



## Dogstar Rising

*Parker Bilal*

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## **Dogstar Rising** Parker Bilal

Summer, 2001. The mutilated bodies of young boys are turning up in the backstreets of Cairo, and the finger of suspicion is pointing at the city's Coptic community. As Makana, a private investigator who fled his native Sudan a decade ago, watches the embers of religious hatred begin to glow, he has a premonition that history may be about to repeat itself. But for now, Makana has another case to solve, involving a disgruntled travel agent, stolen money, and threatening letters-an assignment that appears to point to nothing more than a family feud. That is, until Makana meets Meera, a woman with a dangerous secret who asks for his help- and stumbles upon an unlikely link to the murdered boys. **When the travel agent's office becomes the backdrop to a brutal killing Makana is the sole witness, and he attracts the unwanted attention of not only the state security services and the police but also a disreputable Sudanese businessman-who claims to hold the key to Makana's past. His search for answers takes him from the labyrinth of Cairo to the city of Luxor and an abandoned monastery near the tombs of the pharaohs, where he uncovers a web of intrigue, violence, and secrecy that reaches deep into Egypt's political heart...**

## **Dogstar Rising Details**

Date : Published February 19th 2013 by Bloomsbury USA (first published February 1st 2013)

ISBN : 9781608198719

Author : Parker Bilal

Format : Hardcover 384 pages

Genre : Mystery, Crime, Northern Africa, Egypt, Fiction

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## From Reader Review Dogstar Rising for online ebook

### Jacki (Julia Flyte) says

Set in Cairo in summer of 2011, shortly before the 9/11 attacks, this is the story of a private detective hired to investigate threatening notes with a religious tone sent to a local travel agency. The detective, Makana, who previously appeared in *The Golden Scales: A Makana Mystery*, is a former policeman who fled his native Sudan some years previously. He quickly learns that the notes were intended for someone other than the owner of the travel agency but also that the owner has his own reasons to feel apprehensive. This is a complex mystery with multiple strands but the real standout of this book is the way that it conveys modern Egypt, with its religious conflicts, corruption and violent underworld.

I feel like my giving this book three stars is my personal failure, because I kept feeling when I was reading it that it was a great book that I just wasn't quite appreciating as I should. Somehow I kept losing interest in it, getting confused by the many characters and the multiple plot strands. Makana is a terrific character that I really like and as I've mentioned above, the sense of place is one of the best things about this book. I just couldn't help feeling that maybe if he'd kept the story slightly simpler and more linear, that the book may have worked better. I enjoyed it, but as it took me almost two weeks to read, I don't feel that I can justify giving it more than 3 stars.

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### Cathy says

Interesting that the story took place in Egypt and that the author is mid eastern, but aside from that, not so much. Too many characters to keep track of and why do children have to be victims of crazed demonic killers. Aren't they already victims of a sort, powerless? Dependent on the kindness of grown ups?

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### Umut Çal??an says

Sudan'da ya?anan ?slami darbeden sonra M?s?r'a ka?an, ka?arken can?ndan can b?rakan, yorgun, yaral?, y?re?i buruk kahraman?m?z Makana yine i? ba??nda. Bu kez kendi gibi s???nmac? olan Talal'?n m?stakbel kay?n pederine gelen tehdit mektuplar?n? ara?t?rmak i?in kiralan?yor. Ancak Makana, ilk ba?ta basit bir vaka gibi g?r?nen mektuplar? ara?t?r?rken, kendini ?slami ter?rist org?tlerin, dinler aras? ?at??malar?n, uluslar aras? komplocular?n, eski darbecilerin, silah ka?ak?lar?n?n ve daha nicelerinin aras?nda buluyor.

?lk kitap Kahire'de Kay?p da oldu?u gibi, yine s?r?kleyici bir polisiye ile birlikte, alt metin olarak daha o zamanlardan duyulmaya ba?layan "Arap Bahar?"n?n ayak seslerinden bahsedilmi?. Pek ?ok noktada ?lkemizdeki yak?n tarih ve g?ndem ile ilgili benzerlikle kurmak m?mk?n.

<http://www.umutcalisan.com/2017/03/ka...>

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### Jelena Milašinovi? says

The second book in the Makana series is another interesting glimpse into Egypt at the beginning of the 21st

century. Parker Bilal masterfully weaves threads of various seemingly unconnected stories into a fascinating tapestry making Dogstar Rising such a tempting read that it's very, very hard to put it down. I loved seeing the characters from the previous instalment coming back in this book, seeing them change and grow. Furthermore, I liked the twists the author puts in the path of the main character. I can't wait to see what will he face in the 3rd book.

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### **Jerrie says**

Good quick read with interesting background and setting (Cairo, Egypt). Both of the mysteries in this series that I've read now have James Bond type endings that are a bit over the top but good reads.

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### **Christine Van Heertum says**

Le Caire, été 2001. Les corps mutilés de jeunes garçons sont découverts à intervalles réguliers, attisant les tensions entre les communautés musulmanes et coptes. Makana, détective privé soudanais qui a fui son pays une dizaine d'années plus tôt, est appelé par son neveu pour enquêter sur une lettre de menaces envoyée à son patron, directeur d'une agence de tourisme. Durant ses investigations, Makana fait la connaissance de Meera, une jeune femme qui cache un lourd secret. Lorsque celle-ci est assassinée sous les yeux de Makana, l'enquête prend une tournure inattendue.

L'enquête en elle-même n'est pas extraordinaire, mais le personnage de Makana me fait penser aux inspecteurs blasés des vieilles séries policières. Quant à l'ambiance qui se dégage du livre, il nous suffit de fermer les yeux, et l'on se voit suivre Makana dans les quartiers insalubres du Caire, terreau nourricier des tensions entre les communautés, exacerbées par les discours religieux de fanatiques. Le prélude au Printemps Arabe.

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### **Bree T says**

In the summer of 2001, before the terrorist attacks that rocked America and the globe, Cairo is concerned with the brutal murders of young and homeless boys. The deaths are creating religious tensions between the Muslims and the Coptics, the Egyptian Christians. Further complicating matters is the angel that appears on the rooftop of a nearby building whenever a body is found.

As a favour to the son of an old friend, Makana has paid a visit to the owner of a travel company who believes that he is receiving threats. When Makana arrives, he finds the office in a shambles and although there are various people drifting in and out, no one seems to be actually working. Despite not really wanting to take the job, Makana agrees to investigate, under the cover of an auditor brought in to help streamline the company for more efficiency. When Makana meets one of the workers and begins to talk to her, he realises that things are definitely not what they seem in this travel business and that there are some odd things going on.

Having fled his native Sudan a decade ago, Makana is stunned when someone approaches him and rocks his world with just one statement. Now he must decide whether or not to continue with the quiet life he aspires to in Cairo or take a chance on something that could be little more than a dream.

I read the first Makana book, *The Golden Scales*, last year and loved it. Cairo is portrayed in all its dirty, gritty, rough and overcrowded glory. In that novel there was a highlight of the rich against the poor and how corrupt the city was. In this second book, it's more about religion.

Straddling Africa and the Middle East, Egypt is a country almost without a clear identity. It is home to refugees that have fled wartorn nations in Africa, it is home to Muslims and it is home to Christians. Wherever there is religious fervour there is bound to be trouble and this book tackles an attempt to divide the different religions by setting them against each other.

*Dogstar Rising* is rife with the same grittiness as *The Golden Scales*. Despite his wish to live a safe, comfortable life, Makana does have the knack of poking his nose into things that people really don't want him poking his nose into...and then they try to kill him. He is poor, with barely enough money to pay the rent on his houseboat, his taxi fares and his bribes for information but he always seems to get by. He still mourns the loss of his wife and child and the loss of his idyllic Sudan as well. He's resigned to the fact that he can never go back there but Egypt is not exactly what one would call safe, either. In fact in this book alone I think at least five people should've attempted to find refuge in other countries or tried to, or were fleeing. Despite the danger, the city seems to foster a great love and pride in its residents, almost at the same time as they seem in despair about it. It's so far removed from what is familiar to me that I can't help but lap it up – the sights, sounds, smells are all described here as Makana works his way through all parts of Cairo – the seediest underside with 12 year olds running drugs, guns and who knows what else for wealthy corrupt men, the middle income earners who keep their heads down and stay out of trouble, the journalists and their quests for the truth and the wealthy who are almost untouchable.

There's a twist in this one as someone attempts to throw Makana with information to make him do something. It may or may not be true, Makana has no way of knowing and he must agonise over what to do. He's used to being alone, he's used to thinking that he knew what happened on that day that he fled Sudan. I think it was an interesting side plot and I'd love to see Makana return to Sudan one day, even though he does not believe that to be possible. Until that particular part of the plot, I would not have said it was necessary to have read *The Golden Scales* before tackling this one but now I think that it would be best for a reader if these were consumed in order.

*Dogstar Rising* is one slick crime novel that marries up a fabulous setting with truly clever plots. I love immersing myself in the streets of Cairo again as Makana tracks his investigations and learning more and more about this area and the people who live there. The next one will be set in a post-9/11 world and I do wonder whether or not that will be obvious in the next novel, if there will be stark differences that reflect how different things became after that day. This series is quickly becoming a favourite of mine and I look forward to more books. As Parker Bilal is a pen-name for Jamal Mahjoub, I really need to have a look at some of his literary novels under his name.

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## **Karen says**

Summer (northern hemisphere), 2001, and religious and political tensions in Egypt form the basis of the second Makana crime novel by Parker Bilal. Whilst there's nothing new in the use of crime fiction as the vehicle for exploring society on the edge, *DOGSTAR RISING* set, as it is, in that place at that time, provides an illuminating alternative viewpoint. Not automatically that of the "opposing", it is a look at pressures and perspectives from another angle. It's edgy fiction based in a very edgy world.

Whilst it's obvious to Makana, Private Investigator and Sudanese refugee, that the rise of religious hatred and intolerance is history repeating itself, other outcomes are less obvious. The plot of the book revolves around the connections between the murder of a number of young boys mostly forgotten, abandoned children and the persecution of Coptic Christians. Into this mix must fit the State Security Services, the local police, religious leaders, a lowly travel agent and his family connections and a disreputable Sudanese businessman. There is also the story of Makana himself, a refugee from war-torn, corrupt Sudan, his family gone, his life lived now somewhere on the outskirts. Partially as a result of being a refugee, partly because of who he is.

Bilal works his way steadily through a plot which, whilst complicated, never bogs down. He does that whilst continuing to draw a picture of a place and a culture which is searingly honest and instructive.

DOGSTAR RISING is the second book in the Makana series, and in two books it's proved itself extremely impressive. Tackling a range of issues in a society that is particularly on edge, neither book (THE GOLDEN SCALES is the first) pull any punches, albeit without beating the reader around the head and shoulders. Clever, intelligent and extremely thought-provoking, in two books, in the space of a couple of months for this reader, this has become a series to follow closely.

Parker Bilal will be attending the Perth Writer's Festival and Adelaide Writers Week where he'll also be doing Crime Writing Workshops and launching Bloomsbury's Short Sentence Writing competition for Budding Crime Writers

<http://www.austcrimefiction.org/revie...>

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### **Paul Batchelour says**

I won't detail the plot, it's been done previously. I found this quite hard work and very put downable. I just didn't feel particularly engaged with the plot or characters. However it seems I'm in the minority so what do I know.

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### **Anneke de Bundel says**

Good thriller with a sharp eye for social & political environment of Egypt. Reminds me of the French Izo policiers.

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### **Eastendleo says**

Corruption, crime, poverty and the excess of faith. No, not modern America, but the Egyptian reality of the past many decades. And settling lightly on top of this background is the crime of a young woman gunned down and our expatriot Sudanese police officer trying to figure out which threads belong to which tapestries.

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## **Melanie says**

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Het verhaal speelt zich af in Egypte. De detective is een Sudanese vluchteling. Daarmee is het boek in sfeer heel anders dan detectives die ik eerder las. De schrijver weet de geuren en kleuren op straat, en de spanningen die er in de samenleving spelen goed te vangen.

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Heel veel personages. Ik was af en toe kwijt wie wie is.

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## **P.D.R. Lindsay says**

Book two in a series well worth reading.

An unusual mystery novel set in contemporary Egypt. Young boys are turning up dead and mutilated. In the muddle that is Egypt's mix of cultures someone is trying to stir up trouble and blame the Coptic Christians.

Investigator Makana, a mystery man from the Sudan, becomes involved when he sees a murder. He finds a thread linking that murder to those of the boys. Suddenly the police and state security services are breathing down his neck and all hell breaks loose.

Tightly written, the second in a series, and well worth a read for the exotic locations.

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## **Chris says**

If you want to understand the Arab Spring you might want to read these mysteries. Bilal captures the hopelessness that the average Egyptian has about his or her government. Makana, a Sudanese exile, is a good man to have on your side as some urchins and a reporter soon find out. We have street children being killed, tension between Christians and Muslims over the killings—each blaming the other, money laundering via a travel agency which handles Western tourists, and terrorist intrigue involving a nemesis from the Sudan. The time is 2001 and the book ends with the planes striking the twin tower in NYC. Makana is a really captivating character or as his enemies and sometimes allies of convenience call "an interesting man." There are only three in the series and I hope Bilal continues this series. Given the current situation in Egypt I'm sure there is plenty to write about to keep Makana working.

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## **Claudia says**

Not your classic detective story, if you are into Mankells' novels you will probably dislike this

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