



The Missing Guests of the Magic Grove Hotel

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As a nurse ethnicist, Ladarat Patalung works to save the lives of her patients, and to make sure the ones she can't save have at least the dignity of a "good death."

But when wealthy foreign travelers start to go missing all across Thailand, Detective Wiriya Mookjai fears that a killer is at large, and turns to Ladarat for help.

The travelers have nothing in common, except for brief stays at a mysterious resort, known as the Magic Grove Hotel...

Ethical Chiang Mai Detective Agency

Murder at the House of Rooster Happiness

The Missing Guests of the Magic Grove Hotel

The Missing Guests of the Magic Grove Hotel Details

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From Reader Review The Missing Guests of the Magic Grove Hotel for online ebook

Linda L says

Maybe I should have read #1 first, but I just didn't care much for this book. Ladarat was way too insecure and Wiriya had no clue how to deal with her. And the entire premise of the book was too strange -- terminally ill folks who want to die alone in a strange country where they don't speak the language?? How is that a good thing? And I figured out the bit about the juice boxes -- not the straw part, but the needle part. My favorite characters were Jonah and the little dog. I truly struggled to finish this -- it seemed long, but maybe that was just me.

Rachel says

The Missing Guests of the Magic Grove Hotel is a charming mystery. It reminded me a bit of reading the Isabel Dalhousie series in that the central protagonist, Ladrat Patalung, is a reflective and thoughtful woman. Rather than the editor of an academic philosophy journal, here we have a nurse ethicist who is thinking about her patients and especially about what it means to have a good death.

I enjoyed meeting Ladrat and, as someone fascinated by palliative care, I enjoyed that side of the novel. This is a mystery but with a lot more focus on the characters and their lives and thoughts than on the mystery itself, which did not bother me at all.

However, I would have liked a bit more depth on Ladrat's relationship with Detective Wiriya. I wanted to really have her delve into the complexities of being an amateur sleuth who is involved with a recognized detective and I felt that while Casarett brought up some of the conflict, he glossed over it rather than delving more and I would have liked to have seen that.

Kyrie says

Ladarat, a nurse ethicist in Chiang Mai stumbles onto several minor mysteries. Why is a young doctor so exhausted? What is the lady with the parrot bags giving to foreigners at the bus station? Why are some people waking up on bus station benches with no clue what happened on their trip there? Why are there so few deaths in the hospital palliative care unit? Where are the guests from the Magic Grove Hotel?

This book grew on me. It's slow and thoughtful, with lots of food references. Picture Precious Ramotswe in Thailand. There are lots of similarities between Ladarat and Alexander McCall Smith's detective.

I figured out the two big mysteries long before the lead characters did, but I didn't mind. The descriptions of Thai culture and life were fascinating. It was a gentle trip to a different place. I would definitely read another in this series, especially when I want a break from regular life.

Also this book fulfills No. 40 from the 2018 Popsugar reading challenge - your favorite prompt from the 2015, 2016, or 2017 Popsugar reading challenge (2015 A book by an author you've never read before).

Olivia says

I picked this up thinking that apart from a pleasant read it might give me some painless insights into Thai culture and the surrounds of Chiang Mai.

Hmm...a very lightweight detective story, almost as if Alexander McCall-Smith's No 1 Detective had pre-set her v. new and v. shiny laptop to write itself a No. 1 ladies Detective novel but in another land.

Over-written and repetitive to the point of boringly pointless at times. A few funny or informative moments. The main 'message' regarding westerners choosing to relocate to 'die with dignity' is not, in itself, uninteresting.

Above all I glean that Thais of Chiang Mai prize a certain form of Coconut cake/dessert above all others. Pity a sample doesn't come with the boook.

Lizzytish says

I loved this book! The character development is lovely, as are the facts about Thailand. It's a slow pace that works. I just want to cuddle up on the couch with some tea as I visit Thailand and meet new friends. The telling reminds me of an Alexander McCall Smith story. Did you know there is a different Thailand name for each kind of smile someone uses?

The mysteries are simplistic which works

A charming read.

Helen says

What looked like an interesting mystery set in Chiang Mai, Thailand, turned out to be very disappointing. The book just felt like it was trying to be another No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency mystery, but failed to evoke the same sense of place that Alexander McCall Smith describes as Botswana.

The plot revolved around four little problems: missing farangs from the Magic Grove Hotel, the tired doctor, the parrot bags and the drugged travelers who travelled by long distance bus. All solved by the nurse ethicist, Ladarat and her boyfriend Wiriya.

I wasn't able to decide what a nurse ethicist really did, except deliver a speech at a conference.

Much was written about Thai food that I really expected recipes at the end of the book. Kanom maprao and peaflower tea sounded interesting and I will try to find them at my Thai restaurant. Or look up in a cookbook/internet.

Emily says

I rarely give a book one star, so when I do, I feel like I should explain.

I mostly enjoyed this book. It is a pleasant read with charming characters.

Then I got to the end.

It turns out the Magic Grove Hotel has become an unofficial destination for those seeking to end their lives. And the proprietor of the hotel is not a murderer, but, for all intents, a willing accomplice in suicide. She doesn't kill them. Instead, she makes sure they're really terminally ill, then gives them a comfortable place to commit suicide. Once it's done, she buries them in the backyard and donates their luggage to charity.

And this is where my opinion of the book did an abrupt change. Upon finding out what is really happening to the missing guests, the main characters, while they don't explicitly support it, they do suggest that maybe it's not so wrong. The guests were terminally ill and chose to do it, so... They turn a blind eye and the proprietor continues on, but now sends the ashes back to their families, rather than burying the guests in the backyard.

I'm sorry, but the moment you imply that suicide is a valid option for certain people, you've lost me. The missing guests spoke of not wanting to be a burden, of not wanting to be less than they were, of wanting to avoid the pain and indignity of their disease. Wouldn't anyone in that position? But agreeing with a person that they're better off dead is wrong. Why do we mourn the suicide of a person with a mental illness/depression/etc. as a tragedy, but cloak the suicide of a person with a terminal illness in terms of compassion and dignity? Shouldn't our focus be on ending suffering, rather than ending the person? Terminal illness is a tragedy, but so is suicide. The presence of the first does not change the nature of the second. Acting otherwise just starts us down a very dangerous road.

Allan Doe says

Pretty good story. The names of the Thai food slowed me way down to ill effect. Next.

Anne Logan says

I'm a fan of the occasional cozy mystery, although I only read them every once in awhile because they can be a bit slow. The Missing Guests of the Magic Grove Hotel by David Casarett is a perfect example of the cozy mystery; it's slow, very slow, in fact the 'mysteries' that came to light were only really introduced about a third of the way into the book. In between working on her 'cases' nurse ethicist/amateur detective Ladarat Patalung focuses on food; what she's eating, what she's going to eat later, and why she can't cook very well despite her love of food. There's also a cute little dog named Chi that accompanies her every so often when she's visiting patients, and there are lots of in-depth descriptions of his demeanor. So...there's that.

To see the rest of my review please visit:
<https://ivereadthis.com/2018/02/27/bo...>

FangirlNation says

Ladarat Patalung, nurse ethicist, gets involved in another case with her detective boyfriend, Wiriya Mookjai,

in tracking down missing visitors to Thailand in *The Missing Guests of the Magic Grove Hotel* by David Casarett. Ladarat doesn't really have time to help Wiriya because she has a lot of extra work, plus a conference presentation to prepare, but she can't turn him down when the families of eight American or European tourists so far have reported that they haven't heard anything from their family members. Ladarat sends her very large American bouncer friend, Jonah, who is looking for a new line of work to the isolated Magic Grove Hotel, where each of these missing people have stayed at one point or another, as their new receptionist.

Read the rest of this review and other fun, geeky articles at [Fangirl Nation](#)

Cathy Cole says

I really enjoyed the first book in this series, *Murder at the House of Rooster Happiness*, and looked forward to this one with a great deal of anticipation. Unfortunately, *The Missing Guests of the Magic Grove Hotel* was a bit of a disappointment. The characters and the setting are still strong, and the mysteries are intriguing, but this second book in the series really needed more editing and tightening up.

The mysteries took forever to get moving-- mainly due to the fact that too much emphasis was placed on food in the first half. Casarett has definitely tickled my taste buds with his descriptions of Thai food, but having Ladarat attempt to learn to cook was overkill. Once all the food descriptions stopped, the pace picked up and my flagging interest was re-engaged.

There were also too many mysteries to solve: drugged bus passengers, a smuggling ring, tourists disappearing from a strange hotel, a doctor who's acting strangely... and why are so few people dying in the palliative care unit of the hospital? When there are so many investigations screaming for attention, they oftentimes do not get all the attention they deserve, and that's what happened here.

Yes, *The Missing Guests of the Magic Grove Hotel* does have a problem or two, but I'm still looking forward to the next book. There is a wit and humor and gentleness in these two books that just plain makes me feel good. Learning about all the many variations of Thai smiles and feeling good are two excellent reasons to keep reading, don't you agree?

Megan says

Usually when you look at the reviews of a second book in the series you see the ratings go up, it stands to reason that the people reading the second book generally liked the first book, the author, the premise, and those who rated the first book lower didn't bother to read on to the second book thus creating a rising rating. That's what usually happens.

I adored *Murder at the Rooster House of Happiness* so much that I've been eagerly tracking and awaiting a follow up book to take me back into that world and those characters so it took me no time at all to snap up the *Magic Grove Hotel*... but unfortunately it took me a lot longer than I anticipated to actually read it. I'm not sure I'd say it disappointed me, but it certainly didn't live up to it's elder sibling. The problem is I can't really put my finger on what it was...

The setting was just as unique and rich. The characters were just as quirky and well-rounded. The writing was just as solid. And yet... it was slow, so slow. I'd say the first third to half took real effort to push through and while I found reading the second half happened more naturally I wouldn't exactly say that the plot picked up any.

And while the Rooster House of Happiness had more than one story intertwining in and through together, this book felt like ideal plots for, maybe, two short stories or novellas woven together to make one full novel. Which is a shame. As novellas the stories would have been much more compelling and kept us interested in the character and series, while cobbled together as a novel seeming to lack one cohesive plot line/mystery it does the exact opposite.

But it's still a good book, just not an amazing or wonderful book, but good and definitely worth picking up. Just don't read it on an empty stomach, and definitely look up the number to your local Thai delivery restaurant because you will leave almost every chapter of this book hungry.

Jaclyn says

This is such a lovely series!

Linda says

This was tough for me to rate fairly.

Pros: I really enjoyed the adventures of Khun Ladarat. I enjoyed learning about a small city in Thailand and its inhabitants and I thought the descriptions of the street foods she loves were a great added touch. I hope there is a book 3 in this series.

Cons: this series is a rip-off of A McCall-Smith's #1 Ladies Detective series. Both series are written by white men from USA/Scotland about Indigenous women in 3rd world countries (Thailand/Botswana) Both women become detectives. Both women rely on a book written by an American and consider it their bible in how to do their work (ethics&detective/detective) Both women philosophize frequently using formal language- and even use the same phrases (such as "This is well known"). Both women have younger assistants who are outspoken, opinionated, and who want to claim credit that is due to the women. I think this author read the #1 Ladies series or saw the TV adaptation before he wrote this series.

Given all this, I still enjoyed it and would read another.

Emma says

2 1/2 stars.

Idk the story just didn't engage me and I couldn't of cared less what happened... maybe I just wasn't in the mood for this type of story. ?
