



Walt

Russell Wangersky

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From critically acclaimed author Russell Wangersky, comes a dark, psychological thriller about a man named Walt, a grocery store cleaner who collects the shopping lists people leave in the store and discard without thought. In his fifties, abandoned, he says, by his now-missing wife Mary, Walt is pursued by police detectives unsatisfied with the answers he's given about her disappearance.

Almost invisible to the people who pass him every day, the grocery lists he collects, written on everything from cancelled cheques to mortgage statements to office stationary, give him a personal hold over those who both ignore him and unwittingly disclose facets of their lives to him.

When a new cold case squad is formed in St. John's to look into Mary's disappearance, the detectives begin to realize that Walt may be involved in more than just his wife's disappearance.

Set in modern-day Newfoundland, after reading *Walt*, you'll be sure to never let your shopping list fall to the floor ever again.

Walt Details

Date : Published September 13th 2014 by Spiderline

ISBN : 9781770894679

Author : Russell Wangersky

Format : Paperback 315 pages

Genre : Fiction, Cultural, Canada, Mystery, Suspense, Thriller

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From Reader Review Walt for online ebook

Cheryl says

I won't be leaving my grocery list at the store any more

Walt is a janitor at a grocery store in St. John's, Newfoundland and he picks up discarded grocery lists. It's amazing what he can find out about someone just from one of these lists. And he especially likes the lists of attractive women.

His wife disappeared a few years ago with no trace. And now two officers of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) are checking up on cold cases in the district.

This was a creepy, dark look at the inner workings of Walt's reasoning behind what he does. He is NOT a likable character. But the book was written well.

It had a very abrupt ending, which is why I took a star off of the rating.

I received this book from House of Anansi through Net Galley in exchange for my unbiased review.

Blair says

Well. That was a creepy little read. A really interesting concept and developed in a way that leaves you guessing throughout. And even afterwards. Anything else I can say feels like it might be a spoiler because it is pretty twisted.

Cathleen says

This is an insidiously creepy read, and it works especially well for most of the narrative. The author keeps us off-balance enough that we're not certain whether Walt is a merely a socially awkward sad sack who eventually crosses boundaries or if there is something much darker at work.

The best parts are Walt's analysis of discarded grocery lists. What he can puzzle out from what is bought and the various papers on which lists are written shows just how many clues we leave about ourselves if we aren't paying attention -- and more disturbingly what can be done with that information by social media searches or 'casual' following or even by being careless with an envelope. His deductions are reasonable, which makes them all the more chilling.

Chapters with the detectives offered contrast, but their leap from disinterested to highly suspicious didn't quite feel earned. I was much more invested in the story until the final quarter, when it felt a bit rushed-to-the-end without the high tension of a standard suspense or thriller. Recommended for those who appreciate narrative technique and subtle character work, less so for those looking for outright adrenaline stories.

Jenn says

*received through first reads

I was really hoping that I would like this book. The back review made the story sound like a thriller and impossible to put down. I had a hard time finishing this book, fell asleep many nights after reading a page or two. The writing is very descriptive, so much that the story would go on in great detail about irrelevant content. The storyline was unique but written in such a way the story became lost. The ending was a huge disappointment, as if it had to be finished suddenly and just cut off.

Dee says

I really, really wanted to love this book - but alas, I didn't. While the main character is intriguing, and the story line unique, I just kept waiting and waiting for something - anything! - to happen. It's as if Wangersky just couldn't commit to the character. Sure, Walt has some twisted thoughts and mystery surrounds him, but the reader is never truly let in on his secrets. Most of the book is spent describing, hypothesising, and theorizing about events that never come to fruition. The ending is predictable and almost feels like a cop-out. For me, this book was utterly forgettable.

Louise says

I love this writer, but not this book. He seems to be stronger in the short story genre because I felt this novel lacked development and lacked characterization.

MeggieBree says

I thoroughly enjoyed this one. Creepariffic!

Joanne says

This a seriously creepy book. Walt is a janitor at a grocery store in downtown St. John's, the kind of middle-aged man you don't notice. That suits him just fine, as he can watch you without being caught. He has a hobby of collecting old grocery lists from the garbage at his store, and constructing stories about their writers. The problems start when he begins to stalk the list makers. Oh, and by the way, his wife disappeared without a trace a few years ago.

The narrative goes back and forth from Walt's first-person account to more traditional story telling about the police procedures to diary entries by one of Walt's interests. It weaves together nicely, and ends chillingly and abruptly. The author was adept at atmospheric constructs: you felt the creepy coldness of the wilderness cabin, the warmth of Walt's kitchen, the clinical smells of the hospital ER. Very well written indeed.

Kilgallen says

I really wanted to like this one more than I did. I am always excited for a new dark, psychological thriller, and this one is Canadian to boot. I just found myself waiting for something to happen, and waiting, and waiting. Then the book ended and there I was still waiting.

Heather(Gibby) says

This is a very difficult book to describe. On face value it is about the observations of a grocery store janitor who collects left behind grocery lists and uses them to make observations about their owners lives. This part of the story is quick quirky and enjoyable. There is also a sinister side to the story as the main protagonist's wife is missing, and it follows the cold case offices who are trying to solve this and other similar crimes.

So there is this mixture of quirky and creepy that keeps the reader on their toes.

monsieurschlaubsen says

Die Idee ist echt nicht schlecht, aber die Umsetzung war doch letztendlich enttäuschend!

Penny (Literary Hoarders) says

Wangersky must have spent hours and weeks observing inside a grocery store! Guaranteed I will not be grocery shopping the same ever again. The downright, incredibly astute observations made about the common grocery list, to the way people shop, the differences between the sexes...incredibly observant and written about in an excellent manner.

Walt is the janitor in a grocery store - he collects all those discarded lists and is able to describe the creator of those lists with pinpoint accuracy. Trouble with Walt is that his wife is missing, the police won't leave him alone, another girl has gone missing and yet one more is making frequent calls to the police about feeling that someone has been watching her, been in her home and she can never shake the feeling she is being followed.

While the ending comes to an abrupt, seemingly unresolved finish, this was quite a creepy read! There were times when I was reminded of Martin John, but Walt is written in a far more linear (and pleasing to me) manner.

I have to go to the grocery store today, and I can honestly tell you I'm quite creeped out by it.

This is also another Bingo square completed for the CBC Books Bingo Challenge! Walt will fill in the Bookie Awards square.

Dystopian says

Psychological suspense is right in my wheelhouse, but this book just plodded along. Walt is creepy alright, and dangerous in the end, but the book itself seemed too long and boring.

Lady Knight says

I love the premise, but unfortunately the character nor the story's seems to be able to hold my attention. When you're reading a mystery novel and your mind repeatedly wanders, you know it's time to give up.

Cheryl says

Mired in lovely prose, it couldn't pull its feet out and get moving. Two stars for the story but four stars for his way with words, and meet you in the middle.
