



The Museum of Innocence

Orhan Pamuk

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From the publisher: "A sweeping, emotionally charged novel of the nature of romantic attachment and the strange allure of collecting — this is Orhan Pamuk's greatest achievement.

It is Istanbul in 1975. Kemal is a rich and engaged man when he by chance encounters a long-lost relation, Fusun, a young shopgirl whose beauty stirs all the passion denied him in a society where sex outside marriage is taboo.

Fusun ends their liaison when she learns of Kemal's engagement. But Kemal cannot forget her: for nine years he tries to change her mind, meanwhile stealing from her an odd assortment of personal items, which he collects and cherishes — a "museum of innocence" that he puts on display to tell the heartbreaking story of a love that shaped a life."

The Museum of Innocence Details

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Author : Orhan Pamuk

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From Reader Review The Museum of Innocence for online ebook

Elyse says

Wow!!!!!!

Update: WOW!!!!

NOTE: Some people may think ..."what is she talking about?" ...nails on a chalkboard & obsessive? Yes...'sometimes'...but My God --in the best of all ways!! The writing is beyond gorgeous -and the story -- OMG!

I own this book! (Sorry...'not' giving it away).

When I saw that Steve-goodreads member, was reading the 'not yet' released book, "A Strangeness in My Mind" --due out in a couple of days --I was a little envious! :)

Istanbul: "A Love letter to a City"....(nobody could write it better than Orhan Pamuk)!

Marieke says

I think this will be a short review because i don't want to give too much away. This is probably one of the more unique books i've ever read, done completely unpretentiously. most of the time i was reading it, i was thoroughly swept up in its melancholy atmosphere, but as the story began to resolve toward the very end, the tone lightened and i happily noted Orhan Pamuk's sense of humor and ability to make fun of himself. at least that is how i processed certain things at the end of the book.

as a novelized catalog of a very intimate and personal museum, the book cleverly documents one man's (Kemal) tragic attempt to spend his life happily with the one woman (Fusün) he truly loves. the reader knows from the outset that they are aboard a trainwreck, but it's never clear, despite hints all along the way, how the train will ultimately wreck and what will become of Kemal. The reader accompanies Kemal in his besotted state, followed by obsession, and then grief, observing with slight discomfort and sadness Kemal's years collecting various objects connected to Fusün in order to feel close to his beloved. Although we don't know until the end what becomes of Kemal or how his story got written, we do know what becomes of his collected objects. They are part of a museum and as we learn his story we are introduced to these objects, or perhaps, as we are introduced to these objects, we learn his story.

I don't know if the five stars will hold up, but i gave it five stars today because i got so entirely wrapped up in the story, and more so as it reached its resolution. i had expected the opposite to be true, but i was wrong. I also feel terrible that i have yet to read *Snow*, which i have been avoiding since i have been unable to finish *My Name is Red* and i had heard from several people that *Snow* is difficult. I've been afraid of it. But now i really want to read it. And everything else that i have yet to read (or finish reading) by Orhan Pamuk.

ETA 04/12/2012: Life imitates art and becomes real-life art. Moved up on my To-Do list: Visit Istanbul.

Neil says

Okay, I'm going to tell it as it is. Nobel-winning writer aside, this book is insufferable. I frankly don't understand the hype, the glowing reviews, attention from the New Yorker - this book is bad. Really bad.

The story revolves around a privileged man in Istanbul who has a short affair with a shopgirl and proceeds to become completely obsessed with her. So obsessed is he that after the girl marries someone else, he ends up sitting at their dinner table for the next 8 years.

When Kemal is not hopping around the latest upper-class Istanbul hotspots, he's becoming an expert kleptomaniac, pocketing everything around Füsün's house. He reports back about his activities with glee - "After having taken all those matchboxes, and Fusün's cigarette butts, and the saltshakers, the coffee cups, the hairpins, and the barrettes - things not difficult to pick up, because people rarely notice them missing - I began to set my sights on things like ashtrays, cups, and slippers..." Several pages later, we find out that "during my eight years of going to the Keskins' for supper, I was able to squirrel away 4,213 of Fusün's cigarette buts. Each one of these had touched her rosy lips and entered her mouth, some even touching her tongue and becoming moist [shock of all shocks!] as I would discover when I put my finger on the filter soon after she had stubbed the cigarette out; the stubs, reddened by her lovely lipstick, bore the unique impress of her lips at some moment whose memory was laden with anguish or bliss..."

There are plenty of signs that Kemal's obsession is not well received. Going back to cigarette stubbing, we find out that "sometimes she would stub it out with evident anger, sometimes with impatience. I had seen her stub out a cigarette in anger many times, and this caused me disquiet."

This might be an interesting storyline if it wasn't the same old hogwash repeating itself for 560 pages. There are entire chapters of this. Allow me to list out some chapter names for you: "The Melancholy of Autumn" is followed by "Cold and Lonely November Days". A few chapters later, there is a chapter titled "An Indignant and Broken Heart Is of No Use to Anyone."

Other reviewers have tried to find beauty in this book by its descriptions of Istanbul in the 1970's. Some have claimed that Pamuk's "museum" is a commemoration of a time and a place in Istanbul and that the book tries to showcase a lost culture. I disagree. Sure there are a few pages scattered here and there about Istanbul, and sure, the writing does shine in a few small segments. But the vast majority of the book is about Fusün's lips, tears, anger, family, dinners, cigarette butts, marriage, saltshakers, eyes, expressions and words. These discourses have only the most tangential relation to anything enlightening about 1970's Istanbul.

There is a disconcerting conceit about the author, when he introduces himself as a character - "This is how I came to seek out the esteemed Orhan Pamuk, who has narrated the story in my name and with my approval... I had also heard that he was a man lovingly devoted to his work and who took storytelling seriously." There is a lot more self-advertising in this book, but I won't delve into it. Suffice it to say that I really suffered through this book and would have abandoned it were it not so bad that I spent most of my time thinking about how I would justify such a critical review of such a well-hyped book.

jeand99 says

Aren't we all surrounded by thousands of tiny little things of the ones we love(d)?

"What a bore is life and how predictable: to be born, live and die." This is what I told my grandma (from my mothersside) at the age of eight after reading next weeks TV-guide completely. She looked at me with a little mysterious smile and said "Yes, you are right". I was old at the age of eight. The strange thing is this feeling never really left me. In retrospect my opinion back then was only a part of 'homo sapiens' life' truth. In life it's not about milestones it's about all the days in between. It's not about being born, learn to ride a bicycle, fall in love, graduate at highschool, buy a house, become a (grand)parent and die. It's about the 26.000 days in between. Sometimes we think we will never really fall in love. Sometimes we are in doubt about the love we feel. Sometimes we hate our lover. Sometimes it feels as if we are not good enough for our lover and need above all affirmation. Sometimes it's a perfect day full of love and being loved. Sometimes we don't think at all about our lover - and feel guilty when we realize that. What I'm trying to say is, we (better: I) live our life one day after another. In retrospect we can put milestones in our personal life but it's hardly sensible in the days we are living one by one. Yesterday is one day. Today is one day. Tomorrow and all the other days are one day.

All bookreviews tell more about the reviewer than about the writer of a book. I'm completely aware of that. Last weekend I finished reading Orhan Pamuk' (1952-) book 'The museum of innocence' (in a dutch translation). From a milestone point of view this book is a bore. 30 year old male Pamuk falls in love with 18 year female Fusun while he is going to be engaged in a few weeks with 26 (?) year old female Sibel. The setting is Istanbul, Turkey in the seventies (of the 20th century). Pamuk and Sibel are both rich and are the perfect couple. Fusun is poor.

I was completely addicted to the book after reading the first 20 pages. I knew - not really but I guessed how it would end otherwise there would have been no reason for a "museum" - how the book was going to end but I loved all those thousands and thousands of tiny little lovely details of a love. A love between Kemal and Sibel. A love between Kemal and Fusun. All the hesitations, the anger, the insecurity, the perfect moments, the jealousy, the lack of affirmation, the tears, the smiles and the feeling of happiness when you just can touch her or finally see her smile while she looks at you. I loved to read about all the "normal" days when Kemal was surrounded by things of Fusun: touching the saltshacker that once stood at Fusun' house, smelling at the red dress Fusun wore on the day of Kemal and Fusun' engagement and drinking from a glass Fusun once drank out of.

This is it. This is life. For me it's a book of love in all it's tiny little elements. It's tells it all: the hesitations, the good and bad moments and all the feelings in between. It's not a book of milestones. It's a book of all the days in between. For me personally to found a museum for the love-of-my-life is too much. It would be too neurotic. I'll never found a museum for the ones I loved so much and the ones I love right now. I'll never found a museum for the love-of-my-life but aren't we all surrounded by hunderds of things, books, smells, songs, thoughts and dreams of the ones we love(d)?

P.s. More bookreviews of this book can be found [here](#).

@jeand99

Sinem A. says

çookk uzun bir süredir -san?r?m 15-16 sene olmu?tur- Orhan Pamuk okumuyordum. Daha do?rusu kronolojik olarak okudu?um yazar? Benim Ad?m K?rm?z? dan sonra okumay? b?rakm??t?m. Sanki benim bildi?im ve sevd?im yazar Benim Ad?m K?rm?z? dan sonra ba?ka bir yazar olmu?tu. Arada okudu?um K?rm?z? Saçl? Kad?n ? saym?yorum. Saymak istemiyorum.

Orhan Pamuk kesinlikle çok tart??lan bir yazar. Seversiniz sevmezsiniz ancak bence çok çal??kan bir yazar. Hakk?n? teslim etmek laz?m.

Kitaba gelince; benim o Yeni Hayat ile hayran oldu?um Sessiz Ev, Kara Kitap gibi kitaplar? gibi olmasa da yine üzerine çokça ve samimiyetle a?kla çal??lm?? bir kitap Masumiyet Müzesi. A?k üzerine kitaplar a?k?n subjektifli?inden midir nedir çok ho?uma gitmese de kitab?n bu k?sm?n? bir kenara b?rak?rsak asl?nda de?i?ik edebi hilelerin yap?ld??? bir yandan da bu hilelerin samimiyetle de?ifre edildi?i güzel bir kitap olmu?. Yine büyük bir emek var kitapta. Baz? zamanlar okumakta zorland?m hatta kitab?n notu 3 ü geçmez diyordum ama özellikle son k?s?mlar heyecan vericiydi.

Chelsey says

An extremely tedious, depressing read.

I can honestly say that I read the first 150 pages, and then started skimming the rest (which I NEVER do, since I love reading) in search for dialogue. It is so melancholy and slow.

It reminded me of being in a room with an extremely self absorbed person, who blabbers on and on, touching the same points over and over again without really any concern if you're listening or not.

The writing style is also overly detailed, describing dry conversations with business associates, the Turkish movie industry, and one entire chapter was dedicated to a discussion about a clock in Fusun's home.

Absolutely unnecessary!

It starts out well enough, with an interesting love triangle between Kemal, Fusun, and Sibel. I had high hopes that Kemal would take the high road and do the right thing (that is, break off his relationship with Sibel right away and start his pursuit of Fusun).

But NO! I did not feel an ounce of compassion for Kemal's plight. He was arrogant enough to think himself lucky to have a fiancée and mistress. He considered himself as part of an elite group of men happy enough to entertain the thought of having a wife and lover on the side.

In short, WHAT AN ASSHOLE!

I could see that he loved Fusun (or at the very least, was infatuated), but he didn't respect her enough to do what was right and break off his engagement to Sibel as soon as he started having an affair.

I felt extremely frustrated that it was Sibel, NOT Kemal, who eventually broke off the engagement.

My only consolation is that Kemal later acknowledges that he had been terribly irresponsible. Damn rights!

There was also a significant creep factor to Kemal's obsession with Fusun. I can sympathize that a parting gift to remind you of lost love can be soothing. But he takes his to a whole new level!

I hated him describing how he had a pair of her white panties on display in the museum (seriously??? Not

cool, dude).

And how he'd "mouth" certain things he stole from her? Ewwww. Or how he'd try to imitate her and in some way, become Fusun? What a nut job.

But, being the romantic that I am, I rooted for them to end up together in the end. And when they finally do, I was elated! This whole depressing, awful book had suddenly been worth it. And then what happens? Fusun dies! I won't give away all the details about how that happens, but it left me feeling as if the book had been meaningless.

Take two irresponsible, immature people, add sex to the equation and what do you get? An absolute disaster.

I had been excited to read this book, as I would love to see Turkey someday and thought it would be an incredible romance. But it ended up being horrible.

I can't believe this book has received so many 4 or 5 star ratings.

Gearóid says

It was quite an experience reading this book.

At one stage i almost abandoned it as i just had too much of Kemal's obsession and it was getting a bit tiresome.

However, while i was not reading the book and moved on to other books i keep thinking about it and realised it was beautifully written. The descriptions of Istanbul life in the 1970's and 1980's were so brilliant. I would be having a coffee in my local cafe(wet and damp and indoors) and would start thinking about Istanbul and the warm feeling i got when reading about drinking raki or Turkish Tea on the Bosphorus in the sunshine. How cool is that! I could almost smell the Turkish tea.

The only writer who effected me like that before was Hemingway although their styles are totally different.

Kemal's obsession with Fusun and his robbing of little knick knacks was a bit tiresome but i am really glad i did not abandon the book and returned to complete it.

Orhan Pamuk is some writer. You can see he really loves his country and his people and really goes to great lengths to let you understand Istanbul and the Turkish people. It must have taken a lot of energy to write a book like this.

I really loved this book and have three more Orhan Pamuk books lined up ready to go.

Rowena says

“Time had not faded my memories (as I had prayed to God it might), nor had it healed my wounds as it is

said always to do. I began each day with the hope that the next day would be better, my recollections a little less pointed, but I would awake to the same pain, as if a black lamp were burning eternally inside me, radiating darkness.”

— Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*

I must say, when I first started reading this book, I groaned inwardly. I had come across it while I was researching the Turkish word *huzun* (melancholia). However, I’m not a big fan of books with romantic storylines (I had my fill as a teen), and when I found out this particular romantic storyline was between two cousins, Kemal, a rich 30 year old who happens to be engaged, and 18 year old Fusun, a poor shopkeeper, I groaned even more.

Kemal is creepy! His obsession with Fusun didn’t sound believable at all to me. He gets to the point of collecting all of Fusun’s cigarette butts for his museum which is in honour of her, as well as other knick-knacks. I don’t think many men would collect their loved one’s cigarette butts and label them by date collected. Kemal reminds me a bit of Bella from *Twilight* in the sense that he dumps all his friends and family to obsessively mope over his love. This particular sort of angst isn’t becoming in someone over the age of 16.

The book did have some redeeming points. I’ve never read any books set in Turkey before and Pamuk sets the book in an interesting time period (the 1970s) when Turkey was still traditional but moving towards the modern. On top of that, there’s the political unrest. I think that made the story slightly more interesting. Discussions on the clashes of cultures between traditional Turkey and modern Turkey, including Turkish elites who had been educated in Europe and America, were interesting. I wish this part had been elaborated more because I would have liked a more in-depth comparison.

I got annoyed by the one-dimensional portrayal of women. I feel that Kemal only fell in love with Fusun because she was beautiful and had entered a beauty pageant. Kemal’s fiancée stayed with him despite knowing he cheated. Women were obviously looked at as mere trophies. Then again, that’s true in a lot of places even now.

I did get a Proustian feel while reading it. The protagonist’s musings were indeed very introspective but more obsessive than Proust’s, obsessive to a point that they didn’t seem believable, I’d say. Kemal was definitely absolutely obsessed and extreme but reading his thoughts was interesting.

Maybe not the best book to read on Christmas day but I’m glad I finally read something by Pamuk.

Vonia says

Orhan Pamuk. Why have I waited so long to experience your writing? Because that is what this was. An experience. *The Museum of Innocence* has a deceptively simple premise. Kemal Bey, from one of the wealthiest, more prominent families in Turkish society, is to be married to the lovely Sibel, daughter of a diplomat. She is well educated, beautiful, resourceful, well matched for his family even; no one can be anything but ecstatic at their engagement party, where they are on display for all of the nouveau riche to see. No one, that is, except for a young lycée graduate from the poor lower class family named Fusun. Having met only months ago when Kemal came into the gift store where she is employed for a purse for Sibel, the two lovers have since begun a series of rendezvous & barely hidden trysts that, now started, cannot be ended

without great pain, trials, & sacrifices. Even worse, though Kemal (through a complex series of cognitive deceptions) is not aware of it at the time, his attachment to young Fusun has become so rich, so deep, so "fated", so obsessive, that the groom to be himself shares her sentiments.

Although Sibel is obviously devastated when she finds out, she remains with him for months after, trying to support his "recovery". This, of course, is not to be. His love, his obsession with Fusun inevitably leads to the abandonment of his fiancée, a near perfect marriage/family, the family company, his status in Turkish societies, & many of his closest friends as he devotes almost another decade "winning Fusun back" (whom is now herself married). He visits Fusun four to five times a week for eight years, ingratiating himself with her family; they become more family to him than his own as the years elapse. He even becomes friends, then business partners, with Fusun's aspiring film director husband Feridun. Serving as a cover for his frequent visits to the Kreskin household is his monetary support on Lemon Films, which in turn supports an interestingly complex but unstated understanding between Kemal and Feridun, whom are both vying for the same young lady; sadly, the more deeply felt, true love is hidden, unable to be discussed, while the neatly arranged marriage founded on convenience and something closer to an affinity is what everyone openly imagines and acknowledges. Reading about Turkish cinema, the difficulties with the censor board, young stars trying to remain chaste in the harsh eyes of the public; Kemal and Feridun networking in local bars, Kemal and Fusun watching both Turkish and international films in classic theaters together, first with Feridun then without, first as distant cousins that avoid acknowledging each other, then looking at each other under the soft glow of lights with as much passion and devotion as any long married husband and wife, holding hands with such delicate coyness, I was reminded of something akin to *Lolita*, *The Unbearable Lightness Of Being*, *Cinema Paradiso*, *Amelie*. There is whimsy, love, loyalty, unstated values, honor and chaste societal expectations, secrets, obsession, mystery, and many illogical decisions in the name of love.

Indeed, his life is completely transformed; though his life continues, for the most part Kemal Bey lives for one purpose, one aim, one girl. As the love story came to a conclusion, I was aware of the thought that this was the first time, at least in quite some time, that such a detailed, complex, saga-like, epic-akin storyline was written to conclusion with such perfection. It was not necessarily an expected, clear, neat ending, but any ambiguity, any decisions the author made that I did not agree with, was unable to remove the smile from my face, the warm, cozy feeling inside as if I had had a warm cup of hot chocolate.

Then, what do you know, another part of Kemal's story begins. The perfect book gets better. He outlines his single minded determination to establish The Museum Of Innocence. Pamuk insightfully forays into the psychology of collecting, collectors, their collections. What makes these people pursue such a passion? Is it true that it is always reflective of a psychological flaw? At what point does a respected, admired endeavor become an obsession? An unappreciated flaw? Which is correct, the "proud" Western collector, whom strives to display their collections for public appreciation? The "bashful" Non-Western collector whom hides it, shunned by their peers? A museum connoisseur myself, I truly loved reading about all the real life museums and/or private collections Kemal visited worldwide as he reflected on his life this far, lived for Fusun.

This is what I cherish about fiction. Nonfiction "Elitist" Readers question the value of fiction. The right amount of disconnect from real life, what they do not realize, is necessary for full absorption of topics that may be uninteresting otherwise. There is so much more to learn, question, explore, discover in fiction in ways more beautiful than the straight facts of nonfiction can.

Throughout the main novel, Kemal Bey refers to Orhan Pamuk a few times, and I loved that an author would put himself in his novel, especially when he was sometimes referred to in a negative way. A great author should always know how to laugh at himself! At the end of The Museum Of Innocence, we learn that Kemal

Bey hired Pamuk to write what we have finished reading in his voice. His aim was to have readers really know his story, his Fusun, his life. As readers, a free admission to his Museum has been placed between two paragraphs of text in the last few pages. He tells Orhan Pamuk that the last thing that must be included in the book; what the readers need to realize, is that he, Kemal, "have lived a good life."

What brings The Museum Of Innocence to such a level, of course, is Orhan Pamuk's elegiac, incomparable prose. To portray so much, such visual imagery with seemingly so few words; to describe specific emotions with such precision yet eloquently. At chapters, this is a long novel. Yet I always found myself desperately looking at the pages on the right side of my hand, wishing they would always be more than those on my left! There are so many passages that I would love to quote here (i.e. 1) Describing the love you can have simple watching someone, holding items they once held; 2) The chapter illuminating Kemal & Fusun's "language of looks", how meaningful a look, even a non-look could be, during his eight years visiting her family under the guise of assisting her & her husbands' film careers, 3) The kinship he discovered in the subculture of collectors, touring the world to visit museum after museum of niche collections, finding he was not alone, 4) The almost-story-in-itself regarding the passage of time, how we use time to guide us in conducting our lives as it relates to outside society, but to truly live is to live without clocks, as they did in Fusun's house for a time), but I shall leave those hidden gems for you, the next formidable reader of this great novel!

Amaranta says

“ Ogni persona intelligente sa che la vita è bella e che lo scopo della nostra esistenza è essere felici. Ma alla fine solo gli stupidi trovano la felicità. Come possiamo spiegarcelo? .

Kemal Basmaci è un uomo giovane e forte, ricco, interessante, con tanti amici, una bella fidanzata e prossimo al matrimonio. Potrebbe avere tutto dalla vita. Eppure nella sua vita c'è un corto circuito. Fusun. Una giovane diciottenne, che gli concede la sua verginità, di cui lui si innamora follemente. E questo sentimento, da cotta fugace cresce senza misura, diventa amore, ossessione, paura, desiderio e ancora ossessione, costanza, fedeltà e pazzia. Kemal abbandonerà la sua vecchia vita per inseguire una chimera, qualcosa che cresce al di là di lui e su cui lui perderà il controllo per tutta la sua vita.

Chi è veramente Fusun? Alla fine del libro non è più la ragazzina diciottenne che Kemal ha stretto tra le braccia moltissimo tempo prima. E nonostante lui la veda quasi ogni giorno per otto lunghissimi anni, si ritrova di fronte una sconosciuta. Ma non capisce e la sua ossessione è tale da superare anche questo e compiere l'ennesimo atto d'amore per una donna che probabilmente non meritava nulla.

Kemal rivive il suo amore per Fusun attraverso gli oggetti che raccoglie, oggetti che hanno toccato le mani di Fusun, che portano il suo profumo, le sue tracce, cose con cui lei viene in contatto regolarmente nella sua quotidianità spariscono per costituire un tesoro, che è quello che gli permette in tutti questi anni di sentirla più vicina , di non perdere la speranza di una vita insieme, nonostante lei sia sposata. E così mozziconi di sigaretta, accendini, piccoli soprammobili, boccette di profumo, biglietti del cinema, cartoline che raffigurano le loro passeggiate, saliere che lei ha toccato si accatastano come segno di quell'amore che non si può esprimere ma che batte fedele e imperituro, che trascenda il concetto di Tempo e che si fissi nell'eterno.

“ Un po' alla volta, tutti quegli oggetti smisero di essere lo strumento di una consolazione e iniziarono a diventare la misura dell'intensità del mio amore, i segni tangibili della tempesta che agitava la mia anima.”.

Come nel sacrificio di Isacco, ciò che la storia del sacrificio ci insegna non è proprio la possibilità di sostituire la persona amata con qualcos'altro? Ecco perché ero così legato agli oggetti di Fusun che da anni raccoglievo. . Ma un amore così tormentato, così "malsano" può davvero avere una conclusione felice?

Il museo dell'innocenza esiste davvero. Orhan Pamuk lo ha creato mentre scriveva il libro, nello stesso quartiere in cui viveva la bella Fusun. Ci racconta di una Istanbul borghese negli ultimi anni del secolo scorso e ogni oggetto è collegato in qualche modo al libro. Rendere reale qualcosa di immaginario, che di sé

non aveva forza se non nell'animo del protagonista, è una vittoria per Pamuk e per la città, che in fondo è protagonista del libro forse più di Kemal e Fusun, con il suo Bosforo, le sue luci tremolanti della sera, le strade deserte dopo il coprifuoco, le moschee e il canto del muezzin. E' un invito a scoprire tradizioni di un paese diverso dal nostro, legate soprattutto alla famiglia, al fidanzamento, al matrimonio. La scrittura è monocorde, il ritmo è lento e a tratti affatica il lettore, ma la fine lo ripaga.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Masumiyet mu?zesi = The Museum of Innocence, Orhan Pamuk

The Museum of Innocence (Turkish: Masumiyet Müzesi) is a novel by Orhan Pamuk, Nobel-laureate Turkish novelist published on August 29, 2008. The book, set in Istanbul between 1975 and 1984, is an account of the love story between the wealthy businessman Kemal and a poorer distant relative of his, Füsün.

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Lillian says

I'm not sure what to think of this book. I loved Pamuk's memoir, Istanbul: Memories and the City. But this novel, which covers much of the same material from a fictional perspective, with a woman, instead of a city as the focus of attention, was a frustrating read. The cataloging of every meaningful interaction with Fusun, the focus of Kemal's obsession, and the collecting of thousands of objects she touched or that are associated with her, does capture something ... a period of time? Reading this novel was in many ways like sitting trapped at a table with a very self-involved person who talks endlessly about things that might be entertaining in small doses, but become mind-numbing the longer the person continues to talk. My biggest problem with Kemal was this: "Like most Turkish men of my world who entered into this predicament, I never paused to wonder what might be going on in the mind of the woman with whom I was madly in love, and what her dreams might be; I only fantasized about her." I read somewhere that it is Fusun whom Orhan Pamuk identifies with. So is he portraying through Kemal the West's idealized, but very limited understanding of Turkey? One very lovely idea Pamuk expounds upon through Kemal is that of the value of

"sitting together" ... "Touching in the most innocent way upon my main reason for being there -- my desire to be in the same place as Fusun -- the word "sit" suited me perfectly. Unlike those intellectuals who deem it a solemn duty to deride the people and who believe that the millions of people in Turkey who talked of "sitting together" every evening were congregating to do nothing, I, to the contrary, cherished the desire expressed in the words "to sit together" as a social necessity amongst those bound by family ties, of friendship, or even between people with whom they feel a deep bond, though they might not understand its meaning." Maybe that is what I am taking away from this novel, the experience of having "sat" with Kemal, and in a way, with Orhan Pamuk.

Arda says

After finishing "The Museum of Innocence," I found myself in need to talk about it. I wanted my friends to know about this, but I wanted them to know about it slowly, in small drips, and tiny pieces.

- "Do you have time for another cup of coffee?" I'd ask, "This might take a while, but chances are this book might be too long for your taste and you might not want to read it yourself, but you have to at least hear me out till the end. Let me tell you about it!"

It's not typical of me to do this sort of thing. I rarely share stories orally and usually do not even have the patience to tell a short joke, much less listen to one. But everything about "The Museum of Innocence" was different. With this, Orhan Pamuk first created an idea, then built an idea, then created a reality for his idea, and he gave a different meaning to the word "Imagination", and he left me with no option but to want to TELL, to HAVE TO tell, about the "Museum of Innocence."

Yet this is supposed to be a review so I cannot sit here and write my own summary to the book and what it represents and spoil it in this review. But what I will say is: yes, you need to read this, and yes, it will make you look at objects differently. It might make you look at life differently. In fact, this book might have a chance to ruin you. It might seduce you and leave you with no choice to resist it, and yes, it might actually ruin you. But would I still recommend it for you? The answer is yes.

If you do not plan to read the book, then I hope we'll meet one day. I'll ask you whether you have time for a cup of coffee, and if you're willing to hear me out, I'll be happy to tell you about "the museum of innocence."

Till then, you might want to consider reading "the museum of innocence"!

Margritte says

I have been trying to finish this novel for such a long time. It took three tries. Third time lucky. I finally finished it.

An obsessive man shares his memories of a doomed love affair in a society where East and West are fusing. There is a confusion of cultures driven by mosques on the one hand, and malls on the other, which leads to civil unrest and even war in the vibrant ancient city of Istanbul.

I did not manage to become as obsessed as single-minded Kamul with Füsun, the eighteen-year old girl, and that makes a difference in as far as I was willing to tolerate his stream of consciousness drive to conquer and take possession of the object of his lust. His ignorance of the violence playing out on the streets of the city, while pursuing his goal, does not alter his vivid descriptions of a city in transition as the cultural and political situation pendulum in daily tumult.

The elaborate backdrop is the 1970s and '80s in Turkey. The style is similar to Nabokov's Humbert and his Lolita, about a man and the woman he loves, but also his love for his city.

I was wondering if Füsun, his unforgettable love interest, does not represent the western lifestyle, even America. I can just imagine how important this novel is in the Turkish psyche, exposing the deeper state behind the religious and political mantras ruling over the inhabitants. It serves as an open letter to a divided society, telling the truth where lies are preferred. A quest for tolerance, respect, understanding.

Nevertheless, the repetitious nature of Kamul's obsession dampened my enthusiasm for this novel. There might be a lot of symbolism which got lost on me. It just became tedious and boring. Although it was only 400 pages long, it felt typical of what Stephen King confessed about his own novels: being "literary elephantiasis" - that is, his novels tend to bloat.

However, this novel is an important literary event and deserves the many awards it has won. I'm just happy to have finished it. It is too high to come by for me personally.

Irwan says

(Additional notes below)

One thing I just realized, whenever I am about to finish reading a book, usually some sketchy ideas or sentences appear in my mind, so that right after I finish it, I can just open Goodreads, rate the book and write those ideas. I am also usually satisfied after writing three or four paragraphs, feeling that I have said what I have to say. But, I can't do that with Pamuk's books.

The night I finished this book, I was sitting at my desk with my hands laid on the closed book. I was staring past the glare of my computer screen. I smiled. Yes, I did smile! I slept soundly that night too. Rather victoriously..

I felt that I had just concluded a life story of a dear friend whom I know so well. He was in love. A love that tortured him, exhilarated him, inspired him to do mad things for "normal" people. "Normal" meaning people who are not in love.

Reading this book was not all a joyride. There were moments, when obsession really caught Kemal, whom later I called a friend just because I know so much about him, that I wanted to slap him in the face and say "Wake up! Enough already! Stop being this pathetic and get a life, man!" Of course, he didn't do that. I almost stopped reading at this point. That is how rich and heavy Pamuk can describe obsession.

Then the story took its turn and the mood was changing. I was exhausted. I read a review somewhere that the

love would not end happily as in fairy tales. Somehow tragic love story is more worth writing, so they say. So, I didn't have much hope for the bright light at the end of the tunnel. I just wanted to complete the journey. I was prepared for the worst.

But Pamuk is such a master story-teller. He didn't just give you a relief from this journey. He took you to another path. A heroic one. A path that only a mad person would take. Well, mad.. or brave. Or simply in love!

This crazy friend of mine was not set to build a Taj Mahal for his love. But a museum! A place where Time becomes Space. I know I will never look at a museum in the way I used to.

Humorous element gave an extra flavour to the already rich taste in the last part of the book. I like when Pamuk himself appeared on the stage and interacted with his own creations, tying up loose ends and wrapping up the story with a victorious last sentence. For those who haven't read the book or are still reading it: Yes, you can take a peek at it first if you want to. But I would rather leave it for later :-)

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Additional note:

Finally Michael Silverblatt, the host of KCRW Bookworm podcast, interviewed Orhan Pamuk. So far, Silverblatt is the best talk show host for writers. Being an avid reader himself, his questions are insightful and often surprising to the writers themselves because he presents a point of view that the writers haven't thought of.

You can listen to the podcast here:

<http://www.kcrw.com/etc/programs/bw/b...>

Kyriakos Sorokkou says

* çok güzel kitap *

* a beautiful story *

* να ταξ?δι στη χ?ρα της γραφ?ς του Παμο?κ *

?ταν αγ?ρασα αυτ? το βιβλ?ο ?ξερα ?τι στο εγγ?ς μ?λλον θα π?γαινα στην οδ? Τσουκουρτζούμ? να επισκεφτ? το μουσε?ο, αλλ? απ? τ?τε μ?χρι σ?μερα πολλ? ?χουν γ?νει, στ' αεροδρ?μιο, στους δρ?μους, ?να αμφιλεγ?μενο πραξ?ικ?πημα, επ?θεση με ?πλο σε κ?ντρο την πρωτοχρονι?. Πολλ??. Φα?νεται θα αναβ?λω την επ?σκεψ? μου στο μουσε?ο για το μακριν? μ?λλον. ?ταν θα πλησι?ζω τα 40.

_Το_βιβλ?ο_και_το_μουσε?ο_της_αθω?τητας

Ο Παμο?κ ε?ναι ?ξυπνος συγγραφ?ας.

Ε?χε την ιδ?α να φτι?ξει ?να μουσε?ο ταυτ?χρονα με ?να βιβλ?ο.

Μαζε?οντας αντικε?μενα για το μουσε?ο ?φτιαχνε ταυτ?χρονα και την ιστορ?α του βιβλ?ου.

Το βιβλ?ο τελε?ωσε πρ?το εν? το μουσε?ο ?νοιξε 4 χρ?νια μετ?.

Και το βιβλ?ο και το μουσε?ο ?χουν το ?διο ?νομα: Το μουσε?ο της αθω?τητας

Το μουσε?ο ?χει 83 προθ?κες με αντικε?μενα που εξιστορο?ν μια ιστορ?α.

Το βιβλ?ο ?χει 83 κεφ?λαια που εξιστορο?ν την ?δια ιστορ?α με τ' αντικε?μενα στο μουσε?ο.

Προς το τ?λος του βιβλ?ου υπ?ρχει τυπωμ?νο το εισιτ?ριο για το μουσε?ο. Ναι, για ?σους ?χουν το βιβλ?ο μαζ? τους κερδ?ζουν δωρε?ν ε?σοδο. Και ο υπ?λληλος εκε? θα σ' το σταμπ?ρει.

Μια ιστορ?α αγ?πης. ?να ρομαντικ? βιβλ?ο. ?να βιβλ?ο με ερωτικ? τρ?γωνα.

Στοιχε?α που αποφε?γω ?πως ο δι?ολος το λιβ?νι.

Αλλ? αυτ? το βιβλ?ο ε?ναι Παμο?κ, ε?ναι μεταμοντ?ρνο, ε?ναι ?ξυπνο. Και μ' ?ρεσε.

Στοιχε?α_μεταμοντερνισμο?_στο_βιβλ?ο

+ Στα δ?ο μεγαλ?τερα κεφ?λαια του βιβλ?ου: 24. Το π?ρτι αρραβ?νων (58 σελ.) και το 83. Ευτυχ?α (27 σελ.) εμφαν?ζεται ο ?διος ο Orhan Pamuk.

"[...] Füsün had danced with two people early on. [...] The second, however, was the young man with whom I had exchanged glances a short time earlier while visiting the Pamuk family table—Orhan Pamuk himself, as he proudly told me years later." σελ. 170

*

"It was around then that I decided my voice had been heard too much anyway and that it was time I left it to him to finish my story. From the next paragraph until the end, it will, in essence, be Orhan Bey who is telling the story. Having paid Füsün such sincere, detailed attention during their dance, he will, I am sure, do no less in these last pages. Farewell!

HELLO, THIS IS ORHAN PAMUK! With Kemal Bey's permission I shall begin describing my dance with Füsün: She was the. . ." σελ. 708

+ Υπ?ρχει χ?ρτης για το π?ς θα βρεις το μουσε?ο.

+ Υπ?ρχει ευρετ?ριο ονομ?των (κ?τι που πολ? σπ?νια βλ?πουμε σε μυθιστορ?ματα και πιο συχν? σε μελ?τες.)

+ Αρκετο? χαρακτ?ρες απ? προηγο?μεν? του βιβλ?α περνο?ν μ?σ' απ' τις σελ?δες αυτο? του βιβλ?ου:

[...] it was generally believed I had misinterpreted [...] many Ni?anta?? notables [...] including T?z?ebvnt?r? M?r?η και οι γοι του, and his family, my poet friend Ka; (X1?v1) and Celâl Salik, the famous [...] columnist (Το μα?ρο βιβλ?ο) σελ. 721

+ Υπ?ρχουν αναφορ?ς στα βιβλ?α του:

"Orhan Bey, I read your novel Snow all the way to the end," he said. "I don't like politics. So please don't be offended if I say I found it a bit of a struggle." σελ. 727

+ Μουσε?ο και βιβλ?ο γ?νονται ?να.

+ Ζω? και τ?χνη γ?νονται ?να.

Ε?ναι ?ξυπνος αυτ?ς ο Παμο?κ και μ' αρ?σει.

-Τ?σα και τ?σα μας ε?πες, δεν μας ε?πες περ? τ?νος πρ?κειται:

-Ε, η ιστορ?α ε?ναι απλ?. Ο Κεμ?λ ?νας πλο?σιος κληρον?μος που ετοιμ?ζεται να αρραβωνιαστε? την Σιμπ?λ μια επ?σης πλο?σια κοπ?λα, σπουδασμ?νη στη Σορβ?νη, θα ερωτευτε? την φωχ? Φισο?ν και ζουν σαρ?ντα δ?ο μ?ρες π?θους και ηδον?ς. Απ' εδ? και π?ρα ξεκιν? η κ?θοδος του Κεμ?λ σε μια δ?νη ?που η αγ?πη γ?νεται ?ρωτας, ο ?ρωτας π?θος, και το π?θος ?μμονη ιδ?α.

Και εδ? ε?ναι που βρ?σκω το αρνητικ? του βιβλ?ου για μ?να.

Για 195 σελ?δες (387-581) ο Κεμ?λ εξιστορε? τα 7 χρ?νια και δ?κα μ?νες που π?ρασε στο σπ?τι των γονι?ν της Φισο?ν. Τα δε?πνα, οι συζητ?σεις, τα αντικε?μενα που ?κλεβε για να τη θυμ?ται, το τι ?βλεπαν στην τηλε?ραση και ?λλα πεζ? καθημεριν?. Για 195 σελ?δες τα ?βλεπα ξαν? και ξαν? και ξαν? και ξαν? κι αυτ? με κο?ρασε. Αλλ? απ? την σελ?δα 582 μ?χρι το τ?λος (728) το βιβλ?ο π?ρε μπρος και με ?κανε ξαν? να απολαμβ?νω την λεπτομερ?στατη και πυκν? γραφ? του Παμο?κ.

Θα πρ?τεινα να διαβ?ζατε πρ?τα το Ιστανμπο?λ: Π?λη και αναμν?σεις για να ?χετε μια πιο εμπεριστατωμ?νη εικ?να της Π?λης πριν π?ρετε αυτ? το βιβλ?ο. Μοι?ζουν κατ? κ?ποιο τρ?πο.

Παρ?λο που οι χαρακτ?ρες σε ?λα τα βιβλ?α του Παμο?κ που δι?βασα ε?ναι ως επ? το πλε?στον νευρωτικο? και ιδια?τεροι αυτ?ς ο συγγραφ?ας εξελ?σσεται στο να γ?νει ο αγαπημ?νος μου.

Μεγ?λα λ?για...

Διαβ?στε το! 7/10

Grace Tjan says

I must confess that for the last five years, I have had a love and hate relationship with Orhan Pamuk (I also had a similar relationship with Charles Dickens, but that's another matter altogether).

Pamuk's style is meticulous and ornate, intensely introspective, sometimes deliberately repetitive, shot through with that particular Turkish kind of melancholy called 'huzun'. At his best, his prose achieves a poetic, hypnotic quality that makes *My Name Is Red* such a compelling, mesmerizing read. But what John Updike described as a Proustian 'arabesques of introspection' could also easily devolve into interminable navel gazing that makes wading through his novels, such as *The White Castle*, a ponderous undertaking. This novel is a mixed bag of both the strengths and weaknesses of his style.

It begins promisingly enough with a love triangle between Kemal, the young scion of one of Istanbul's wealthiest family, Sibel, his Sorbonne-educated fiancée, and Fusun, a poor, distant relation who happens to be a nubile 18 year-old beauty contest finalist. Their illicit romance, consummated in an empty apartment filled with his mother's abandoned possessions (surely there's a Freudian subtext here?), slowly consumes Kemal's life, and yet he still clings to Sibel, who is not only understanding but is also willing to nurse him through lovesickness for her rival. This earlier part of the novel is quite compelling, although the eroticism occasionally veers towards the graphically icky territory ("As our kisses grew even longer, a honeyed pool of warm saliva gathered in the great cave that was our mouths combined, sometimes leaking a little down our chins..."). However, as Sibel finally gives up on her errant fiancée and Fusun contracts a reputation-saving

shotgun marriage to an aspiring screenwriter, Kemal (and the narrative) becomes bogged down in a mire of repetitive, increasingly self-indulgent ruminations. This part depicts eight years of the characters' lives in which the following happens:

1. Kemal hangs out with Fusun, her husband, and her parents;
2. while with her, he is transcendently moved by some gesture or words from his beloved;
3. he steals ("collects") things that remind him of such moments, such as the soda bottle that she drank from, the saltshaker that she used during dinner, the ceramic dog figurine that sat on top of her TV, cigarette butts (all 4,213 of them, meticulously classified according to how they were crushed),etc. He then carefully stores these items in the empty apartment and sometimes mouths them when he misses her;
4. he makes feeble, half-hearted attempts at producing a movie in which she is going to star in, but is eventually too repulsed by the notion that she will have to do a kissing scene --- or worse, be pawed over by actors and directors --- that he never goes through with it;
5. Fusun pouts and sulks;
6. Kemal is devastated;
7. repeat.

This goes on for hundreds of pages. There is a chapter titled 'Sometimes' (in which every sentence begins with that word) which contains nothing but random snippets of their daily life. It is cute for one or two pages, but exhausting as a chapter-length exercise.

I began to scan the pages. How long is this thing going to be on?

And then suddenly there was a twist in the story and it became good --- really good. I couldn't stop reading - -- and hoping. I forgave Kemal for being a borderline creep with his 'collecting' and I forgave Fusun for being so wrapped up in her acting ambition. I wanted them to drive away into the sunset in Kemal's '56 Chevrolet and live happily ever after in a Turkish dreamland.

And it all ends in a sigh --- a big sigh.

And suddenly you understand everything: the years of waiting, the lifetime of remembering, the significance of mundane things, the obsession with collecting, and why there is a need for so many museums in this world.

"In poetically well built museums, formed from the heart's compulsions, we are consoled not by finding in them old objects that we love, but by losing sense of Time."

Sawsan says

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Laura ???? says

“In realtà, nessuno si rende conto di vivere l’istante più felice della propria vita nell’attimo in cui lo sta vivendo”

Non ho contato quante volte compaia, ma ho il sospetto che la parola “felicità” sia quella che ricorra più spesso in questo romanzo.

Eppure Kemal, il protagonista, finisce per avere una vita tutt’altro che felice. Non che non l’abbia mai conosciuta, la felicità, solo che non ha saputo riconoscerla quando gli si è presentata. O forse, più semplicemente, non ha voluto vederla, preso com’era dalla sua vita di allora che credeva perfetta con il fidanzamento ufficiale alle porte, nell’ambito dell’alta società di Istanbul, e la travolgente passione erotica, clandestina e tutt’altro che da alta società, vissuta in parallelo.

Pamuk, abilmente, attraverso la vicenda di Kemal e Füsün, fa emergere le contraddizioni di una società, quella turca, che, come diceva sempre un mio vecchio professore, non può fare a meno di tenere la testa in Europa e il corpo in Asia, e non soltanto geograficamente; una società combattuta fra tradizione e innovazione, che ama dichiararsi “moderna ed europea”, ma dove, in effetti, la verginità di una ragazza continua ad avere il suo peso. Vero negli anni Settanta, quando inizia la storia narrata dall’autore, vero ancora oggi, altrimenti il Partito Islamico non sarebbe saldamente al potere da oltre un decennio e ciò la dice lunga sulla mentalità sempre in auge.

Bel romanzo, occasione di riflessione sul senso della tanto ricercata felicità, sullo sfondo di una Istanbul immortalata nei suoi viali, vecchie stradine, piazze e giardini, percorsa a piedi, o in un’auto che corre per non far tardi, e malinconicamente ammirata dai locali alla moda sul Bosforo.

Sine says

diyecek bir ?ey bulamad?m. be? dakikad?r bak?yorum ekrana. çok, çok güzel. the washington post'un ?u dedi?ine kat?larak: "pamuk bu kitapla a?k? elle tutulur bir ?ey olarak öňümüze koyuyor", ve orhan pamuk kitaplar?n?n hayat?mdaki tesadüfi (ya da de?il?) do?ru zamanlamas?na ?a??rarak bitireyim. ha bir de, bana istanbul'u sevdiriyor orhan pamuk kitaplar?.
