

Poison garden

by

L J ross

Overall, the book was very well received by the group. Most found the book quick easy to read – a perfect book for a holiday, pacey, entertaining, funny in part with all the elements of a murder mystery. The book was praised for its very creative plot and its short chapters. Some found the characters interesting and believable. Many enjoyed the location of Northumberland including the Poison Garden in Alnwick. Using real geographical places gives novels an extra dimension, inviting the reader to recognise the locations or at least acknowledge as real, and thus making the story more believable and enjoyable.

Despite the positive reception the book was described as not brilliant. Unless you had read other books in the series of the DCI Ryan Mysteries, you would be lost amongst the huge number of characters and who they all are. Criticisms also included the fact that there were too many characters (unnecessarily each is given a name, making it overwhelmingly confusing). It seemed disjointed in places, long winded and with too many dialogues. The ending was disappointing and poor. It was also described of poor literary value by some

However, some of the members are now thinking of reading more of LJ Ross!

Reviews by various members:

This is the 22nd book by LJ ross in the series DCI Ryan mysteries and I have read all of them

New readers may find this book difficult because of the ongoing continuity of the series

All of her stories in this series are mainly based in Northumberland, Northumberland and Durham. That is one of the reasons I started reading them; and most of the titles are of specific places. The Poison Garden takes its name from a garden in Alnwick Castle which houses around 100 poisonous plants.

There are a diverse cast of characters. The only thing I don't particularly like is the way DS Phillips talks – not many people I know use the dialect to that extent. Apart from that the characters are quite believable.

The plot is around revenge after Emily had been raped and the young man responsible had been found guilty after which she killed herself. We knew from the start how the rapist had been murdered and that is when the mystery began for me. I found it quite a clever plot and enjoyed it a lot.

I have just finished reading her latest book Belsay which I found intriguing

Jen

The title has real potential, but it turned out to be a “pot boiler”. Definition: a creative work – such as a book, play or film – produced primarily to earn quick money rather than to achieve high artistic quality... pot boilers are also valued for being highly engaging, tension filled reads.

I didn't like the modern “romance” i.e. lusting after a single mother, while his partner was away!!! Which I felt was unnecessary for the detective style plot. Retribution against evil characters...

An engaging book with a captivating plot and a suspenseful narrative!

Ann M.

...the opening 8 pages were the most powerful piece of prose I have ever read. There were other chapters that I found brilliantly written. Another appreciated benefit of the book was that the chapters were short.

The police are amazing fulfilling their role of public protection often at great personal harm but I didn't think this book did them justice either physically or especially intellectually.

I learnt much about poisonous plants and I didn't appreciate there were so many such plants.

As usual I enjoyed numerous phrases: - "a fulminating glare" – "she closed the door to grief" – "The fortress he had built was only made of sand".

The novel reinforces something I thought I knew. That spiders don't share their web. *A discussion followed about spiders looking or not looking after their eggs and progeny.*

William

I cannot rate this book very highly. It seemed to me that the author tried too hard to be casual and funny; and it didn't work for me.

I simply did not like the writing style of the book: too many "I said, she said, he said...". Too many "aside" comments. I found many aspects irritating such as the use of italics to describe the thinking of a character. And in addition I did not really like any of the characters.

The plot is a good one and intriguing. But from the very beginning of the book I found the style to be an obstacle to my enjoyment. The only chapters I somewhat enjoyed were chapter 43 to 45, when none of the above interfere so much with the murder mystery plot.

Sabine