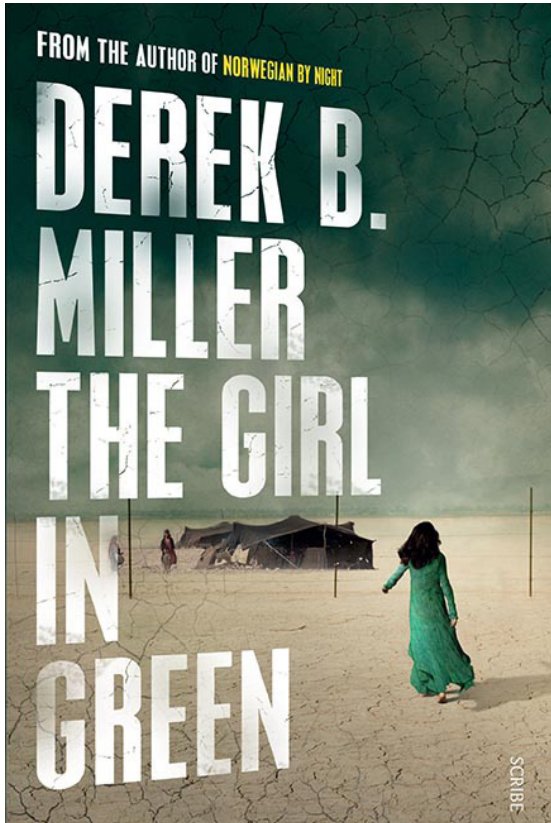


The Girl in Green

DEREK MILLER



BOOK DETAILS

Format: Paperback
 ISBN: 9781925106954
 RRP: \$32.99



AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Derek Miller is the author of the bestselling novel *Norwegian by Night*. He is the director of The Policy Lab and a senior fellow with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, he now lives in Oslo with his wife and children.

1991. Near Checkpoint Zulu, one hundred miles from the Kuwaiti border, Thomas Benton meets Arwood Hobbes. Benton is a British journalist who reports from war zones, in part to avoid his lacklustre marriage and a daughter he loves but cannot connect with; Hobbes is a midwestern American private who might be an insufferable ignoramus, or might be a brilliant lunatic with a death wish — it's hard to tell.

Operation Desert Storm is over, peace has been declared, but as they argue about whether it makes sense to cross the nearest border in search of an ice cream, they become embroiled in a horrific attack in which a young local girl in a green dress is shot in the back and dies in Hobbes's arms. The two men walk away into their respective lives. But something has cracked for them both.

Twenty-two years later, in another place, in another war, the two men meet again. Benton and relief worker Marta Strom are persuaded by a much-changed Hobbes to embark on what may be a fool's errand in a last-chance effort to redeem themselves when the girl in green is found alive and in need of salvation. Or is she?

Set against the war-torn landscape of a shattered Iraq, *The Girl in Green* is an adventure story told with all the wit, humanity, and insight of Miller's acclaimed debut.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Checkpoint Zulu was an actual place, and events depicted in Samawah are based on fact. But the author has also turned Checkpoint Zulu into a metaphor for our collective helplessness today. What has changed since the early 1990s until now that might have placed us all at "Checkpoint Zulu"?
2. Arwood's sense of morality is powerful and drives his actions, but he is no saint. Do you understand his decisions? Do you think they are reasonable or virtuous?
3. The story walks a fine line between comedy and tragedy. Does this work for you?

REVIEWS

'A page-turner that is both funny and sad, intelligent and full of hope. This is a must-read from a writer of extreme talent and compassion.'

JON PAGE, OWNER OF AWARD-WINNING INDEPENDENT BOOKSHOP *PAGES & PAGES BOOKSELLERS*

PRAISE FOR *NORWEGIAN BY NIGHT*

'Humane, blackly funny, heart-breaking, full of believable people and with a touching, magnificent hero in Sheldon, this is one of the best books I've read this year. Verdict: brilliant.' **HERALD SUN**

'Utterly compelling.' **THE SUNDAY AGE**

'An arresting hybrid of serious intent and popular form ... Miller combines Sheldon's memories of love and guilt, his reveries and periods of confusion, with a gripping and at times very funny account of the journey to the showdown.' **TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

4. Does the portrayal of Marta Strom as a professional in the humanitarian sector differ from any assumptions or ideas you may have previously had about people who do this kind of work?
5. Herb Reston and Tigger are friends. They have similar professional backgrounds, but different cultural histories and readings of the world. What are these differences and how do they express themselves in their sensitivities, concerns, and actions?
6. The book is set at a moment in time when the ISIL has not yet emerged into international prominence. What new insight, if any, does this story give you into Iraq and what is happening in the Middle East?
7. At the end of the book, Tigger says to Arwood that it's not the same girl. Arwood responds to that with a powerful and memorable line that captures something essential about the story itself. What is it, and what do you think about that?
8. The Iraqis themselves are given an important role in this story, whether as medics, or national staff at aid agencies or UN personnel. What did you think about the relationship between the international and national staff?
9. Many books have been written about Iraq over the past several years, but few if any have been set outside a military perspective where the international humanitarian and development communities are foregrounded. What does this contribute to our understanding of events and that sector as a whole?



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