Lovereading Reader reviews of

Black Water Lilies
by Michel Bussi

Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereading members.

Ffion Evans

**Shocking and engrossing. Filled with suspense and you are unable to guess what will happen next. Expect to finish this book and be both amazed and astonished.**

A novel filled with intrigue and suspense which is unable to be put aside or forgotten once you delve into the pages. ‘Black Water Lilies’ fills you with a need to keep reading just one more page in hopes of answers being given and the crime being finally solved. The multiple perspectives leave you always second guessing your original thoughts and never able to take what is being said at face value. Showing how everything looks different from where someone else is stood, making it hard to justify someone’s actions or reactions. Whilst honing your own detective skills, prepare to feel chills running down your spine in fear and suspense and what will happen next. The ending leaves a mark upon you long after you close the book for the final time. Prepare to sit in a stupor mixed with awe and shock at what happens. A must read for modern crime fiction lovers.

You can follow Ffion on Twitter: @FfionJEvans

Sheila Dale

**This book is excellent, beautifully written, and descriptive and an excellent twist at the end which I never saw coming.**

I love plants gardens and flowers so the descriptions of Giverny and Monet’s
garden kept me reading when I was struggling a little with the plot. I normally read more ‘heavy duty’ thrillers so found this quite hard to get into but the writing kept me turning the pages.

I strongly recommend anyone to give this a try whatever genre you enjoy - it has romance, history, murder all wrapped up in an amazing package.

Angie Rhodes

A village in France, three women, Monet's art work, a murder, a dog called Neptune and a dead body or two!

The three women are so different from each other. One is a liar, one is mean and the last is an egotist. Even their ages are far apart, the first is thirty six, the second is over eighty and the last is nearly eleven, but they have one thing in common, they share the same secret.

When the bodies of Jerome Morval, a man passionate about art and women are found dead in the local stream, their lives become entwined. The question the police want to know is how much do they know about his death and the connection to the painting of the Black Water Lillies. With more twists and turns than a Helter Skelter, this will keep you guessing right to the last page with an ending you could never imagine!

Jan Kirkcaldy

A really great book in every way. Its accurate description of Giverny, the village made famous by artist Claude Monet and his famous water lily paintings is a fascinating background for the parallel fictional story. The known painters mentioned, art thefts chronicled at the time, museums, buildings and the countryside are based on fact, much of which is relevant today. If that wasn’t enough we come to the three ladies at the forefront of this crime thriller, which is what it really is – one old, apparently overseeing all that goes on, the second in her thirties trapped in an loveless marriage and the third an 11 year old with a talent for painting. All have one wish – to leave Giverny.

All seem to be connected in some way with the murder of a respected local surgeon which starts a 13 day period of investigation involving love, infidelity and historic facts. This riveting mix of fact and fiction makes it impossible to be too specific without revealing too much. You need your wits about you throughout but on reflection the clues are there. One of the first books in ages that I just couldn’t put down until its bittersweet ending.
Water Lilies’ is fascinating and I’m looking forward to reading more by this French Professor.

Siobhan McDowell

All in all a tremendous novel...read it and be intrigued! What a splendid read!

This novel was so engrossing but I deliberately slowed down whilst reading it as I wanted to try to prolong the suspense.

The storyline was so intertwined with mystery that I was left open mouthed at times.

The author has a wonderful way with words and the translator (Shaun Whiteside) did a masterful job and managed to convey the European feeling throughout the chapters.

I was stunned by the ending and grateful to the author for his skill in weaving so many threads of the plot together so skilfully.

Emma Barton

A beautifully written tale with an incredibly original twist, set during a murder investigation in a small French town that was the inspiration for Monet's Waterlilies paintings. This is a beautiful and captivating read, with an incredibly original and unexpected twist at the end.

The main storyline follows an investigation into the murder of a local man, and Monet art lover, Jerome Morval. He is found is a stream that runs through the beautiful town of Giverny, the past home and inspiration for Monet.

The book also follows three local women, and we see the town and investigation unfold through their eyes. How are they involved, and what danger are they in?

I do not want to spoil the ending, but it will not disappoint. A wonderfully descriptive, emotional, heartbreaking and funny tale that will leave you pondering a long time after the final page.

Phylippa Smithson

Humm. It had potential so I persevered but this was a poorly executed thriller leaving me wishing I’d followed my instinct and given up.
Set in modern day Givenchy, it is inevitably the world famous artist Monet who had painted so many of his great Water Lily masterpieces in the village is a constant through the plot.

When a man is found murdered the only identification is a post card in his possession with the message ‘Eleven Years Old. Happy Birthday.’ The local police however do not take long to name the victim who is renowned art enthusiast and has a reputation as a lady’s man despite being married.

If this had been written with a humorous poke at police incompetence, maybe I would have been more tolerant. But it wasn’t. The police investigating the crime, one claiming to be obsessed with detail, the other driven by instinct, seemed to blatantly disregard obvious clues. For example which credible police investigator would not interview all the residents and certainly all that had a perfect view of the crime scene?

Nor was there a chance to enjoy the book by dint of people I could engage with or a sense that I cared why the man was murdered. Why was there a need to have a potential suspect treated with leniency because the lead investigator fancied her?

And when the final twist appears, rather than giving the book the chance to redeem itself, I was left feeling frustrated. This key moment felt staged and incredibly weak.

My one hope is that, had I read 'Black Water Lilies' in it’s original language, French, it would be have been the superior offering it had the potential to be. I’ll blame poor translation and move on.

Sarah Tilley

A great thriller where you are held captive by the narrator, and only when the picture is unravelled do you realise who is telling the tale. Very cleverly done, with no hint at who is the real perpetrator.

An enchanting read, set in Giverny, France where Monet painted his famous Water Lilies and very descriptive of the surrounding area. Extremely well written, and only in the last few chapters do the timelines and story really unfold.

A great thriller where you are held captive by the narrator, and only when the picture is unravelled do you realise who is telling the tale. Very cleverly done,
with no hint at who is the real perpetrator. It will keep you hooked until the end. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and will certainly be seeking out more from this author as I also loved his previous book ‘After the Crash’.

Evelyn Barrett

Nothing is quite what it seems in this complex and intriguing book, trying to guess the outcome is pointless. A highly recommended read.

Set in Giverny, the French village made famous by Monet and his garden, this story gripped me from the prologue. As with Monet, everything in Black Water Lilies is about impressions, nothing is quite what it seems. Partly told by a narrator, partly in the third person, the reader is constantly kept slightly off balance. A murder brings Inspector Serenac and his team of investigators to the village but is he as impartial in his investigations as he should be? When did the murder happen? Has there been another murder that has gone undetected? Who are the children and what do they know? Is anyone who they are supposed to be? Even the dog can’t be accepted at face value. You won’t find out the answers until the denouement and trying to guess the outcome is pointless. This book defines the phrase ‘twist in the tail’.

The story is complex, intriguing and well-structured, a testament to the level of accomplishment that Bussi has achieved as an author. The reader won’t forget Black Water Lilies in a hurry. I can’t recommend this book highly enough.

Liz Stein

A light hearted mystery with an unusual edge.

I found this to be an interesting and unusual story, a little confusing at times, as it jumped about through time and place, following three storylines (or voices). I didn’t much take to the old woman’s voice, and found myself skipping over these bits). I enjoyed the rapport between the two detectives but they also confused me too, as often I didn’t know which was which because their names were so similar.

I liked the ending, when we finally got there. Also I enjoyed the art/ art history/ Monet detail. It seemed quite French, but maybe that was because I didn’t relate to the way of thinking sometimes.
Edel Waugh

*Every so often a book will come along and give you this magical feeling in your body, a story so good it stirs something in you that reminds you why you got excited about books in the first place. This is just such a book.* After I finished this story I sat for about half an hour just thinking about what I had just read, about a lifetime in Giverney and the people who lived and died there.

The story begins by explaining a little about the three main female characters of the story. Each seemingly different in every possible way. Set in this beautiful places made famous thanks to the artist Monet. This haven for artists also lurks deep passions and rage, and for a small idyllic place there sure is a huge amount of curious behaviour going on. This book did everything to my soul, it shocked and tore, made me cry and gave me hope. These characters are going to stay with me, this plot is going to keep going around in my head and I am going to recommend this to everyone I know! This story is beautiful in every way and deserves to be not just read, but treasured!

Jan Kirkcaldy

A really great book in every way. Its accurate description of Giverney, the village made famous by artist Claude Monet and his famous water lily paintings is a fascinating background for the parallel fictional story. The known painters mentioned, art thefts chronicled at the time, museums, buildings and the countryside are based on fact, much of which is relevant today. If that wasn’t enough we come to the three ladies at the forefront of this crime thriller, which is what it really is –one old, apparently overseeing all that goes on, the second in her thirties trapped in an loveless marriage and the third an 11 year old with a talent for painting. All have one wish – to leave Giverney.

All seem to be connected in some way with the murder of a respected local surgeon which starts a 13 day period of investigation involving love, infidelity and historic facts. This riveting mix of fact and fiction makes it impossible to be too specific without revealing too much. You need your wits about you throughout but on reflection the clues are there. **One of the first books in ages that I just couldn’t put down until its bittersweet ending. ‘Black Water Lilies’ is fascinating** and I’m looking forward to reading more by this French Professor.