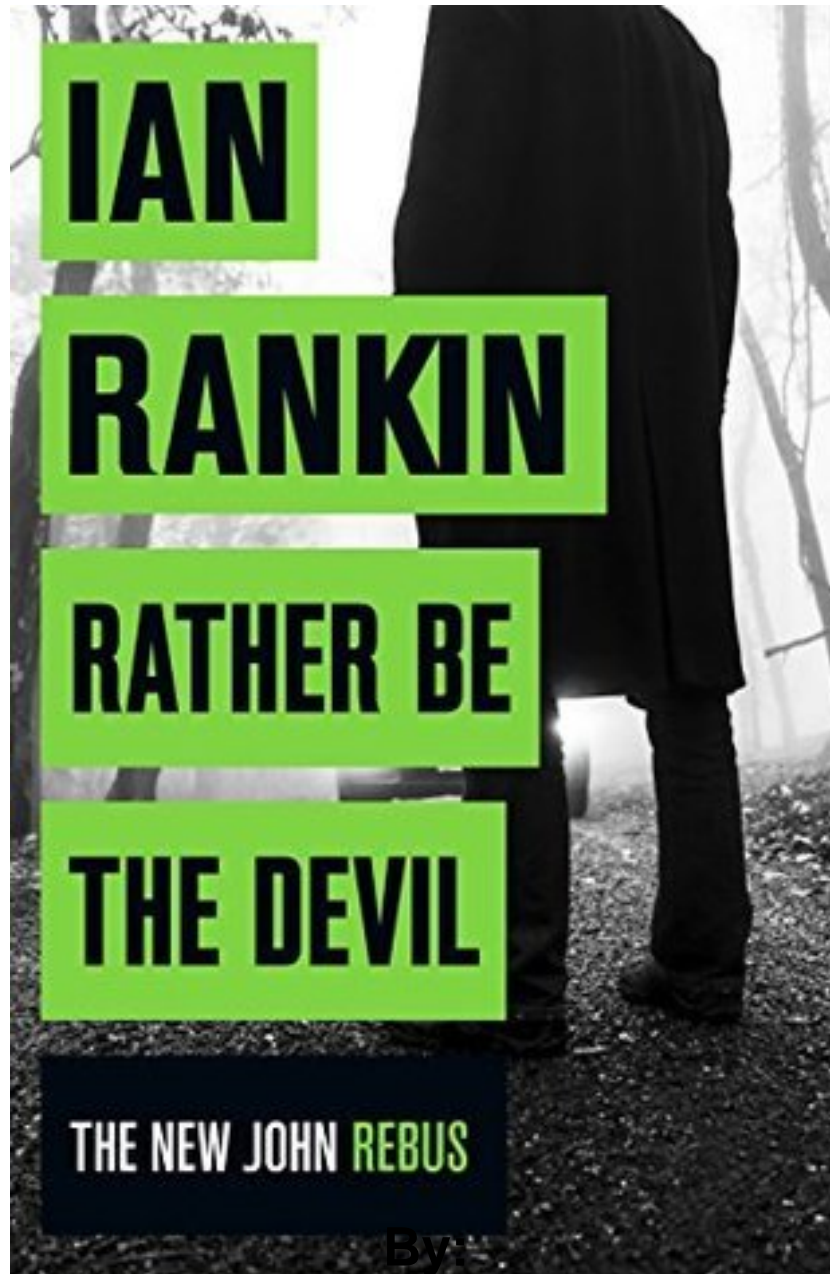


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What people Say:

Paromjit

John Rebus is a favourite of mine, and when this book became available, I snapped it up. There is a strong element of comfort for me now that we are on his 21st outing. This is one hell of a thrill ride of a novel.....and it all begins with Rebus dining out with Deborah Quant at the Caledonian Hotel when he tells her of an unresolved 40 year old murder of Marie Turquand, who was strangled in one of the hotel rooms. Rebus is retired but we all know that is not going to stop him nosing around in

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Rebus meets a number of people associated with the Marie Turquand case. Then the head of a police case review, ex-cop Robert Chatham, is fished out of the Leith after talking to Rebus.. It seems there are dangerous forces out there that do not want the case opened. A police unit, headed by DS Alvin James, which bypasses local CID, is set up to look into the murder. DI Malcolm Fox finds himself back in the city working with Siobhan after a serious assault on Darryl Christie, local crime boss and entrepreneur. Christie has links with a missing man who sets up shell companies for his clients so they can squirrel away money in tax havens. Malcolm's sister, Jude, brings trouble to his doorstep which has him worried. Cafferty is taking a close interest in the assault on Christie which eventually brings Rebus and the police to his door. This is a violent and bloody trail that takes in a brutal and dangerous Ukrainian mobster, betrayal, corruption, greed, bitter rivalries and a number of twists.

As ever, there is a great sense of location in Edinburgh in the novel which I loved. This is a superbly constructed and well written book with masses of atmosphere. I liked the character development that has given way to Rebus, Clarke and Fox now getting on so well and providing support to each other. They work with each other in a remarkably productive way to get to the truth. Given that the series has run for so long, it still has the capacity to surprise, and be an utterly compelling and gripping read. It is to the author's credit that this series is still going so strong. A book which I highly recommend. Many thanks to Orion for an ARC.

Diane S

For John Rebus, retirement is only a word, a minor technicality, something to get around. This something he is very good at, using whatever means necessary. Despite his health, which at present is presenting a problem, he never fails to be enticed when a past unsolved case is brought to his attention. When the criminal bosses come out to play in present day, all nets are off. He is on a trail and with the aid of his friends Clarke and Fox, he is determined to pursue and get answers, especially w

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I gave read this series for years, a series that is slow paced, need to settle yourself in, but full of the atmosphere of Edinburgh, criminal underworld and all. Always excerpts of music are scattered throughout as Rebus is a big time music lover. The characters are so well developed and the cases always interesting. This one though had me a little confused at the beginning, really did so many of the characters have to have names starting with C? Sorted itself out the longer I read but for me it was noticeable. I love this series though, so could not rate it any lower. So John, hope to see you soon, hope you feel better and good luck staying off the cigs.

ARC from Netgalley.

Andrew Smith

The title of this book is taken from a song written and performed by British singer John Martyn. Rankin is big on music and he populates his books with references to songs and song lyrics, perhaps to provide further insight into the personality (and age) of his characters. On this occasion, the use of this particular line is rather ambiguous given there are a quite few stand-out candidates for the "devil" tag. It's a complex tale of power and greed, albeit with the author's usual measure of bone

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As the book begins we learn that John Rebus has retired from the force and is now suffering the consequences of a lifetime on the ciggies. He's coughing up a storm and undergoing tests as a result of a shadow having been found on his lung. He's also cut down on the booze. None of this has done wonders for his temperament, but he's managed to talk friend and ex-colleague Siobhan Clarke into sneaking him the file on a cold case he's retained an interest in. In 1978 an attractive socialite was murdered at the prestigious Caledonian Hotel, as she waited in her room for her lover. At that time musician Bruce Collier and his entourage were staying in adjacent rooms. Were they involved in any way? Well, the murder was never pinned on anyone and now Rebus fancies his chances of dusting off old records (excuse the pun) to work out whodunnit.

In this book the whole gang is here. Malcolm Fox, who started life in a separate series of books, has been transferred to the Scottish Crime Campus at Gartcosh, near Glasgow. He resents the daily commute but the move represents a significant step forward in his career. The fact he was selected for this move irks the ambitious Siobhan and it's put a temporary halt to their burgeoning friendship. To rub salt in the wound, Fox is asked to spend some time back in Edinburgh where he's to look into the possibility of a link between the murder of a nightclub bouncer and suspected money laundering activity involving a young crime boss "a certain Darryl Christie, who'll be familiar to readers of the Rebus stories. And who's in charge of the murder case? Siobhan Clarke, of course.

By this time, I'm casting my mind around to think who else Rankin is going to throw into the pot. Ah, that'll be Gerald Cafferty, or "Big Ger" as he's known by Edinburgh police and criminals alike. Truth to tell, Big Ger is such an engaging wrongdoer that I'm always disappointed when he doesn't turn up in these books. Yes, he has little time for moral principles and can be exceedingly violent but he makes up for this by being very quick with the lip. Whenever he's on the page a smile is never far from my face.

Toss a missing banker into the equation and suffice to say it all gets very complicated from here. I

had to concentrate hard to keep track of the various threads and, in fact, I eventually gave up on this endeavour and just savoured the richness of the prose and the brilliant, and often hilarious, interchanges between the various characters. It's sad to see Rebus getting old and lacking the physical power of his early days, but at the same time it's fascinating to see how he deals with this. He's a brilliant fictional character, certainly amongst the finest I've come across. And in Malcolm Fox the author has developed an interesting foil for his main man. They're not exactly firm friends (their mutual history dictates this) but they do share a smidgen of camaraderie. Enough of Fox's back-story is now known for regular readers to understand what's made him the man he is and he definitely adds some flavour of his own to this tale. And Siobhan Clarke is starting to come out of the huge shadow cast by Rebus to show us that she's got a keen brain and a sharp tongue. I just wish that Rankin would fill in a few more blanks for her as, unlike Fox, little is known about her life outside of the job.

All in all, what we have here is another first rate crime story from Rankin replete with a cast of known and well loved characters doing what they do best. There's a bit of social commentary thrown in for good measure – that's the author's way – and the closing scenes are exciting enough to blow away any cobwebs that may have developed from getting tied up in the innumerable plot lines. As a final bonus, there's a little surprise at the end that's certainly worth waiting for. This book can certainly be read as a stand alone crime fiction thriller but as this is the 21st book in this series, which features a veritable troop of returning friends and foes, I'd recommend readers work their way towards this one - all the better to appreciate the subtle interactions between characters to the full.

Time for another dram and a dig around in the loft for my dog-eared copy of the first Rebus book, me thinks. I might just start the series all over again.

Maureen

I doubt whether Ian Rankin would like me comparing his new novel to a comfy pair of old slippers but sorry! That's exactly what I have to do. You put those slippers on, get comfy in your favourite armchair, and with feet up, the world just fades away. That's how I feel about John Rebus, I start reading and the world can take a back seat. Yes he can be grouchy, and playing by the rules doesn't figure in his vocabulary, but that's what I love about him.

Rebus is a couple of years into his retirement

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Rebus is a couple of years into his retirement now, but he's not gonna let a little thing like that interfere with his investigations. In an unofficial capacity, he's working alongside former colleagues, gathering and sharing information for this latest case.

The latest novel sees him investigating a cold case from the 1970's when a young vivacious socialite was murdered in one of Edinburgh's most luxurious hotels. The hotel was full and there were many suspects at the time but no-one was ever brought to justice. Along the way this cold case becomes entwined with the more recent case of a brutal attack on Edinburgh's latest 'Mr Big', Darryl Christie, who's also suspected of money laundering. Alongside Christie, Big Ger Cafferty, old style gangster, (though now a pensioner,) still maintains a presence in the city, and still has that air of menace about him. Cafferty still believes the old ways are the best, and extracts information by means of torture, not a man to cross!

As is usual, Rebus has his own unique and humorous way of interacting with the characters, and has special relationships with the old school gangsters that help him gain information that other cops can only dream about, and primarily, it's the interaction with these characters that make Ian Rankin's novels special. The language and the humour stand out. He knows the streets of Edinburgh and he portrays the gritty, seedier side of this wonderful city like no other writer can.

This is a very complex plot and needs complete concentration, but with Rebus at the helm, concentration is pretty much guaranteed. As an avid reader of crime novels, I have to say that Rebus is probably my favourite character of them all. Another compelling read from this great author.

Thank you to Netgalley & Orion for my ARC for which I have given a fair and honest review

John Martin

I never miss a Rebus book. I think he's become even more interesting in retirement. He's a bit like a dog with a bone. I marvel at the way Ian Rankin builds character and uses POV. The story is gritty

but there is lots of light to go with the dark.