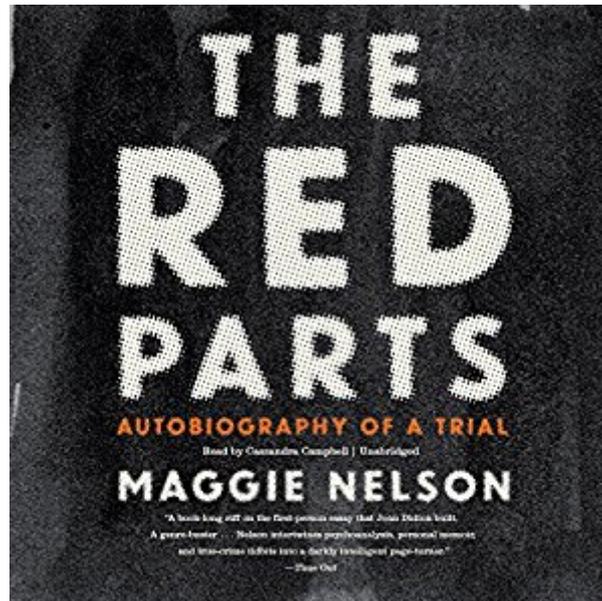# The Red Parts: Autobiography Of A Trial

Synopsis

A chilling genre-busting memoir by a major American essayist Late in 2004, Maggie Nelson was looking forward to the publication of her book, Jane: A Murder, a narrative in verse about the life and death of her aunt, who had been murdered 35 years before. The case remained unsolved, but Jane was assumed to have been the victim of an infamous serial killer in Michigan in 1969. Then, one November afternoon, Nelson received a call from her mother, who announced that the case had been reopened; a new suspect would be arrested and tried on the basis of a DNA match. Over the months that followed, Nelson found herself attending the trial with her mother and reflecting anew on the aura of dread and fear that hung over her family and childhood - an aura that derived not only from the terrible facts of her aunt's murder but also from her own complicated journey through sisterhood, daughterhood, and girlhood. The Red Parts is a memoir, an account of a trial, and a provocative essay that interrogates the American obsession with violence and missing white women and that scrupulously explores the nature of grief, justice, and empathy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A stunning piece of writing . A powerful and deeply personal memoir that expound the grief of a family after a horrific act of violence. I like that God is present in the story and that the author doesn't sugar coat the horrific violence and how it effect not only the victim but those associated with the victim. There. Are a lot of chilling moments in this book told from a person that doesn't mince words. It is a fearless look at violence and its aftermath. This is a good read.

The author has an intriguing story to tell of her aunt's murder. Her perspective presents a different view than other books about the Michigan Murders as those deaths came to be known. The experience of ultimately going to court decades later and facing the man indicted based on DNA evidence was a compelling account of the victim's family and the impact the crime had had on them.

Maggie Nelson was not even born on the spring day long ago in 1969 when her aunt, Jane Mixer, a student at University of Michigan, was found murdered in a rural cemetery. Jane had posted the day previously on a bulletin board on campus looking for a ride home to tell her parents about her engagement. What happened next remained a mystery for almost 35 years.Back in 2004, Maggie had just finished writing a poetry book about Jane when she received a call from her mother that a man had been arrested under suspicion of Jane's murder. Gary Leiterman was arrested after a cold hit on his DNA matched the DNA found on Jane's pantyhose at the crime scene. The Red Parts chronicles Maggie's life as she sits through Leiterman's trial.Because of Nelson's background as a poet, this is not your typical true crime fare. There is much more fluidity to the prose and much more emotion conveyed. Instead of a retelling and recounting of the trial itself, it is a snapshot into Nelson's entire life for the brief time during the trial.I read this for the #24in48 readathon and it was perfect. It grabbed my attention from the beginning, was a shorter length, and kept me riveted throughout. I have heard the poetry piece is not difficult, so although I typically avoid poetry like the plague, I may pick that up.An interesting aside, Jane Mixer was originally believed to be part of the Michigan Murders, committed by serial killer John Collins. I also plan on reading The Michigan Murders, by Edward Keyes, which was just republished in June of this year.

Brilliant book that clearly took a lot out of the author as her reflections on violence against women are so deep, provocative and disturbing.

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