



Ten Days

Gillian Slovo

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Ten Days by Gillian Slovo is a powerful and unputdownable thriller tracing a riot from its inception through to its impact one year on.

It's 4 a.m. and dawn is about to break over the Lovelace estate. Cathy Mason drags herself out of bed as she swelters in her overheated bedroom - the council still haven't turned the radiators off despite temperatures reaching the 30s.

In a kitchen across London, Home Secretary Peter Whiteley enjoys the tea that his security detail left for him before he joins his driver and heads to Parliament, whilst his new police chief, Joshua Yares, clears his head for his first day with a run.

All three will have reasons to recollect this morning as their lives collide over ten days they will never forget.

Ten Days takes an unflinching look at how lives are ruined and careers are made when small misjudgements have profound effects on frustrated communities and damaged individuals. Gillian Slovo's game-changing novel about political expediency and personal disenfranchisement is as page-turning as it is culturally significant.

Ten Days Details

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Author : Gillian Slovo

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Download and Read Free Online Ten Days Gillian Slovo

From Reader Review Ten Days for online ebook

Bookread2day says

Ten days remains a work of fiction the plot and characters have sprung entirely from the authors imagination. It's 4a.m and Cathy Mason is watching dawn break over the Lovelace estate. By the end of the day, her community will be a crime security. By the end of the week, her city will be on fire.. The private and confidential for inquiry use only. The submission to the internal inquiry of the Metropolitan Police into Operation Bedrock,uses abbreviations. At the back of the book the abbreviations and police terms are al there. Ten days is a very well written novel.

Wendy Greenberg says

Taken from recent history of inner city London riots during a heatwave, this novel charts events from several perspectives, which gives the book a real momentum. The story seemed, to me fairly convincing on the ground and kept up a great pace. However, the political element of the plotting, whilst possibly true about the corruption of power, seemed rather like a posse of caricatures playing out their own inevitable endgames. A bit cliched and rather more "tell" than "show" which was a shame as the intensity was well crafted but we really could work out for ourselves much of what was rather blandly spelled out.

Paromjit says

This is a remarkable book that understands the class ridden and political flaws in our society and history. A decrepit London housing estate explodes into riots after a death during a police arrest. The events that follow are viewed through the perspective of several people which include the Head of the Metropolitan Police, an exceedingly ambitious Home Secretary, and a resident on the housing estate, Cathy Mason.

Cathy's home is overheating, a situation that could be said to mirror the state of the housing estate and the events that flow from it. The author painstakingly details the pressure cooker scenario that results in a frustrated and powerless community. The errors made by the police and political decision makers are unerringly described. Those with ambitions are going to use the situation to promote themselves. Love and secrets emerging are interspersed within the incendiary Ten Days covered.

Gillian Slovo has used recent British history to marvellous effect in this superb read. She has done her research well and plotted a book which is a thrilling and engaging read. I cannot recommend this book enough. Read it, you will be glad that you did! Many thanks to Canongate, the publishers for a copy of this book via netgalley.

Gumble's Yard says

Novel set over ten days following a death of a black man (a local schizophrenic) in a London estate while being restrained by police which causes a series of riots. The key "point of view" characters include: a

member of the riot squad; the new Met Office chief, the home secretary and a lady living on the estate. The Home Secretary (with his ambitious wife and his special assistant with who he is having an affair) is plotting against the prime minister, who has recently over-ruled him to put a friend in charge of the Met. The lady confusingly is a single Mum, with the absent father being unbeknown to her an undercover police operative (who goes rogue – actually calling in the police to report the schizophrenic, then being the face of the riots). The Home Secretary tries to force the Prime Minister's resignation over his son's misdemeanours, but is first forced to leave his wife due to the leak of his affair (we later find the person he is having the affair with) and then forced to resign (due to information leaked by his embittered wife).

Overall this is a weak book – with almost no literary merit as a novel and instead effectively the screenplay (and research notes) for a Channel 4 “real-life” dramatisation.

Joanna says

Characters have little depth, and mostly behave simplistically and stereotypically, in line with their socioeconomic position. Unsurprisingly, the path of the narrative is also predictable, for the most part.

Laura says

From BBC Radio 4 - Book at Bedtime:

A gripping thriller by Orange Prize-shortlisted author Gillian Slovo. Ten unpredictable days of violence erupt from a stifling heat wave. And, as Westminster careers are being made or ruined, lives are at stake.

Ten Days is about what happens when politics, policing and the hard realities of living in London collide.

Episode 2:

As the heat wave persists, in the aftermath of an unfortunate death involving the Metropolitan Police, the Home Secretary grapples with personal and professional intrigues.

Episode 3:

Cathy and her daughter are caught up in the street protests that the Met and the government are struggling to contain.

Episode 4:

While the Prime Minister is away at a trade conference, the new Police Commissioner is focused on finding the Molotov Man who has become the tabloid face of the London riots.

Episode 5:

Crisis point has been reached - for London, for Peter Whiteley, for Cathy and her daughter, and for Joshua Yares, struggling to stop the rioting and find an officer gone rogue.

Episode 6:

On a dark and stormy night, matters come to a head when the police finally discover where their missing officer is hiding - just as Cathy Mason does the same.

Read by Jasmine Hyde and Ben Onwukwe

Abridged by Eileen Horne

Produced by Clive Brill

A Brill production for BBC Radio 4.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0775pfd>

Kris McCracken says

The novel is presented outwardly as a thriller, but in reality is an exploration of the dynamics of power between politicians and police with regard to the tricky issue of public order policy. Set in a fictional London borough, a young black man dies while being restrained by police, with the tension exploding into riots on a run-down housing estate.

Meanwhile, we have a devious home secretary plotting against a wounded Prime Minister; with an equal level of disharmony within the Metropolitan Police. The book reads very much as a TV screenplay. As such, it's well structured and plotted, if a little hackneyed in its execution.

A.B. Patterson says

An enjoyable read which did keep me wanting to know what happened next. Also a fascinating portrayal of political and police corruption and skulduggery, and the way the public interest is relegated behind the self-interested hypocrites at the top of the establishment. From my own professional experiences, these aspects were very realistically depicted. The downside for me, and the reason I didn't give more than 3 stars, was the lack (for me, anyway) of any character I could warm to and want to see them prevail. A couple of the housing estate characters seem decent enough as human beings, but don't grab me as any form of narrative hero or heroine. And all the other characters are pretty despicable, in varying ways. I'd still definitely recommend it as a good read.

Shiva Patel says

Ten days by Gillian Slovo is a gripping political story based on the 2011 London riots. The story follows a number of characters through its timeline sequence of timings and days.

These include the Home Secretary, Peter Whiteley, the new Metropolitan Police Commissioner Joshua Yares and a resident of Lovelace estate, Cathy Mason.

An unfortunate death occurs in the estate. The parents go to the police to find out what happened to their son but nobody talks to them. After hours of waiting, the heat becoming unbearable, tensions arise and a rioting begins outside the police station.

The trail of events in each of the characters' lives will keep you gripped until the end. Such a real to life story!

Esil says

A high 4 stars. And this one deserves breaking my self-imposed one paragraph review rule because I want to start by writing about Gillian Slovo -- the author of Ten Days.

I suspect we all have authors whose books we love and who we feel are woefully unrecognized. Slovo is one of mine. Her background is fascinating. She was born in South Africa. Her father was Joe Slovo, the leader of the communist party in South Africa and an anti apartheid activist. Her mother was Ruth First, a journalist who was murdered in 1982 for her anti apartheid activism. Slovo moved to the UK in her teenage years. Over the years, she has written in several different genres, about a wide variety of topics. Her writing is straightforward, but there is always an interesting political angle to her writing. To me, her strength is that she skilfully combines politics and history with very human stories. She had a great eye for the human aspect of the situations she depicts, without infusing too much unrealistic romance. Looking at the small number of ratings on Goodreads for each of her books, she has clearly flown under the radar in the North America and elsewhere. But I get excited every time I see she has a new book, and books I would recommend to anyone who might be interested are the two fiction books Red Dust and Ice Road and her family memoir Every Secret Thing: My Family, My Country.

So that's why I was very happy to get an advance copy of Ten Days, and I would definitely include Ten Days in the list of Slovo's books worth reading. Ten Days takes place over ten days of a riot in contemporary London. The riots start after a mentally ill resident of a Council area called Lovelace dies as he is taken into police custody. We see the events through the eyes of a number of characters, including Cathy who lives in Lovelace with her 14 year old daughter, a member of parliament who is trying to use the situation to gain political ground, and the newly appointed police commissioner who is trying to figure out how to deal with the situation in the face of a fairly dysfunctional and underfunded police force. The story moves quickly and kept me reading, but I wouldn't agree that it's a thriller as described in the GR blurb. It's a story that deals with politics, police brutality, police officers trying to do the right thing, racial and social tensions, community and poverty -- but all from a very human perspective. Slovo writes a good story -- she engages my intellect and my emotions, and Ten Days was no exception. Thank you to Netgalley and the publisher for an opportunity to read an advance copy. It looks like this has just been published in the UK, and is also available at least as an ebook in North America. And I promise that no one paid me to promote Slovo's books -- I have just long felt that she is under recognized and worthy of attention.

Roman Clodia says

What makes this so good is that Slovo keeps things real. Drawing quite clearly on the London riots of a few years ago following a death in police custody this explores power, politics, ambition... and the genuine emotion of a dignified family who lost a son for no reason. The novel ranges from Westminster to a rundown housing estate and it all feels authentic. The blurb likening this to Homeland is misleading in my view but the comparison to House of Cards is spot on, though the range is wider in this book.

Slovo's writing is clean and unfussy and never gets in the way of the story she's telling. A compelling and engaged read that has more tension than many thrillers...

Clare says

Listened to in audio format.

As the name suggests Ten Days is about the ten days following a riot in London, and inspired by the 2011 London riots.

This book centres of three individuals. Single Mum Cathy Mason, Home Secretary Peter Whitely and new

Commissioner of The Met Joshua Yares.

Cathy Mason lives on the Lovelace Estate with her daughter Lyndel. Ruben is black and is also a resident of the Lovelace. He suffers from mental health problems but is a popular young man and loved by everyone on the estate. One night Ruben goes to the community centre on the Lovelace in a distressed manner and the Police are called. They do not understand he has mental health problems and mistakenly restrain him and Ruben dies. The Lovelace residents are predominantly black or Asian and the death of Ruben at the hands of the police sparks tension.

Ruben's family decide to hold a demonstration outside the police station and ask to speak to Commissioner Yares, the family are left outside for hours waiting to be spoken to. The crowd are angered by the attitude of the Police. Then demonstrators from other areas of London arrive looking for trouble, and a riot develops.

This is Yares first week as Commissioner and it is a real baptism of fire. He finds himself trying to find enough officers to bring the riot under control. His appointment was made at the insistence of the Prime Minister and realises his Deputy is trying to undermine him at every opportunity. Home Secretary Peter Whitely wants the Prime Ministers job and is plotting to trigger a leadership battle with the help of his wife.

This was an excellent book. You could feel the grief of Ruben's parents after he died and the anger of the Lovelace residents by the indifference of the police. This book was a bit of a slow burner introducing the characters. After Ruben died however you could feel the simmering tension through the pages.

Gillian also mentioned the other peoples lives that were damaged due to the riot. The shop keepers and other businesses that were looted and set on fire. Also the normally law abiding kids who got carried away and got involved the looting and were excessively punished.

Unfortunately in 2017 this could happen all over again. This is well worth a read.

Marc Nash says

As a Londoner who live blogged the riots and who turned up to coach his kids' football team one Wednesday evening wondering if the other parents would let their kids come to training, even though there was no trouble in our area, but the atmosphere was thick with menace and threat of violence, this is a subject that is very, very important to me. And Gillian Slovo completely manages to minimise it.

Her approach is one only of the high politics of Prime Minister, chief political rival and his ambitious wife eager to dethrone him and help him take top spot for himself, and the Chief of Police. While there are other characters, nowhere does a rioter make an appearance, except in one case where having hurled a few stones at police, a rioter helps the main common character go in and rescue people from a house set on fire by rioters. In other words, the riots are but a mere background for the main play of political actors to fight out their ambitions. The riot starts because a civilian is killed during a police arrest (remember the UK police are unarmed, he dies of suffocation) and a protest vigil outside the police station erupts. So far so 2011. But while the riots spread throughout London and the rest of the country, as people with motives completely removed from the original death at police hands join in for a multitude of reasons, nowhere is this ever but alluded to by Slovo. Indeed she returns time and again to the local estate where the riot started, but even this gets short shrift in terms of analysis of its people. So there is no sense of why people are doing this. No sense of a countrywide raising of emotions. Instead we are forced to concentrate on the lives of four people; the three high politicians are fairly stereotyped (the ambitious politician is being unfaithful to his wife with an

intern), the new broom police commissioner is immediately compromised and tortures himself accordingly. The lowly commoners are pretty unengaging creations despite them representing more real emotions than those of the political Machiavellis; the mother-daughter relationship Slovo portrays here is frankly risible in it's unbelievable veering between emotional poles. I have never read Slovo before but I suspect she can only write 'important' or powerful people, not the common herd. And the psychology of the character Banji makes no sense to me whatsoever. I won't spoil it by elaborating, but he is the character who supposedly straddles both high and low politics and yet is just badly drawn and full of plot holes. Banjaxed more than Banji.

I mentioned the real riots of 2011. It's fair enough that Slovo sets this work in an unspecified near future, but then she shouldn't draw so tightly on the events of 2011. But in doing so, she makes the mistake of having the police repeat exactly the same tactical errors as they did in 2011 as the country spiralled beyond their ability to control the riots. Now a future police force may well be similarly under-resourced as they were in 2011, so much so that they still wouldn't be able to contain any riot, but they would not try and police it in the same way as failed so uselessly in 2011 as they do here. They would have learned sufficiently to at least try and change their tactics, but not here.

I'm with the common main character Cathy, who when hearing on the radio about how the Machiavellian manoeuvres between Prime Minister and political rival have finally played out, simply says "Who cares?". Because there is no sense of why a country erupts, nor what's in the mind of rioters (which covers a diverse spectrum of grievances and attitudes towards the state and police), I didn't care for the petty politicizing that was Slovo's only concern. The context and backdrop against which she wanted to set it, just lacked for any resonance to inject any importance to the power struggles of these characters. If she wanted it to be a Shakespearean drama, it fell way, way short. Because Shakey invokes a world of metaphor to lend resonance to the machinations of his characters.

Hannah Wattangeri says

Whilst I like some of this author's work I found the character development not very strong. However the political games played by both politicians and the police highlighted their real indifference to real people's lives

Mariam A says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book! I love how Slovo interwove multiple perspectives of the same event; it allowed me to immerse wholly in the scenes being described before me. Her ability to articulate different perspectives of the same event was very well done, and made the event seem more tangible.

Although it did take me a while to get hooked, but that is generally the case when being introduced to various view points at the beginning of the book - it takes longer to get invested in the story - but it was well worth it.
