



Ordinary Thunderstorms

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From William Boyd, award-winning author of *Brazzaville Beach* and *Restless*, comes a stunning literary mystery about crime and punishment: *Ordinary Thunderstorms*. One of the most accomplished writers of our time, Boyd has written a profound and gripping novel about the fragility of social identity, the corruption at the heart of big business, and the secrets that lie hidden in the filthy underbelly of every city.

Ordinary Thunderstorms Details

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Author : William Boyd

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From Reader Review Ordinary Thunderstorms for online ebook

Sandi says

Ordinary Thunderstorms is an extremely flawed novel. It's ostensibly a mystery, but it never completely solves that mystery. The protagonist makes a series of very odd choices that don't strike me as being believable. The ending is kind of a non-ending with a lot of loose threads, yet it's clearly not setting up a sequel. Yet, I give it 4 stars for the beauty of the writing. Boyd does an amazing job describing his characters and the setting. He uses an astounding vocabulary, but doesn't sound like he's using a thesaurus. The imagery in this book is incredible. It's just the plot that was weak and full of holes. I suppose I should have given this book three stars, but I was impressed enough with the word craft to give it an extra.

The narration was very good. Gideon Emery puts emphasis on all the right parts, but doesn't sound like he's acting out the part.

I liked this book a lot, but it's probably not a good choice for those who want a tight plot and a solid wrap-up in their mysteries.

Simon Lipson says

I recently finished reading William Boyd's latest novel, Ordinary Thunderstorms. It took me forever because I kept abandoning it then picking it up again. I mean, surely it couldn't be that awful all the way through to the final page. Could it? Well, no. Somehow, it actually got worse before disappearing up its own bottom with a grim squelch. I had to check that this was the same William Boyd who wrote Restless and Armadillo. Tragically, it was.

I'm not Boyd's biggest fan, but have generally found him to be fairly readable, in a can't-find-anything-else-in-Luton-Airport-Smiths-and-the-plane's-about-to-leave kind of way. He can handle whimsy and more serious themes reasonably well, and there's a level of intelligence that marks him out as a reliable if not exactly must-read author. So what happened?

Ordinary Thunderstorms starts off with a ridiculous (and seen-it-all-before) premise - innocent man witnesses murder when he goes somewhere no sensible (or even stupid) human being would even think of venturing. He then - surprise, surprise - pulls the knife out of the victim (the only person in the western world who's never watched CSI or a million other police procedurals) and dithers about informing the police for reasons so inane I can no longer recall them. He then goes into hiding - in a tent on a grassy bank alongside the Thames, mind - and becomes feral, vicious and cunning. The guy's a respected meteorologist or something. Doesn't he have any better ideas than that? The casual murder he carries out is as incongruous and silly as the fey, dopey, facile affair he conducts with an investigating policewoman.

Sorry if I've ruined it for you but, trust me, I've saved you eight quid and days of ploughing through dung wondering whether it can possibly get any stinkier. Trust me, it does. Pathetic, implausible, lazy, idiotic, cretinous, moronic...and I haven't even opened my thesaurus yet.

Bettie? says

Description: *It is May in Chelsea, London. The glittering river is unusually high on an otherwise ordinary afternoon. Adam Kindred, a young climatologist in town for a job interview, ambles along the Embankment, admiring the view. He is pleasantly surprised to come across a little Italian bistro down a leafy side street. During his meal he strikes up a conversation with a solitary diner at the next table, who leaves soon afterwards. With horrifying speed, this chance encounter leads to a series of malign accidents through which Adam will lose everything - home, family, friends, job, reputation, passport, credit cards, mobile phone - never to get them back. The police are searching for him. There is a reward for his capture. A hired killer is stalking him. He is alone and anonymous in a huge, pitiless modern city. Adam has nowhere to go but down - underground. He decides to join that vast army of the disappeared and the missing that throng London's lowest levels as he tries to figure out what to do with his life and struggles to understand the forces that have made it unravel so spectacularly. His quest will take him all along the River Thames, from affluent Chelsea to the sink estates of the East End, and on the way he will encounter all manner of London's denizens - aristocrats, prostitutes, evangelists and policewomen amongst them - and version after new version of himself. William Boyd's electric follow-up to Costa Novel of the Year *Restless* is a heart-in-mouth conspiracy novel about the fragility of social identity, the corruption at the heart of big business, and the secrets that lie hidden in the filthy underbelly of everyday city.*

Opening: **LET US START WITH the river - all things begin with the river and we shall probably end there, no doubt - but let us wait and see how we go. Soon, in a minute or two, a young man will come and stand by the river's edge, here at Chelsea Bridge, in London.**

What better book to crack open in a storm where our leccy supply is decidedly on/off, and big print is best under torch light. We have flood warnings too.

Gleick's Chaos theory started with a 'hands behind the head and whimsy alot in the grass on a hill, looking up' view of the clouds, do you remember that? There is a lot of chaos going on here, and also a lot of 'fate' and 'predestination' a la Buddhism credo.

This book has the opening quote:

Ordinary thunderstorms have the capacity to transform themselves into multi-cell storms of growing complexity. Such multi-cell storms display marked increase in severity and their lifetime can be extended by a factor of ten or more. The grandfather of all thunderstorms, however, is the super-cell thunderstorm. It should be noted that even ordinary thunderstorms are capable of mutating into super-cell storms. These storms subside very slowly.
'Storm Dynamics and Hail Cascades'
by LD Sax and WS Dutton

I was in Boyd's thrall whilst reading 'Ordinary Thunderstorms' and was impatient to know if all the strands could be joined by the end and they were... just, by the skin of their teeth.

Read in one sitting because I just couldn't put this book down, yet there are some sections that are flawed. For instance, were the initial behaviours the actions of a sane man or did Boyd wish to inflict us with the fatalism of The Dice Man for his main character.

You can see why I couldn't award that final star, as much as this entertained.

LATER (upon the good ship dilemma) - many reviews state that it is well known that no-one should touch a murder weapon therefore this tale lacks credibility, yet Dr Wang was not dead when he pleaded for the knife to be removed: what would you have done?

5* Any Human Heart

4* Restless

TR Waiting for Sunrise

4* Ordinary Thunderstorms

4* Brazzaville Beach

2* Solo

3* Armadillo

WL Sweet Caress

3* A Haunting

Thomas says

Βαθμολογία: ★★★

?να μυθιστ?ρημα με αρκετ? αγων?α, καλογραμμ?νους χαρακτ?ρες και ενδιαφ?ρουσα πλοκ?. Δυστυχ?ς δεν κατ?φερα να ξεπερ?σω ?τι ολ?κληρο το βιβλ?ο βασ?ζεται σε μια εντελ?ς ηλ?θια απ?φαση του πρωταγωνιστ? στις πρ?τες σελ?δες.

Angie says

I was disappointed in this book. William Boyd is one of my favourite authors (Any Human Heart is one of my top 20). I just found this that was a holiday-type thriller paperback. The descriptions of living rough in London were evocative and vivid but the characters only ever appeared to be on a superficial level and I didn't really care for them or feel for them which would be crucial to the plot getting under your skin. Shame I was hoping for so much more.

Bill Khaemba says

I really fell in love with the book and quite familiarized with the character of Adam who one minute he got his life together with a promising new job things couldn't get any better but WAIT A minute Everything is falling apart before his very eyes *he literally changes his name 3 times*

Apart from minor issues like the author leaving readers with a lot of unfinished business and theories like how he forced a relationship out of nowhere and how he didn't expand on some really promising characters on the book..... But I really enjoyed the book considering it was read in one day, thrilling and amazing.

Maddy says

PROTAGONIST: Adam Kindred, climatologist

SETTING: London

SERIES: Standalone

RATING: 4.75

A chance encounter leads a man to lose everything—his identity and his life as a respected professional—in this chilling psychological adventure

Publicity Contact: Katherine Beitner, Katherine.beitner@harpercollins.com

Adam Kindred is a promising young climatologist who is in London for a job interview with a prestigious university. After the interview, he is in the mood for an Italian dinner. If only he had chosen Chinese or Greek, perhaps his life wouldn't have gone completely down the tubes. At the restaurant, he meets another lone diner, with whom he has a brief conversation. After the meal, he realizes that the other man, Dr. Philip Wang, has left behind a file folder. Not having anything better to do, Adam decides to return the folder and perhaps share a drink with Philip. But when he enters the apartment, he finds that he has interrupted a murder and that Dr. Wang is in his death throes. Foolishly, Adam removes the knife from Wang's gut. He means to go to the police, but is deterred when he is almost attacked at his hotel. From that point on, he is a desperate man on the run, a man who has to give up everything just to survive.

One of the first things that Adam does is to try to find a safe place to shelter. He builds a little niche for himself by the Chelsea Bridge, and for the first time in his life sleeps rough. He can't use his credit cards or bank accounts; ultimately, he survives by begging. He has rapidly moved from thriving professional to scruffy homeless man, leaving behind a life of relative luxury for one with very few assets—and surprisingly not missing his old life very much at all! Several encounters with others prove fortuitous, one resulting in his association with the Church of John Christ which provides him to some temporary shelter with a woman who is down on her luck and her young son. Eventually, he takes on another person's identity and is able to hold a job and even rent an apartment. But that doesn't mean that the danger that he is in isn't always there; an extremely motivated hired killer is always one step behind him.

ORDINARY THUNDERSTORMS was a fascinating study of a resourceful young man who relies on his wits and a bit of luck to survive. He realizes that most of his problems have to do with the meeting with Wang—what was in the folder that was so threatening that it led to his murder? Using the skills he had in his former life, Adam researches Wang's professional accomplishments and finds that he was on the verge of exposing the malfeasance of a major pharmaceutical company who were about to put an asthma drug on the market despite the fact that drug trials had shown it to have problems.

Boyd did a masterful job of building a suspenseful narrative with a riveting plot and flowing prose. I found the book quite un-putdownable. The preface of the book points out that ordinary thunderstorms have the capacity to transform themselves into multi-cell storms of great ferocity. That's a perfect analogy for what happened to Adam, a perfectly ordinary man who is transformed into a person of great complexity. *ORDINARY THUNDERSTORMS* is a remarkable book, and I highly recommend it.

Ron Charles says

The most astonishing thing about William Boyd's fine new novel is how hackneyed its opening chapter is. It reads so much like a parody of thriller conventions that you expect Alfred Hitchcock to waddle out and drawl, "Good eve-en-ning."

On the first page, we learn that a young climatologist named Adam Kindred has "no idea how his life is about to change in the next few hours -- massively, irrevocably -- no idea at all." Okay, then, we're ready for excitement -- massively, irrevocably ready: Noticing that a man at a nearby table has left behind some scientific papers at a restaurant where he's eating, Adam calls the man and offers to take the papers to his apartment. But when Adam arrives a few minutes later, he discovers that the man has just been stabbed. "The file," the dying man whispers. "Whatever you do, don't -- ."

And then -- damn the luck! -- he dies right before he can tell Adam what to do with the file. Should he call an ambulance? The police? "NO! NO! RUN!" he thinks, realizing this will "probably be one of the most important decisions of his life." And if you doubt that assessment, it's repeated 10 lines later: "So he made his decision, one of the most important decisions in his life."

As a reader, this is the kind of opening that makes me think, "NO! NO! RUN!" But Boyd is the author of a dozen respected novels, shortlisted for the Booker, winner of the Whitbread and the Somerset Maugham and the Costa Novel of the Year. Surely, you keep hoping, his first thriller will get better than this.

And it does.

Once Boyd lays out that thread-worn crisis, in fact, the rest of his novel quickly grows rich and engaging. He creates the wide spectrum of London -- from its lawless slums to its posh boardrooms -- with arresting cinematic detail. And the many characters who populate these pages, from drug-dealing prostitutes to drug-making chief executives, are surprising and sympathetic.

But what really interests Boyd in "Ordinary Thunderstorms" -- and what will make you self-conscious about every step you take -- is the way a single, random event can spark a storm of complex reactions. By kindly offering to return that folder of lost papers, Adam finds himself swept up in a deadly plot to silence a rogue medical researcher who was about to blow the whistle on a faulty new asthma drug. The police assume he stabbed the doctor, while the murderer is determined to rub out an inconvenient witness. In a moment of panic, Adam abandons his life and disappears onto the streets of London, sleeping by the side of a highway, begging for coins and snacking on pigeon.

For a pampered academic, it's like falling into some ghastly negative image of London. Previously invisible people become Adam's friends and colleagues: addicts and runaways, illegal immigrants and religious fanatics, the kind of nameless people who are pulled dead from the Thames.

This is a novel about the frailty of identity, the anonymity of modern city life, the frightening and thrilling possibilities of personal reinvention. Boyd gives a harrowing sense of how close and yet how distant the nether life of a large city is, accessible to anyone willing or forced to step outside the web of modern technology: "No cheques, no bills, no references, no mobile phone calls -- only payphones -- no credit cards, only cash -- nothing. That's how you disappear in the twenty-first century -- you just refuse to take part in it. You live like a medieval peasant: you scrounge, you steal, you sleep under hedges."

What follows is the story of a hunted man, the chapters propelled along thrillingly at just the right moments by sudden reversals, revelations and reprisals. Penniless and hunted, Adam has few resources to mount a criminal inquiry or pursue a pharmaceutical scandal, but he toughens up quickly on the streets and manages an ingenious investigation to clear his name. Nevertheless, through it all, he's madly pursued by a retired British soldier-turned-hit-man who honed his grisly techniques in Afghanistan. I'm still trying to blot out of my mind what he does to a captured man's hands. . . .

The novel's most impressive quality is the way Boyd rotates through a large group of characters, allowing us to experience this crisis from a variety of perspectives -- each slanted and usually wildly mistaken. Adam, his determined assassin, a tenacious young policewoman and the wealthy president of a pharmaceutical company are all racing to understand what's happening to them. Boyd reminds us that we're pattern-hungry creatures, deeply biased toward the belief that events are connected, that motives underlie actions. But sometimes the only connection is the one we imagine. And kill for.

Admittedly, the evils of big pharma felt like a fresher theme a decade ago, when John le Carré wrote "The Constant Gardener," but Boyd provides a slick primer on the way new drugs are marketed -- from helpful public service announcements to anodyne branding commercials, all designed to bully government regulators, stoke public demand and maximize profits. Chemicals and genes aren't the only thing being manipulated here.

"Ordinary Thunderstorms" never sounds too polemical, though, because at the center of this Death Star of corporate malignancy, Boyd places one of his most complex and humane characters: Ingram Fryzer, president of Calenture-Deutz Pharmaceutical. He's a corporate tycoon, a man of impeccable taste and extraordinary power, but ultimately he has no more control over his life than poor Adam. Once this storm of fraud and conspiracy gets roaring, nobody can manage it.

<http://articles.washingtonpost.com/20...>

Brian says

Immensely enjoyable, Ordinary Thunderstorms is a literary thriller set in the world of global pharmaceutical companies and packed with enough plot twists for half a dozen novels.

It takes the reader on a whistlestop tour of London society, from millionaires to illiterate prostitutes via academics, hospital porters, dissolute lords, police officers and self-styled African bishops.

The plot springs into life within the first few pages when, after a chance encounter in a cafe, the hero, Adam Kindred, stumbles upon a violent crime. From that point on his life will never be the same.

I was reminded in places of a Hitchcock film and certainly this novel has all the ingredients. But it's not just thrills and spills. There's also terrific characterisation, some lovely description that you barely register as the need to unwind the plot drives you on, and above all, lots of humour.

I took this on holiday and even Ryanair didn't seem too bad.

Carlos Azevedo says

Depois de uma semi desilusão com *Inquietude*, descobri esta peça de literatura que joga com o balanço do thriller, a devassa da vida privada pelos meios tecnológicos, a misteriosa vida da indústria farmacêutica e a sobrevivência dos desmobilizados das guerras actuais. E a magnífica improbabilidade de tudo ser igual amanhã. (ok, depois de amanhã).

Frances says

A Superb Novel!

After reading about Wm. Boyd's multi-award winning novels I recently purchased this mystery/thriller.

After a few pages I was completely hooked. It is an extraordinary story, excellent plot and has many interesting characters. Don't hesitate to give this gifted writer a serious look.

Judy says

William Boyd is Scottish by descent, was born in Ghana, and educated in Scotland and France. He completed a PhD in literature at Oxford. He is to my thinking a hybrid, an intellectual who has written a dozen novels, won awards but is considered British because he lives there part of the time. (You will see where I am going with this.) I have always been curious about his books, though *Ordinary Thunderstorms*, his 12th novel, is the first I have read. It won't be the last.

Recently I have come across several discussions on various lit blogs about highbrow vs lowbrow novels and whether or not literary fiction is passe because it doesn't sell well. Some see a trend where literary authors are trying their hands at genre fiction is an effort to sell more copies of their novels. Others see it as a marketing ploy by publishers in an effort to sell more books.

I find most of this speculation to be hogwash, though I am pretty sure marketing personnel are the key suspects. After all, it is their job. I think an author should write what he or she wants to write, should experiment, not always write the same story over and over for the sake of fans, income or profits. Basically, if an author can write well, I will read just about any novel by that author despite subject matter or genre.

William Boyd has a pretty solid reputation as a literary writer. *Ordinary Thunderstorms* was marketed as a "literary mystery about crime and punishment." See what I mean? Well, it is tremendously exciting, it does involve murder, crime, the dastardly side of big pharma, and the underbelly of London. The violence is brutal and the mystery is complex. Not one truly admirable character inhabits its pages.

However, the novel is about identity. Adam Kindred has returned to the country of his birth after many years in the United States. He is in London to interview for a job. A respected and successful climatologist, he has made a mess of his personal life. While he intends to start anew in London he was surely not planning the drastic transformation he undergoes.

Within 24 hours he is a prime suspect for a murder he did not commit. He makes the decision to go

"underground" for a while until he figures out what to do. He goes about as far underground as a person can go in a major metropolis, sleeping in a park, begging for food, and becoming a man with no social identity.

In an interview, William Boyd says his intention was to write about what happens to a person who loses everything that makes him who he is. One thing that happens is that a person who loses his social identity finds he still has a self. Adam is intelligent, resourceful, often impulsive and foolish, a risk taker where people he cares for are involved. His innate goodness and humanity bring him up against a couple of true psychopathic personalities. His intelligence and something like bravery make him a Dickensian character in a modern world.

William Boyd calls no attention to himself as an author, but in straightforward prose tells us a powerful and exciting tale full of heart while it is steeped in all manner of human degradation.

In no way would I call the novel lowbrow. I suppose one could read it just for the thriller aspect, as Boyd does not write in any sort of wordy or obscure manner. He is certainly several cuts above Brad Thor, David Baldacci, and the like. Does that mean he is highbrow?

Nick Sweeney says

I like William Boyd's writing a lot, and have read everything of his apart from his spoof biography of painter Nat Tate, which I must track down. My favourite WB books are *The New Confessions* and *Any Human Heart*, which were both long sagas taking in a lot of events and people through the whole of the twentieth century, and I feel that he pulls off such monumental tasks with great skill. He also does small worlds very well, such as those in *Brazzaville Beach* and *A Good Man in Africa*. So how does he do with a 'straightforward' thriller? Not so well, in my opinion, though I state here that the book is a fine competitor among other thrillers; that may just be another way of saying that WB has dumbed his style down a bit to get into the thriller genre, and I think a man of his skills shouldn't need to. I missed the literary flourishes of his other work, and, occasionally, got annoyed at the thrillerish one-dimensional characters, as if he's sometimes saying 'this character won't be hanging around too long, so you don't need so much information'. Good story, anyway: after a chance meeting, a man is blamed for a murder orchestrated by shadowy types that John Le Carre has already marked out for villainhood - an international pharmaceutical company. So far so North-by-Northwestish. What does such a man do? How does he hide in a place like London? As you do for many thrillers, you have to suspend your disbelief pronto - which I have no problem doing - and enjoy the ride. Respectable Adam Kindred - rather Bunyanesque name, I thought, and kind of disapproved of WB trying a bit too hard to convince us that Adam is an ordinary bloke - has to not only hide from the law and the brutal killer the company has sent after him, but, in time-honoured fashion, has to solve the crime, and the scam at its centre, himself, as nobody else will. And I did enjoy the ride, and am sorry if this sounds a bit scathing, but I look forward to the next WB with the hope that he gets back to 'being literary'. Whatever that means.

George K. says

Τρ?α βιβλ?α του Γου?λιαμ Μπ?ιντ ?χουν μεταφραστε? μ?χρι στιγμ?ς στα ελληνικ? (Το γαλ?ζιο απ?γενμα, Η απειλ?, Τοπικ?ς καταγ?δες), τα ?χω και τα τρ?α στην συλλογ? μου και ?τσι αποφ?σισα να διαβ?σω ?μεσα κ?ποιο απ? αυτ?, επιλ?γοντας το συγκεκριμ?νο ελ?ω βολικο? μεγ?θους (?χω την ?κδοση τσ?πης). Λοιπ?ν, αν και στο Goodreads δεν ?χει και καμ? τρομερ?

βαθμολογ?α (εδ? που τα λ?με ο?τε στα Amazon.com και Amazon.co.uk), προσωπικ? μου φ?νηκε ?να απ?λυτα ψυχαγωγικ? θρ?λερ, με ωρα?α πλοκ?, ενδιαφ?ροντες και καλογραμμ?νους χαρακτ?ρες και πολ? καλ?, λογοτεχνικ? γραφ?.

Πρωταγωνιστ?ς της ιστορ?ας ε?ναι ο ?νταμ Κ?ντρεντ, ?νας κλιματολ?γος, που μια λ?θος κ?νηση θα τον οδηγ?σει στο επ?κεντρο μιας κατ? τα φαιν?μενα μεγ?λης συνωμοσ?ας στον κ?σμο των φαρμακοβιομηχανι?ν, με την αστυνομ?α και ?ναν πληρωμ?νο δολοφ?νο να ε?ναι στο κατ?πιν του. Ο ?νταμ θα βγει στο περιθ?ριο, θα ενταχθε? στην κοιν?τητα των "εξαφανισμ?νων" του Λονδ?νου, θα γνωρ?σει αλ?τες, π?ρνες και ιεροκ?ρυκες, και θα ανακαλ?ψει ?λλες πλευρ?ς του εαυτο? του, που δεν ?ξερε? τι υπ?ρχουν. Μ?σα σε ?λα αυτ?, θα προσπαθ?σει να μ?θει την αλ?θεια, ?ποια και αν ε?ναι αυτ?...

Η πλοκ? ικανοποιητικ?τατη, με αρκετ? αγων?α και ρεαλιστικ? δρ?ση, οι χαρακτ?ρες πολ? ενδιαφ?ροντες στην πλειοψηφ?α τους, καλογραμμ?νοι και κατ? κ?ποιο τρ?πο ?λοι τους λιγ?κι συμπαθητικο? (ναι, ακ?μα και οι κακο?!), οι περιγραφ?ς των διαφ?ρων καταστ?σεων, της π?λης του Λονδ?νου και του κ?σμου του περιθωρ?ου π?ρα πολ? ωρα?ες και παραστατικ?ς, η ατμ?σφαιρα σο?περ. Εντ?ξει, η πλοκ? μπορε? να ?χει κ?ποιες ευκολ?ες και χρ?σιμες συμπτ?σεις για να προχωρ?σει ομαλ?, δεν ?χει σημασ?α ?μως, ε?ναι οπωσδ?ποτε ενδιαφ?ρουσα. Γενικ? πρ?κειται για ?να πολ? καλ? βιβλ?ο, καλογραμμ?νο, ευκολοδι?βαστο και ενδιαφ?ρον, ?,τι πρ?πει για μια ψυχαγωγικ? αν?γνωση στην παραλ?α. Β?βαια, ?που και αν το διαβ?σετε θα ε?ναι εξ?σου ψυχαγωγικ?, αλλ? λ?με τ?ρα...

Kata says

William Boyd is well... well... how do I put this tactfully? He's like an easy a dish you make when entertaining guests. My go to easy dish is meatballs. It isn't the best dish I make but it easy and it tastes good. With the right presentation it doesn't look ordinary or boring. Secondly, I know they're just meatballs but they taste darn good. Suck that IKEA meatballs! Just kidding! But do you want to know the truth? It never fails every time I make them some asks me to disclose the ingredients and that is when I want to crawl up inside of myself and Martha Stewart should jump out from behind a potted plant and slit my throat. Martin Amis is foie gras and William Boyd is/are (?) meatballs.

We have Adam Kindred, a man in London seeking gainful employment. He's a middle class man with his life primarily on track up until this particular job interview. This is Boyd with all the right presentation skills for a dish. Adam is charming, intelligent, he has tenacity and in my mind I imagine him being slightly handsome... And then WHAMMO someone asks for the ingredients! Through a rapid series of bizarre events Adam becomes wanted by the police for murder and he is on the lam, running from the law and essentially he loses his identity. I shouldn't just say his identity because he really loses everything... And I mean everything - down to his shoes. But just when Boyd is disclosing the crazy ingredients you start to taste the dish and your itty bitty taste buds do that little happy dance. Adam meets the most intriguing characters, a girl name Mouse who has a small boy named, Lion. I'm not kidding. Forget the ingredients, remember happy dance in your mouth. Then there is the church which Adam gets sucked into because he is homeless, on the run and he needs to eat and the church serves meals to the homeless so Adam becomes a member despite his own personal beliefs. The church's message revolves around John the Baptist being the true savior of the world and Jesus being an ordinary man who essentially takes the fall like a best friend would for the true savior. I know, I know this dish is really strange but don't forget your itty bitty taste buds and how happy they are because it's entertaining and yummy. It is... don't look at me like that.

I like his presentation and I enjoy how his writing tastes even though I know he's not foie gras. There's something yummy and quirky about his writing that I like. Maybe it reminds me of my meatballs and if I told you what I put in them you would probably shake your head from side to side in disbelief all the while continuing to pop one after another into your mouth until you cleared off the whole darn platter.

Marina Maidou says

The author begins a usual story about a divorced meteorologist, which by accident becomes a fugitive accused for a genetist's murder. He hides himself at first under a bridge, after in a strange church called John Christ's Church and so on. The title is misleading: nothing in the book talks about weather. It's also exact, because everything begins so ordinary and then chaos happens. The cover of the greek edition is the most beautiful, has a achictectural poetry, the characters are very vivid and unique, you can't confuse who's who. What seems as a pharmaceutical thriller, like John Le Carre's The Constant Garderner turns into Roy Huggins's The Fugitive and finally transforms into an identity quest. Adam changes identities in such weird situations, so at the end he becomes a new person with a completely different life. There's no answer what will happen next, he has the opportunity to go back in his old life but he doesn't go. In a strange way, the author makes you think, what if you had to change your life and what if you liked your new one and there was no price for keep it, or if it was, it wouldn't matter, just because you believe it worths it?

A fresh view of the eternal question, what describes everyone's identity?

Ο συγγραφ?ας ξεκιν? μια συνηθισμ?νη ιστορ?α για ?ναν χωρισμ?νο μετεωρολ?γο, ο οπο?ος ?θελ? του βρ?σκεται καταζητο?μενος για την δολοφον?α εν?ς γενετιστ?. Κρ?βεται, στην αρχ? κ?τω απ? μια γ?φυρα, ?στερα σε μια παρ?ξενη εκκλησ?α που λ?γεται η εκκλησ?α του Ιω?ννη Χριστο? και ο?τω καθ' εξ?ς. Ο τ?τλος ε?ναι παραπλανητικ?ς: τ?ποτα στο βιβλ?ο δεν μιλ? για τον καιρ?. Ε?ναι ωστ?σο και ακριβ?ς, γιατι καθετ? ξεκιν? συνηθισμ?να και μετ? ?ρχεται το χ?ος. Το εξ?φυλλο στην ελληνικ? ?κδοση ε?ναι το πιο ?μορφο, ?χει μια αρχιτεκτονικ? πο?ηση, οι χαρακτ?ρες ε?ναι ζωντανο? και ξεχωριστο?, δεν υπ?ρχει περ?πτωση να μπερδ?ψεις ποιος ε?ναι ποιος. Αυτ? που ξεκιν? σαν ?να θρ?λερ φαρμακοβιομηχανι?ν, ?πως τον Επ?μονο Κηπουρ? του Τζον Λε Καρρ?, γ?νεται Ο Φυγ?ς του Ρ?η Χ?γκινς και στο τ?λος μεταμορφ?νεται σε μια αναζ?τηση ταυτ?τητας. Ο ?νταμ αλλ?ζει ταυτ?τητες μετ? απ? τ?σο παρ?ξενες καταστ?σεις, που τελικ? γ?νεται ?να ν?ο πρ?σωπο με εντελ?ς διαφορετικ? ζω?. Δεν υπ?ρχει απ?ντηση τι θα συμβε? μετ?, ?χει μ?λιστα την ευκαιρ?α να επιστρ?ψει στην παλι? του ζω?, αλλ? δεν το κ?νει. Μ? ?να παρ?ξενο τρ?πο ο συγγραφ?ας καταφ?ρνει να σκεφτο?με, τι θα συν?βαινε αν ?πρεπε να αλλ?ξουμε ζω? και τι ε?ν μας ?ρεσε η καινο?ρια χωρ?ς να υπ?ρχει κ?ποιο τ?μημα; ? αν υπ?ρχε τ?μημα, δεν θα ε?χε σημασ?α γιατ? η ν?α ζω? θα το ?ξιζε;

Μια φ?σκια ματι? στο αι?νιο ερ?τημα, τι περιγρ?φει την ταυτ?τητα του καθεν?ς;

Roz Morris says

First let me clarify that this one-star rating is abiding by Goodreads rules - 'did not like it'. Not terrible, certainly, but I couldn't say I liked it.

Why, especially as I'm a fan of his other novels?

First off, I found the premise hard to believe. A man witnesses a murder and seems likely to be framed for it. He's inveigled into touching the murder weapon, leaving his fingerprints, getting covered in blood etc. The

actual moment when he's persuaded to do this is realistic enough - the dying man simply wants him to pull the knife out. I have no quarrel with that and I found it a powerful emotional moment. But I do quarrel with what happens afterwards. Instead of going to the police and telling his story, as any innocent chap would do, he decides to live rough on a patch of waste ground in Chelsea. This seems extremely hard to believe.

Boyd hints later on that his protagonist had depression and was possibly looking for a way to reboot his life. But this isn't introduced early enough. It looks as though he thought of it half-way through the writing and scribbled it in.

Also, several points seem badly thought through. The murderer, a trained assassin, is supposed to have used a breadknife. Go downstairs now and look at your breadknife. Breadknives are flimsy. Would you choose that as a stabbing weapon? Not if you had other things at your disposal, and if a house has a breadknife it probably has more serious knives too. Or a screwdriver. And if you were an assassin you could probably use the gun that's also in your pocket. So 'breadknife' seems like Boyd wasn't thinking very hard. Indeed, the assassin seems to be a bit of a bungler, but you're never quite sure if Boyd intends him to be. In another scene, he kills a hooker by tossing her into the river, but doesn't make sure she's actually dead. And this isn't so she can then come back and spoil people's plans. She's certainly dead. But it doesn't look as though Boyd made the assassin either careful enough, or deliberately idiotic. It's just an unconvincing character.

Usually, I'll happily settle down with a Boyd because his characters are such singular and interesting people. But in this novel, they seemed thinly drawn. Also, there were too many of them, and I think he may have had trouble making them distinct enough. Although plots need red herrings, with people who look significant but aren't, the red herrings here are irritating rather than enriching.

There are good points, of course. The protagonist's eventual reboot with a new identity is persuasively done. There are a few clever twists, such as the assassin being arrested, mistaken for the protagonist. There's a religious cult that recruits homeless people and gives them all the name 'John'. There are a lot of loose threads that aren't definitively tied up, which echoes the theme of randomness, and mean it works well as a 'slice of time' novel. Not everything can be neatly answered - and that's fine and realistic. But this is also perhaps where the novel's overall flaw might lie. The protagonist is a climatologist before he goes on the run - hence the title 'Ordinary Thunderstorms'. So we're supposed to be aware of how our fortunes can be as changeable as the wind. The trouble is, I don't find there was much mileage in that as an idea. Boyd hasn't used it to create an intriguing story world. It seems to be an excuse for a bit of a random and rambling book that could have been better executed.

So: disappointing, but I'll certainly pick up more Boyd.

Iain Rowan says

I'm not quite sure what Boyd was going for here: a straight thriller, or a playful pastiche. Neither worked, for me, and it left the book as an uncomfortable amalgam of the two. I'm a sucker for stories about identity, and about missing people, but part of the reason this disappointed was that the protagonist was rather flat, and I never felt as if I got inside his skin. Some of the secondary characters were the same, from the ex-SAS coldhearted killer to the prostitute with a heart of gold, speaking in cliche, acting perfectly within stereotype.

I liked the way London was drawn in the book, and Boyd's ingenuity in creating Kindred's life off the grid, and eventual assumption of a new identity.

Too many themes seemed to offer interest (the maritime police, the church), but they were never given space to develop, and so became rather mundane and obvious hooks on which to hang a particular plot device.

I still read it to the end, because I wanted to know how it turned out. But when I got there, I didn't feel that the time spent had been worth it. It's too *shallow*.

•Karen• says

Good Reads now makes recommendations, amazon makes recommendations, my friends here guide my impulses of what to put on my wishlist, I have a shelf of unread books that is quietly groaning under the weight of past purchases, and yet, and yet.....

Certain elements come together: I've just sold two books - never mind that, in the past weeks, five have come in for the two going out - it's November and I'm feeling end-of-the-yearish, days-drawing-in-ish, and even if I do buy a lot of my books online, I would never want to forgo the pleasure of going into a bookshop, and, as it happens, the place where I give English classes on a Wednesday morning boasts a 19th century barn that was, in its time, a home, a post office, a local lending library, and is now a lovely little bookshop:

Does this happen to you? You buy a book (OK, three) online, but then it takes three, four days, a week maybe for them to reach you. Yes, there is that wonderful moment when you open the package and feel the heft of the pages and imagine the joy they will bring you. But somehow the mood has passed slightly: they go onto the TBR shelf, and wait. Patiently. Maybe months, maybe years. But when you go into a bookshop and just pick up something on a whim; it's the only thing in the shop that really draws your eye, it's the very thing you need at this particular moment and you take it home and start reading straight away - that is sheer joy.

That's how *Ordinary Thunderstorms* came to me. The right thing at the right time. After one real heavyweight, with two non-fiction on the go, I needed something fast and furious that at the same time would not make me feel guilty for totally wasting my time. Mr Boyd's thriller fits the bill as no other could. It's perfectly calibrated to wind up the tension at the exact moment where momentum slows, it is satisfactorily familiar and yet surprising at one and the same time, the puzzle is solved in roughly the form that you would have hoped for, but the detail is ultra-modern, using internet forums and suspicion of insider trading to push the plot to its conclusion. And Mr Boyd gives little knowing nods to the reader, and uses words that pull you up for a moment - borborygmus? - and is playful, he's obviously having fun writing this. There is the odd slight implausibility, but utterly forgivable in view of the pleasure afforded. Mr Boyd manages to fulfill all the expectations you have of a thriller in an admirably original way. Ian McEwan, eat your heart out.

Kemper says

Stop me if you've heard this one before. An innocent person discovers someone who has just been murdered, and then they stupidly pick up the weapon, end up covered in blood and then they're accused of the crime. That scene has played out so many times in pop entertainment that I think anyone with more than ten working brain cells would instantly know that the one thing you should never do if you find a body is pick up the murder weapon.

Then I met Adam Kindred in *Ordinary Thunderstorms*. Adam is a British climatologist who had been living in the U.S., but is trying to get a job in London following a painful divorce. After his job interview, Adam stops for some lunch and strikes up casual conversation with Dr. Philip Wang. Wang leaves a file at his table, and Adam decides to do a good deed and return it to him at his hotel. When he arrives at the hotel room, he finds that Wang is dying after being stabbed. With his last breaths, Wang begs Adam to pull out the knife.

You see where this is going, right?

Dumb-ass Adam yanks out the knife, gets himself covered in blood, and Wang promptly dies. (This is also exactly what they tell you NOT to do from a medical standpoint if you ever find someone with a knife stuck in them.) Adam still might have been able to convince the cops that he didn't kill Wang, but instead of contacting them immediately, he has a complete mental meltdown and decides to stop at the pub and have a few drinks first. Before he can get his shit together, he's attacked by Wang's killer and barely escapes. Completely freaking out, Adam goes turtle and instantly joins the ranks of London's homeless.

As Adam hides out by dropping off he grid, other characters become entangled in the events that the murder started. There's a beautiful police woman who discovers the body and struggles with the disapproval of her aging damn-dirty-hippie father. The CEO of a pharmaceutical company is excited that a breakthrough discovery of a new drug is leading to a blockbuster merger, but he's starting to worry about his business partners. A young prostitute hustles to make the rent and care for her son. And the ex-soldier hired to kill Wang is getting seriously angry that he can't find Adam Kindred.

Describing Adam's discovery of the body probably makes you think that this a pretty standard thriller. But the story does not follow the usual storyline you see in these types of books. One of the more interesting points is the many ways that Adam reinvents himself as he's on the run.

This was an exciting story that gives wildly different views of London life. From the richest executives living the high life to the poorest street people, all the characters are fully formed and unique. For starting with such a clichéd set-up, the plot has a lot of surprises.
