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MAGAZINE

## Books: The dead man... or woman?

Nora Gold's latest novel is a captivating story.



Can an obsession with a past lover consume someone completely?. (photo credit: Courtesy)

The title of Canadian author Nora Gold's latest novel is *The Dead Man*. Reading it, however, one might wonder why it isn't called "The Dead Woman," as the protagonist has been unable to live her own life since becoming obsessed with a former lover.

As the story goes, Eve is a 55-year-old music therapist and composer of Jewish sacred music who had an affair with Jake, a married man, more than five years earlier while they were in Israel. He called it quits, but she just

cannot shake it off. Indeed, she is consumed to the point of being unable to focus her thoughts on anything else, including her two beloved sons, or to develop professionally to her ability.

Her career has been “going nowhere,” Eve writes.

“After her Kaddish Concerto won a prize seven years ago, people had high hopes for her. But these hopes have come to nothing, mainly because the past five-and-a-half years have been a waste.”

Beautifully written, *The Dead Man* is a captivating story with fascinating psychological insight. It is also very human, as Eve – an attractive and outwardly successful professional – reveals her inner insecurities that likely would have gone undetected by the casual observer.

Eve’s obsession with Jake is so deep that she has become a stalker – even returning to Israel, where he still lives, to visit “the scene of the crime.” Initially, that may sound creepy, but really – who hasn’t stalked anyone before, be it through the old-fashioned telephone or modern-day social media? Yet the extent of her obsession and her difficulty in accepting the circumstances, as well as the outcome, are extreme. Eventually, a striking discovery explains at least part of the reason why she has been clinging so tightly to a man who not only ended their brief relationship years earlier but also was likely a psychopath, as she discovered over time.

With a good dose of humor, Gold also exposes, to a degree, the world of celebrities – in this case, musical giants, including the fragile egos and, every now and then, the hypocritical accolades.

*The Dead Man* is one of those absorbing works of fiction that hold the reader’s attention. As in Gold’s previous novel, *Living in Exile*, her profound love for Israel resonates throughout.