

Minette Walters, *The Chameleon's Shadow*.

Lieutenant Charles Acland has returned from Iraq with severe head and face injuries and a predilection for sudden rages particularly against women. Three men are killed in London and Acland seems implicated. Walter's compelling exploration of estrangement and psychological chaos owes much to the presence of one of her best characters ever, Jackson, the weight lifting locum G.P. who moonlights as a bouncer at her girlfriend's pub and befriends Acland when he precipitates an unnecessary brawl. A monumental 'saviour' of near mythic competence, Jackson ironically begins to question Acland's social isolation and sexual anxiety. 'He squinted up at her. From the floor she looked like a mountain of white muscle, with calves, thighs, shoulders and neck bulging out of her biker boots..' Salvation can arrive in many forms! Add to this an ex-girl friend who believes she is Uma Thurman, a secretive tramp, deceitful rent boy and a strangely submissive parent; this is a book that entertains without insult or injury!