



Shadow Family

Miyuki Miyabe , Juliet Winters Carpenter (Translator)

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In *Shadow Family*, Miyuki Miyabe draws readers into the amorphous world of Internet chat rooms-a world of people from all walks of life attracted by the possibility of being whomever they want to be.

Police investigating the murder of a middle-aged office worker discover e-mail correspondence on the victim's computer that indicates he had been a regular participant in an Internet chat room, as the "father" in a fantasy "family." Meanwhile, a female detective is assigned to protect the dead man's real-life daughter who complains of being stalked. As the real daughter confronts her father's alternate life, we are pulled into a psychological drama that pits reality and illusion against each other in astonishing ways.

Shadow Family Details

Date : Published December 9th 2005 by Kodansha (first published January 1st 2001)

ISBN : 9784770030047

Author : Miyuki Miyabe , Juliet Winters Carpenter (Translator)

Format : Paperback 203 pages

Genre : Mystery, Cultural, Japan, Asian Literature, Japanese Literature, Fiction, Crime, Asia

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From Reader Review Shadow Family for online ebook

Deniz Balc? says

Miyuki Miyabe daha çok anaak?m yazarl?k diyebilece?imiz, korku/gerilim, polisiye, dönem dramalar? ve melodramlar yaz?yor. Oldukça çok say?da da eseri var. Asl?nda bu tarz kitaplar ülkemizde her zaman okur bulur ancak Miyabe'nin yahn?z bu kitab? çevrili?i, ilginç geldi bana.

Polisiye/gerilim türündeki Gölge Aile, kolay okunabilecek; kendinden akan bir kitap. Grange'den sonra bu tarz polisiyenin iyi örneklerini okumak çok zor. Ciddi anlamda, her ?eyin sarmal oldu?u, sonunda da etkileyici bir ?ekilde katilin ortaya ç?kt??? polisiyenin maksimumunu Grange zaten yaptı?. Ama yine de çok kötü bir roman de?ildi. Polisiyeseverlerin okuyabilece?i, butik bir eser.

Kitaptan edebiyat beklemeyin. Öyle bir polisiye de?il. Yeni dünyan?n her gün bir tane kar??la?t??? türde bir eser.

3/5

Patrick Sheriff says

This was an OK police procedural, but I'm beginning to wonder about Miyabe's writing abilities. Her celebrated All She Was Worth felt a little poorly plotted and the ending was frankly lazy (my review is here: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>) and some of the writing was a bit clunky. I had thought that was possibly the fault of the translator, but the translator is different for this one and the same faults are present, so there's only one person to blame. That's not to say Shadow Family (Japanese title RPG, which is a better title btw) is objectively bad, it isn't, but it just falls a little flat. The banter between the detectives felt unnatural, the puzzle over-dominant and the social problem being explored -- the terrible danger of internet chatrooms -- felt a bit dated and silly, like a novel warning of the dangers of fax machines or something. But despite those flaws, it was good about the problems of a broken family, which in Japan often means one staying together when it really is non-functioning and all members would benefit from being free to go their separate ways. The book did keep me reading all the way to the end, so that's worth an extra star, but I'm still waiting to be wowed by Miyabe.

Download my starter library for free here - <http://eepurl.com/bFkt0X> - and receive my monthly newsletter with book recommendations galore for the Japanophile, crime-fiction-lover in all of us.

Elisa says

The only other Japanese book I've read is Out, by Natsuo Kirino, and I loved it so much that Shadow Family disappointed me a little. It's not bad, it's just too predictable and a little slow in the middle.

Nicki says

Intriguing premise about a married man who had a pretend online family. I don't think I have ever come across a book with this type of story. The mystery was good too.

Lokidm says

Final para la Tetralogía de Tokio.

Nuevamente Miyabe me ha enganchado con sus forma de escribir, sus personajes y sus casos.

En este caso, como en los anteriores, el culpable es bastante sencillo de adivinar, pero eso no es lo que importa en esta novela.o importante es la soledad, la falta de comunicación y la familia, esto por encima de todo.

Hay algunos momentos en los cuales me he llegado a emocionar, y he tenido que parar.

Como me gusta esta autora, y espero que sigan apostando por ella en España.

Julieta Steyr says

Hace mucho que no me divertía tanto con un libro. Si lo van a leer, tengan en cuenta una cosa: acá no importa que sepamos rápidamente quién es el asesino, disfruten del viaje porque hasta a mí me ha sorprendido al final y eso es extremadamente difícil de lograr. Sabemos quién es el asesino, pero mejor es cómo llegó hasta ahí y cómo se resuelve todo. Tiene unos diálogos impecables en cuanto a autenticidad y unos monólogos internos creíbles.

Michelle Yoon says

Shadow Family is a mystery story. Two people get murdered within a couple of days of each other, and seemingly unrelated. But thread from a striking blue parka left on both crime scenes soon prove to the police that things are more than meets the eye. Meeting dead end after dead end, one of the officers come up with a theory that could potentially make or break the mystery behind the curious deaths.

And it is here that the story finally starts to reveal itself.

One of the victims had, during the one year or so before his tragic death, been part of an online 'family'. He called himself 'Dad', and his family consisted of 'Mom', 'Minoru', and 'Kazumi'. A 4-member family. A typical family set-up, only that it was all virtual.

Upon finding out about this make-believe family, how does the real-life family respond? And how do these deaths reveal the truth behind all the pain, anger and loneliness?

*

Personally, I feel that the mystery in this plot is not at all strong. In fact, I felt like I already knew who the culprit was half-way through the book. However, I also feel that the redeeming point of this book is how the story unfolds. The mystery of the plot itself may not have been its strongest virtue, but certainly the way the characters were introduced, and how certain things were thrown into light just when you least expect it... These make the plot feel less significant.

We're made to think, exactly why does a man with his own family go in search for a virtual family on the Internet? What drives a person to such measures? Then we are given a chance to see things from the wife's perspective. How would one feel if her husband were to find another 'wife' on the Internet? Does one feel lonely? Does one feel like a failure?

How about the people with whom this man forms a 'family' with? Why does one choose to be the virtual daughter of a stranger?

On the face of it, this is a mystery story. But underlying this story is the undeniable search for connection. Under the surface of it all, is the question of how each different person reacts to a given set of circumstances. How does one overcome feelings of loneliness and desperation?

At the end of it all, when family ties start to tangle up into a big mess, or maybe fray away at the ends, what is it that holds the family unit together?

From: <http://sushu.blog.com/2009/10/22/shad...>

Jessica says

Extremely impressive.

Like Seicho Matsumoto, another favorite Japanese crime novelist, Miyabe is less interested in keeping the reader guessing 'who did it?' than in showing us *how* the detective(s) come to discover the murderer, and in this case, wring a confession. Miyabe is equally interested in exploring a social problem: in the last novel I read, *All She Was Worth*, it was the world of credit, loans, personal debt and bankruptcy; here it's the fantasy/alternate life the Internet provides.

Astute and well-written. She's excellent with character as well as plot.

Ksenia (vaenn) says

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Ginger K says

It's hard to talk about a mystery, especially one as short as *Shadow Family*, without giving too much away. What I am comfortable saying is that the story is not exactly what I'd expected from the summary, but not in the way which makes me cringe and wonder if the blurb writer even read the same book. Rather, to have said too much would have dampened my enjoyment of the revelations made throughout the novel. The author slowly pulls back layer after layer of stories and role-play, to expose the truth of the murder. I could almost say that the entire novel is one long Parlor Scene during which the detective stands up and announces that the murderer is *here in this very room* and explains how he solved the mystery.

But even that would be inaccurate, as our detective, Desk Sergeant Takegami, is far too self-effacing to command the attention of a roomful of interested parties. He would, by his own account, feel much more comfortable pursuing paperwork than conducting interviews. The language itself is far more beautiful than I expect from literature of this genre, though I'm sure that's an unfair generalization. I loved the way characters' appearances were sketched in with a few clever turns of phrase and the beautiful use of metaphor and analogy, especially towards the very end.

Shadow Family is a good, fast read. My only trouble with it arose from the high number of unfamiliar family names which were introduced too quickly in the opening chapters for me to get a good handle on which name belonged to which character. A reader more versed in Japanese names would probably not have the same problem, and I could have made my own life easier by cribbing a character sheet to refer to until I had the names down.

Gerald Kinro says

Police investigating the murder of a middle-aged office worker and his young lover discover that he had been a regular in an internet chat site where he is the “father” in a make believe family. Other participants are a young girl, a young boy, and a middle-aged woman, the “mother”. All four are drawn into this fantasy family because of less than ideal situations with their real families. A female detective is assigned to protect the real daughter of the murder victim, for she claims to being stalked.

This story has so much potential as it explored a world not written much about in crime novels. For me, it fell short, however. The acquisition of clues that solve the murder are done as a narrative. In this short work,

the initial part is virtually all narrative. The bulk of the scenes are in an interrogation room. While the psychological drama is intense, I would have liked it better if the author had made this into a procedural, showing how detectives follow leads, get clues and solve the puzzle.

Drew says

If you're looking for a great modern Japanese piece of mystery/crime noir, check out Miyabe's *Shadow Family*. I had read her other book, *All She Was Worth* awhile back and wasn't overly happy with how the story ended. That wasn't the case this time around. *Shadow Family* is a fabulous novel whose action revolves around a small cast of characters. Most of the action takes place inside a police interrogation room, although what is going on isn't what you'd expect. This relatively short novel (~ 190 pages) only covers a few hours in the police station, but effective flashback techniques fill in the missing pieces. The characters are well-developed and the emotions run high. The action involves a former desk jockey who stands in to help investigate two murders, which originally seemed unrelated but become connected through an the internet. Four unrelated characters, including one of the murder victims, formed a cyber-family on the internet. The interactions of these family members online and off drives the novel.

Glen says

A Japanese mystery.

A man is killed. When the police investigate, they find he had a real family, as well as an entirely different family that he met online.

A police procedural, but also, like most Japanese mysteries, a book of manners.

Emi Bevacqua says

I like reading Japanese stuff and generally stick to the well-known ones like Haruki Murakami and Banana Yoshimoto; I'd never heard of Miyuki Miyabe before, and would totally read more of her writing (a bunch of the characters have a past together so I'm assuming this is a sequel or follow up novel). This was a super quick read, a murder mystery involving four unrelated people who meet online and form an imaginary "family". Most of the drama actually takes place at the police station, in the interrogation room specifically. I've heard a lot about forced confessions in Japan, and in this story the police are heroic masterminds of justice who prevail. It's nice, just not very deep.

Brittany says

Shadow Family is an interesting look, via a mystery story, into the universe of online role-playing. The odd thing about this particular role-play is that a girl has other people role-playing her own family, after finding

her own less than attentive, let alone supportive. Though at times this framework seems a bit too literal for those of us who grew up in the age of going online and interacting with others (as an escape mechanism or otherwise) it's still an interesting read nonetheless.
