

Requiem for a Gypsy

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When the wife of one of Slovakia's most prominent businessmen is killed in a very public assassination, it looks like the bullets were meant for her husband. But could the wife of Oto Bogan have actually been one of the primary targets? And where has Bogan gone? Both he and his son have disappeared without a trace. Commander Jana Matinova was present at the party where the shooting took place, and she was the one who pushed Bogan out of the line of fire. As a witness to the crime, she's being told to stay away from the case, but her Colonel knows that he needs his best investigator on it.

Jana must push through her own government's secretiveness and intransigence to discover what connects the murder of Klara Boganova to an anonymous man run down in Paris, a dead Turk with an icepick in his eye, and an international network of bank accounts linking back to the Second World War. The key to the case may lie with a mysterious, vagabond girl who has attached herself to Jana and who seems to be connected to the notorious international criminal Makine, AKA Koba. To solve the case and stop an ongoing series of murders, Jana must travel to Berlin and Paris and look back into the darkest period of Slovak history.

Requiem for a Gypsy Details


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From Reader Review Requiem for a Gypsy for online ebook

Sara says

This was not my favorite of the series. There seemed to be more talking and thinking, but I'm also getting tired of how many people are shot in these books. This is the third of this series I have read and there is a lot of shooting throughout the series.

Deon Stonehouse says

Oto Brogan is at the top of his game, making bucket-loads of money and moving into politics. He is throwing a party; all the right people will be there to cheer him on, all the right people and a killer with a prime target. Before the night his over his wife will lie dead under the spotlight, felled by an assassin's bullet. Clearly Brogan was the target, a rising star in Slovakian politics. Commander Jana Matinova isn't so certain. Her investigation will take her to Berlin, Paris, and back into the evil of the past. Jana is a strong female lead, with an interesting mystery to solve.

Beth says

Michael Genelin has a sort of good news/bad news situation in that his books are set in Slovakia, an area in central Europe that used to be Czechoslovakia. It is bad news because most Americans know little about Slovakia so it is difficult to place one's self in the scene. The good news is that the author is presenting a country that we know little about so we don't question the atmosphere.

Czechoslovakia was created on political lines during World War I, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed in 1918. With the rise of the Third Reich, Czechoslovakia was divided into pieces, all of which ended as the part of Europe Hitler would use in his plan to defeat the USSR and expand Germany's "lebensraum", more territory in which the Germans could live and grow food. At the end of the war, the area came under the influence of communist Russia and the citizens remained something of a thorn in the side to their Russian guardians.

That is until "Prague Spring" in 1968. Alexander Dubcek became the leader of the Czechoslovakian in January, 1968. He was a liberal and he believed that the majority of the people would follow him. He loosened restrictions on the media, and on speech and travel. His chief goal was to decentralize of the government and the economy. He oversaw the division of the country into the Czech and Slovak states but by August, 1968, the Soviets had had enough and came into Prague in tanks. One hundred and eight Czechs and Slovaks were killed and the move to less restriction ended.

On January 1, 1993 the country peacefully split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. This very much abbreviated history explains in some small way who Commander Jana Matinova is. She is one of the highest ranking female officers in the Slovak state police. She is grandmother to a child who is half American, a child Jana sees rarely. The author hasn't given any substantive hints as to Jana's age but she was likely too

young to participate in Prague Spring. She is certainly a product of the changes it brought to Slovakia. No longer a Communist country, the people are still reminded of their history. It seems that no country in on the European continent has yet been able to escape from the years when Hitler dominated the lives of all.

To a degree, not understanding Jana's past and the growing pains of her country, the reader benefits. The reader can concentrate on Jana. Slovakia is a country that is still trying to find its feet and one of the issues is the Roma population, a group that has never been welcomed in any nation. A young gypsy is killed and this becomes a case that Jana knows will be difficult. The Roma have no reason to trust the police and their culture is secretive.

In Paris, an old man is working through the Saturday outdoor market. "The old man never saw the truck that hit him....Pascal was killed on impact....The truck proved to be stolen, so the police could not find anyone to hold responsible...and Pascal had three separate sets of ID on his person, which made things even more troubling for them. After all, how can you notify the decedent's next of kin, or even his landlord, if you don't know who he was or where he lived?"

Jana finds herself forced to go to a party being given by "one of the new breed of businessmen that the country was hell-bent on developing: high profile figures who wanted to be international players and were determined that everybody should love and admire them for their ruthless corporate plundering. So far, at least, tonight's businessman, the larger-than-life Oto Bogan, had miraculously avoided criminal prosecution and so was still on the 'we can associate with him' list for police officers." That status changes when the party is barely underway. While standing with Jana, her boss, Colonel Trokan, and her husband, Klara Bogan is shot, hit by a bullet likely meant for her husband.

The murders are linked when Jana learns that Pascal had a tattoo linking him to the Hlinka Guard, a group who, under the direction of the SS, led the roundups of the partisans, the Jews and the gypsies. They Guard killed without question when ordered to do so by the SS. Into this mix comes Em, a young teenager who meets Jana when she sells her a pair of earrings.

Eventually all the various threads come together and there are no degrees of separation. The plot is complicated and Jana is a complicated character. She is mistress of her own destiny in her work life but there seems to be few boundaries in her personal life. Her relationship with Em is difficult to explain given Jana's commitment to her job.

REQUIEM FOR A GYPSY is the fourth book in the Jana Matinova series. I don't think it is necessary to read them in order but read them you should.

The author hasn't given any substantive hints as to Jana's age but she was likely too young to participate in Prague Spring but she is certainly a product of the changes it brought to Slovakia. No longer a Communist country, the people are still reminded of their history. It seems that no country in on the European continent has yet been able to escape from the years when Hitler dominated the lives of all.

Suspense Magazine says

I know how you feel. You pick up a mystery set in a European country and you have second thoughts. "I can't pronounce the names," you say. "I'm not familiar with the cities." My answer? Who cares if the street, city, or personal names are half a mile long or don't contain but one vowel? With Genelin's latest Jana

Matinova mystery, you'll forget all about the confusing names and enjoy an intriguing little mystery while touring some of Europe's locales. Matinova's character is caring, witty and her deductive reasoning is very convincing.

Commander Matinova attends a party for a financier politico wannabe and ends up watching the man's wife get killed. Staying out of the public eye, she parallels the official investigation, always staying a step ahead, but always searching for what she's not being told. With the help of an enigmatic and precocious teenage street girl, and avoiding several attempts on her own life, Matinova puts together the pieces of a puzzle that has connections to bands of thugs in World War II.

What rounded out this book were the other things occupying Matinova's life. Besides her major case, she deals with the shooting death of a Gypsy boy and how recollections of her mother's Communist attitude shape her own thoughts. This is Genelin's fourth Matinova mystery so fans should be satisfied with another fine novel.

Reviewed by Stephen L. Brayton, author of "Beta" for Suspense Magazine

Larry says

Commander Jana Matinova is a tough-minded homicide cop in Slovakia. The attempted assassination of a business oligarch, the sighting of a known assassin, and the death of a couple of criminals come together to make an interesting case in what used to be a communist-controlled country. Jana is relentless in most aspects of her life, save her relationships with her now-American granddaughter and a young girl who sometimes serves as a courier and messenger for criminals. Gemmelin's fourbooks (so far) provide a look at an interesting culture, though police work seems much the same the world over. Reread, it's an even better book (4 1/2) than I remembered. It's tied to the first book in the series in that the central bad guy is the same professional assassin, but it stands on its own.

Kathleen Hagen says

Requiem for a Gypsy, by Michael Genelin, b-plus, Narrated by Suzanne Toren, Produced by audiogo, Downloaded from audible.com

This is one of the Czechoslovakian Police Commander Jana Matinova series. When the wife of one of Slovakia's most prominent businessmen is killed in a public assassination, it looks like the bullets were meant for her husband.

But could the wife of Oto Bogan have actually been the target? Bogan can't comment. Both he and his son have disappeared without a trace. Commander Jana

Matinova must push through her own government's secrecy to discover what connects the murder of Klara Boganova to an anonymous man run down in Paris, a

dead Turk with an icepick in his eye, an international network of bank accounts, and a mysterious vagabond girl. To solve the case and stop an ongoing

series of murders, Jana must travel to Berlin and Paris and look back into the darkest period of Slovak history. Suzanne Toren does a wonderful job particularly with Commander Matinova's voice. The

Commander appears to be a hard-nosed cop compensating for being female by never showing feelings, but she turns out to have feelings which come forward when she is introduced to a young gypsy girl who

suspiciously keeps turning up in her investigations as time goes on.

Patricia says

When Commander Jana Matinova of the Slovakia Police witnesses the assassination of Klara Bogan at a party honoring Oto Bogan, Klara's husband, Jana immediately begins to wonder if Klara's death was the fault of a stray bullet or if she was actually the intended victim. Jana's Colonel gives her permission to proceed with the investigation even though as a witness to the shooting she is told that she cannot be actively involved.

The department in charge of the main investigation refuses to share all of their information with Jana. It is not long before Jana is on the trail of the pieces of information that she has no doubt will eventually lead to the reason behind the death of Klara Brogan. Jana has access to the Murder Book but knows that the contents are incomplete. Jana finds that Oto Bogan as well as his son has disappeared.

A girl whose name is Em Mrvova shows up at Jana's door, cold and hungry. Jana takes pity on the girl but soon finds out that there is more to Em than meets the eye. Em seems to appear and disappear with frequency. Much wiser than her years Em is able to give Jana a few tips that help in her investigation.

Klara Bogan's is not the first death that happens in this novel and Jana's trail eventually takes her to Paris where she learns the real identity of an anonymous man that is run down on the streets of the city.

Jana is a brilliant police officer with a talent for interrogation that eventually gets her the answers she needs to put the puzzle pieces together that eventually tell the story behind the death of Klara as well as a long kept secret that goes back to a dark time in Slovak history.

The author has worked as an international consultant in government reform. I hope to see Jana Matinova in many future novels.

Beth says

Really enjoyed the read with an interesting plot and good twists and turns but not so out there that I couldn't follow. I hoped for a bit more about life in Slovakia but perhaps that is more in the earlier books from this series. (Yes I am reading these out of order!) I will certainly look for others by this author.

Mimi says

A fascinating crime novel! A complicated plot with several major story lines moving along side by side. Gripping, nonetheless. Riveting with suspense.

A crime is committed. The wife of a prominent businessman, Oto Bogan, is publicly killed at a party. Police commander Jana Matinova, who happened to also witness the assassination, is asked to step in and solve the case. For her the number one question becomes: Did Bogan's wife get a bullet that was meant for her husband or was she the real target? To answer this question and solve the case, Matinova has to travel back and forth to Germany, Austria and France. In the process, she uncovers several deep secrets entangling the case that reach up to the government of Slovakia. Filled with historical facts about post-communist Slovakia, the story is a great portrayal of the universal corruption that fills the world. I liked Jana's character especially. A very smart woman, brilliant police officer, very intuitive, perceptive, always led by a strong sense of fairness and justice.

All that said, there is only one thing I could not understand: Em's character and her role in the story. What is Genelin trying to convey through her? It seemed to me that she was pointless,...unless she is put in the middle of things just to show us Jana's motherly side, as well. A complicated, sort of strange relationship between the two which was very puzzling to me.

"Requiem for a Gipsy" is a great read that I would definitely recommend to others.

Victoria says

This book was able to hook me right away. Amazingly the inappropriate language was very little, and only about 2 very ugly words. Well written, suspenseful, and characters that you come to know well, this book was interesting and enjoyable and worth taking time to read.

Monica says

This series gets better and better. Bratislava police inspector Jana Matinova witnesses the assassination of the wife of a prominent businessman. As a witness, she is not allowed to participate in the investigation, but the police in charge seem to be sitting on their hands. When she returns to the crime scene and finds a shell casing and the two murder weapons, they reluctantly agree to let her in.

With the help and/or interference of the teenage girl Em, who appears at her door, Matinova travels to Vienna, Berlin, Paris to find the ties between the assassination, the hit and run death of an old man in Paris and international financial crimes dating back to WWII. We learn more of Jana's back story and her difficult relationship with her dead mother, a dedicated Party member.

Mjlibrary NDSCS says

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Commander Jana Matinova of the Bratislava police must investigate the death of a politician's wife. Was she the target, or were the bullets meant for him? Unfortunately, he and his son have disappeared, so they cannot

be asked. Are there connections of this death with a death in Paris, a dead Turk, and a vagabond girl? Jana must solve this while fighting her own government's secrecy, traveling to Berlin and Paris while looking back into the dark parts of Slovakian history. This is 4th in a popular police procedural mystery set in a Europe unfamiliar to American readers. Genelin has served as a consultant for the US State Department and USAID in Central Europe.

Diane says

Excellent! Jana Matinova, a Slovakian police commander is a fearless grandmother. Quite a change from the usual hard drinking detective in most mysteries.

I admire Jana's character for her integrity and compassion. The plot is complex and well executed. One of the reviews put it well;

"Michael Genelin knows crime, knows Europe, and knows how to write."

The gypsy story of the title is a subplot, but perhaps a metaphor for the larger story.

I came across this book because it was in the library shelf next to the author I was looking for. Genelin has written 3 other books in this series that I will have to go back and read now.

Penny says

Different-- This author was on a publisher's list. This was the only book by this author my library carried. I'm requesting more. Different but a pretty good read and mystery. A Slovakian woman police detective follows a series of murders through Europe. There are cultural differences but that makes it interesting without being patronizing or making a parody.

Karen says

Jana is a detective that finds herself in the middle of a murder, not altogether sure that she isn't the intended target as attempts on her life happen again. Because she was close to the person that was murder by virtue of the assignment, she is not allowed to investigate the case. As any good detective that doesn't stop her, but information is being held from her that is vital to the case. Then comes Em into the picture, an unsettled child that knows more about the murdered people than Jana.

This mystery will keep you wondering who did it and what the outcome will be. I don't know if the author is planning on a second book, but I would hope so as this one ends abruptly.
