

SAY HER NAME by Dreda Say Mitchell & Ryan Carter

Published by Thomas & Mercer, Seattle

My latest book recommendation is '*Say Her Name*' by Dreda Say Mitchell & Ryan Carter. It is a chilling thriller about an adopted woman's determination to discover where she originally came from and what really happened to her biological mother.

MY REVIEW

Twenty years ago, eight-year-old Eva, a mixed-race child, was adopted from a children's home by Carlton 'Sugar' McNeil and his wife, Cherry. Brought up in a loving home, Eva could not have wished for better parents. However, following the death of her beloved Cherry, and her sudden suspension from work, she decides it is time to find out who her real parents were and what happened to them.

Keen to help her, Eva's husband Joe persuades her to join a DNA database. Although apprehensive at first, when she finally receives a match, she is excited to learn that she has blood relatives willing to meet her. However, having found her father and acquired a sister, she is no closer to discovering what happened to her mother. Instead, as she continues to dig, she finds herself drawn into a darker side of society where black women disappear without a word, and nobody seems willing to search for them.

As an ex-police officer, Sugar knows Eva could be placing herself in danger and warns her to leave things to the professionals and not get involved. But Eva is not about to give up. Unfortunately, Sugar's warning turns out to be true, and the closer she gets to uncovering the truth, the more it seems someone is determined to stop her ... by any means.

This is the third novel I have read by Dreda Say Mitchell and, as before, I was not disappointed. Dealing with the exploitation of black women and girls, and the propensity of the authorities to put their disappearance below that of white women, '*Say Her Name*' is obviously a novel written from the heart. Right from the start the reader is drawn in by a series of mysteries and unanswered questions. The more Eva discovers, the more questions arise, until virtually everyone has a cloud of suspicion hanging over them.

Apart from a clever and gripping storyline, *'Say Her Name'* also carries a serious message, and with the winter fast approaching and the nights slowly drawing in, it is an excellent novel to settle down with – and one I can thoroughly recommend.

THE AUTHOR

Her debut novel, *'Running Hot'* was awarded the Crime Writers' Association's John Creasey Dagger in 2005 – the first time a black British writer received this honour. Apart from being the author of ten novels, she is also a broadcaster, campaigner, journalist, and motivational speaker, for which she was named by *Lady Geek* – in association with Nokia – one of 'Britain's 50 Remarkable Women'. She has been a *World Book Night* author and has contributed to the multi-award-winning crime fiction guide, *'Books to Die For'*. She is a frequent guest on television and radio, with appearances on programmes such as *The Papers*, the *BBC News Channel*, *The Review Show* and *Newsnight*.

'Say Her Name' is published by Thomas & Mercer, Seattle, and is available in ebook, paperback and audio format from Amazon. It is also available in paperback from W H Smith.