



Premeditated Murder

Slobodan Seleni? , Jelena Petrovic (Translator)

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Jelana, a young drama student and photographer, lives in contemporary Belgrade. Lively, intelligent, and complex, she hides a big heart behind a surly look, and expresses herself in highly-colored, provocative language. Such language serves as an act of revolt against a society which has learned to distill horror-horror which her boyfriend encounters first hand on the battlefield. Coming across old belongings of her grandmother, Jelena reconstructs her tale, using imagination where the puzzle reveals no concrete truth.

The life uncovered is one of passion and terror, and of crossed romance. A young woman caught between loyalties-to her step-brother, fellow explorer of sex and true friend; to her ideologies and principles; and to an officer of the formidable secret police. Does she resign herself to a disinherited life at the mercy of those running the country? And who is the father of her child? The grandfather of her grandchild?

Selenic deftly links broken lives, bound by war across a chasm of half a century, in an elegant and amusing voice.

Premeditated Murder Details

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From Reader Review Premeditated Murder for online ebook

Kunuici says

Five decades seem not to have changed a thing in a small Balkan country. The people are different, but pattern of destruction is the same. Interweaving of two stories, each of them with its own shadows. But the shadows, although heavy, are marvelously composed...

????????? says

[illegible]

SamB says

As good as I remembered, very glad I picked it up again.

Dusica says

Although better if you can read it in Serbian language, the translation does it justice. Recommend the book to anyone interested in Serbian history and culture. Movie interpretation is great too.

Kelly says

1992 - Jelena's life with her Serbian soldier lover parallels her grandmother's life in WW2. She find grandmother's diary and searches for the truth in her own life. I think the book will not be appreciated unless people have background knowledge of Serbia and Croatia and their history and war.

Marija Filipovic says

Prezadovoljna i knjigom i filmom.

Milan/zzz says

Slobodan Selenic published the last of his six novels in 1993 in Belgrade, where he died two years later. In 'Premeditated Murder', he spins out two strands that are both parallel and intricately intertwined. One is the story of a young woman named Jelena trying to hold her life together in Belgrade in the terrible year of 1945, "a dark era of ruination". The second is the story of another Jelena, the granddaughter of the first, as she tries to hold her life together in Belgrade in the terrible year of 1992, in another dark era of ruination.

The younger Jelena has found a cache of letters and papers that belonged to her grandmother, who died in a sanatorium in 1950. In a city preparing for another senseless and barbaric war, she meets a wounded young soldier named Bogdan Bilogorac in a park. She names him Bonehead and takes him home to take care of him. With Bonehead's help, Jelena tries to assemble a book about her grandmother out of the "patchy, accidental trinkets" she has found, and "Premeditated Murder: The Love-Life of My Grandmother Jelena" is the result.

The first Jelena was beautiful, intelligent, educated, aristocratic, and stubborn as a bulldog. The second Jelena is plain, spottily educated, crudely outspoken; her friends call her "Bulika", short for bull terrier, because she has that kind of loyalty, stubbornness, and guts. The two women are totally unlike each other in every superficial way, the same in everything that matters. Both women are heroic in worlds that do not recognize heroism, worlds where heroism doesn't make any difference anyway.

'Premeditated Murder' is an amazing novel no reader will be able to forget, no matter how much he might want to - an angry, powerfully emotional, and profoundly pessimistic book.

Stefan says

Bukvalno sam je progutao za par sati. Odli?na!

Jovana Palavestra says

Unlike "Fathers and Forefathers", Selenic's book which raised many questions that made me reassess even the firmest of my beliefs (which, at times, was a very painful process), "Premeditated Murder" was a lighter read. But this, in no way, means that the book itself is a light read. On the contrary.

There are two time frames to this story - one, set in Belgrade during the final years of the WWII, and the other, set also in Belgrade, during the equally tragic year of 1992. Jelena Panic is a student of dramaturgy and one of the rare rays of sunshine in the otherwise grim Belgrade of the 90s. With the help of a wounded soldier from the Croatian front Bogdan Bilogorac whom she happened to find sleeping on a park bench, she is trying to write a book on her grandmother's love life, finding bits and pieces along the way which will reveal a rather macabre story of a love triangle in a "liberated" Belgrade where one act or ill-chosen word

could get you imprisoned, or, more likely, killed. Communism and its devastating effects on Serbian society had always been a favorite topic of Selenic, but in this book, his biting criticism is a bit toned down compared to "Fathers and Forefathers", focusing more on the emotional aspect of the story. His characters are realistically portrayed, and, with the exception of Jelena and Bogdan, they are really difficult to like with all their intellectual snobbishness, bourgeois vanity and feeling of supremacy. Nonetheless, they are real. And his Belgrade of the 90s is also real, starting from the student antiwar protests and rallies, the effects of sanctions and warmongering to overcrowded busses and ever helpful health officers. Although this book is rich with humor (there were plenty of LOL moments for me), this isn't a feel-good novel. Be forewarned. And prepare tissues, you'll need them.

P.S. I would also like to recommend the movie based on this novel. In my opinion, it is one of the rare instances where a movie does a book justice.

Nikos79 says

I think Slobodan Selenic is the second best Serbian writer I have read so far after Ivo Andric. Here I want to agree with another reviewer who claimed that Premeditated Murder seems a lighter reading compared to Fathers and Forfathers by the same author, but it's not light at all. Perhaps this happens cause this book's main plot is based on two love affairs over the years. However the historical and political background is quite powerful within its pages something that prevents us characterize it as something light. The plot is taking place in Belgrade but in two different eras, one during the last and post war years of WWII, and one at '92 during Yugoslavia's civil war. A really interesting thing is that Selenic uses many multiple narrating voices each one has a characteristic style and he does it extremely successfully. In conclusion this is one more excellent book, not that powerful as the other one I mentioned before but certainly worth a reading. Unfortunately there isn't any other book by the writer translated in my language. However I 'll keep reading Serbian literature (and meet new authors) which seems really good and many times very notable in my eyes so far (there were 1-2 disappointments as well but belong to minority).

Liv (???) says

Gledala sam film barem deset puta pre nego što sam je po prvi put pro?itala, a opet me pri?a udari svaki put.
