



City of Veils

Zoë Ferraris

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

City of Veils

Zoë Ferraris

City of Veils Zoë Ferraris

The body of a young woman is discovered on the grimy sands of Jeddah beach; soon afterwards, a strong-minded American woman finds herself alone and afraid in the most repressive city on earth when her husband suddenly disappears.

Investigating police officer Osama Ibrahim, forensic scientist Katya Hijazi and her friend, the strictly devout Bedouin guide Nayir Sharqi join forces to search out the truth in the scorching city streets and the vast, lethal emptiness of the desert beyond.

Breathtakingly fast-paced, sure-footed and thrilling, this novel paints in dazzling colours a city of veils in which more is hidden than is revealed, and nothing is what it seems.

City of Veils Details

Date : Published August 9th 2010 by Little Brown and Company (first published 2010)

ISBN : 9780316074278

Author : Zoë Ferraris

Format : Hardcover 393 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime

 [Download City of Veils ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online City of Veils ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online City of Veils Zoë Ferraris

From Reader Review City of Veils for online ebook

Giovanni Gelati says

This novel is an eye opener. I am the proud father of seven girls (we also have a son) and must say that the way in which women are treated in the Middle East have always stunned me. *City of Veils* gave me a new perspective on the whole thing. Zoe Ferraris has a unique viewpoint being both a woman and having lived in the Middle East, experiencing it first-hand. Her previous novel, *Finding Nouf*, was a Los Angeles Times Prize Winner.

Here is the summary of the novel; When the body of a brutally beaten woman is found on the beach in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Detective Osama Ibrahim dreads investigating another unsolvable murder-chillingly common in a city where the veils of conservative Islam keep women as anonymous in life as the victim is in death.

But Katya , one of the few females in the coroner's office, is determined to identify the woman and find her killer. Aided by her friend Nayir, she soon discovers that the victim was a young filmmaker named Leila, whose controversial documentaries earned her many enemies. But was it Leila's work with an incendiary Korainic scholar or a missing American man who got her killed?

The plotline is intense, riveting and eye opening to say the least. Ferraris paints a picture and mindset that I would think most Western thinking people, men and women alike, find hard to comprehend and embrace. How do you identify a woman that is murdered that has to have her face shielded seemingly at all times? Difficult job, yes I would think. Maybe our friend Mr. Monk the obsessive/ compulsive detective can find a difference in her burka versus another woman's, but he isn't in this novel. But I digress.

I enjoyed this novel on many levels because it really challenged me. The setting, the mindset, the language and customs are all foreign to me. The manner in which the detective had to go about his business, the treatment of the women all were a surprise to me and at times enlightening. Ferraris uses all these things to the reader's advantage as she takes us on a journey that I don't think many of us have a chance to go on in this genre. So for that my hat is off to her. *City of Veils* is a unique novel for the reasons listed and many more. Dare to be different, give this novel a go, add it to your Goodreads - to read- list and challenge yourself. I think that the suspense and mystery of the novel combined with grappling to understand the mindset of the culture prove to a winning combination.

What are you reading today? Check us out and become our friend on Facebook. Go to Goodreads and become our friend there and suggest books for us to read and post on. You can also follow us on Twitter, Book Blogs, and also look for our posts on Amazon, Barnes and Nobles and the Bucks County Library System. Did you know you can shop directly on Amazon by clicking the Gelati's Store Tab on our blog? Thanks for stopping by today; we will see you tomorrow. Have a great day.

Lisa says

It's been a while since I've escaped into a good detective thriller with likable, complex characters. *City of Veils* was fast-paced and enjoyable and also provided a glimpse into the veiled world of Saudi Arabia.

It was eye-opening for me to read about the daily obstacles women must undergo just to be part of the workforce in a society that represses and degrades them. Now I'm inspired to read *Daring to Drive: A Saudi Woman's Awakening* . And I'll definitely read the next book in this series.

Jill says

There have been many literary mysteries written and many books about the plight of women in repressive Saudi Arabia, but I have never read an author who is able to so seamlessly weave these threads together to create a potboiler thriller that sizzles with knowledge.

Set in Jeddah – seemingly one of the more liberal cities of Saudi Arabia – the core of the story focuses on a burqa-clad and tortured body of a young woman on a beach. Three stories are interwoven: a whodunit story of how she got there and who perpetrated such violence on her...the story of forensic scientist Katya and her would-be suitor Nayir, a Bedouin guide, who is crippled emotionally by the yokes of his religion...and a vanished American expat Eric Walker, whose wife Miriam finds herself bereft in an alien culture where women truly have no face.

What makes *City of Veils* stand out is its nuanced and highly intimate portrayal of a woman's life in a repressive and paranoid country...where women's faces are shielded, voices are silenced, and lifestyles are infantilized.

Ms. Ferraris – who herself moved to Saudi Arabia with her now ex-husband and his extended family of Saudi-Palestinian Bedouins – has a voice that rings with authority. Some of it is unwittingly humorous: the husband Eric, for example, has a name that translates to a part of the male anatomy, and therefore is renamed Abullah while at work. But most of it is frustrating and heartbreaking. We read, for example, about women's mini-rebellions, as they hide Bluetooth devices inside their burquas, which send the message, "Do you want to see my face?" Or the quagmire of lingerie stories: women cannot interact with the male proprietors of the stores; therefore, the government allowed women to work in these lingerie shops. Only one problem: the religious police are convinced women should be tending to their homes and babies, not shopping.

Ferraris shows that this repression is not just a woman's problem; it's a man's as well. Osama Ibrahim – the fair and liberal police investigator – believes his marriage is a strong one until he discovers his wife has been surreptitiously taking birth control pills. And Nayir, who was featured in *Finding Nouf*, is numbed down by the love he feels for Katya, all the while knowing she may not be such a "good Muslim woman", and how can he possibly marry an infidel? Being in a car with a woman who is not his wife is excruciating for him: "This was the worst kind of weakness because there was nothing he could do about it...short of kicking her out of the car."

On one level, *City of Veils* has all the dimensions of a first-rate crime story; its eventual denouement in the scorching and unforgiving desert would make a stunning and crowd-pleasing movie. Yet on a deeper level, the book shines its laser-eye on woman who must be resourceful to even feel human while simmering inside, and the men who are raised to fear them and place a lid on their own human desires and compassion. *City of Veils* does what sometimes seems to be impossible – lifts the cultural veils off and looks gender segregation right in the eye.

Mirela says

Ova knjiga ima sve što treba imati punokrvni triler. Odli?an zaplet , savršenu napetost koja ne prestaje ni na jednoj stranici , jako zanimljive glavne likove koji se bore sa nekim svojim "demonim " . Uz sve to

spisateljica nas upozna sa jednom kulturom koja je nama "zapadnjacima" uglavnom nepoznata , a koja u ?itaocu stvara dodatnu dozu napetosti i intrige . Poglavlja su kratka , ?ita se u jednom dahu , preporuka svima koji vole dobar krimi? / triler.

Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says

Life for women in Saudi Arabia =

Burqa required

Brain optional

BYOB(Bring Your Own Brother/Bodyguard/Bedouin) any time you set foot outside your home.

I thought *City of Veils*, although perhaps overlong, was a much better novel than *Finding Nouf*. It explores the varying levels of compliance with religious law in what is considered an "open" city, from both a male and female perspective. I found it especially interesting to read how modernization might pose dilemmas for devout men, as we usually tend to focus on the strictures placed on women.

Harry says

Book Review:

The saga of Katya and Nayir continues in this, the second in this Ferraris series.

Elsewhere here on GR I have been embroiled in commentary regarding the nature of protests: political, economical, etc. And as I was responding in that particular thread my mind kept returning to perhaps the only form of protest not mentioned: the fictional author mounting a protest. In particular it kept returning to my latest read in a mystery series quite unlike any other.

City of Veils is assuredly a protest as was *Finding Nouf*. But it is a form of protest that slithers into your conscious mind almost unawares: it is audacious and whispers to you from behind a veiled burqa.

City of Veils

Again, we find ourselves in the city of Jeddah, gateway to Mecca and a city torn apart by a slow movement towards liberalism. Along with multiple homicides inextricably tied together the motive for the crimes for a Western reader will be difficult to ascertain. But, Ferraris handles the complexities with which we're unfamiliar with beauty and elegance. Again we are struck by a certain affection for Islam contrasted against a devastating pronouncement against the treatment of women.

But, as with any system that abuses and constricts the freedom of those in it, we find that among the women loopholes exist within their secret society.

Get this! Veiled in her Burqa, you say? To hide her countenance from men who might be sorely tempted? For that, I give you a Bluetooth Burqa! Now, a woman can walk the streets in perfect anonymity and flash

her unexposed face to passerbys.

The more I read in this series, the more I read the news with horror story after horror story where the Arab world seeks to thwart western liberalism, the more I think this is not about faith, but about a fiercely dominated men's world that will not relinquish it's hold over the female gender, their availability for sex, children, and the choice of multiple wives.

For example: would it surprise you to know that Victoria Secret has nothing when compared to similar stores in Jeddah? And that it isn't the women who shop there, but the men who accompany them so as to select their favorite turn ons?

And yes, we return to the desert with Nayir. Recently my daughter and I were caught in a sandstorm just North of Colorado's great sand dunes and we had to stop the car, turn of the AC and just sit there while being pummeled by the storm, hoping the dust and sand would not invade the internal workings of my automobile.

Ferraris version of this is a devastating look at what happens when you are caught unawares in the Saudi Empty Quarter.

And yes, Ferraris continues the romantic saga between Nayir and Katya, a most humble and endearing look at courtship Saudi style.

I am impressed with this series and look forward to the third and final installment.

Series Review:

Zoë Ferraris moved to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the first Gulf War. She lived in a conservative Muslim community with her then-husband and his family, a group of Saudi-Palestinians.

In 2006, she completed her MFA in Fiction at Columbia University. Her debut novel, *Finding Nouf*, (published as *Night of the Mi'raj* in the UK) and a follow-up novel, *City of Veils*, have been published in over thirty countries. Her third novel, *Kingdom of Strangers*, came out in June 2012.

She currently lives in San Francisco and is hard at work writing about subjects other than Saudi Arabia, the setting for her first 3 novels.

Just as we find with the Inspector O series, Zoë Ferraris sets before her the task of writing mysteries in which the very system in which the crime takes place is an obstacle to solving the mystery. Church, in his Inspector O series, places his hero within the North Korean political system, a system that is as much an obstacle to solving crimes as is the the crime itself. Ferraris, on the other hand, chooses the closed society of Saudi Arabia (or more the point, the city of Jeddah) for her novels' settings.

American readers of these novels will be reluctant to put these novels down. The riveting and intricate plots taking place in this part of the world are eye openers to what would surely mystify most readers in the West: an inside look at a closed system where women and men to this day remain segregated; where both genders come to terms and wrestle with their own views as laid down by the strictures and tenets of Islam; where heroism is defined by defying the often horrible restrictions imposed by such beliefs. The stories you will read are heroic; we certainly get the sense that Ferraris who has lived in this closed society condemns much of what she has experienced while simultaneously granting respect to the faith of Islam.

The books will shock you at the plight of Saudi women and simultaneously keep you glued to the pages as the various intrigues expand and ripple across the crescent shaped dunes in the Saudi desert. Part ethonography, part mystery detective, part literary the novels are all encompassing and are the mark of a new voice and an astounding talent on the mystery and literary fronts.

The heroes of this series are Nayir Sharqi, a male Palestinian desert guide, and Katya Hijazi, a Saudi female forensic lab worker. The mere pairing of these two of opposite genders by Ferraris is an act of defiance in itself, especially in a heavily segregated society. You will say, as a westerner: "what's the big deal in having a job?" The big deal is that women don't have jobs in this society. The fact that Katya even has a job is an act of defiance. Cloaked in public, the showing of her ankles, or even stopping to speak to a man in public may be reason enough for the religious police to throw Katya in jail.

And what about Nayir?

A devout muslim, this displaced Palestinian man was created by Ferraris to investigate all that is good about Islam. Frustrated with his desire for a female companion, often forced to confront the seeming contradictions between religious edicts and what he knows to be right, this desert man brings to us an endearment of Saudi Arabia, of Jeddah, a place caught between its role as the holy gateway to Mecca and the cosmopolitan city in an increasingly liberal world.

These books have my attention! They represent a new wave within the genre of mystery/detectives...and I do recommend this series to any who find that the above tickles their curiosity.

Eszter Faatima Sabiq says

I hesitated between 2 and 3 stars because it is an entertaining read but also full of pretentious nonsense. The writer is trying hard to describe Saudis, Arabs and Muslims in a surprisingly unconventional way- the bad guy is an atheist, the good guy is a fundamentalist and Islam is nice just misunderstood etc. but she fails in understanding how Muslims feel or think in the framework of their beliefs and religion and towards an authority representing and enforcing one understanding of Islam. She also fails in making me believe she understand her male characters or the way men feel and think about the world in general (muslim and non-muslim alike) so the characters in the novel do not act, think, speak or feel the way they possibly would but the way an American woman living in the Saudi thinks they feel. There are also basic faults in her knowledge about the religion which is most apparent when she makes the assumption that the Quran as known today is a translation, when the rhythm and poetry of Quran depends solely on it being in Arabic. Another horribly silly thing is the way Nayir makes a hose from camel intestines- I am not sure what Ms Ferraris thought intestines contain when taken fresh out of a corpse, so in case she reads reviews on Goodreads, I share this piece of valuable information: they are full of shit. Anyhow, I read it until the end, so I guess that means it is enjoyable (or else I am a masochist which I am not) so I gave it a 3.

Laura says

There are some books that we do regret when it's finished. This is one of them.

4* City of Veils
TR Finding Nouf

TR Kingdom of Strangers

Julie Christine says

I wondered several times during *The City of Veils* if I could read another Nayir Sharqi mystery after this follow-up to the mesmerizing *Finding Nouf*. The oppressive Saudi culture and the unforgiving interpretation of Islam that requires subjugating women sets a haunting and desperate tone that is almost unbearable. I wince at the thought of spending more time in the wet, stifling heat of Jeddah and with its suffocated citizens.

Yet, this is a brilliant and irresistible work of literary crime fiction. The characters are full and complete individuals, despite the deadweight of Saudi cultural mores. Beneath their abaya, some Saudi women are pushing back, at great risk to their lives. They pursue education and careers, reject traditional marriage, and raise their burquas to reveal their individuality. Their defiance is a very lonely pursuit, but together these women are exposing the weaknesses in the armor of conservative Islam.

Perhaps more remarkable is the author's nuanced portrayal of men in contemporary Saudi culture. Nayir Sharqi, a pious Bedouin guide, is bewildered by his attraction to lab technician Katya Hijazi, whose independence and ambition verge on blasphemy. Detective Osama Ibrahim is proud of his successful wife, Nuha, and their seemingly equitable marriage, but his confidence as a progressive husband is shaken when his wife acts on her own to preserve her independence. It is, in fact, the American men who behave most callously and carelessly with women, using Saudi culture as an excuse for neglect and betrayal.

As crime fiction, there are classic and familiar elements. Nayir Sharqi, desert guide turned investigator, is a solitary and reluctant hero. Like many of his Western potboiler counterparts, he suffers from addiction, but his is not to drugs or alcohol- it is to a conservative interpretation of Islam. Katya provides us with the perspective of a police insider. She is a patient observer, seeking mentors in her colleagues who unwittingly guide her clandestine investigations. Her sweet and cooperative attitude belie the spine of steel she needs to advance, nay, survive in this regimented society. Jeddah, on the Red Sea, and the desert just outside its borders, are vivid and multi-dimensional characters that Ferraris reveals to shattering effect.

The premise of the crime, its investigation and resolution are brilliantly and originally crafted. Ferraris's writing is less fluid and more direct than *Finding Nouf*, but the story is stronger. Ferraris flashes literary genius of great depth; the sandstorm in the desert was one of the most breathless, tense and engrossing scenes I have encountered.

The stage is set for a continuation of this series. I wonder how Ms. Ferraris will continue to develop her characters in a regime that deliberately stifles individual growth and reflection, one that forces men and women into an artificial division of thought and a literal division of social interaction. I hope that the author doesn't write herself into a corner, confined by the strictures of Saudi Islam. If anyone can write her way out of these constraints, surely it is she.

Blaine DeSantis says

I began reading this book for International Womens Day. Whether you are a woman or a man (as I am) this

book is another wake up call by one of my favorite authors, Zoe Ferraris. This is the 2nd book in her short 3 volume series and transports us back to Saudi Arabia where we are faced with not just a shocking murder, but the continued shocking treatment of women in this conservative Muslim country. I am not about to outline all the issues that are presented here, including one called "summer wives" but suffice it to say that the more we read about this country the more concerned I am about both their treatment of women and the way their faith controls their entire actions. So fellow readers, don't just sit and pat ourselves on the back for how far we have come in America, but rather sit down and have a read of Zoe's book and understand how women are treated in the Saudi Arabia and how far a road they have to travel for basic rights. Why a 4****, because Zoe completely stopped writing this series after one more book. I love the characters of Nayir and Katya and am sad that there is only one more book to go!

Sanaa Iona says

This book I thought was brilliant.

Crime, religion, culture and mystery all in one. FAB!!!!

I don't like to make a review and basically tell what the whole story was about because then those who haven't read it know too much but the way the characters within the book are portrayed and portrayed with such realism I thought made this story all the more so real. Each of the main characters intrigued me in their own way and I could relate to them all in way or another. As a Muslim woman I think I related to Miriam best out of the women who was a Christian woman.

Not regarding her faith but regarding her worries and struggles as a non Saudi trying to adapt to living life in Saudi Arabia style. That is something I wouldn't even attempt or want to do ever! lol

I loved the way the main muslim characters in the book (Nayir, Osama, Katya) all represented Muslims upon different perspectives of how they lived Islam without any one being mocked or portrayed as wrong or weird.

I am not sure how much of crime statistics of treatment of women and murders was real but it did remind me how unheard and of course unseen women in Saudi really are and may Allah make things easy for all oppressed and ill treated women irrespective of race or religion where ever they are. Recommend this book no doubt to all who haven't read it.

Bettie? says

Description: The body of a young woman is discovered on the grimy sands of Jeddah beach; soon afterwards, a strong-minded American woman finds herself alone and afraid in the most repressive city on earth when her husband suddenly disappears.

Investigating police officer Osama Ibrahim, forensic scientist Katya Hijazi and her friend, the strictly devout Bedouin guide Nayir Sharqi join forces to search out the truth in the scorching city streets and the vast, lethal emptiness of the desert beyond.

Breathtakingly fast-paced, sure-footed and thrilling, this novel paints in dazzling colours a city of veils in

which more is hidden than is revealed, and nothing is what it seems.

Opening: **The woman's body was lying on the beach. "Eve's tomb," he would later come to think of it, not the actual tomb in Jeddah that was flattened in 1928, to squash out any cults attached to her name, nor the same one that was bulldozed again in 1975, to confirm the point. This more fanciful tomb was a plain, narrow strip of beach north of Jeddah.**

'Slavery had been outlawed in the kingdom in 1962, but that hadn't changed the fact that it still existed in some quarters under the less charged name of domestic help.'

4* Finding Nouf (Nayir Sharqi & Katya Hijazi #1)

3* City of Veils (Nayir Sharqi & Katya Hijazi #2)

Blumental says

A lot of reviews of this book make us believe that the interesting angle for this crime novel is the fact that it is set in Saudi Arabia, written by a quasi-local and, hence, that the novel offers us an insight into a world we know very little about. Unfortunately, this book fails to do so in quite a disappointing fashion.

In my view *City of Veils* does very little to shed more light on an intriguing culture and instead re-hashes preconceived, rather superficial notions of the culture of Saudi Arabia. After I finished this book, I was intrigued as to how superficial and incoherent the cultural aspect of the story was and I must say I felt less surprised to find that the author had actually lived in Jeddah for only 9 months. She divorced her Saudi husband 'shortly after'. In itself not a token for cultural understanding and harmony. Nor does the author seem to speak Arabic - undoubtedly, a prerequisite to genuine cultural understanding as well as an indication for deep-rooted interest in a specific culture.

It may appear cynical to think so, but I cannot rid myself from the feeling that the 'Saudi' angle was a good way for the author to get a very average imagination and literary craftsmanship into book stores. The book certainly does not suggest any genuine interest in this society. The sales pitch, though, is easy enough to see. There was indeed a place for crime novels set in the Middle East. Too bad though, it was not written by a local.

In Zoe Ferraris' portrayal of Saudi culture we learn that women are oppressed, that they have to wear burqas, that women have to walk behind men, that there are separate sitting rooms for women and men, that men cannot be alone with women, especially unmarried women, that people eat Shawarma and seemingly nothing else in Saudi Arabia, that there is a strict religious police and capital punishment, ...but in terms of objective insights into the social make-up of the country this is pretty much it. The sort of 'cultural insight' I suspect some commentators ravish about must be, for instance, the fact that walking with a burqa can be difficult because you can't actually see through these things properly. An insider's perspectives I was indeed not aware of. The pun is intentional and the quality of the humour at par with the usefulness of what we learn. There just isn't much.

Other areas the author touches upon and that would indeed be of immense interest if portrayed with true insight are women at work and their professional relationships to men, and to a lesser extent women in their private lives, be it as sisters, mothers, wives or daughters as opposed to the public image of women.

The former figures quite prominently and yet the descriptions are so vastly inconsistent and contradictory at times that one is left perplexed with utter disbelief and distrust of the author's true insights, cultural understanding of the place and hence the relevance and value of her views. On the one hand Ms Ferraris portrays professional life so restrictive for women, so utterly male dominated and pious that there are constant issues about who is in a room with whom, people 'blushing' all the time, looking awkwardly into empty places to avoid eye contact, restrictions due to dress codes etc..and on the other hand we hear the same central, female and professionally ultra junior character make career-defining, self-promoting pitches to her superiors worthy of any up-and-coming, ambitious NY criminal investigator, we see the character take a proactive role in her very first interview of a suspect, and another week on during an interrogation in presence of her boss say things like "your problem is that you can't get a woman....You think women should be your sex slaves. That's what (so and so) was to you, A pretty face. A cute, tight Someone you thought you could ... if you felt like it". The language is utterly rude and I leave it out purposefully. Words you would expect from a police woman in the *The Wire* and deepest Baltimore, but in Jeddah? It's possible, the reader does not know but it clashes harshly with all the ultra-sensitive, pious descriptions of society and individual characters. Or do we have to imagine Jeddah and the (female) work place ultimately as a meritocratic place where a woman defines her destiny after all, where her courage and aptitude triumphs over religious conventions and pre-defined gender roles? The story gives incoherent and hence misleading clues. When in doubt, the integrity with which she portrays the local culture and, indeed, characters always seems to take a backseat to the need to develop the story line.

The repetitiveness with which the author employs the ever recurring few cultural observations of Saudi culture is a final clue as to how razor thin her insights into Saudi culture truly are.

As far as women and their roles in families go, most of what we hear are atrocities that seem to confirm deep-seated fears and resentments of the average and above all clueless reader regarding Saudi Arabia. We hear about women who are killed for taking contraceptive pills, maids seem to be killed so frequently that indeed it lends itself as a ploy to disguise a 'regular' murder as such or we hear about a short woman who is confined to her room and abused by her brother as a "freak" and a sight he wants to avoid at all costs. The ignorant reader sees all of his or her prejudices around Saudi gender issues fully confirmed.

There really is no point in reading this book if your motive is to find out a bit more about Saudi culture.

Pressed upon this extremely poor depiction of, let's call it, 'day-to-day Wahhabism' is a story line for a crime novel that follows the same architecture as most modern crime novels. The short chapters, a restricted number of characters, interlaced story-lines, short sentences, etc...all this makes for an easy read and the author achieves a degree of suspense by following this successful recipe closely. But her lack of imagination is reflected in a closer analysis of the 'crime'. It is difficult to go into detail without giving away too much and spoiling it for others. One thing worth keeping an eye out for, though, is the element of coincidence. The more 'coincidence' you find in both a criminal ploy and the chain of events leading to solving of the crime, the less convinced I am generally about the author's imagination.

The Guardian's Laura Wilson referred to this book as a '...knowledgeable and sensitive depiction of a place where religion, used as a blunt instrument, has given rise to a stultifying, paranoid and sex-obsessed society.' Dwell on these words and what they say about Saudi Arabia's culture. As I said, the author lived in Jeddah for 9 months !

Joy says

This book was read for my 2016 Reading Challenge Around the World in 80 Books

I first discovered Zoë Ferraris when I read around the world in 2013. So I was really excited for this challenge when I saw another book had been released in the Nayir Sharqi & Katya Hijazi saga. A murder mystery and criminal investigation set against the religious extremism and the harsh desert of Saudi Arabia is the perfect combination for a cannot-put-this-down read. *City of Veils* picks up roughly a year after *Finding Nouf*, the first in the series. Nayir Sharqi & Katya Hijazi have distanced, after what appeared to be the beginnings of a relationship. Nayir Sharqi is a devout Muslim man, and a scholar of the Qur'an. Katya Hijazi is a modern woman who continues to work in the medical examiner's office, and is forced to lie about being married to keep her job. A new case, the tortured body of a young Saudi woman washed up on the beach, intrigues Katya as she attempts to look past the burqa at who this woman really was and what caused her death. This story also has an element of an outsider looking in as well, with the storyline of an American woman searching for her missing American husband who may or may not have connections with the washed up woman. It's riveting.

This is great mystery, no doubt, but I think it's the cultural and religious backdrop of this tumultuous country make it a page-turner. A character in the story references Saudi Arabia as a city of veils, and it seems so true. As an American, it's hard to imagine or fathom what happens in the country, and this book pulls back the veil a little, and it isn't always beautiful. This story really highlights the treatment of woman in Saudi Arabia also, which I think is a conversation worth having. I also appreciate Nayir Sharqi's perspective throughout the story. He's a highly conservative Muslim man, who believes that woman should remain covered at all times and that their place is in the home. Yet, he sees himself falling for Katya who is independent and often leaves her face uncovered. His thoughts are eye-opening as to how a devout Muslim man could view the world. I thoroughly enjoyed this story, and am excited to read the third installment too!

Debbie says

I loved it!

Another winner from author *Zoe Ferraris*. *City of Veils* is a must read if you read her first novel in this series, *Finding Nouf*. I read *Finding Nouf* some time ago and enjoyed it so much. I always intended to read this next book in the series. I really don't have any logical excuse for the delay. Maybe I forgot how much I liked these characters. Catching up with Katya and Nayir was like a reunion with old friends.

This is a murder mystery series with a twist. What makes this so interesting is that they are set in Saudi Arabia. With all the religious laws and customs of that land it is intriguing to learn not only how the people live but how they handle crime.

What I loved about this book was not only the fact that it was another good unpredictable mystery from this author and this location but that the same characters that we connected with in the first novel seemed to grow and mature. This is what you want from an author of a series. You want the characters to progress. We got to learn more about our main characters Katya and Nayir and they metamorphasized right before our eyes. These characters were not one dimensional by a long shot. As they solved the mystery they came out of their preconceived boxes and blossomed. By the end of the book they were new characters. I liked this a lot. We as human beings do mature and grow from our experiences in life and it was great to see the characters do this in a book. We also met a few new characters. One in particular, Osama Ibrahim, who I hope makes another appearance in the third book or even in his own series. That would be great. I don't own the third book but I hope to get my hands on it soon.

This book really gets 6 stars from me. I do recommend it to anyone. There was action, suspense, murder, detectives and a little romance woven through. It's just good. Good ending too.

