



Miss Homicide Plays the Flute

Brendan Connell

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Serena Plievier, flautist by profession, superlative decadent by tendency, must subsidise her income with the mellow art of assassination in this romance of violence and harmony, of dull lists and extraordinary occurrences. Histories of sound and perversion are painted in Holland, Germany and Italy, in a Europe of decay that is accented by Mozart and has the court of Ludovico Sforza as backdrop. A relentless symphony of pleasantries and things unpleasant sketched with the inimitable style of a master's hand.

Miss Homicide Plays the Flute Details

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Author : Brendan Connell

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From Reader Review Miss Homicide Plays the Flute for online ebook

Randolph says

Wickedly funny and just plain wicked. Connell is a master of language and with his encyclopedic mind every phrase is both a delight and a challenge. If you can keep up the reward is there and the book actually becomes somewhat of a page turner that you have to slow yourself down in order to savor.

It is rare that you feel like an entertainment that is so enjoyable is also elevating as well.

Jason Rolfe says

When I first read Brendan Connell's "The Translation of Father Torturo" elements of the writing brought Corvo's "Hadrian VII" to mind. Brendan's recent book, "Miss Homicide Plays the Flute" elicited a similar response, albeit for different reasons. With Torturo, Brendan was paying homage to Corvo's "Hadrian VII". Miss Homicide, on the other hand, is less a conscious tribute to a brilliant writer than a case of Brendan being brilliant in his own right. I don't make the comparison between Connell and Corvo lightly, nor flippantly. I am not comparing the Miss Homicide story itself to anything Corvo wrote, and while both Connell and Corvo display courage with their prose, that courage is not the source of this comparison. It's the elegance of the language...no...deeper than that, it's the elegance of the structure of the language itself that evoked these Corvine thoughts. Frederick Rolfe, an artist as well as an author, painted with language. Brendan too is an artist. Miss Homicide Plays the Flute is gracefully written, beautifully packaged, and unlike anything else being written today.

Axolotl says

While I really liked it (as with other "Connells") the plethora of antique erudition (almost to the point of morass), chiefly from Greek antiquity. The bulk of these antiquarian references, I will readily admit, flew right over my head, while I stopped to look up some which seemed so fantastic they must be invention. I can accept not knowing certain things, but what I do manage to retain from BC's peculiar historical facts humbles me into a greater appreciation for the ancients. I suppose the primary function of having these precedents brought into relief is to place our little lady (and her story) into an idiom which has a timeless, almost mythic, quality.

The characters are interesting, but not over-drawn and it is easy to picture them. Moreover, Connell's judicious use of characterization frees up the narrative and, in doing so, retains the feel of a fable or parable (a few of these, in fact, are peppered throughout the book, as separate chapters).

I admire the way that Connell takes material which seems, upon first encountering it, to be oddly jarring (the cold descriptions of Konrad's photographic work, for instance), and manages to weave this material into the narrative deftly. At other times he chooses not to bother so much with picking up the threads, but to rather obliquely juxtapose whole story-lines. This juxtaposition produces the effect of amplifying the themes present in the main "arc" (the tale of the headless French ghost encountered on a road at night, as an example), causing the reader to draw their own parallels. Indeed, Connell has perfectly blended elements of noir/suspense, fable, and antique history to create an episodic modern picaresque (a word often thrown around in reviews of books that are anything but of this tradition). And all of this does little to address BC's

poetic and effective use of a kind of concrete poetry. Although this type of cut-up or stream-of-consciousness-type experimentation seldom works for me in longer fiction, in Connell's hands it never feels tacked on or cheap, but rather adds to the understanding and adds richness to the experience of reading.

In summary, 175 pages of Brendan Connell is like a 6 course meal of haute cuisine, strictly for bon vivants of discerning palate.

Incidentally, I do hope that Connell actually does write a book entitled (view spoiler).

I hear that this education in murder is still available in hardcover from Eibonvale Press--you should probably get a copy.

Seregil of Rhiminee says

Originally published at Risingshadow.

Brendan Connell's *Miss Homicide Plays the Flute* is a fantastic novel. It's a brilliant example of what can be achieved when an author has enough imagination and vision, and isn't afraid of writing something different and experimenting with different kind of storytelling.

"Ah, what an extraordinary and beautifully written novel!" was the first thing that came to my mind when I finished reading *Miss Homicide Plays the Flute*, because I liked what I had read. Because I've always loved weird, imaginative and twisted stories, I have to confess that I read this novel twice before I began to write this review. This novel made a huge impression on me, so I can't help but praise it as much as I can.

Brendan Connell is an author who has a distinct writing style that separates him from other authors. No matter what he writes about, he writes quality and he isn't afraid of experimenting with unusual material and combining different elements. He's an undisputed modern master of decadence and weird stories. His prose can be as sharp as shards of glass and there's underlying and seductive eroticism in his stories. If I had to describe Brendan Connell's prose and stories with only one word, the word would be "unique" (I'm sure that all the readers who read his stories will notice that they're unique and original stories).

Miss Homicide Plays the Flute is an excellent example of Brendan Connell's talents, because it's an intriguing and sophisticated combination of decadence, style and beautiful prose. It's a clever, disturbing, weird and also humorous story that will fascinate you with its strangeness.

Homicide Plays the Flute pushes the boundaries of literary fiction quite a lot, but it fits into the realm of literary fiction and surrealism. It's a bit difficult to categorize it properly, because it - just like all the other novels and collections by Brendan Connell - defies easy categorization. I categorize this novel as literary fiction with surreal and decadent elements, but I could also categorize it as experimental literary speculative fiction with strong avant-garde elements.

Here's a bit of information about the story:

Serena Plievir is a flutist. She has an expensive taste in art and she needs to pay the bills somehow, so she assassinates people and gets paid for executing the murders. Her first victim is Leslie who tries to sell a stolen painting. She executes the murder perfectly. Then she gets a contract to kill Pier, who's a 20-year-old cross-dresser. That's when things become weirder and more complex, because Serena finds herself in a complicated situation and doesn't know how to exterminate Pier. She becomes involved with Pier's family

and soon Pier's mother, Gemma, becomes fascinated and attracted by her...

Brendan Connell creates an excellent and memorable vision of European culture and society and urban decay in this novel. Writing wittily about European culture and society is often difficult for several readers, but in my opinion Brendan Connell is one of the few authors who succeed in it. He also manages the difficult feat of writing fluently and fascinatingly about customs strange and peculiar without appearing to be condescending. I also have to mention that he writes boldly and unflinchingly about all things connected to sexuality. (It's truly refreshing to read a story in which all of these things are in balance.)

This novel has a wonderfully inventive structure, because there are sections (and footnotes) that describe the names of famous flute players and the types of prostitutes that were found in ancient Greece etc, and then the story continues in a normal way. These sections are truly interesting, because the author has added several details to them. The author has also written one paragraph backwards so that it needs to be viewed in the mirror - this is rare in literary novels.

The unusual structure isn't the only thing that separates this novel from other novels. This novel requires quite a lot of concentration from the readers, because it's much more complex than several other novels out there on the market. In my opinion this is great, because I love reading novels that make you think about what you're reading.

In several places the prose is charmingly poetic and lyrical, but also deliciously sharp. Brendan Connell's descriptions of the events are beautiful and they transport the reader into a true literary bliss (it isn't often that readers have a chance to read something like this, because finding this kind of descriptive prose is extremely difficult nowadays). His descriptions of the characters and their traits are wonderfully vivid, and his observations on society are as sharp as they are accurate. He easily creates a perfect atmosphere for the pleasant and unpleasant happenings.

I have to mention that I love Brendan Connell's twisted sense of humour very much, because his humour is often pitch black and he manages to surprise the reader with his nuanced humour. His humour is also fresh and playful.

Serena Plievir is an intriguing character, because she's a flutist who murders people for money. One of the things that makes her interesting is that she prefers not to kill young people (in her opinion killing young people is "miserable work"). The author wrote well about Serena's work and what she did to get close to her targets. It was interesting to read how Serena got to know Pier, Glauco and Gemma and got involved with them (I also enjoyed reading about how Serena felt about the family). The author also wrote fascinatingly about Serena's exquisite taste in fine arts and music.

I think it's possible that Nikita (played by Anne Parillaud in the film Nikita [aka La Femme Nikita]) and other famous female assassins from different movies and TV series may have been sources of inspiration for the author when he has created the character of Serena Plievir. I'm not sure if the character of Alice Morgan (played by Ruth Wilson in the British crime series Luther) has been a source of inspiration to the author, but it's possible, because the characters of Alice and Serena have a few similarities. There are of course plenty of differences, because Serena murders people in order to get money and has an expensive taste in art, but I can almost see Ruth Wilson as Serena.

Before I finish writing this review, I'll mention that the cover art by David Rix fits the story perfectly. The historical references are wonderful, because they add a compelling and a slightly mysterious atmosphere to the story.

In my opinion Miss Homicide Plays the Flute is a superb feast of extraordinary storytelling, seductive decadence and experimental strangeness. It's a gorgeous combination of different elements and nuances that

melt together and produce a beautiful and seducing symphony of sublime pleasures and perversions to readers who appreciate reading something out of the ordinary. (By the way, if you truly want to enjoy the excellence of this novel, pour yourself a glass of wine, put a CD of classical music to your CD player and press play, sit in a comfortable chair, lean back and let yourself be seduced by the story.)

If you appreciate quality and good prose and read literary novels, do yourself a favour and read Miss Homicide Plays the Flute immediately. It's a unique novel about the art of assassination and poisoning, musical instruments and history (Brendan Connell stirs these elements into a perfect mix of strange beauty and irresistible elegance). If you like thrillers, enjoy classical music, love weird stories and are fond of decadence, you won't be disappointed by Miss Homicide Plays the Flute, because it offers all of these things and much more in an unforgettably weird package. It's a literary treasure that awaits to be discovered by as many readers as possible.

Highly recommended!

Karl says

I found "Miss Homicide Plays the Flute" to be excellent. Serena Plievier, the main character plays the flute in a German orchestra. She loves her job. But alas, it does not pay the bills, as Serena loves to collect expensive fine art. So she hires herself out to kill people. Be warned, this is not a Modesty Blaise type of pop book. This is a symphony.

Serena's story is intermingled with the history of murder, the history of poisoning, and the history of musical instruments. All intertwined as only Mr. Connell is capable of doing through his exquisite use of language, allegory, and art.

If you like footnotes, as I do, this book has them. There are only 200 copies of the Hardcover produced, so act quickly and pick one up.

This hardcover is numbered 5 of 200 published and is signed by Brendan Connell.

Caleb Wilson says

I love Brendan Connell's writing: crisp and perfect prose, devolving occasionally into poetic fragments, studded with mind-blowing levels of erudition (lists, footnotes). This is a lovely, grotesque novel, and probably the fullest expression of his style I've read.
