



Funeral at Noon

By Yeshayahu Koren

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One of the best novels out of Israel in recent memory. --Kirkus (starred review)

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Funeral at Noon By Yeshayahu Koren Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

With his spare but gripping prose, Yeshayahu Koren quietly portrays a small, hot Israeli village; a restless, bored housewife; and the events that lead, one by one, to tragedy. Koren's evocative style, translated into English by Dalya Bilu, makes palpable the stone walls strewn with cigarette butts, the dry thorns that scratch housewife Hagar's legs, and the awkward stance of Yiftach, the round-faced 10-year-old neighbor with whom Hagar explores the abandoned village. The novel's tone is thick with tension, the descriptions starkly sensuous, and an air of melancholy and mystery clings to the narrative. It's not an easy book to put down once you've entered its world.

Koren deftly weaves into his story Israeli history, simple details of daily village life, the struggles of the heart, and the presence of the land. It's a wonderful choice for a novel to read when you're planning a trip to Israel, visiting Israel, or even daydreaming about a trip to Israel. The guidebooks and itineraries may be full of museums and archaeological sights, but while you're waiting for the bus or cooling off after a day of seeing sights, your soul can drink the subtle nuances wrought by Koren's pen, creating an intimate bond between you and Israel such as that which forms between Hagar and her young neighbor, Yiftach. It will linger with you long after you've read the last page.

From Publishers Weekly

A stark tragedy unfolds in Israeli author Koren's deceptively simple novel, first published in Hebrew in Israel in 1974. In an Israeli village in the 1950s, Hagar Erlich, a childless, frustrated housewife who is drifting apart from her self-absorbed garage-mechanic husband, Tuvia, forms a special attachment to her neighbor's 10-year-old son, Yiftach. She takes him on walks to a ruined, deserted Arab village, where Hagar meets a nameless Israeli soldier with whom, on impulse, she later has a sexual liaison in an abandoned Arab house. After Yiftach spies them through a window during their secret lovemaking, the boy, confused and upset, vanishes from home. Hagar, by concealing the affair from her husband and by misrepresenting to police the circumstances of Yiftach's disappearance, compounds the ensuing tragedy. Koren makes every word count, and his restrained storytelling is charged with the tensions of living in an embattled land. His subtle study of poor communication in a stifling marriage mirrors the disillusionment of Israeli Jews amid the fraying of the old communal pioneer mentality while also echoing the misunderstandings and lack of communication between Jews and Arabs.

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From Kirkus Reviews

A first English translation of a subdued and haunting story of Israeli village life, originally published in Hebrew in 1974, that combines elements of Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady* and L.P. Hartley's *The Go-Between*, with hints of Albert Camus and Paul Bowles to produce a devastating impression of waste and loss. A funeral, early in the novel, establishes a mournful tone that never dissipates (and never relaxes its grip on the reader) and that deftly suggests a premature end to things, a darkness that descends too soon. The aftermath of that funeral resonates with images of heat and exhaustion, with suggestions of failed communication, and with a sense of the nearby presence of vaguely threatening dangers. These elements join to create an atmosphere of depression that encompasses Koren's protagonist, the young housewife Hagar Erlich. Indifferent to her busy husband Tuvia, and unable to stir herself to complete the requirements for her teacher's certificate or to find some other fulfillment, Hagar drifts into an almost maternal relationship with a ten-year-old boy, Yiftach, entrusted to her care. During walks with Yiftach outside their village to a former Arab settlement (now used as a military training facility), Hagar abandons herself to the consequences of her

meeting with a solitary, taciturn soldier--and passively endures the linked catastrophes that overtake her marriage to Tuvia, their neighbors, and the naively trusting boy. The story's a simple one, and Koren conveys its exceptional portraits of wasted lives with rigorous understatement. But its characterizations are deep and weighted with implied emotion. Koren intensifies our understanding of his damaged people through several interpolated extended flashbacks, such as the story of Yiftach's mother's unhappy youth and continuing bad luck with men, and the revelation of Tuvia's history of submissiveness and disappointment- -a history that leaves him helpless in the face of Hagar's unhappiness and unfaithfulness. A minor masterpiece, and one of the best novels out of Israel in recent memory. -- *Copyright ©1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Roger Bennett:

What do you about book? It is not important with you? Or just adding material if you want something to explain what the one you have problem? How about your free time? Or are you busy person? If you don't have spare time to complete others business, it is make one feel bored faster. And you have extra time? What did you do? Everyone has many questions above. They should answer that question mainly because just their can do in which. It said that about reserve. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is suitable. Because start from on pre-school until university need this Funeral at Noon to read.

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