



## Books



# Measured in blood

Maria Eliades chats with Barbara Nadel about her latest Istanbul-based crime novel

**A** *Noble Killing*, Barbara Nadel's 17th novel, is her 13th one set in Turkey, starring detective, Çetin İkmen. Nadel lives and writes in England.

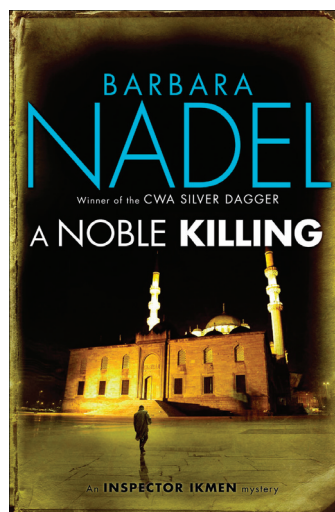
## How did you decide to become a novelist?

Well, I think like a lot of writers, I'd always written things as a child, but I'd never written them for publication. Then, when I did my degree, I wrote a couple of academic things and that was quite nice, but of course, it's not like writing for the mass market. It's a very small market. Then when I started working in the psychiatric hospital, that's when I started writing, and I wrote almost as a kind of therapy. I worked on a forensics unit, so I worked with people who had committed offences. Obviously, you can't talk about it outside the unit, but some of the things you would hear would be quite difficult to deal with. So, I think, like other crime writers, you create almost like a perfect world, where everything gets sorted out. I think I would like crime fiction anyway, but part of it was to have people do things and

have it be okay, because that wasn't happening in real life very often.

## Will you ever stop writing about Turkey?

Will I ever stop? I don't want to [she laughs] because you're always finding new things. So, I'd like to



## Wham, bam, kapoot!

As a reader, I have long sworn off on mystery novels, which I never find as thrilling, surprising or engaging as they are intended. With that in mind, I approached Barbara Nadel's *A Noble Killing*, a novel about the search for the killer of a young girl with dalliances into feminism, religious conservatism and infidelity in Istanbul, with as open a mind as possible. Devoted mystery readers should appreciate Nadel's deftness in maneuvering her characters through the plot and the city, but residents of Istanbul will pick up on more than a few fallacies. Despite a few unfortunate instances of the cutoff chapter, in which a dramatic moment occurs in the last sentence and is then left, Da Vinci Code-like, to "smolder" in the reader's mind, Nadel is clearly imaginative enough to deliver a somewhat arousing chase even to a mystery cynic. *A Noble Killing* is available at Pandora Books.

continue if I can, but of course, it depends on whether people want me to. That's the whole point of being an author, that you're there only as long as people want you there.

## How do you know that?

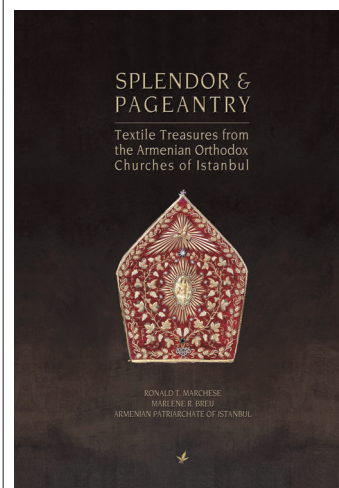
Well, if they don't buy your books, if people stop reading you, no one will commission you to do anything.

**With all the other topics you've covered: arabesque music, ethnic killings, drug use, goths in Turkey, rural communities and terrorism, you've now chosen to write about honour killings. What made you decide that should be the main theme of *A Noble Killing*?**

I felt, for various reasons, that the time was right. There's been a lot of publicity about it both in England and in Turkey, because we have honour killings here [in the UK]. The thing is, hearing from both sides, from the UK and Turkey; I realized that it's a much bigger subject than I originally thought. It goes far beyond the ordinary perception of it. I think people always see it as a religious thing. There are often religious elements to it, but it's much bigger than that. It's much more of a social thing, it's much more of a cultural thing and [it] effects people more than somebody getting killed. It's much bigger than that. It affects an entire community. The pressures on the victims, on the people who do it, on the people around them, are absolutely enormous. We actually had a few honour killings here [in the UK] that were so horrific that I thought, I've got to say something about this, because people are starting to say things about it. We had one over here [in the UK] where a young girl was tortured and then cut up. That goes beyond honour killing. That's more than getting a girl out of the way because she's inconvenient. That is something else. That particular case was here, where I live now, and I think the judge, when it came to court, was almost speechless, it was so terrible. I wanted to learn more about it myself because I think it's a very important subject. I think that's why writers often write about certain things, because they actually want to know more about something themselves. I think you'll find that there are more honour killings in Istanbul now than there were a few years ago.

## Did your research show you why this was the case?

It is thought that [it is] because there are more people [emigrating] from the countryside [to the city] where this kind of behaviour is more prevalent. The same is true [in the UK]. It's not a thing you see in cities generally, but it's a thing you see going on in the countryside all the time.



## Getting there

After 10 years of careful preparation, Çitlembik Publications at last releases its collaboration with the Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate, *Splendor and Pageantry: Textile Treasures from the Armenian Orthodox Churches in Istanbul* (Ronald T. Marchese, Marlene R. Breu and the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul). The book, equally worthy as coffee table material and on art guide, captures the details of the Patriarchate's rich embroidered objects, not only in their beauty but moreover in their significance as products of piety and religious expression, which the text explains, were created mostly due to Ottoman restrictions on the architecture of churches. It wouldn't be a surprise for an exhibit to pop up featuring the expertise of this fantastic volume in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Splendor and Pageantry* is available at Pandora Books.