



## Literary Murder

*Batya Gur, Dalya Bilu (Translator)*

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A shocking double murder at Israel's top academic institution brings Superintendent Michael Ohayon to the scene to probe the nature of creativity and unravel the mystery.

## Literary Murder Details

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Author : Batya Gur , Dalya Bilu (Translator)

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## From Reader Review Literary Murder for online ebook

### Magda says

Πολ? ωρα?α πλοκ? κι ενδιαφ?ρουσες οι λογοτεχνικ?ς και ποιητικ?ς παραπομπ?ς που περι?χει το βιβλ?ο. Δυστυχ?ς ?μως η φιλολογικ? επιμ?λει? του ε?ναι (επιεικ?ς) ελλιπ?ς, καθ?ς σε κ?θε σελ?δα εντοπ?ζει κανε?ς ορθογραφικ?/τυπογραφικ? λ?θη τ?σο σε λ?ξεις ?σο και στα ον?ματα των κεντρικ?ν χαρακτ?ρων, εν? η απουσ?α στ?ξης σε κομβικ? σημε?α μπερδε?ει τον αναγν?στη.

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### Joanne says

A little slower moving than Batya's other two books, but fascinating look into Jerusalem life and university politics - with a murder or two to solve, of course.

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### Kat Walter says

Too many characters and none I cared about; I've read 3 in the Ohayan series and I'm done. Good, detailed writing, although confusing and awkward at times. More than I wanted to know about poetry in this tiny university setting. Sorry, just can't recommend it.

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### Jim Leffert says

In the tradition of P.D. James, here is a fine character-driven mystery story, one of a half-dozen by this Israeli author (now deceased) who was also a teacher and literary critic for the Ha'aretz newspaper. The mystery involves the death of two members of the Hebrew Literature department at the Hebrew University, and the interpretation of poetry plays an important part in the story.

The detective, Michael Ohayon, is himself a graduate of the Hebrew University, where he majored in history but did study poetry at one point. Ohayon's university degree sets him apart from others in the police department, as his boss keeps annoyingly reminding him. As a cop and a Jew of Moroccan birth, he is also seen as an outsider by the university people.

I returned to this book, which I had read years ago, and this time was pleasantly surprised and impressed by the way in which the author integrates the interpretation of poetry into the story. I recommend Literary Murder and Gur's other books, which include Murder on a Kibbutz: A Communal Case and Bethlehem Road Murder.

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### Laura Boudreau says

New to the Michael Ohayon series, but definitely enjoyed the writing style and the glimpse of Israel in the 1980's.

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### **Bev says**

#### **Part I**

Next up on the reading list: Literary Murder by Batya Gur. This is the bargain bin book that I mention in one of my earliest posts. The one about the lecherous star poet at Hebrew University. The one I couldn't resist. This also marks a first for me...an academic mystery set in Jerusalem. I can't wait to dive in and see how the university setting is handled by Ms. Gur. I am anticipating a fun and informative read.

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#### **Part II**

Wow. A new motive for murder. That's always a plus in mystery...at least in my book. And this story of a unique murder motive in a unique (for me) setting was really intriguing. I saw a post on Virtual Bookshelf (an app on FaceBook) where someone said they knew the why but didn't figure out the who. I knew who...I just wasn't sure why. I'm intrigued by Batya Gur and her Jerusalem setting. I will probably keep an eye out for the other three mysteries in this series.

This was first posted on my blog: My Reader's Block (click links above). please request permission before reposting. Thanks.

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### **Oceana2602 says**

Go here for the English version

Murder story set in the literature department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The German title, which compelled me to read this book in the first place, sounds much better than the English one.

I gave this book three stars, though I really felt only "it was okay" about it. Three stars because it is a good book. Two stars, because I've been to Jerusalem and nothing in the book gave me the feeling that it was set there. It could have been set anywhere. Missed chance.

Three stars, because it was a good mystery, with many characters that were well enough drawn to keep them apart. Two stars because it took her about 100 pages to get started, with all the character descriptions that were necessary to make it work.

Three stars, because for a crime story, it's quite well-written.

Two stars, because the thing I care about most in crime stories, the investigator, never really clicked with me. Even though he is in every chapter, I have no idea what kind of man Ochajon is. And while I like reading about strangers, I don't like leaving them as strangers.

Conclusion: I don't regret reading this, but I won't read another book by the author any time soon.

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### **Nathanial says**

Gur keeps as incisive as ever in this early work: her interplay of character and plot balances well over the course of the book--minor characters appear and reappear at different angles, seen from different perspectives, each time shedding new light not only on the protagonist, but the issues of ownership, fidelity, identity and jealousy central to the plot. She has a talent for depicting close-knit communities with specific interests and esoteric demands--setting, tone, and detail draw out glancing responses from the central character, while developing more elaborate enthusiasms or affinities from readers. In this book, she is less interested than elsewhere in holding up a mirror to literary devices themselves, which comes as a relief, but at the same time we're left with some meandering passages meant, I suppose, to create a sense of surpassing meaning...more successful in some areas than others. For instance, she's not interested in happy endings: her detective protagonist is reportedly 'reknown' for needing time, after solving a case, to recover from the implications he's discovered: about the paucity of the human condition, or the conundrums of sympathy and judgment, perhaps. Here, we're left with the question posed by the villain--does truth transcend morality, or does morality depend on truth? Meh...

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### **Toni says**

Wow, a book that goodreads doesn't have a cover picture for. This must be obscure. On the other hand, a bunch of other readers have given it 3 stars (I am not alone in this rating, which I made before I had read the ratings of any other reader, by the way). It was well-written and engaging, but I really didn't ever care about any of the characters. They were ok, but never compelling. This is a pretty intellectual mystery. There's lots of dialogue and monologue about Israeli poetry. I liked that fine, but the characters just never grabbed me. Lots of brooding types. And I think maybe you needed to have read some of the other books Gur has written to be up to speed on the cops on the case. In sum, an interesting locale, forgettable characters (with hard to follow names, to be culturally insensitive but honest), too convoluted a plot.

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### **Kathrin Stacked'n'Painted says**

On a short vacation to the sea with his son, Superintendent Michael Ohajon witnesses the body of a dead scuba diver being pulled out of the sea. The diver turns out to be a lecturer at the Hebrew Literature Institute at Hebrew University in Jerusalem - Ido Duda'i. Back home in Jerusalem, Ohajon helps with the investigation in the lecturer's death, when a second murder victim is found: the head of the institute, Sha'ul Tirosh, a world-reknowned scholar and poet. While investigating the two murders, Ohajon heads back into the world of the university, including its academic talking and the lectures.

To be up front, this book can be boring in some parts for those readers who don't know the basics of studying literature (for example what hermeneutics is). Batya Gur recreated two longer lectures on literature in this mystery and some shorter discussions in conversations between the characters. This, of course, could have been expected in a book set around the world of the lecturers and professors of a literature department at a university. You can of course skip or skim those parts, but I really enjoyed them, as they showed some more distant characters in a new light.

Aside from that, though, the murder mysteries and the characters were so well-developed, it was amazing to read *Literary Murder*. The characters are really three-dimensional, with different reasons that make them tick. It was hard to keep track of every little detail, which made it impossible (at least for me) to guess who did it up until the very last moment.

On top of that, the setting in Jerusalem was one I have yet to encounter in other mysteries. According to SYKM there are a few more series set in Israel, or Jerusalem, more specifically (do authors know there are other interesting cities in Israel? I'd like to read a series set in Tzfat or maybe Haifa \*wink\* Batya Gur really brought Jerusalem into my living room and my room at my parents'. It was awesome to almost see the streets of Jerusalem with the old buildings and everything!

In my German copy, the publisher even added some explanations about the Jewish terms, as not everyone might know what "shiva" is. I'm really excited about this series, as it is so different from other murder mysteries / police procedurals I've read in the past, yet, it is similar. I can't wait to get my hands on the next book.

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### **Mary Ronan Drew says**

Read my review on my blog at:

[http://maryslibrary.typepad.com/my\\_we...](http://maryslibrary.typepad.com/my_we...)

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### **Lorinda Taylor says**

Batya Gur is one of the best writers of police procedurals around and *Literary Murder* is her finest. Three things make this book outstanding: first, a tightly constructed plot with lots of parallelism; second, the application of certain themes; and third, the complexity and contrast in the characterization. The book is laid in the Literature Dept. of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, a milieu in which the author is right at home, having studied there. The major theme is corruption (and corruption versus beauty). The image of corruption and decay appears promptly, when Ruchama Shai is picking up dust balls in her apartment – that's sort of a dry image of return to dust – dry decay, lack of life and substance, futility. Then we see the two corpses, with faces and bodies that are moist, nasty, and repellent. The Hebrew title of the book, which translates as "Death in the Department of Literature," is much more illustrative of this theme than "Literary Murder"; the word "death" is a lot broader than the word "murder." A lot more died in that Literature Dept. than two of its members – a lot of illusions and suppositions and faith – and furthermore, so many of the characters are already effectively dead inside.

This is absolutely wonderful book, which I recommend wholeheartedly to anyone, whether they read mysteries or not, and especially to people who are fascinated by literature and poetry, both of which play such an important part in the story.

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### **Lorraine says**

This novel intrigued me. It contained a reference to literature in the title, is a mystery, and set in Jerusalem, an unusual location. How disappointing! I had to wade through the academic literary pseudo-babble in the first chapter. "Okay," I thought, "I guess this is necessary if the main characters are university professors specializing in Israeli literature." Then I met the cast of characters; none of whom are likable or appealing. Two murders ensue. A great deal is made of the question: Are they related? Of course they are! Get on with the story! Sad to say, I had the mystery solved halfway through the book. Who and why were obvious. The detective helped me by working out how the murders were committed, but as a reader of crime mysteries, I want the author to lead me to the solution near the end when he or she figures it out. I do NOT want to figure it out and have that confirmed at the end when the detective finally solves the mystery. Not worth the time I spent reading it. The typos and omitted words are not acceptable either!

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### **Joyce Lagow says**

The 2nd in the Michael Ohayon series.[return][return]Set in Israel, Ohayon is a superintendent with the Jerusalem Police. Within the space of a weekend, two people who are associated with the Hebrew Literature Department of the Hebrew university are murdered. Ohayon investigates.[return][return]That's the plot. It does have some nice twists and turns, particularly towards the end. The resolution is very good.[return][return]The writing in this book, given that Gur is a literary critic for a leading Israeli publication, is surprisingly mediocre. It works for the story but is uninspired to say the least. Her characters are pretty one-dimensional, and you wind up not really caring what happens to them. Which is too bad, really, because she does come up with a nicely varied cast. It's no surprise, though, to find out that university politics is the same the world over.[return][return]What is really annoying about this book is the quantity of peetic analysis thrown in. It may be, as the jacket blurbs comment, a passion of Gur's, but it does nothing for the book. I followed most of it with difficulty, got totally lost in some sections, and was extremely irritated by the last, lengthy section which purported to sum up the semester and did nothing of the sort. As a former university teacher, I found that annoying.[return][return]This is not a book I would particularly recommend. Too much wrong with it despite some nice plotting.

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### **Veronica Preiss says**

I couldn't get into it. Forced myself through it and appreciated a couple of passages on literary analysis. It reads like a literary textbook thinly disguised by a murder whodunit.

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