

[PDF] Crescent

Diana Abu-Jaber, Nike Doukas, Marcelo Tubert - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Crescent

Author: Diana Abu-Jaber, Nike Doukas

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Description:

It's a positive relief to read a novel that treats Iraqis as real people. Diana Abu-Jaber's second novel, *Crescent*, is set in Los Angeles and peopled by immigrants and Iraqi-Americans. Thirty-nine-year-old, half-Arab Sirine is a chef in a Lebanese restaurant. Her uncle works at the university with Han, an Iraqi-born academic who begins frequenting Sirine's restaurant, drawn by her beauty and her exquisite cooking. Part of the book's charm is in its determination to impart the sheer glamour of Arabia, here personified in Han's face: "Sirine watches Han and for a moment it seems that she can actually see the ancient traces in Han's face, the quality of his gaze that seems to originate from a thousand-thousand years of watching the horizon--a forlorn, beautiful gazing, rich and more seductive than anything she has ever seen." Too, the book addresses head-on the one-dimensional view Americans possess of Iraq. I used to read about Baghdad in *Arabian Nights*," says one American character. "It was all about magic and adventurers. I thought that's what it was like there.

And when I got older Baghdad turned into the stuff about war and bombs--the place on the TV set. I never thought about there being any kind of normal life there." As she falls more deeply in love with Han, Sirine discovers that part of being Iraqi now means learning to live with not knowing: not knowing where people have disappeared to, not knowing if your family is alive or dead. In the book's thrilling, romantic denouement, these lessons come perilously close to Sirine's Los Angeles home. Crescent brings alive a vibrant community of exiled academics, immigrants on the make, and optimistic souls looking for love. --*Claire Dederer* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly Abu-Jaber (*Arabian Jazz*) weaves the story of a love affair between a comely chef and a handsome, haunted Near Eastern Studies professor together with a fanciful tale of a mother's quest to find her wayward son in this beautifully imagined and timely novel, which explores private emotions and global politics with both grace and conviction. Green-eyed, 39-year-old Sirine cooks up Arab specialties in a bustling cafe in Los Angeles where Arab students gather for a taste of home. When her doting uncle, who raised her after the death of her relief-worker parents 30 years ago, introduces her to his colleague Hanif, the placid surface of her life is disturbed. Their affair begins quickly and ardently, as Sirine, who has heretofore equated cooking with love, discovers the pleasures of romance, and the exiled Han struggles to feel grounded in a place far from the Baghdad he loved as a boy. In Abu-Jaber's sensuous prose, the city is as lush and fragrant as the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, and her secondary characters, like the wry, wise cafe owner Um-Nadia and the charmingly narcissistic poet and satyr Aziz, are appealingly eccentric. But a darkly troubled photographer drawn to both Sirine and Han, news of Saddam Hussein's latest atrocities and Han's painful memories of his imprisoned brother and his disappeared sister, for whose fates he feels responsible, cloud their affair, perhaps dooming it. Abu-Jaber's poignant contemplations of exile and her celebration of Sirine's exotic, committed domesticity--almond cookies, cardamom, and black tea with mint--help make this novel feel as exquisite as the "flaming, blooming" mejnoona tree behind Nadia's Cafe.

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