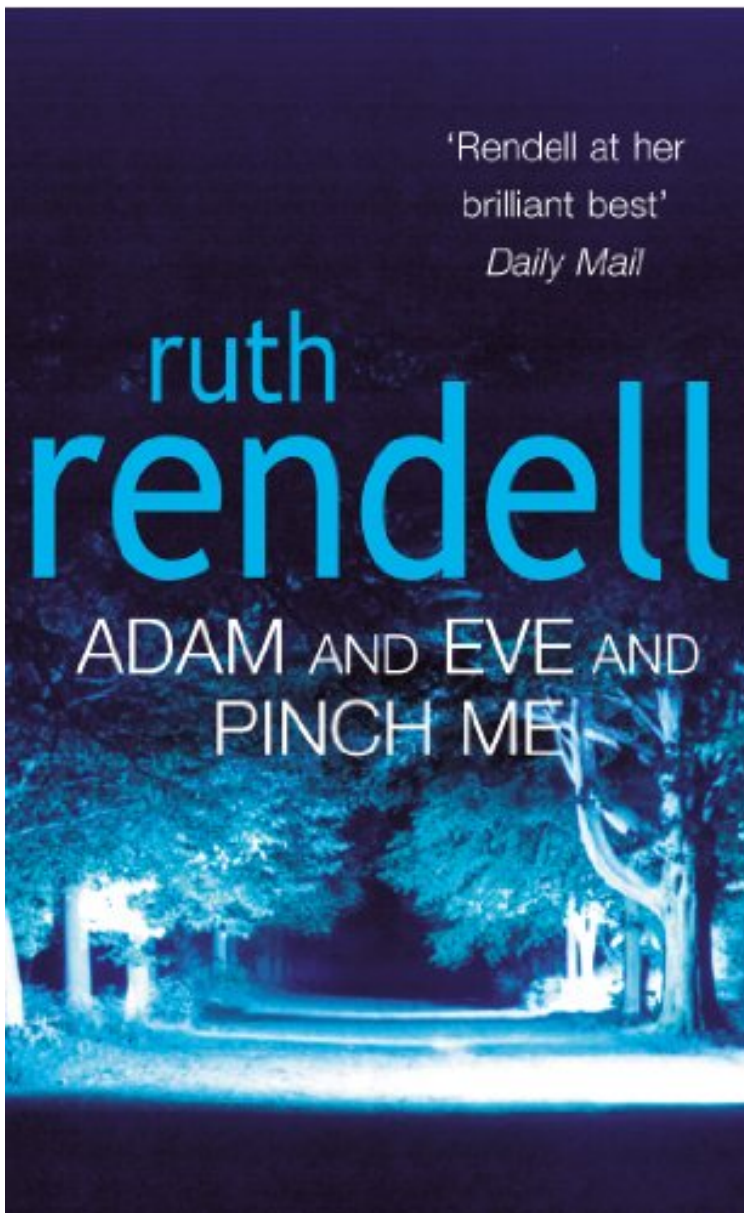


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Adam And Eve And Pinch Me



Par Ruth Rendell
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Par Ruth Rendell : Adam And Eve And Pinch Me before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Adam And Eve And Pinch Me:

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Description : Description du produitMintys boyfriend, Jock, was killed in the disastrous train wreck at Paddington, shortly after he borrowed all her savings. Now he has come back to haunt her. Zillah lost her estranged husband, Jerry, in that same accident. She is not convinced he is actually dead, but for reasons of her own decides not to pursue the matter. Fionas fianc, Jeff, has simply disappearedquite inexplicably since she was supporting him in style.In her ingeniously unnerving new novel, Ruth Rendell deftly traces the connections among these womenand between them a series of vicious stabbings terrifying London. Adam and Eve and Pinch Me is a masterpiece of malice and psychological suspense.

Prsentation de l'diteurJock Lewis died in the Paddington train crash. His fiance Minty even received a letter

from Great Western. But she never heard from the police, and Jock had left with all her savings. When a mysterious dark-haired man appears at Minty's home, at work, even in the cinema, she knows it must be Jock's ghost. But ghosts are grey and don't wear leather jackets... Five women, all unknown to each other, are the simultaneous unwilling victims of one man, a morally corrupt criminal who exploits them all and then suddenly, suspiciously, disappears. As this mystery man of shadows returns, and five women are haunted by a living nightmare, Minty begins to wonder... Can you kill a ghost?.com In Adam and Eve and Pinch Me, the mills of the gods appear to have ground Jock Lewis to dust--or have they? Jock's obsessive-compulsive girlfriend, Minty, thinks he was killed in a train crash and is tormented by his ghost. But the cheerfully amoral Jock--AKA Jerry Leach and Jeff Leigh, depending on which woman he's romancing--faked his death to move on to yet another unsuspecting lady. His one legal wife has swept their union hastily under the rug and married a conservative member of Parliament, who has his own urgent secrets. Jock's most recent fiancée, a successful banker, hasn't minded keeping him in the manner to which he's become accustomed--that is, until the day he doesn't come home. When his body is found in a cinema, the intersections of his past collapse in a way that destroys some lives and rebuilds others. Adam and Eve and Pinch Me is no whodunit: the murderer is known from the outset. The suspense arises from the uncertainty of whether justice will be served. That deftly handled angle draws the reader into the book, while Ruth Rendell's famously acute insight into all forms of borderline madness makes it all so believably chilling. --Barrie

TrinkleExtraitChapter 1Minty knew it was a ghost sitting in the chair because she was frightened. If it were only something she'd imagined, she wouldn't have been afraid. You couldn't be when it was something that came out of your own mind. It was early evening but, being wintertime, quite dark. She'd just come home from work, let herself in the front door, and put the hall light on. The front-room door was open and the ghost was sitting on an upright chair in the middle of the room with its back to her. She'd put the chair there to stand on and change a lightbulb before she went out in the morning and forgotten to put it back. Her mouth tightly covered up with both hands to keep the scream in, she took one step nearer. She thought, What will I do if it turns round? Ghosts in stories are gray like the people on black-and-white television or else see-through, but this one had short, dark brown hair and a brown neck, and wore a black leather jacket. Minty didn't have to see its face to know it was her late fiancé, Jock. Suppose it stayed there so that she couldn't use the room? It wasn't absolutely still. The head moved a bit and then the right leg. Both feet edged back as if it were going to get up. Minty squeezed her eyes tight shut. Everything was silent. A shriek out in the street from one of the kids that lived opposite made her jump and she opened her eyes. The ghost was gone. She put the light on and felt the seat of the chair. It was warm and this surprised her. You think of ghosts as cold. She moved the chair back to where it belonged under the table. If it wasn't in the middle of the room, maybe he wouldn't come back. She went upstairs, half expecting to see him there. He could have got past her and come up while she had her eyes shut. Ghosts didn't like lights, so she put them all on, all good hundred-watt bulbs, and he wasn't anywhere to be seen. She'd loved him, thought of herself as married to him though she wasn't, but she didn't want his ghost about. It was upsetting. Still, he'd gone now and it was time for a good wash. One of the things Jock had liked about her, Minty was sure, was that she was always spotlessly clean.

Of course, she'd had a bath this morning before going off to Immacue and she'd washed her hair; she wouldn't dream of leaving the house without, but that was eight hours ago, and she must have picked up all kinds of dirt from Harrow Road and the people who came into the shop, not to mention the clothes they brought that needed dry cleaning. It was lovely having a bathroom entirely to herself. She said a little prayer of thanks to Auntie as if she were a saint (which was a way Minty had seldom thought of her when alive) every time she went in there, for making that possible. Dear Auntie, thank you for dying and leaving me a bathroom. I'm ever so grateful, it's made a world of difference. Your loving niece for ever and ever, Araminta. She took all her clothes off and dropped them in the laundry basket with the lid. It was expensive having more than one bath a day. She'd have a shower put in when she could afford it. One day, though not as soon as she'd hoped. Meanwhile, standing at the basin on the bath mat, she used the big natural sponge Sonovia next door had given her for Christmas. Like everything else in the bathroom, the nailbrush had been Auntie's. It was turquoise blue with a handle, which meant you could get a good grip on it. Minty scrubbed her nails. She had brought this hygienic measure to a fine art. It was no good just rubbing the brush across your fingertips, you had to insert the bristles on the outer edge right under your nails and move them rapidly backward and forward. She washed her feet last, taking care to get plenty of soap between her toes, then using the nailbrush on her toenails. It was Auntie who had said soap was disappearing from the shops. Mark her words, the time was coming when you'd not be able to find a decent cake of soap. It was all this gel and

essence in bottles these days, and powder stuff and cleansing bars, not to mention the soap that wasn't soap at all but a cake of something stuffed full of rosebuds and seeds and bits of grass. Minty wouldn't have given you a thank-you for any of it. She used Wright's Coal Tar as she always had. In the bathroom she felt safe. You couldn't imagine a ghost in a bathroom somehow, it would be all wrong. How about her hair? Should she wash it again? It looked clean enough, the fine, flyaway fair hair behaving in its usual way and flying away at all angles. Better put it under the tap and be on the safe side. She was going out with Sonovia and Laf later and she didn't want to give offense; there was nothing so unpleasant as greasy hair next to you. In the end she gave it a proper wash, it couldn't do any harm. Minty dried herself and dropped the used towel into the basket. She never used a towel more than once and she never used body lotion or perfume.

Deodorant, yes, and on the soles of her feet and palms of her hands as well as her underarms. Body lotion only dirtied clean skin as makeup did. Besides, she couldn't afford all that rubbish. She was quite proud of the fact that no lipstick had ever soiled her mouth nor mascara her pale eyelashes. Normally, since Auntie passed away, Minty would have walked naked across the narrow expanse of landing into her bedroom, as she might have if only the living Jock had been in the house. It was different altogether with a ghost who was dead and shouldn't want to look at a nude woman from beyond the grave. She took a clean towel from the cupboard, wrapped it round her and opened the door cautiously. There was no one and nothing there. No ghost could have survived in that bright light. Minty put on clean underwear, a clean pair of cotton trousers, and a clean sweater. No accessories, no jewelry. You never knew what germs were harbored by things like that. She was due to give them a knock next door at seven-thirty. The cinema they were going to was the

Odeon at Marble Arch, and the film started at eight-fifteen. Something to eat first and maybe a cup of tea. Why had he come back like that? They said ghosts returned when they had unfinished business to attend to. Well, he had. An engagement isn't finished till it ends in marriage. She hadn't even seen his body or been asked to the funeral or had a pot of ashes like they gave her when Auntie was cremated. All she'd had was that letter telling her he'd been in the train that crashed and been burnt to a cinder. The fact was that she'd started to get over it--she'd stopped crying and got on with her life, the way they said you had to--and now his ghost appearing like that had brought it all back. Perhaps he'd only come to say a final good-bye. She hoped so. The kitchen was spotless. It smelled powerfully of bleach, a scent Minty liked. If she'd ever worn perfume it would have smelled like bleach. Although she'd just had her big wash she washed her hands again. She was very particular about what she ate. Food could be messy and make you dirty. Soup, for instance, or pasta or anything with gravy. She ate a lot of cold chicken and ham and salad and bread, the white kind, not the brown, which might have any filthy substance in it to make it that color, and eggs and fresh, unsalted butter. Her weekly expenditure on tissues and paper napkins and kitchen roll was ruinous but it couldn't be helped. As it was, she used the washing machine to capacity every day without adding linen napkins to the load. When she'd eaten she washed up everything she'd used and put it away, and washed her hands under the running tap. Was she going to leave all these lights on when she went out? Auntie would have called it a wicked waste. The upstairs ones would have to stay on. She wasn't going to go up there and turn the lights off and have to come down the stairs with all that darkness behind her. Out in the hall she took her coat off the peg and put it on. There was always a problem with coats because you couldn't really

keep them clean. Minty had done the best she could by running up a couple of cotton linings on the Immacue machine. She could wash them and slip a clean one into the coat each time she wore it. The best thing, if she was to have any peace of mind, was not to think about the dirt on the outside of the coat, but it was a struggle not to do this and she didn't always succeed. The light was blazing in the front room. Minty went a little way in there, retreated, and, standing in the hall, put her hand round the door jamb and snapped off the light switch. Her eyes had closed of their own volition while she performed this action. Now she was afraid to open them in case Jock's ghost had taken advantage of her temporary blindness to seat himself in the chair once more. With the chair pushed up against the table, perhaps he wouldn't be able to. She opened her eyes. No ghost. Should she tell Sonovia about it? Minty couldn't make up her mind. The street doors in Syringa Road opened on to tiny rectangular front gardens. Minty's garden was paved all over, Auntie had seen to that, but next door's had earth and flowers growing out of it, masses of them in summer. Sonovia saw Minty coming and waved from the window. She was wearing her new red trouser suit and a long scarf thing in powder blue that she called a pashmina. Her lipstick matched her suit, and her hair, newly done, was just like the shiny hat on the toby jug Auntie had brought back from a trip to Southend. "We thought we'd go on the bus," Sonovia said. "Laf says there's no way he's parking the car down there and maybe getting it clamped. He has to watch his step, being in the force." Sonovia always said "being in the force," never "being

a policeman." Minty was disappointed about the car but didn't say so. She missed being taken about in Jock's car, though it was old and what he called a "boneshaker." Laf came out from the front room and gave her a kiss. His name was Lafcadio but that was a bit much of a name to go to bed with, as Sonovia put it, and everyone called him ...