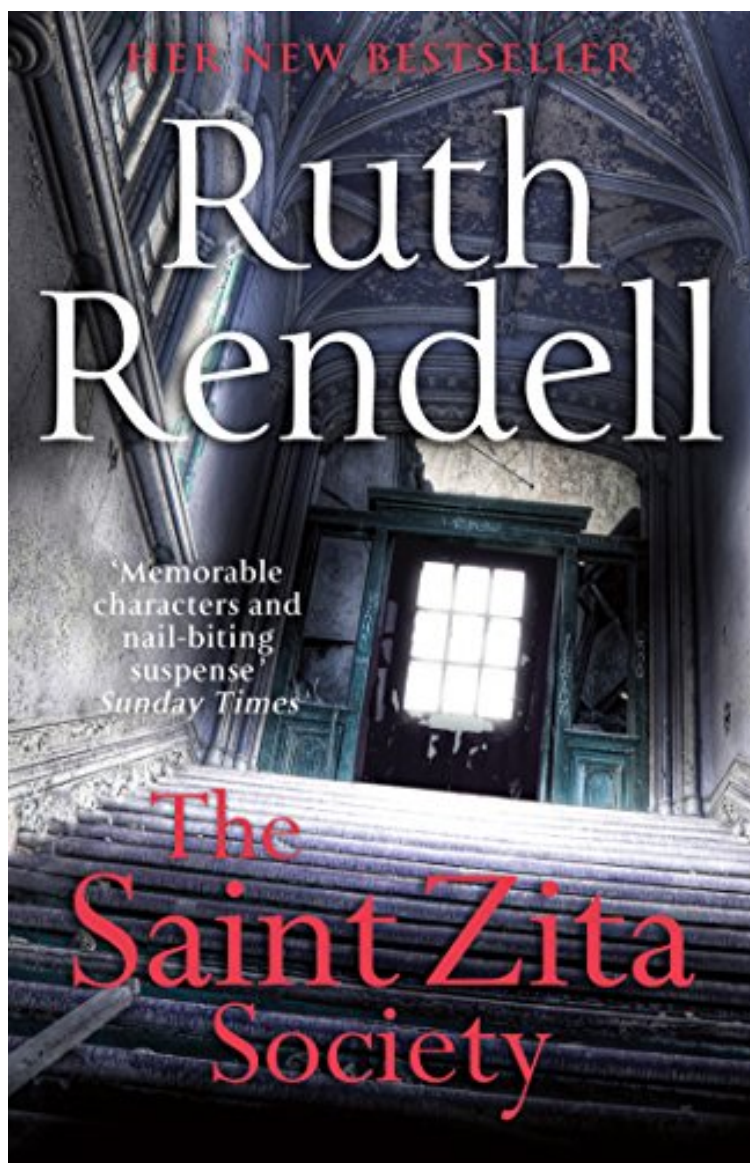


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The Saint Zita Society



Par Ruth Rendell
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(Download pdf ebook) The Saint Zita Society

Par Ruth Rendell : The Saint Zita Society before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Saint Zita Society:

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurWhen millionaire banker, Preston Still, kills his wife's lover by pushing him down the stairs, he looks to the family au-pair to help him dispose of the body.But the au pair belongs to the Saint Zita

Society, a self-formed group of drivers, nannies and gardeners, who are servants to the rich - and whose intentions are not entirely benign.Accident murder, illicit affairs, and a young man recently released from a hospital for the criminally insane come together with devastating consequences in Ruth Rendell's gripping new crime novel.Extrait1 SOMEONE HAD TOLD Dex that the queen lived in Victoria. So did he, but she

had a palace and he had one room in a street off Warwick Way. Still he liked the idea that she was his neighbour. He liked quite a lot about the new life he had been living for the past few months. He had this job

with Dr. Jefferson that meant he could work in a garden three mornings a week, and Dr. Jefferson had said he would speak to the lady next door about doing a morning for her. While he was drawing his incapacity benefit, he had been told he shouldn't get any wages, but Dr. Jefferson never asked, and maybe the lady called Mrs. Neville-Smith wouldn't either. Jimmy, who drove Dr. Jefferson to work at the hospital every day, had asked Dex round to the pub that evening. The pub, on the corner of Hexam Place and Sloane Gardens, was called the Dugong, a funny name that Dex had never before heard. There was going to be a meeting there for all the people who worked in Hexam Place. Dex had never been to a meeting of any sort and didn't know if he would like it, but Jimmy had promised to buy him a Guinness, which was his favourite drink. He would have drunk a Guinness every evening with his tea if he could have afforded it. He was halfway along the Pimlico Road when he got out his mobile and looked to see if there was a message or a text from Peach. There sometimes was and it always made him feel happy. Usually the message called him by his name and said he had been so good that Peach was giving him ten free calls or something like that. There was nothing this time, but he knew there would be again or that Peach might even speak to him. Peach was his God. He knew that because when the lady upstairs saw him smiling at his mobile and making a message come back over and over, she said, Peach is your God, Dex. He needed a God to protect him from the evil spirits. It was quite a while since he had seen any of them, and he knew this was because Peach was protecting him, just as he knew that if one was near him he should look out for, Peach would warn him. He trusted Peach as he had never trusted any human being. He stopped outside the Dugong, which he knew well because it was next door to Dr. Jefferson's house. Not joined on to but next door, for Dr. Jefferson's was big and standing alone and with a large garden for him to look after. The pub sign was some kind of big fish with half its body sticking out of blue, wavy water. He knew it was a fish because it was in the sea. He pushed the door open and there was Jimmy, waving to him in a friendly way. The other people round the big table all looked at him, but he could tell at once that none of them were evil spirits. I AM NOT a servant. Thea helped herself to a handful of mixed nuts. You may be but I'm not. What are you then? said Beacon. I don't know. I just do little jobs for Damian and Roland. You want to remember I've got a degree. Blessed is she who sitteth not in the seat of the scornful. Beacon moved the bowl out of Thea's reach. If you're going to eat from the common nuts, you ought not to put your hand in among them when it's been in your mouth. Don't quarrel, children, said June. Let's be nice. If you're not a servant, Thea, you won't be eligible to join the St. Zita Society. It was August and the day had been sunny and warm. The full complement of those who would compose the society couldn't be there. Rabia, being a Moslem and a nanny, never went out in the evening, let alone to a pub; Zinnia, cleaner for the Princess and the Stills and Dr. Jefferson, didn't live in; and Richard was cooking dinner for Lady Studley's guests while Sondra, his wife, waited at table. Montserrat, the Stills au pair, said she might come, but she had a mysterious task to perform later; and the newly arrived Dex, gardener to Dr. Jefferson, never opened his mouth except to say Cheers. But Henry was still expected, and as June was complaining about the Dugong's nuts being unsalted and therefore tasteless, he walked in. With his extreme height and marked resemblance to Michelangelo's David, he would in days gone by have been footman material. Indeed, in 1882 his great-great-grandfather had been footman to a duke. Henry was the youngest of the group after Montserrat, and although he looked like a Hollywood star of the thirties, he was in reality driver and sometime gardener and handyman to Lord Studley, performing the tasks that Richard couldn't or wouldn't do. His employer referred to him with a jovial laugh as his general factotum. He was never called Harry or Hal. Beacon said it was his round and what was Henry going to have. The house white, please. That's not for men. That's lady juice. I'm not a man, I'm a boy. And I'm not drinking beer or spirits till next week when I'm twenty-five. Did you see there's been another boy stabbed? Down on the Embankment. That makes three this week. We don't have to talk about it, Henry, said June. One who plainly didn't want to talk about it was Dex, who drank the last of his Guinness, got up, and left, saying nothing. June watched him go and said, No manners, but what can you expect? Now we have to talk about the society. How do you set up a society, anyway? Jimmy said in a ponderous tone, You pick a chairman, only you mustn't call him a chairman because he may be a lady. You call him a chair. I'm not calling any bloke a piece of furniture. Thea reached for the nuts bowl. Why can't we make Jimmy the chairperson and June the secretary and the rest of us just members. Then were away. This can be the inception meeting of the St. Zita Society. Henry was sending a text on his iPhone. Whos St. Zita? June had found the title for the society. Shes the patron saint of domestic servants, and she gave her food and clothes to the poor. If you see a picture of her, shell be holding a bag and a bunch of keys. This boy that was stabbed, said Henry, his mum was on the TV and she said he was down to get three A-levels and hed do anything for anyone. Everybody loved him. Jimmy shook his

head. Funny, isn't it? All these kids that get murdered and whatever, you never hear anyone say they were slimeballs and a menace to the neighbourhood. Well, they wouldn't when they'd died, would they? Henry's iPhone tinkled to tell him a text had come. It was the one he wanted, and he grinned a little at Huguette's message. What's the society for, anyway? Solidarity, said Jimmy, supporting each other. And we can have outings and go to shows. We can do that anyway. We don't have to have a servants society to go and see Les Miz. I'm not a servant, said Thea. Then you can be an honorary member, said June. Well, that's my lot. It's got quite dark and the Princess will start fretting. Montserrat didn't come and no one knew what the mysterious task was. Jimmy and Thea talked about the society for an hour or so, what was it for and could it restrain employers from keeping their drivers up till all hours and forced to drink Coke while they awaited their employers' call. Not that he included Dr. Jefferson, who was an example to the rest of them. Henry wanted to know who that funny little guy with the bushy hair was, Dex or something, he'd never seen him before. He does our garden. Jimmy had got into the habit of referring to Simon Jefferson's property as if it belonged equally to the paediatrician and himself. Dr. Jefferson took him on out of the kindness of his heart. Jimmy finished his lager, said dramatically, He sees evil spirits. He what? Henry gaped as Jimmy had intended him to. Well, he used to. He tried to kill his mother and they put him insidewell, a place for the criminally insane. There was a psychiatrist saw to him and he was a pal of Dr. Jefferson, and when the psychiatrist had cured him, they let him out because they said he'd never do it again and Dr. Jefferson gave him that job with us.

Thea looked uneasy. Do you think that's why he left when he did without saying good-bye? Talking about stabbing was too near home? Do you think that's what it was? Dr. Jefferson, said Jimmy, says he's cured. He'll never do it again. His friend swore blind he wouldn't. Henry left last because he fancied another glass of lady juice. The others had all gone in the same direction. Their employers' homes were all in Hexam Place, a street of white-painted stucco or golden brickwork houses known to estate agents as Georgian, though none had been built before 1860. Number six, on the opposite side to the Dugong, was the property of Her Serene Highness, the Princess Susan Hapsburg, a title incorrect in every respect except her Christian name. The Princess, as she was known to the members of the St. Zita Society among others, was eighty-two years old and had lived in this house for nearly sixty years, and June, four years younger, had been there with her for the same length of time. Steps ran down into the area and June's door, but when she came home after having been out in the evenings, she entered by the front door even though this meant climbing up eight stairs instead of walking down twelve. Some evenings June's polymyalgia rheumatica made climbing up a trial, but she did it so that passing pedestrians and other residents of Hexam Place might know she was more of a friend to the Princess than a paid employee. Zinnia had bathed Gussie that day and brought in a new kind of air freshener so that the doggy smell was less pronounced. It was warm. Mean in most respects, the Princess was lavish with the central heating and kept it on all summer, opening windows when...*Revue de presse*"Rendell deploys her unadorned prose style to create memorable characters and nail-biting suspense." (Sunday Times)"This is a rip-roaring crime caper that will have you on the edge of your seat and will keep you guessing until the very last pages." (Daily Express)"Probably the greatest living crime writer in the world" (Ian Rankin)"As a page-turner there are few who can match Ruth" (Colin Dexter)"Unequivocally, the most brilliant mystery writer of our time. She magnificently triumphs in a style that is uniquely hers and mesmerising" (Patricia Cornwell)