



## The Threshing Circle

*Neil Grimmett*

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A young couple arrive on the Greek island of Crete and begin prying into the execution of a beautiful English woman during the German occupation sixty years before. They enter a labyrinth of forbidden love, betrayals, murder, greed and vendettas, old and new.

Then they disappear.

A feisty Scottish woman and an irascible, Zorba-like Greek form a reluctant allegiance in a desperate attempt to find and rescue them. They both have very different motives for their involvement. Their search will take them to hidden rituals, ceremonies, remote gatherings, famous monasteries and villages abandoned after decades of vendettas. To the remote island of Gavdos and finally back to a place that, “Even God does not know exists”.

They will encounter characters good and evil; some modern and pragmatic, others ancient and magical. All the time they are being stalked by the sons of man who seeks to complete the crimes of his father and sate his own greed and insane desire for vengeance. These men are more animal than human and have been raised in the remote mountains for the sole purpose of carrying out the brutal will of their father.

The mystery of the real, hidden Crete runs deep, and THE THRESHING CIRCLE explores some of the myths and romance while not shying away from its often violent nature.

By the end choices will have to be made. If such actions are really possible on an island where many Cretans still believe that: “The Cycle of Blood”, can never stop flowing.

## **The Threshing Circle Details**

Date : Published May 12th 2015 by Lake Union Publishing (first published February 19th 2014)

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Author : Neil Grimmett

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## From Reader Review The Threshing Circle for online ebook

### Lynelle Clark says

I received the book from the author for an honest review.

This was absolutely a fantastic read. From the beginning the author drew you into this plot; tailored to hold you captive till the very last page. His ability to paint pictures with words making it alive and believable is simply outstanding. Every character, every place and every scene had your interest as this mystery / thriller reveals more of the human frailty, the greed, betrayal and their way of seeing things. The island of Crete lives according to their own rules where no law has a say.

The story begins in 1942, introducing you to a young woman who wanted to love her husband, see her baby grew and gain the respect and acceptance of the village. A simple thing that every person wants. But jealousy, hate and betrayal had its effect long after the tragic death of this woman. Sixty years later it still had its influence on the main characters: Barba Yiorgos and Diomidis; two elderly men that had their own experiences, was doing well and taking it easy. For 60 years people lived with revenge in their hearts, a misguided form of family honor as they ruined other people, shame and guilt. The vendetta coiling like an fat octopus around the sons and the entire community.

When a young woman found herself in the midst of this vendetta she had to go and find the truth, knowing it may cost her more than just her dead puppy and kitten. Kristy McIntyre, a divorced Scottish woman thought she could escape from her own life and troubles, buying a kafenion on the picturesque Island of Crete, not knowing that meeting these two elderly men the problems she would gain. Her tenacity and will power as well as strong ethics held her firm while sorting through the clues left by another young English couple: Eleni and Patrick. The moment Eleni stepped into the village it caused all sorts of reactions and when they disappear it caused more questions than answers.

The characters are colorfully painted with so much flair that you could not help but admire or even fell in love with them. From all the characters, Barba Yiorgos, was definitely my favorite. His larger than life persona made you believe that there is really men like this, filled with passion and not afraid to live as he pleases. He was boisterous, rough around the edges that loved his wine and olives, but with a heart of gold. Kristy's reluctance to fall for him could be seen throughout but even she had to bow her knee at the end.

All elements of a good thriller were evident in the book. Murder, mystery, abduction, romance, love, brutality, frailty, secrets and even a witch as you get to know the people and the Island and all the villages we visited on our tour. You are taken to many different places, meeting interesting characters: from the priest with one eye to Kyria. Enjoying them equally as the plot unfolds in every scene. The easy flow from one scene to the next made this a quick, fast paced book that will definitely take you deep into the emotional state of each person as you unravel the mystery so long buried.

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### R.C. Bean says

I was provided with a digital copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

There are some books that create a tremendous anticipation in you as the reader, even before you pick the book up for reading. This was one such book. The blurb and the thoughts of the other readers here, all made me certain that this book was going to be special and worthy of being cherished. True to this, the book proved to be brilliantly captivating and made me finish it in one go straight.

The story is enticingly multi-layered, with many plots, subplots and intricate twists. The book begins with a young couple, who land on Crete, a mesmerising Greek island, who try to find details about the execution of an English woman, Marianna, around 60 years ago, being suspected to be a spy. The author weaves a superbly different dimension into the tale at this point. What they discover is a web of mind-boggling, massive pit that brings to the fore tales of deception, hidden motives and betrayal. When they vanish, destiny brings together an unlikely team of two, to find and save the couple. The way the past and the present are threaded so deftly into each other makes this book very gripping.

Grimmett is a master of narration and he brings the locales to life with his excellent descriptions - these beautifully deliver the scene visually to the mind. The characters linger on in the mind long after one is done with reading the book. The language is exquisite and at the same time, easy on the mind - not taking away the readers' attention from the narration. The pace of the novel is perfectly chosen.

I highly recommend this book. If a "hard to put down" book that comes with a great plot appeals to you, then this book is a must-read!

My rating for this book: 5 stars

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### **Sandy S says**

4.5 stars

#### **ABOUT THE BOOK: Release Date February 19, 2014**

A young couple arrive on the Greek island of Crete and begin prying into the execution of a beautiful English woman during the German occupation sixty years before. They enter a labyrinth of forbidden love, betrayals, murder, greed and vendettas, old and new.

Then they disappear.

A feisty Scottish woman and an irascible, Zorba-like Greek form a reluctant allegiance in a desperate attempt to find and rescue them. They both have very different motives for their involvement. Their search will take them to hidden rituals, ceremonies, remote gatherings, famous monasteries and villages abandoned after decades of vendettas. To the remote island of Gavdos and finally back to a place that, "Even God does not know exists".

They will encounter characters good and evil; some modern and pragmatic, others ancient and magical.

All the time they are being stalked by the sons of man who seeks to complete the crimes of his father and sate his own greed and insane desire for vengeance. These men are more animal than human and have been raised in the remote mountains for the sole purpose of carrying out the brutal will of their father.

The mystery of the real, hidden Crete runs deep, and THE THRESHING CIRCLE explores some of the myths and romance while not shying away from its often violent nature.

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still believe that: "The Cycle of Blood", can never stop flowing.

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REVIEW: 4.5 stars--THE THRESHING CIRCLE, written by Neil Grimmett, is a storyline of mystery and suspense, where the past meets the present; where the sins of the father follow each successive generation; where revenge is the ultimate act of betrayal.

As the storyline unfolds, the reader is pulled back in time to 1942. Near a mountain village (on the Greek island of Crete), witnessed by the members of the village and an army of sadistic soldiers, a young woman named Marianna will be executed by the Nazis. As her infant lay screaming for the mother she will never know, a villager will take the young child and escape to places unknown. Fast forward sixty two years where a young British couple-Patrick and Eleni- in search of the truth will traverse a minefield of lies, deceit, murderous revenge and betrayal in the hopes of uncovering the truth. Enter Scottish ex-pat Kirsty and respected village elder Barba Yiorgos who take on the mission, when the authorities discount the story, to find and locate the now missing British couple. As the clues begin to unfold, Kirsty's support and faith in Barba's ability will shatter when another story from the past goes in a decidedly different direction.

THE THRESHING CIRCLE is a fascinating and intriguing crime story rich in Greek and Crete culture. From the small towns and villages, through the ancient ruins of a time long ago, the social nuances and idiosyncrasies of a people who remain locked away in their protective bubble, are the backdrop to a story rich in Greek and Crete heritage, old fashioned beliefs and deadly family secrets. The world building takes the reader on a tour through small cafes, the food and drink of the locals, as well as a cross-island tour in search of the truth. There are moments of betrayal, pain, vengeance, graphic sexual violence and imagery that run full circle from a time when the world was at war with itself to present day when a family is at war with everyone else.

Neil Grimmett will seduce your mind in this thrilling and suspenseful journey that follows two families, three generations and six decades. Where one family needs closure for the pain and heartbreak for an unimaginable death; still another family demands retribution for the sins of the past. There is a dark malevolence weaving itself through the story but in the end, justice will be delivered in much the same way a young woman met her murderous demise.

Copy supplied by the author

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### **Kath Middleton says**

This excellent story takes place on the island of Crete. Kirsty is a Scottish woman who left home to run a kafenion on the island following a divorce. A beautiful girl, Eleni, and her new husband, Patrick, come for their honeymoon and old memories are stirred up. Memories and enmities. Treachery and betrayal during WWII echo down the years and Eleni, with a half-Greek mother, is drawn in. Kirsty is determined to find the couple when they disappear in strange circumstances.

This is a tightly-written and exciting thriller which saw me carrying my kindle around for two days unable to let go. There is some breathtaking writing and some thoughtful comment on the concept of vendetta and how family honour can seem to overtake and overwhelm a whole life. It's not something we and Kirsty understand but by seeing it through Cretan eyes we find an inevitable struggle and a final acceptance. Highly recommended.

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### **Sandra Stiles says**

I wasn't really sure what to think about this book. It sounded interesting from the beginning. I was completely surprised by what I read. It starts off in 1942 in a small village in Crete. A young English woman is married to a Cretan soldier. What she doesn't know is that he is married to another Cretan woman. She thinks the people of the village have accepted her when they give her a gift. She shows it to her husband when he slips away from his patrol to see her. Little does he know that the person who gave it to her has branded her in many ways and the Germans will use these gifts against her. They take her from her house, leaving her young infant crying and they hang her. Until she takes her last breath she believes she is dying for the cause of her village. I could not believe how angry I felt at the villagers and how evil I felt some of them were.

The story then moves to present time and we meet a Scottish girl who is living in a Cretan village. She keeps getting proposals from a Cretan named Barba Yorba. They both see a young couple enter their village. Barba Yorba is spooked by this for reasons you learn later. Kristy welcomes Patneck and Eleni to the village. She helps them find a jeep to tour the place. Several strange events happen and then the couple disappear. Kristy tries to find out about them and finds herself a target for reasons she doesn't understand. She decides to seek the help of Barba Yorba. At first he is reluctant. The reason? He holds secrets the villages and families want kept hidden.

This becomes a quick read because once you get started the action of it keeps you going. You don't want to stop for any reason. Definitely one you want to read.

I received a copy to help facilitate my review. The opinions expressed here are my own.

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### **Frenchie says**

A web of deceit, lies and ultimate betrayal...

Oh my, what a read! I have to say, I skipped sleep because I couldn't bear not knowing what would come next. I know my review will not do the story justice, so, I will just try my best. I have read very good books this year, but this is actually the first book that had the 'wow' factor for me and stayed with me a little bit longer after I finished it.

The background is Crete today, but the root of the story is Crete, May 1942 when a young English artist, Marianna, is hanged by the Germans as a 'spy' and her baby daughter, Athena, left alone in her cot to starve to death. She is crying when a shadowy figure steps into the house to silence her.

Life continues on the island, with its blood feuds and nothing much is changed. Until the day a couple arrives in a little tourist town, Chania, and the young woman bears a striking resemblance to the young woman

hanged sixty years ago. It is just impossible and yet.... Kirsty, a Scottish expat, owner of a little café, is strangely attracted to them and feels the strong need to befriend them as she can sense they are looking for something.

The Threshing Circle is a story of deep forbidden love, jealousy and vendetta, bitter betrayal and the search for the truth but also, undying loyalty. There is not a boring moment in this book. From the beginning to the end, we are entangled in a web of deceit and doubt.

I recommend The Threshing Circle to everyone who likes a page turner - yes, I know, so cliché but true. Believe me, this is a book that will leave you breathless. Well, it did me. It will take you deep into the forbidding mountains of Crete, secret prisons, abandoned villages on a span of two generations. It is not a soft book, there is violence in it. Physical violence and emotional violence. Oh yes, well worth the read.

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### **Liz Barnsley says**

\*\*4.5 stars\*\*\*

Thank you to the author for the review copy.

A young couple arrive on the Greek island of Crete and begin prying into the execution of a beautiful English woman during the German occupation sixty years before. They enter a labyrinth of forbidden love, betrayals, murder, greed and vendettas, old and new.

So I wasn't quite sure what to expect going into this one – what I found was a wonderfully addictive story (I read it off and on in a single day), an absolutely tremendous sense of place (I feel like I have actually been to Crete) with some brilliantly drawn characters and an absolutely compelling premise.

I do love a novel where past seeps into present and there is much to discover lying just beneath the surface of seemingly ordinary lives. Sixty years ago a young woman, Marianna, is hanged as a spy, her baby left to starve. Move to current times and a visitor to the island, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Marianna, sparks off an expansive tale of vengeance, love and betrayal.

It is a beautifully woven multi stranded story, cleverly plotted to keep you turning the pages, with a high level of characterisation and one of those that it is extremely difficult to review without spoilers – beautifully written, emotional often, horrific sometimes and with an ending that made me draw a sharp breath, there was a great depth here that was somewhat unexpected.

Sometimes a novel comes along for me, that I am expecting to enjoy, but then surpasses that and ends up surprising and delighting me. This was one of those books and I was sorry to leave it behind me, I will certainly be reading more from this author.

Happy Reading Folks!

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### **Cheryl M-M says**

Some authors can transport you straight into the location, environment and setting their story takes place in. Grimmett does that exceptionally well. You can almost feel yourself wandering the dusty roads of Crete,

smelling the salty sea air and soaking in the atmosphere.

This tale starts in the past and the events of one night trickle like a ripple of water through time all the way into the present. Secrets once thought buried forever are suddenly alive and well and strutting through town.

One of the issues in the book, which is often swept under the carpet by people in these particular settings, is the way foreigners are perceived by native inhabitants of a country. No matter how long you live in a village, if you are not from there you may be accepted but will always remain a type of outsider.

In a way the story starts with one outsider, is reawakened by another and a third tries to understand the secrets buried deep within the past.

At one point I found myself disliking Kirsty, her actions and reactions. I was rooting for Barba Yiorgos all the way, despite his grumpy personality and demanding nature. Perhaps because I not only identified with the path of vengeance leading all the way back from WW2, I also agreed with the need for closure.

There is a poignant moment a few chapters before the end where the violence peaks and I have to admit I had to put the book down for a while. Why? Because of a very specific scene which is make or break for most of the characters. It is graphic in a sense that the author has created an image you are not likely to forget in a hurry. I came back to the story ready to accept the characters inevitable fate and the destruction which would come in its wake.

Eleni carries the bitter taste of betrayal on the tip of her tongue and deep in her soul. Kirsty begins to doubt the innocent nature of the young woman and wonders whether the ball was set in motion on purpose. At the height of her suspicion the invisible link becomes obvious between two people in the middle of the story. Nature and not nurture, blood and not water. As if it was always meant to be and the end was laid out and drawn in the dusty road with a bloody finger of fate many years ago.

This is a beautiful tale of betrayal, hatred, vengeance and love, and a vendetta stretching the span of a lifetime.

I received a copy of this book courtesy of the author.

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### **Joan says**

I loved this novel because it was full of extremes and loaded with Cretan culture, a certain darkness and yet exhilarating romances that titillate the reader.

The story begins with an extremely beautiful English woman, Marianne, falling in love with a married Cretan man, although she believed him to be single, has a baby girl by him, when he has to return to fighting Germans. As a vengeance for their misconduct, she is revealed to the Germans, who decide to make her an example to the locals populace what the Germans are capable of doing. They took her prisoner, stripped her naked and hung her before the populace as an example. They left her baby in her crib to starve or die from exposure.

This adulterous couple, as the locals considered them, remained an active story of the area and an older Cretan ex-Korean soldier, had a picture of Marianne and her lover, and his interest in them winds in and out throughout the story. A young English couple, Patrick and Eleni come to Crete seeking information and Eleni is the spitting image of the deceased Marianne.

The story is one mystery after another, with various elder Cretan men and women adding to its twists and

turns. A young Scottish girl, Kristy, has recently opened a shop and learns immediately of this age old story. She sees the picture of Eleni and is determined to help her find her answers before Eleni and Patrick are murdered. She is aware of the black nature of these Cretans and what they are capable of. She becomes attracted to an older Cretan Barba Yorba, who has betrayed that he has some interest in Marianne and her lover, which thread continues to run through the story.

Vendetta, retaliation, hate, passion continuously run through the story with always Cretans words to maintain its dark and colorful culture. At various moments, just when Kristy thinks she has the answers relative to Marianne, her baby girl and Eleni, then she realizes she is on the wrong trail.

This novel is complex and psychological, including several mysteries. I was given a complimentary copy for an honest review and I am delighted that this story crossed my path.

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### **Clare O'Beara says**

Set on the Greek island of Crete, this thriller looks first at life during the hated Nazi German occupation and then at modern day in 2004. We are early in no doubt that this book contrasts outsiders with islanders, and that lives will be lost.

An English girl stuck on Crete during the war falls in love with a Cretan freedom fighter and one of the local women smilingly gives her a gift of red silk, but on this is a picture of a mermaid with forked tail, which implies a loose woman. Not knowing the secret, the girl keeps the silk and so is implicated in the deaths of Nazi paratroops.

In modern day, Kirsty, a Scottish divorcee who has come to spend a warm winter serving coffee in her kafenion, looks askance at the womanising local men and chats with the tourists. Barba Yiorgos, a local elder, sips red village wine in the evening as he hears the cicadas chirp, musing on the changes he has seen. The two are thrown together when a young British couple come to investigate the disappearance of the 1940s Englishwoman. Secrets which have festered for generations are in danger of being uncovered.

I liked several aspects of this book; the immediate feeling for the location and culture which never lets up; the strong characterisation and history ranging as far back as the Ancient Greeks. We learn that the village stone threshing floor is where the whole village would dance in a circle; threshing out the grain from stalks. The spot was then used as a round theatre for village entertainment, also for a combat floor, the origins of later amphitheatres.

I didn't like the lengthy scenes of captivity and violence against women late in the book, but we expect violence in a thriller. The tension is skilfully built with Kirsty feeling under watch, vandalism, her friends disappearing, a shot being fired at a tourist and the British couple's Jeep being driven off a cliff. The danger for Kristy mounts as she keeps asking questions of people and seeing different aspects of the island - locals resent foreigners buying up cottages, while they also dislike a big landowner who wants to build housing on his end of the island. Drugs being grown in remote areas are a distinct possibility. So in more ways than one Kirsty and Barba Yiorgos are walking into trouble when they try to find the couple and discover what really did happen during the occupation.

Read THE THRESHING CIRCLE by Neil Grimmett for the armchair travel, the copious food and drink, the dancing, hospitality and history, the red mud rain as Sahara dust falls. As a bonus, you get a haunting and intriguing crime story.

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## **Nancy Silk says**

### **"A Modern Day Greek Classic"**

This is an astounding, never to be forgotten story written by Author Neil Grimmett. In today's world, Crete is a popular tourist attraction for the British Isles and Europe cultures. Even before and during the Second World War it was also a place where many foreigners took up residence. On May 17, 1942, in a high mountain village, Marianna, an English woman dwells with her infant daughter, Athena. Her husband, Michaelis, is a member of the Cretan Freedom Fighters hiding out from the Germans in the higher mountains. Michaelis can steal away occasionally into the village at night for a couple of hours to visit his wife and child. Marianna shows him the beautiful gift a woman has given her, which she believes reflected her acceptance in the village. It was a beautiful red silk chiton (dress) with Gorgona, the two-tailed mermaid embroidered on it. However, it was not given to her because the women accepted her; it branded her as a loose woman, who stole another woman's husband. But it also holds much more meaning when the German's arrive, drag Marianna from her home, and hang her naked from a tree for all to see. Now move on to the year 2004, in Chania where divorced Kirsty McIntyre, 36 years old, Scottish, has been owner of a cafe for four years. There is one man who occasionally comes into the cafe and taunts her. She detests him as he always tries to provoke her. He's strong-willed, a true Cretan, heavily gray bearded, with a walking stick. However, his body and carriage appears to be that of a much younger man. If I were watching this story as a movie, I can envision Sean Connery playing the role of Barba Yiorgos, who has always attracted beautiful women. There arrives a young couple from Britain who one evening, invites Kirsty to dine with them. While her husband Patrick is pouring the wine, Eleni brings out a box from the bedroom. Inside the box is the red silk dress ... with the Gorgona embroidered upon it. No one knows the story behind this dress, do they? Someone must, because before long, the vehicle Patrick and Eleni have been driving is found in the bottom of a deep ravine, and nowhere can they be found. This is an amazing story, one that I could not put down. It is classically beautifully written with much great style and mystery. The story is extraordinary and it will hook you from the start. There is much trauma overhanging this story, vendettas, passion, and history with many, many secrets to be revealed. Stay with it to the end. I highly recommend this compelling story.

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## **Tinfoot says**

### **Aloni, a Thresing Circle of Harvest Dancing and Death Harvesting**

Normally I am a quick reader; however, I spent two weeks with THE THRESHING CIRCLE. Not because it was labourious or confusing, quite the opposite. I read slowly, two or three chapters a time, to truly soak in page after page steeped in Cretan culture. I had wished to allow my mental painting to grasp as finely as possible the rich details that Neil Grimmett weaves into this thrilling tapestry with a native fluidity.

Although more thriller than traditional mystery, the Agatha Christie elements are there enough to have had me paging back to a dialogue, hoping I could pick up on the clue before the heroine did. Now that's something a thriller hasn't possibly ever made me do. As for the ending, for those who may wonder, "We have had the climax! Why is there still 15% of the book left?", I urge you keep reading as the final resolution mirrors wonderfully the very essence of THE THRESHING CIRCLE.

Potential concerns some readers may want to be aware of:

- There is a rather explicit scene of a dark sexual nature.
- A spattering of profanities, but never in an overwhelming, repetitive way.
- Unhappy ending for some animals.
- And of course, plenty of climatic blood.

None of these elements, however, are placed with wild abandon. The focus remains throughout on the mystery, the history, and the thrilling chase after truth, honor, obligation, and love.

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I received a free copy of the aforementioned book in exchange for a candid review. I have no genre bias, having always been extremely eclectic in reading tastes, and critically consider when applicable (in order of weight) titular promises vs content deliverance, stylistic qualities, general Kindle/physical formatting, and personal enjoyment.

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### **Grady says**

A mermaid with a forked tail.....

British author Neil Grimmett has been writing short stories and winning awards for same for many years. Born in Birmingham and now living in Somerset, Grimmett has traveled extensively in Greece and Spain and that sense of place comes through with distinction and acute attention to detail of place and culture in this debut full length novel **THE THRESHING CIRCLE**. It is a mystery thriller of betrayal, murder, vendetta, kidnapping and other chilling incidents that takes place on the island of Crete. Grimmett lived on Crete while writing this dark novel and the atmosphere and tastes and flavors of Crete come through on every page. Of note, a story from this novel was published in the Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine that offers the reader some suggestion as to both the quality and construct of the tale.

Grimmett quite intentionally develops his story from several angles, not unlike disparate clues in a detective mystery. During the German occupation of Crete in WW II an English woman was executed. A young couple besot with curiosity arrive on Crete with an attempt to investigate the execution, but they mysteriously disappear. Enter a headstrong woman from Scotland and bouncy but crusty Greek who align to search for the missing couple - together in their search, different in their motives. The search takes the reader with the couple on their curious entry into monasteries and villages and remote islands - all scarred by the vendettas of the past. The characters whom they encounter steam the globe of investigation - characters that only a witty and creative novelist could invent - and among this cast are the sons of very strange vendetta ridden man who is bent on revenge.

Grimmett wisely peppers his novel with sensual romance, raw language, bloody rituals, and some grisly moments that make the reader cringe (absolutely designed to accomplish that feat!). The author manages to dip up the atrocities of WW II, toss in some Cretan magic, add a dash of passion and a walloping does of intrigue to a very splendidly constructed novel. There WILL be more!

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## **Carrie Lahain says**

\*\*I received the Kindle version in return for an honest review.

In Neil Grimmett's taut thriller, the arrival of a young British couple on the island of Crete re-ignites a vendetta with its roots in the darkest days of WW II. It falls to Kirsty, a Scottish woman who owns a cafe, and Barba Yiorgos, a local bigger-than-life personality, to unravel decades worth of tangled secrets and half-truths and prevent a bloody history from repeating itself.

While I gave the book five stars, I had a serious love-hate relationship with it. The writing is fabulous. In use of language and character development, *THE THRESHING CIRCLE* is one of those uncommon genre works that rises to the level of literary fiction. Kirsty is a wonderful mix of vulnerability and vinegar. She just leaps off the page. Barba Yiorgos's arrogance and provincialism is offset by great warmth and a delightful willingness to laugh at himself. In terms of setting, Grimmett gives us a Greece we haven't seen before, full of hidden villages and seething resentments.

While the novel succeeds on many levels, there are two places where I believe Grimmett takes a wrong turn...

### **NOTE: SPOILERS AHEAD**

First, the murder of Kirsty's cat and dog and Barba's lovely chickens. Nine times out of ten, violence against animals is a lazy way to incite reader horror and/or label the character behind the violence as depraved. Grimmett's villains are fully realized almost from the moment we meet them. They've done horrible things to people and animals off-stage. So there's really no point to this killing other than as an extra, and therefore gratuitous, dash of viciousness that falls emotionally flat. And replacing them at the end with a new kitten and puppy? I was incensed on Burns and Diego's behalf.

Second, the level of sexual violence at the climax is not only over the top, it undermines what comes after it...and there's a lot after it....Grimmett's denouement is considerably longer than is usual for a thriller. Up until this point, the novel crackles with tension, dread and--yes--an undercurrent of sexual violence. This beautiful suspense, built chapter by chapter, scene by scene, is then shattered by a graphic sexual assault (and it IS an assault, even if the gang rape itself is averted) one would expect in the work of a troubled adolescent.

The climax makes it difficult to appreciate an ending that is almost lyrical in its beauty...Barba Yiorgos transfigured...man colliding with myth.

In spite of its problems, *THE THRESHING CIRCLE* is a standout novel. Grimmett creates a fictional world that is by turns sensual, humorous, tragic, and terrifying. Even (Burns and Diego, forgive me) unforgettable.

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## **Cara says**

I really had no expectations going into this book, and it completely blew me away! It's the best fiction I've read in years. There are probably more, but the other books I can remember responding to this intensely were

by Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and Cormack McCarthy. In short, this dude is frickin' amazing! The characters, the way the story is woven together, the foreshadowing, the carefully placed questions in the reader's mind... all masterfully done. And the writing is so beautiful, I wanted to read slowly and savor it, even as the suspense made me want to get to the end and see how everything turned out NOW!

I'm so not a thriller person. I hate knowing that something bad is about to happen. I don't even like leaving the characters in silly chick-lit books stuck with unresolved unhappiness, but THIS! I ended up reading almost the whole book in one sitting because I just couldn't stand to leave the characters hanging. I missed the entire sunny part of the weekend--I couldn't even surface long enough to realize I should at least put on some pants and read outside.

This author is my client, so you might say I'm biased, but all I did on this book is the Kindle formatting--nothing editorial, not even any design. I didn't actually have to read it, but the cover made it irresistible, and I'm so glad I did! Can't wait for more from this author.

(view spoiler)

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