally absorbing story, one that pitted Matilda and her team against a killer, set amid a roomful of killers!

Starling House,a high security facility for teenage killers,is where our story begins. Enveloped in a dark,distrustful,shadowy atmosphere,we question who could have killed Ryan,their reasons for doing so,while also being privy to the gory details of the past crimes of the other residents in the facility.

Is one of the teenage killers guilty of adding yet another name to their list of victims or could it possibly be one of the staff? What of Thomas,one who stands guilty of a heinous crime against his parents,yet one,Matilda inherently believes,is the victim of a miscarriage of justice?

Can she prove the guilt of one and the innocence of another,is the same person guilty of both,or is she letting the pressures and stresses of this high powered job alter her finely tuned intuition?

This was a masterpiece of storytelling!! Utterly compelling,the author spun a most bewitching and beguiling web of intrigue,red herrings,multifaceted characters,a complex and intrinsically woven plot,one that urged the reader on,compelling them to not only find out 'who dun it',but the manifold reasons for such.

I highly recommend you devote some time to this fantastic book and hope that this is not the last snapshot we get into the lives of Matilda,Rory,Adele etc.

Be warned! Once you begin,you will lose contact with the outside world,so mesmerised will you be by this thought provoking and mysterious tale!

Sarah says

Having read the other books in this series, I have to say this is one book I have been very much looking forward to coming out. The wait has very much been a worth while one as I don't just think, I know, without a doubt this is the best one in the series so far, even though I did love the others also.

What a story line! I was totally fascinated by the residents of Starling House. In a way the character Rory, who is one of Matilda's team, was acting out how I would exactly be. I was desperate to know why a child would kill and especially in the horrific ways that they carried it out. I was as desperate as Rory was to get into their minds and understand them that bit better.

I loved how every so often a chapter would be throw in, in to how each boy had killed their victims. My goodness it didn't half make for some shocking yet riveting reading. As awful as it was, I literally could not get enough and couldn't wait to come across the next one.

In the search for the murder of Ryan Asher, Matilda comes across another young lad who not only pulled on her heart strings but pulled on mine also. No one else believes his innocence and Matilda risks everything to prove it. This thread of the story was certainly a bit of a heart wrencher and I had tears in my eyes more than once!

A Room Full Of Killers is without a doubt a nail biting and gripping read. Believe me, when you pick it up you are going to struggle to put it back down. Totally loved it and if you haven't read any of the books in the series yet I really urge you to give them a go, as believe me you won't regret it.

Andrea says

Another brilliant book from this author third book in this series. This book starts in a place where young killers placed in an institute and a young lad who arrives gets murdered, was it an inmate or someone working in the institute. You get to know the characters' crimes and this story starts to unravel. Love Matilda Drakes character; she lost her husband and another case haunts her. Matilda and her team are brilliant in the book's. Looking forward to Michael Wood's next book. Brilliant writing; highly recommend.

Mary Beth *Traveling Sister* says

I just loved loved loved this book. It is the best in this series so far! The books just get better and better! The characters are done so well. This is a scary dark disturbing thriller with twists and turns and keeps you on the edge of your seat. It kept me turning the pages to a race to the end. I was reading each night till early in the morning. It kept me intrigued.

This is the third book in the DCI Matilda Darke Series. I binge read this whole series this month. It is just so good. I love a book that just gives me what I love in a dark thriller and this book definitely did that, and met the WoW factor.

Matilda is an incredible complex character. She is not the perfect heroine, she has flaws but she is very gutsy and does her best to get justice served.

I loved reading about the residents in Starling House, a home for some of the country's deadliest teenagers who are too young to go to prison. When one of the inmates is murdered, Matilda and her team are called to investigate. There is one house, 8 inmates and an almost perfect murder. Within 24 hours of arriving to Starling House, Ryan Asher is found brutally murdered. Now there are only seven inmates left in the facility, is one of them a killer or will they be the next victims. Each kid is so evil and so scary. It was a creepy eerie place to stay. There's only one person Matilda believes is innocent, and he's facing prison for the rest of his life. With time running out, she must solve the unsolvable to save a young man from his fate. And find a murderer in a house full of killers...?

This series is very intriguing, so shocking and chilling! I want more of this Wow factor and Mr. Wood. I can't wait for the next one! If you haven't started this series yet, and love a dark disturbing thriller, I would say that it is about time you start reading this series now...

Debra says

Eight Killers. One House. Oh baby!

Starling House is home to some of the most notorious teenage killers in Britain. Things seem to be running smoothly at Starling House, until their newest arrival, Ryan Asher, has been found murdered. He has been at Starling House less than twenty-four hours, why would someone want to kill him?

DCI Matilda Darke and her team have been called in to investigate Ryan Asher's murder. At first the case seems cut and dry. The prisoners are locked in their cells at night and released the next morning for breakfast. The deadly teens have no way of leaving their cells at night. But then the investigation shows the

security system has been sabotaged. Making matters worse, the homes director is both hostile and falling apart due to the stress. The inmates and staff alike are not very trustworthy and many within Starling house have secrets.

The only thing that Matilda knows is that one of the boy's in Starling House is innocent. It's a gut feeling but she doesn't believe he belongs there. If this young man is innocent, then who committed the crime for which he was convicted? As usual, DCI Darke will stick her neck out to try and solve two mysteries at once -the murder and why an innocent teen has been locked up.

This is a very well written and crafted series. It's one that I highly recommend and strongly suggest that readers begin with the first book in the series, Yes, this book will work very well as a stand-alone novel, but don't sell yourself short, this is a very captivating series so enjoy it from the beginning! Plus, with each book the reader gets to learn a little more about Matilda Darke, her team, and friends!

DCI Darke is a captivating and complex leading lady. She has her flaws and is still coping with the loss of her husband but remains dedicated to her job. She is strong, intelligent, and can hold her own against the deadliest of criminals. I appreciate how the Author shows that as a female officer in a place of authority, DCI Darke, must maintain a strong poker face even when she wants to cry or show her emotions. I think he does a good job showing what a female officer is up against and that shedding a tear in frustration or pain would be looked down upon and seen as weakness.

Starling house is the perfect location for a crime. It's unwanted by the local community, it's not a warm place, its dreary outside and the rain and darkness add to the atmosphere. These elements add to the chilly atmosphere of the place plus there may be a killer there waiting to possibly kill again.

This book, like the others, was a real page turner for me. I was captivated from page one and didn't want to stop reading until the last page. Michael Wood has created a very captivating and intelligent series.

Another great addition to the series which has me waiting for the next one!

Read more of my reviews at www.openbookpost.com

Kendall says

Ahem... excuse me Mr. Wood thank you for uping your game! Damn..... this is an excellent and addicting series ladies and gents!

If you haven't gotten your fanny on the Matilda Darke series... I suggest you do today ;).

Dare I say this is THE best one out of the third so far. There is something about diving into a story about the most gruesome killings committed by teenage boys. Matilda has her hands full in this story about a teenage boy Ryan Asher who is brutally stabbed twelve times after his second night in the Starling House. Granted, as you can imagine Matilda finds herself trying to solve a murder wondering whether staff or another one of the 8 boys living in this institution has killed Ryan Asher. Matilda is convinced that one of the boys is innocent in the Starling House and is determined to address this case despite the chaos it brings on her team

and herself.... yikes. Matilda I have to say damn girl.... you can't ever have peace can you haha?

As time continues to unfold, Matilda and her team see the blurry lines of this evil house come alive.... literally secrets start pouring from the dark and sinister walls. Ooo but this is what makes it SOOOOOO addicting! ;)

Michael Woods is extremely talented with his ability to hold his readers attention at ease and keep you engaged throughout the entire novel. I really enjoyed how Woods showed his readers a glimpse into the dark and sinister mind of each teenage boy.

Okay.... soooo can I just say OMG at the end! Who ever has read this can you explain the last page? This makes me think after all that..... he could be guilty?

I can say this is one of my favorite series! (Well almost haha)

Paromjit says

This is the first book in the DCI Matilda Darke series that I have read, and it works reasonably well as a standalone. I must say that I was seriously impressed with it and found it a totally gripping read. It is set in Sheffield where the old and gothic Starling House, a secure private youth offenders institute, is located. It houses those deemed to have committed the most evil of acts, eight boys, all of whom are convicted killers. There is a lot of local opposition to the facility which is run by Kate Moloney . One dark night, Ryan Asher, who murdered his grandparents and has been disowned by his parents is bought to Starling House to begin his sentence.

DCI Matilda Darke and her team are called to Starling House after the body of Ryan Asher is found splayed over a pool table stabbed 12 times. So begins a claustrophobic investigation that suggests that only someone on the staff of Starling House could be the perpetrator, something Kate Moloney does not believe is possible, yet all the inmates are locked in and only staff hold the keys. The staff are convinced that one of the inmates is responsible, after all, they are all killers. We are given descriptions of the murders committed by the boys from each of the boys perspective, a truly disturbing experience that gave me nightmares. Matilda is convinced that one of the boys is not a killer and is determined to address this wrong despite the obstacles in her path. She is aided in this by Pat Campbell. In a case that brings mayhem, chaos, another murder and danger to her team, Matilda struggles to hold it together. This is a police procedural where it really is a team effort that resolves this hot potato of a case but not without a heavy cost to Matilda and those who work with her.

Michael Wood spins an atmospheric, dark and disturbing yarn with panache. The writing is beautifully fluent and the narrative holds the readers attention with ease. He really gets inside the heads of some disturbing boys and makes them come alive. His plotting excels in creating spellbinding levels of suspense and tension. The police team is diverse in its characters, I became particularly fond of Sian with her wonderful drawer of snacks. I am delighted to have encountered this author for the first time, and plan to read everything he has written. Brilliant crime novel that comes highly recommended. Thanks to HarperCollins for an ARC.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

I thought before I read this book that I was quite hardened when it came to crime novel that I could deal with quite a lot (except harming of animals and children), but there were really tough parts in this book that was hard for me to get through and that were the chapters that were the POV of the children, the murderers.

A Room Full of Killers is a dark and tragic book that I devoured. It's engrossing, but at the same time is it not an easy book to get through. DCI Matilda Darke has a lot on her plate, with the release of a book concerning a kidnap case that she was in charge of that went wrong. Also, she is still not completely over her husband's death 18 months earlier. And, now this case at the Starling House. A teenager is dead, and who could have done it? The question of why someone murdered him is perhaps not hard to understand since Ryan Asher is a convicted murderer, but someone got him out of a locked room. Matilda then meets one of the inmates, Thomas, and Matilda is convinced that the young boy is innocent of the crime he is said to have done. Now she wants to find Ryan's murderer and at the same time is she trying to get Thomas free.

I found the book thrilling and intense and the last part of the book had some really great twist to the story. I was a bit surprised on how Matilda could believe someone to be innocent by just looking at him. I mean quite literary just instantly believe his innocent without knowing much about the case. I'm not a police, but appearance can be deceiving, but I guess I much more cynical. Still, it added drama to the story. The side story with the kidnap case was also interesting and I'm really curious to see the impact it will have in the next book. If the kidnapping will be solved. I'm also quite eager to get the two previous books to read!

A Room Full of Killers is an excellent thriller. The characters are well-developed and interesting to follow and the case is interesting and I love the ending!

I want to thank the publisher for providing me with a free copy through NetGalley for an honest review!

Jean says

No rest for the weary! That has to be how Matilda Darke feels as she works her incredibly draining cases. In Michael Wood's third book of the DCI Darke series, A Room Full of Killers, Matilda Darke and her team are assigned to investigate a strange murder at Starling House, a security facility in the town of Sheffield for underage felons. Ryan Asher, a fifteen-year-old lad who was convicted of murdering his grandparents, arrived at the lockup in the dead of night. After one day with seven other killers, Asher is found laid out in a pool of blood. Who stabbed him? Was it one of the other boys? Or could it have been one of the staff? Why? No one seems to have known him. Matilda and her detectives question everyone and come up empty. Kate Moloney, head Starling House for twenty years, is a stern woman who stands up for her employees. But it seems to Matilda that Kate is hiding something.

Darke's boss, ACC Valerie Masterson is demanding a quick resolution to this case for two reasons: one, the people of Sheffield are vehemently opposed to the prison, and she wants to keep the murder hush-hush, and two, the South Yorkshire police cannot afford the negative publicity. A previous case gone wrong still haunts them. Sally Meagan's book about her son Carl's kidnapping and DCI Darke's role in the failure to recover him is due to hit the bookstands. ACC Masterson fears more damage to her department's already shaky reputation. For her part, Matilda is extremely sensitive to this, feeling personally responsible for the breakdown in the case. On top of that, she still grieves for her late husband James. Can Matilda buckle down

and focus on the task at hand?

Getting in the way of the Asher case is one of the other inmates. Upon meeting him, Matilda instantly intuits something amiss; this kid does not belong here. She decides to take it upon herself to prove his innocence. Will it be a giant distraction? Maybe she couldn't save little Carl, but Matilda Darke is going to do her darndest to help this guy, whom she believes to be innocent.

Where do I start? The plot is magnificent! It suggests shades of both Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* and *The A.B.C. Murders*. The mood is tense, if not downright creepy. Starling House is an ancient, Gothic style building, complete with gargoyles. With eight convicted killers and even questionable personnel, it seems like a house of horrors. There is even a dark and stormy night, which figures significantly in the story. As in the previous books in the series, Mr. Wood kept me guessing throughout. Would there be more killings? Who the heck was responsible for the crime, and did he/she have help?

What I really love, however, is Michael Wood's character development. Matilda Darke is one tough cookie. She's had a rough go of it, certainly, and she sometimes falters in how she handles her emotions. But when the going gets tough, the tough get going, and Matilda always seems to come out on top. She respects her fellow officers and cares about them. While she's sometimes – often, actually – insubordinate, she always has a reason, and she has nearly impeccable instincts. She sees a therapist, and despite not being out of the woods yet, she has made progress in her strides toward coping with recent adversities. Other members of the squad are shaping up nicely as well. Sian displays calm, intelligent leadership qualities. And let's not forget the ever-present treats in Sian's snack drawer! The attention to detail is fantastic. I wonder how many cups of coffee are consumed by this crew...I digress...Rory is inquisitive to the point of being annoying, but he's a valued team member. Faith is extremely dedicated and reliable. The staff at Starling House, particularly Kate Moloney, are also very well done. I also have to add that Mat's steady friends, pathologist Adele Kean and retired DI Pat Campbell, assist her both emotionally and professionally again in this book.

A Room Full of Killers is at times dark, disturbing, and suspenseful. It is puzzling and filled with red herrings and seemingly impossible scenarios. It does have a few bits of humor. I liked it all! Most of all, I was not prepared for the eyebrow-raiser at the end! Wow! More, please, Mr. Wood. Maybe Matilda deserves a break in the Carl Meagan case?

5 stars

Kate~Bibliophile Book Club says

I have been eagerly awaiting *A Room Full of Killers* pretty much since I finished reading *Outside Looking In* last year so I was delighted to have an opportunity to read it pre-publication. I knew from the first few pages that I was going to be hooked, and it was definitely worth the wait.

A Room Full of Killers is another brilliant installment in the DCI Matilda Darke series. This one focuses on Starling House and its inmates, young murderers. When one of the inmates is murdered, Darke and her team are called to investigate. What follows is a nail-biting, fast-paced and very twisted tale. Interspersed with chapters from the inmates of Starling House, *A Room Full of Killers* is Michael Wood's darkest book yet. I LOVED it!!!!

Michael Wood has a skill for creating great characters, and this book is no different. I love the dynamic relationships between Matilda and her team, they all seem to bounce so well off each other. I especially like how Wood writes strong female friendships. Matilda and Adele are one of my favourite duos to catch up with. The way they are written makes the reader feel included in their friendship and invested in their characters. Very few authors make me care for their characters, but I always care about these two.

I briefly mentioned the interspersed chapters above. The reader is essentially introduced to the inmates of Starling House sporadically throughout the book. Each chapter focuses on one boy and their crime. Some of these are just horrendous to read. It's hard to imagine a child committing murder, but that's exactly what they've done and how they've ended up where they are. These chapters are quite chilling.

I think that *A Room Full of Killers* is possibly my favourite book in the series so far. It's the one that's made me question people more, and when I say that, I mean questioning people's motivations for murder. Nature vs nurture and so on. As a parent, it's hard to imagine what could drive your child to do such unspeakable acts, so this book is quite hard-hitting as it makes you wonder... what if?

I can't recommend this series highly enough. If you've not read them yet, treat yourself. You won't be disappointed!

Joanne Robertson says

I just LOVE this series so I was really excited to start to read DCI Matilda Darke book 3 especially as I hadn't had long to wait since reading the short prequel novella *The Fallen* just before Christmas. I love strong female protagonists in crime thrillers and Matilda is such an incredibly complex character with hidden and unexpected depths that I don't think I will ever tire of her! If you have enjoyed the previous books as well then you are in a treat as I think this is the best book so far! I was awake till half two this morning finishing it (with a little break for some hot tea and a Tunnocks Teacake at midnight-reading about Sian's snack drawer always makes me hungry!) as I physically couldn't put it down until the case was solved.

I think one of the reasons I loved this so much was that it had an unexpected "Agatha Christie feel" to it. After the murder has occurred, all the suspects are gathered together by the detectives in one room which reminded me of the way Hercule Poirot would gather the cast of misfits together, pulling all the alibies apart individually before revealing the murderer. Unfortunately, it's not that easy for Matilda as her investigation is also side tracked by a possible case of a miscarriage of justice. Interspersed throughout the teams investigation into the murder we hear the backstories of the eight killer's who have come together at Sterling House and those chapters are truly chilling. These are teenage boys who have committed the most heinous of crimes and one of the team, Rory, really struggles to understand why? What has happened to these boys to turn them into killers? We are back to the nature versus nurture argument, could some people just be born evil?

Kate Maloney, the prison manager, was possibly one of the most frustrating characters I have read about recently (as well as appearing rather familiar for some reason!) so I felt absolutely no sympathy for her predicament whatsoever. And you can't help but compare her to the fiercely loyal and single minded Matilda, who's stubborn persistence is unfailing in her attempt to do the right thing and see justice done.

Honestly I am overwhelmed by how much Michael Wood has upped his game here and I'm already chomping at the bit for more DCI Matilda Darke. This is highly recommended by me and if you haven't read

any of this series yet I suggest you start with For Reasons Unknown, the first book and I guarantee you will be as addicted as I am!

I received a copy of this book via netgalley and have chosen to read and review it.
