



The Prophet Murders

Mehmet Murat Somer , Kenneth Dakan (Translator)

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Something's gone seriously wrong in Istanbul - a killer is on the loose, and transvestites are being murdered, the modus operandi becoming increasingly bizarre with each death. Our protagonist - fellow transvestite, nightclub owner and glamour puss extraordinaire downs her lipstick and ups the ante in the search for the religious nut. Not an easy task with the pressures of everyday life - investigations have to be slotted in between leg and chest waxes and rotating lovers. Luckily she's the perfect investigator: she knows everyone on the scene, her maitre d' is the biggest gossip in town, her web skills are rivaled only by the most nerdy computer geek and she's very, very persistent. As the killings accelerate, our girl struggles against the odds in her pursuit - after all, everyone knows that running in stilettos and a black leather cat-suit is hell ! Can she end the slaughter without breaking a nail?

The Prophet Murders Details

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Sevgican says

Serinin 2. kitabini, ilkinden daha cok sevdim! Kurgu, konunun islenisi, yazim dili ile birlikte cok keyifli bir okumaydi. Bende, hic ara vermeden, serinin 3. kitabina baslama istegi uyandirdi.

Rowland Pasaribu says

The Prophet Murders is narrated by a (here still nameless) transvestite ("I glory in being both Man and Woman"). S/he's part-owner of a nightclub, works with computers, and is "practised in Aikido and Thai-boxing."

The book begins with her/him reading about the murder of yet another transvestite. The odd circumstances of the death suggest there's more than meets the eye to this, and looking into it s/he finds that a serial killer seems to be on the loose, targeting transvestites. It's soon also clear that the murderer is targeting transvestites whose given (male) names are the same as those of the prophets. Naturally curious (and concerned about his/her friends and clientele) -- and given that the police can barely be bothered to look into these deaths --, the narrator investigates, playing at being an amateur sleuth: "Merhaba Poirot", someone suggests; "You may refer to me as Miss Marple," s/he responds.

Some good connexions help: a childhood friend ("we'd suck each others lips until they were swollen" in those good old days) is now police commissioner, and provides some helpful professional assistance. But the narrator is quite capable him/herself, and in particular his/her computer skills come in handy, helping lead him/her down the proper trails (as well as some blind alleys).

The mystery part of The Prophet Murders unwinds fairly predictably: it's a paint-by-the-numbers work in that respect, though competently enough done to satisfy most fans of the genre. But the real appeal of the novel is in the milieu it describes, and in the main character. The narrator is an entertaining figure, immersed in the transvestite scene but also understanding that aspects of it are hard to take entirely seriously. Many of the queens are ridiculously dim and/or fussy, making for an amusing cast of characters (though even this gets a bit monotonous).

Fairly daringly, Somer also brings the religious issues to the fore, describing a society of homosexuals repressed by the demands and precepts of the prevalent religion -- and the sometimes very unpleasant consequences thereof. (It's no surprise that the prophet-murderer behind the crimes has issues which are grounded in the fundamentals of this society.)

Fairly amusing, with a few uncomfortably graphic scenes, The Prophet Murders is an unusual exotic murder mystery. Somer has a nice, easy-going tone and manner (though it too often doesn't go anywhere far) and there's certainly potential for the series.

Zahide Ertu?rul says

ben okurken üzüleyim mi güleyim mi bilemeyerek okudum,translar?n durumlar?n? o kadar keyifli bir dille anlatm?? ki onlar?n dünyalar?n? belki ilk defa bu kadar içeriden okudum diyebilirim.Somer'in dili kesinlikle ak?c?,merak uyand?r?c?...

Konu ise asl?nda dramatik..

Serinin devam?n? da bulup en k?sa zamanda okumal?y?m.

Antonio Bibliotecario says

Great fun and a window into a totally different trans culture to the one in the US.

Heather says

Perfect summer read!

Sonia Valverde says

Una lectura divertida, pero la verdad que sin ningun misterio. Su originalidad reside básicamente en lo curioso de sus personajes y el submundo que representan. La trama y como se van uniendo los hilos es muy muy superficial, con un desenlace cogido con pinzas y metido con calzador. Esto, unido a que carece también de acción, provoca que solo retengas en la memoria los pasajes que te han hecho sonreír. El apartado de novela negro, el suspenso y el misterio brillan por su ausencia. Joder, y todavía hay editoriales españolas que compren los derechos de estas novelas y las traducen, sin pararse a leer los manuscritos de los autores nacionales.

Ekin Aç?kgöz says

Kahraman?n travesti olmas?ndan kaynaklanarak, kahraman?n dünyas?nda geli?en olaylar, haliyle cinsel temalar içeriyor.

Ancak yazar bu temalar?, okuyucuyu rahats?z etmeden vermeyi çok iyi ba?arm??.

?a??rt?c? derecede ilginç ve e?lenceli bir polisiye.

(Y?llar sonra edit: Bir söyle?ide kar??la?t???m Frans?z bir polisiye-sever okur, Mehmet Murat Somer'in Fransa'da okundu?unu söyledi. Yerli polisiye ad?na mutluluk verici.)

Π?voς Τουρλ?ς says

Να πτ?μα τραβεστ? που αναγγ?λεται στην τρ?τη σελ?δα μιας εφημερ?δας τραβ?ει την προσοχ? του πρωταγωνιστ? των ιστορι?ν του Μεχμ?τ Μουρ?τ Σομ?ρ, μ?νο και μ?νο για να αρχ?σει να ανακαλ?πτει κι ?λλες τ?τοιες ειδ?σεις, που καταλ?γουν σε μια αλυσ?δα φ?νων απ? τον ?διο serial killer! Τραβεστ? που τα αντρικ? τους ον?ματα ε?ναι τα ον?ματα των προφητ?ν που αναφ?ρονται στο Κορ?νι τραβο?ν την προσοχ? του δολοφ?νου και σκοτ?νονται ακριβ?ς με τον τρ?πο που αναγρ?φεται στο βιβλ?ο αυτ?! Η δε?τερη ιστορ?α του τραβεστ?-ντετ?κτιβ ε?ναι εδ?!

Ο αν?νυμος αφηγητ?ς της ιστορ?ας ε?ναι ?νας γοητευτικ?ς προγραμματιστ?ς υπολογιστ?ν το πρω? και μια παν?μορφη, προκλητικ? τραβεστ? το βρ?δυ, με δικ? της gay club και αυστηρ?ς καν?νες και για τους πελ?τες και για τα «κορ?τσια» της. ?χει ολοκληρωμ?νη και συγκροτημ?νη προσωπικ?τητα κι ?σο αθ?ο τον βλ?πεις τ?σο καλ? μπορε? να σε εξοντ?σει στο δευτερ?λεπτο χ?ρη στις πολεμικ?ς τ?χνες που γνωρ?ζει! Κι ?λα αυτ? στην Κωνσταντινο?πολη, την ουσιαστικ? πρωτε?ουσα της Τουρκ?ας, με τον μουσουλμανικ? ν?μο π?νω απ? τα κεφ?λια ?λων των πολιτ?ν της. Το κε?μενο, χωρ?ς να γ?νεται πουθεν? χυδα?ο, περιγρ?φει με ωμ?τητα τις συν?θειες και τα σεξουαλικ? ενδιαφ?ροντα ευυπ?ληπτων κατ? τα ?λλα, παντρεμ?νων και δι?σημων αντρ?ν της Π?λης. Ο πρωταγωνιστ?ς μ?λιστα ?χει καταπληκτικ?ς και διορατικ?ς παρατηρ?σεις π?νω στο αντρικ? φ?λο και τα β?τσια που ικανοποιο?ν την ερωτικ? λ?μπιντο.

Σε αυτ? το μυθιστ?ρημα, η Πονπ?ν, με το βαπτιστικ? ?νομα Ζαχαρ?ας, απ? φ?βο ?τι θα ε?ναι η επ?μενη στη λ?στα του δολοφ?νου, συγκατοικε? με τον πρωταγωνιστ? μας, δημιουργ?ντας του ?ναν πονοκ?φαλο ?νευ προηγουμε?νου. Η δε?τερη παρ?ξενη συναναστροφ? ε?ναι η εκλεπτυσμ?νη, με περ?εργη φων? και αρκετ? «κραγμ?νη» τραβεστ? Γκιονο?λ και η κορυφ?α ε?ναι ο παρ?λυτος, απομονωμ?νος, κομπιουτερ?ς Κεμ?λ, με τον οπο?ο ο ντετ?κτιβ ?χει τις πιο σοκαριστικ?ς και δυνατ?ς σκην?ς του μυθιστορ?ματος. Φανταστε?τε ?ναν ?νθρωπο, παν?ξυπνο, ιδιοφ?α στους υπολογιστ?ς, καθηλωμ?νο σε αναπηρικ? καρ?τσι και ?σχημο εμφανισιακ?, επομ?νως ?λα του τα β?τσια και οι κρυφ?ς επιθυμ?ες να ξεχειλ?ζουν απ? το σ?μα του. Και αυτ?ς ο ?νθρωπος να ?ρχεται σε ιδι?τυπες συνεργασ?ες με τον αφηγητ? μας, ο οπο?ος τον χρει?ζεται για να λ?σει την υπ?θεση. Η ανθρωπι? και η ερωτικ? β?α κορυφ?νονται ταυτ?χρονα στις συναντ?σεις τους!

Ως προς το αστυνομικ? κομμ?τι, η εξ?λιξη της πλοκ?ς ε?ναι κλιμακο?μενη. Ποιος ε?ναι ο κατ? συρρο?ν δολοφ?νος που σκοτ?νει ανυποψ?αστες και αθ?ες τραβεστ?; Τι πρεσβε?ει; Τι κ?νει στην καθημεριν? του ζω?; Γιατ? ο αφηγητ?ς π?ει γυρε?οντας; Ε?ναι ?ντως ?νοχος αυτ?ς που υποψι?ζεται ο ντετ?κτιβ-τραβεστ?; (μα ακ?μη παραμ?νει αν?νυμος;). Η ιστορ?α κλιμακ?νεται στην τουριστικ? Αλικαρνασσ?, με μια αξ?χαστη σκην? και μια μεγ?λη αποκ?λυψη. Ο πρωταγωνιστ?ς ε?ναι πολ? διαφορετικ?ς απ? ?σους «ντετ?κτιβ» και ντετ?κτιβ ?χω συναντ?σει ως τ?ρα. ?νθρωπος της ν?χτας, με ολοκληρωμ?νη προσωπικ?τητα, χωρ?ς υπερβολικ?ς γν?σεις ? τρελ?ς διασυνδ?σεις, καταφ?ρνει με απ?λυτη αληθοφ?νεια να λ?σει τις υποθ?σεις που τραβ?νε την προσοχ? του και στοχοποιο?ν τον χ?ρο στον οπο?ο κυκλοφορε? και εργ?ζεται τα βρ?δια. ?να ωρ?ο, διαφορετικ? αστυνομικ? μυθιστ?ρημα που αγ?πησα ?σο καν?να. Κρ?μα που δεν ?χουν μεταφραστε? στα ελληνικ? και τα τρ?α επ?μενα βιβλ?α της σειρ?ς.

Karen says

THE PROPHET MURDERS is the first of six 'Hop-Ciki-Yaya' thrillers translated into English - written by

engineer, banker and now management consultant Mehmet Murat Somer. The book introduces the reader to a central protagonist who is nothing, if not slightly unexpected. Our unnamed hero/heroine is referred to as abla throughout the book which means big sister (thanks to the handy little glossary included at the back of the book). He/she is a well-known identity in the transvestite sub-culture in Turkey. The reason for the dual references to this character is that he/she is not adverse to dressing as a man or a woman, depending upon the circumstances. So let's start referring to our protagonist as abla. (Later books apparently reveal the real name).

Abla is the first to wonder about the deaths of other transvestites - the girls, members of their community - tensions and troubles aside. There has been one mysterious disappearance and when one of the girls is killed in a fire in very odd circumstances, her death is followed quickly by another dead body in a strange place. Because the girls are part of the sub-culture it's unlikely that the police will be looking too hard, but abla and her friends are able to find the connection and identify a likely killer very quickly. Finding proof is another matter.

The book is written in the first person - abla voices it totally, and whilst the investigation moves at a pace that would make a snail impatient, it wanders through the life and times of the Turkish transvestite community. There are some humorous touches, although a large number of these are heavy handed, and there is a lot of detail about life in and around the transvestite scene. Undoubtedly this is where *THE PROPHET MURDERS* shines - it provides real insight into a community that is going to be different for many of us - Turkish or not. Through abla, the author reveals much about the differences within the transvestite community, the hierarchy of power, the older and younger girls. There are also revelations about the sorts of attacks that the community can endure, whilst having a slightly sly dig at the perpetrator's of the abuse.

THE PROPHET MURDERS will probably not work for somebody who is looking for an investigation based book. You are going to have to handle the slightly odd (maybe it just doesn't translate) humourous moments. All of that being said, if you're looking for something very different then *THE PROPHET MURDERS* provides some insight into a world that is foreign in culture and foreign in lifestyle for many of us.

Marie Chartier says

Not as widely known outside of some circles as other LGBT authors, Mehmet Murat Somer offers nonetheless a different voice of the beautiful cité of Istanbul. His Hop-çiki-yaya serie features an original protagonist*: computer tech-genius by day and bar owner at night; but not any bar, one of the most popular transvestite bar of Istanbul. This nameless protagonist is himself walking on the line between genre, being absolutely glamorous with Audrey Hephburn as his personnal fashion muse, but not wanting to give up part of his masculinity. But at his core, Murat Somer's stories are murder mysteries, where our protagonist uses his connections and computer skills to find out killers in his beloved city.

The Prophet Murders is the second book of the serie, but the first one translated in English**. In this volume, the hero/heroine investigate the murders of fellow travestites, all of them having a prophet name for giving name. Gay and trans not being highly regarded in the Turkish society and the police not investigating the murders seriously, our protagonist is the only one who can put a stop to these killings.

Giving a fresh look on Istanbul, The Prophet Murder allows us to see another face of the 'Sublime Gate' city, giving us an entry to the world of travestites in a Muslim society through the first person perspective used by the author. This perspective also allows the reader to get more intimate with the thoughts of the protagonist and gives the impression of following him in its adventures as a friend sharing a conversation. Moreover, "friend" is the word that popped in my mind when I started the book: I had read the first volume of the serie the year before, and rediscovering the unique voice of the protagonist gave me the impression to find an old friend I had not see for ages. The humorous tone, the witty writing, the unique setting and the colorful cast of characters surrounding the protagonist really gave me that fuzzy feeling you often get when you read an author you like after a long time.

On the less positive note, I would say the "detective" side is sometime too coincidental to take seriously and the ending can be seen from miles away. The pacing can be clunky at time, with parts being unnecessary for the investigation. Another critic could be the fact that the protagonist is a bit "too perfect"; a genius hacker, an aikido master, a financially comfortable club owner, a waist line as thin as Audrey Hephburn (not always, but you get the idea) a great sense of style... All of which helps the protagonist, but are a bit much for only one person. It is quite improbable that a person have all the skills necesitated for his investigation, and at that level of excellence too. On the other hand, the protagonist has defaults too and make mistakes, so he isn't that perfect and feels quite real despite all these characteristics. In the end, these negative points are quite minor and it is still an utterly enjoyable read.

If you want to discover another side of Istanbul or a protagonist with a different voice, Mehmet Murat Somer's Hop-çiki-yaya is a great serie, with a unique protagonist and an original modern setting. LGBT muder-mysteries are quite a rare breed and Turkish author are seldomly translated in French or English, so having both in the same package is quite a treat. If you think this kind of story fits your tastes, gives it a try.

*I used the masculine pronom in this review for convenience. The protagonist is called "abla" or "auntie" though the book, but isn't considering himself a woman per se and likes using both genders as he please. I really used the masculine because it is easier to read.

**I have read the French translation of the book, so I can't comment on the English translation.

Lydia G says

A fun continuation of the series. My only complaint is that it is difficult to read them in order due to out of order publishing dates and missing translated novels. They are self contained but it would have been nice to read this first before The Kiss Murders.

Sam says

Lo que principalmente quiero destacar de esta novela, es el trasfondo social.

Podemos calificarla de regular, mala, obvia, con un final sin pena ni gloria, etc.. Pero no podemos, ni debemos, pasar por alto la vida de la protagonista y del resto de los personajes. La cruda realidad que se ven obligados, sí sí obligados les guste o no, a vivir los travestis.

Vayamos entendiendo que no "eligen" prostituirse, que no todos desean "operarse" y que todos desean y sueñan con vivir libres para amar y ser amados.

Estamos necesitando más literatura LGBTIQ cruda y real, como esta.

GZN says

Şmindeki iddianın aksine serinin zayıf kitaplarındandır. Sanki travestilerin dünyasının hiç tanımayanlar da anlayabilsin diye iyice basitleştirilerek anlatılmış. Final de sürprizsiz ve biraz aceleyle gelmiş gibi.

Aussiescribbler Aussiescribbler says

A sadistic serial killer is picking off drag queens in Istanbul. One of his potential victims is a detective. While the mystery is intriguing, what makes the story memorable is the chance to enter into an exotic subculture full of histrionics, bitchiness and glamour.

Elizabeth Bennet says

Çok eğlendim okurken zira espriler bana hitap etti. Ancak sonlara doğru epey bir karanlık öze vardı. Bu janrı sevenlere gönül rahatlığı ile tavsiye ederim.
