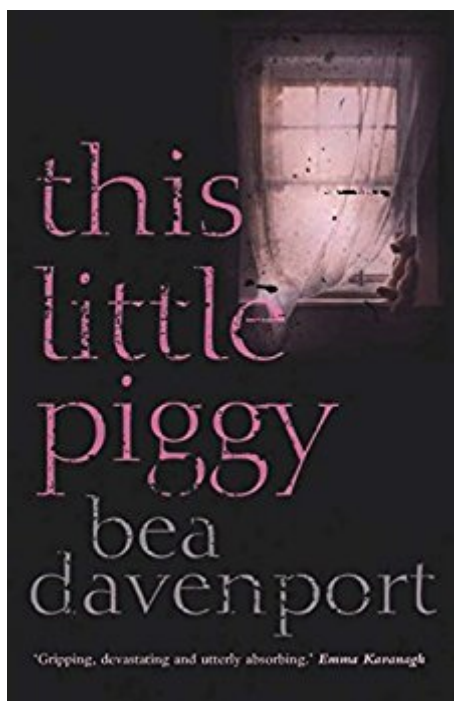


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This Little Piggy



Synopsis

A gripping look at a community in turmoil, struggling through a miners' strike and now rocked by a child's murder in the summer of 1984 and there is a sense of unease on the troubled Sweetmeadows estate. The residents are in shock after the suspicious death of a baby and tension is growing due to the ongoing miners' strike. Journalist Clare Jackson follows the story as police botch the inquiry and struggle to contain the escalating violence. Haunted by a personal trauma she can't face up to, Clare is shadowed by nine-year-old Amy, a bright but neglected little girl who seems to know more about the incident than she's letting on. As the days go on and the killer is not found, Clare ignores warnings not to get too close to her stories and in doing so, puts her own life in jeopardy.

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Customer Reviews

I received this title from NetGalley and Legend Press for a free review. Clare Jackson is a journalist in 1984, passed over for a promotion after she failed to appear for an interview, offering only "she was ill" as a reason for not showing up. The catty and snide deputy news director, aptly named Sharon Catt, then gives Clare the Sweetmeadows Estate as her patch. Sweetmeadows is the type

of place most communities have where the residents are cast off, much like the grounds and dwellings where they reside. Clare's life takes unexpected turns when baby Jamie Donnelly's body is found after he was apparently thrown over a balcony at Sweetmeadows. Accusations swirl, and seem to focus on Jamie's family, as his father was a miner who had broken the strike line to try to keep supporting his family. However, a group of rebellious teens also come under suspicion as well as members of the miners' union, now run by the charismatic Finn McKenna. Clare's long-time friend Joe Ainsley is also a journalist and expresses concern when Clare becomes attached to neglected nine year old Amy, a resident of Sweetmeadows Estate who is always ready to help by providing information. There are multiple plots within this story and Clare is involved in them all. There is the investigation into Jamie's murder, the fallout affecting families in the mining community because of the strike, a romantic attraction between Clare and Finn, the fight to gain information for printable newspaper stories and byline credit, and the issues involved when Amy becomes attached to Clare. There is also something devastating and personal in Clare's past that colors her reactions and perhaps causes her to behave recklessly. The book was not a cozy nor could it be classified as a procedural.

Review of "This Little Piggy" by Bea Davenport This book started out slow and boring and it continued that way throughout the first half. During that time there were two apparent murders, but they were neither intriguing nor compelling. Clare, the reporter for the local newspaper, did not interest me all that much. She was a bit of a whiner. Amy, the neighborhood rag-a-muffin, was somewhat more interesting than Clare, but in terms of this book that is not saying a great deal. The back-story had to do with a major union strike and I do not think that I have ever read a good mystery involving a miner's labor strike. Around midpoint in this story little 9-year-old Amy begins to take center stage with Clare. Clare exhibits real concern about Amy and the lack of attention that is paid to her by her mother Tina. Amy, who claims to have seen the baby thrown off the fourth floor, also was the first to see the second murder involving the baby's mother. Amy now even says that a bunch of local teenage hooligans may even had something to do with the baby's death, but the police are leery about this given the fact that Amy often changes her story about what she actually witnessed. Even Clare begins to question the reliability of Amy account of what she has seen. But there is no denying that Amy is a strange little girl who is able to detect that something bad has occurred in one of Clare's bedrooms rooms after spending several nights there. There was no real tension in this mystery aside from some physical flare-ups in the community over mistrust of the police handling of the miners strike. The culprit was obvious to me throughout most

of the book and therefore there were no real plot twists, aside from Clare's secret that was revealed at the very end.

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