

(Download pdf) Queen Against Karl Mullen

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Michael Gilbert

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Michael Gilbert : Queen Against Karl Mullen before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Queen Against Karl Mullen:

Karl Mullen is a South African secret police torturer who has come to Britain to try to get a prominent black activist extradited. The author examines the British legal system in this light and looks specifically at the games lawyers play.

From Publishers WeeklyThough Gilbert (*Close Quarters*) is a Grand Master of the Mystery Writers of America, his latest work is a disappointment. Karl Mullen is a brutal South African secret policeman in Great Britain to try to extradite Jack Katanga, a Mozambique citizen wanted in South Africa for murder. When Mullen is picked up on charges of shoplifting, with Katanga as the primary witness, both pro- and anti-apartheid activists are up in arms. Then Katanga is killed, leaving Mullen as prime suspect. Again people on both sides of the apartheid issue attempt to sway a supposedly impartial governmental process. Less a novel about the apartheid controversy than a behind-the-scenes courtroom drama, solicitor Gilbert's latest showcases his thorough knowledge of the insider politics that abounds in a trial by jury. But his restrained style and reserved characters combine with a frustrating, unbelievable ending to make this novel a mystery only in the sense that one wonders why he has read it. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Kirkus sFrom versatile veteran Gilbert: a moderately involving mixture of legal tactics, media

maneuvers, and ambiguous politics--with all inklings of murder-mystery saved up until the last hundred pages. Karl Mullen, an unlikable South African security-chief, has come to England to try to extradite black migr-writer-activist Jack Katanga--who's wanted back home for murdering a policeman. But before Mullen can start proceedings, he's arrested on a phony shoplifting charge--thanks, in part, to the machinations of a discreet but fanatic anti-apartheid organization based in London. Should Mullen go free via diplomatic immunity? Can he get a fair trial considering anti-Johannesburg sentiment? Those are the main issues bounced around by lawyers, newsmen, politicians, and schemers of various persuasions. But then Katanga (a key witness against Mullen) suddenly dies, nastily poisoned. So Mullen's the obvious suspect. The ensuing trial, however, reveals that others, too, had reason to wish Katanga dead. Gilbert's approach here could hardly be less ``politically correct": Mullen's a swine, but the anti-apartheid crowd is just as bad, and Mullen's supporters (legal and journalistic) come off best. Also, the pacing and focus are often less than commanding. Nonetheless: solid, ironic work from a natural storyteller--with quietly effective courtroom drama and special insight into the legal/ethical fine points. -- Copyright 1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. "Entertainment certainly, but with a serious intent." (The Guardian)