



The Death of the Little Match Girl

Zoran Ferić, Tomislav Kuzmanović (Translator)

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Set against the omnipresent pounding of artillery on the enchanting island of Rab, this gripping tale of politics and psychosis juxtaposes one instance of crime against acts of mass murder occurring elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia. When a transvestite prostitute nicknamed the “Match Girl” is cruelly murdered on the Croatian island, investigators are forced to delve deep into Rab's underbelly to find her murderer. From corpse chaperones, pedophilia, and xenophobia to Romanian secret police, exorcisms, and radioactive watches, the detectives are brought face to face with the secrets, illnesses, and deviant behavior of the island's inhabitants.

The Death of the Little Match Girl Details

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From Reader Review The Death of the Little Match Girl for online ebook

Brett Francis says

Fantastic book I am so glad I picked up while on vacation in Croatia. The writer truly knows how to keep me involved, his prose is tight and full of great moments (the town with four noons, and the twist on that at the end) the characters are just the most interesting mix of misfits I've read in a while, and the mystery and intrigue kept me turning pages and excited to read more. It was over almost too quickly, at a scant 190 pages. I highly recommend this story. Like a classier Chuck Palahniuk, with a disincensive Central European flare.

Kozmokitap says

Prvi put Hrvatske književnosti pročitao sam jedan od njenih autora. Pisanje je vrlo zanimljivo i originalno. U ovom romanu se bave temama kao što su nasilje, zločin, ljubav i smrt. Roman je napisan na vrlo zanimljiv i originalan način. Preporučujem svima koji vole dobre romane.

<https://kozmokitap.blogspot.com.tr/20...>

Mario says

Tu stvarno ima svašta. Nije za gubljenje.

Iris says

I tako dođem ja u knjižnicu i pita me gospođa želim li možda pročitati nekog hrvatskog pisca jer, eto, žao mi je što ih se pročitao znatno manje nego strane pisce. Pristala sam, naravno da jesam i pitala ju ima li neki prijedlog. Predložila mi je Ferića. Nisam prije pročitao ništa njegovo pa mu htjedoh dati šansu. Izabrala sam Smrt djevojčice sa šibicama jer me zaintrigirao naslov.

I tako posudim ja Ferića, uputim se prema parku i krenem pročitati. Bio je krasan dan - sunce, lagan vjetrović, cvrkut ptica, ljudi sa psima. Prava atmosfera za jedan opuštajući krimić.

Osim što nije krimić (ok, ima elemenata). I definitivno nije opuštajući.

Ferić svojim ne toliko suptilnim sarkazmom ismijava sve, od vjernika sumnjivih moralnih vrijednosti do mentaliteta stanovnika otoka.

Preporuka? Apsolutno da.

Za sve? Apsolutno ne.

Ako slabije podnosite tabue, estetiku ružnoće, psovke i generalnu morbidnost, ne pročitajte ovo.

A ako ste kao ja i volite pobjeći od ružnoće života skrivajući se u ne toliko nestvaran, ali ipak ružan fiktivan svijet, ovo je jako dobra knjiga za to.

Pročitajte hrvatske pisce! :)

Simon says

We were on holiday in Croatia and had unexpectedly run out of books to read. Browsing through the very small selection of English books in the local village I was pleasantly surprised to find that, instead of all the latest bestsellers, they had a range of contemporary Croatian books in translation, so I picked this one up. What a disappointment. Clumsily translated, with many glaring errors, typos, inconsistencies and illogicalities, it reads like a messy first draft.

The plot bears some surface similarities to the Sciascia I read recently: a murder in a small town, investigated by an interested amateur, and an author more keen to use the crime as away to reveal the inhabitants' peculiarities and secrets than as a puzzle to be solved.

Feric himself says he wanted to write a "Mediterranean Twin Peaks", and I guess he succeeded in that he matches Lynch for nightmarish surrealism, but I found the whole thing very tiresome. A parade of freaks, sadism, cheap fatalism, empty symbolism and narrative dead ends, most of the time I neither knew nor cared what was going on. Maybe this sense of dislocation was deliberate, but for me it was neither enlightening nor entertaining.

Malcolm says

Imagine an island where the seemingly absurd unravels as the murder of the main town's only stripper (a Romanian transsexual) is woven into the death by leukaemia of the seven year old daughter of the narrator's (Fero) school friend (neighbours of the dead Romanian), where we encounter grave robbing (of humans and pets), resurrection, exorcism and in the distance the rumbling of the guns of war..... It might be that this is a slightly surreal story of a small Croatian fishing and tourist town with disturbing sexual politics, but it seems much more than that.

I've not read much contemporary Croatian fiction, but what I have read suggests a grappling with cultural ways of being, from Dubravka Ugresic's not unsympathetic dissections of Yugo-nostalgia to Slavenka Drakulic's tales of badly damaged women to, as the most like this in tone, Edo Popovi?'s disturbing tale of people who don't quite fit the new Croatia. Feri? seems to be invoking a place where things that had formerly been swept under carpets were now getting an airing, where the small and not-so-small disturbing and disruptive is becoming more widespread (someone is tearing the last few pages out of all the detective book in the local library, for instance) and the forces of social change are unsettling social rules and conventions: newly announced twin towns seem absurd, the new Europe is recasting the place of the town in the world, the town is in receipt of aid money, and the tourist industry has shifted to become health tourism of overweight Czechs.

Yet amid all the bizzareness, all the seemingly inexplicable weirdness of Fero's hometown this is a fairly conventional murder mystery – Fero, the returning local is a pathologist drawn into a violent local death; his friend Mungos, the chief of police, is a mid-level bureaucrat and detective trying to solve a mystery but worried who in his small town and which of his friends might be implicated; a local friar Marijan provides important (mystical) cultural-historical knowledge; Franka, the local librarian seems a source of gossip and information about relationships and cultural nous. These are, often, the standard figures of crime fiction of the police procedural (sub)genre.

But these figures exist in an environment that oozes violence and decay, where a past-best-forgotten (not a Yugoslav past but an older, in places equally material past of war) lurks just below a surface of civility that seldom papers over the Hobbesian brutishness: despite the beauty of this part of the Adriatic coast, there is little in Feri?'s image of this town's life that appeals..... and I think that is the point. Although published in 2012 the book is set against the war of the early 1990s, of the fratricidal violence of the end of Yugoslavia, of the breakdown of a former order that, in hindsight, seems to have had some in-built restraints and constraints that the combination of war and xenophobic nationalism rebuffed, when the problem of that nationalism was a difficulty in defining who would or could fit into which group.

These time of turmoil make this, on the surface, a bizarre almost surreal tale (I suspect some of the characters would prefer to be dreaming) – Feri? cites *Twin Peaks* as an inspiration (that is clear to see); the sexual violence and misogyny he depicts alongside the banal xenophobia and contempt for those who don't quite fit (when it seems none properly fit) is an indictment of the times. What is so disturbing is the compelling way he keeps the story running, shifting narrative focus while allowing what appears at the outset to be several independent stories weave together leading to a plausible but not necessary true solution to the case.

It is a very good book and easy to see why it has made it so quickly into vbz's *Best of Croatian Literature* series, but it paints a disturbing picture of a time and place.

Chris Hays says

Yeah....no. Even with a bit of knowledge regarding Croatian humor, understanding what type of story the author was trying to write, this book was not for me. And with regards to opinions of others, I would be very hesitant to hand this book to friends or colleagues. The jokes contain bigotry, sexism, or racism the story is convoluted with characters who are hard to follow or understand, and the translation to English missed in some parts. I was disappointed by all the acclaim and the final product.

Andrea says

Prili?no dobar roman, kvalitetno napisan, iako ne odolijeva sirenskom zovu nepotrebnih morbidarija. Završetak pomalo razo?ara - nakon vješto vo?ene pri?e, mnogobrojnih sumnjivaca, mamaca, završava prebrzo, štoviše, uop?e nismo sigurni da su pravi krivci uhva?eni.

Mirjan says

Prva pro?itana Feri?eva. Ako izuzmemo morbidarije pristojan krimi? sa kritikom ostrvskog, zatvorenog društva.

Jonpaul says

Misogynist, homophobic, unfunny turd of a book. Reading this is like being forced to sit next to a loud, fat

jerk who thinks he's the funniest, smartest guy in the room. This book is an utter waste of time, money, and paper.

Sarah says

Although the translation isn't the best, the characters and the prose is funny enough to keep you interested. Almost every page is hysterical.
