



Death Doesn't Forget: A Taipei Night Market Novel

Ed Lin

Soho Crime (Jul 19, 2022)

Hardcover \$27.95 (288pp)

978-1-64129-327-3

A night market food stall owner becomes involved in a double homicide in Ed Lin's novel *Death Doesn't Forget*.

Jing-nan just wants his food stall to be successful. If he could stop finding himself connected to homicide investigations, that would be perfect. The notoriety has helped his business, but it also brought him into the crosshairs of Captain Huang, the head of the precinct, who oversees the night market district. Captain Huang has it out for Jing-nan: he's determined to prove that his involvement in previous cases was nefarious, rather than happenstance. He catches Jing-nan on a security camera leaving the flophouse of a recently murdered petty criminal and, thinking he's got him, roughs him up a bit to get him to confess. The dead petty criminal's connection to Jing-nan via his girlfriend's mother is a bonus. When Captain Huang turns up dead in an alley, all eyes turn to Jing-nan.

The mystery takes a back seat to considerations of family and social ties. Taiwanese culture and spirituality are present throughout: as Jing-nan is persuaded to honor the dead, a pivotal scene takes place in a Buddhist temple. Political and racial tensions also play a role—in particular, the racism affecting Taiwanese Indigenous people, and the lingering enmity between nationalists and communists. This social backdrop provides fertile ground for character development.

In spite of the beat-by-beat narration, the book keeps its action moving. When not focused on clearing his name, Jing-nan tries to navigate the murky waters between his girlfriend and her estranged mother. As the book turns toward discovering and catching the actual murderer, the character work pays off, and the fun intensifies.

Death Doesn't Forget is a mystery novel that balances growth and intrigue with an exploration of a busy city that sees everything.

DONTANÁ MCPHERSON-JOSEPH (July / August 2022)

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