

Indie Reader Rating: 4.5 (out of 5)

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“... Snodgrass is adeptly able to synthesize a murder mystery and literary affectations under a single roof.”

“... the novel is a double-edged sword, containing both astute subconscious observations and page-turning intrigue about the regular travails of a small town and a series of unlikely crimes it can scarcely fathom.”

“All Fall Down brims with insights into its characters and provokes thought while simultaneously succeeding at intriguing and instilling a sense of time and place.”

FULL REVIEW:

IR Rating: 4.5 (out of 5)

A minister is compelled to unofficially investigate the death of a prominent local businessman in ALL FALL DOWN, a small-town, who-dunnit novel, containing both a dose of literary flair and poignant nuance.

Set in an idle, sleepy town in Pennsylvania where everyone knows everybody else since high school, the book commences with Minister Bryce Orr pondering some unusual aspects of the funeral over which he is officiating. For example, many of the deceased's friends and family are absent from the proceedings. The funeral was also arranged in a slapdash way only a few days since Dickie Sutcliff was alleged to have fallen down at his office and injured himself beyond repair. But was Sutcliff's passing accidental? Bryce wonders this as rumors spread subtly across this isolated bedroom community that foul play may be afoot. Bryce begins questioning people involved with Sutcliff on his own, without any police involvement. His wife tries to put him off the idea that it might have been a murder, with little effect, as Bryce soon becomes obsessed with the incident and the story pivots into his relentless pursuit of truth, even at the expense of treading the boundaries of decent inquiry.

Overall, the narrative thread in the novel proves compelling, because Snodgrass is adeptly able to synthesize a murder mystery and literary affectations under a single roof. An interesting trait of the book is its tendency to digress into characters' minds and observations in a way that nods back to older experiments of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf into free association and stream of consciousness. These scenes are set in italics, and often there is unorthodox punctuation, as many of the sentences are strung together by only commas.

Some readers may find the technique bewildering. Others may find the style exotic and alluring, but as if to allay any concerns of the book becoming too inaccessible, Snodgrass keeps his narrative primarily rooted in regular styles of novelization. In this sense, the novel is a double-edged sword, containing both astute subconscious observations and

page-turning intrigue about the regular travails of a small town and a series of unlikely crimes it can scarcely fathom.

IR Verdict: ALL FALL DOWN brims with insights into its characters and provokes thought while simultaneously succeeding at intriguing and instilling a sense of time and place.