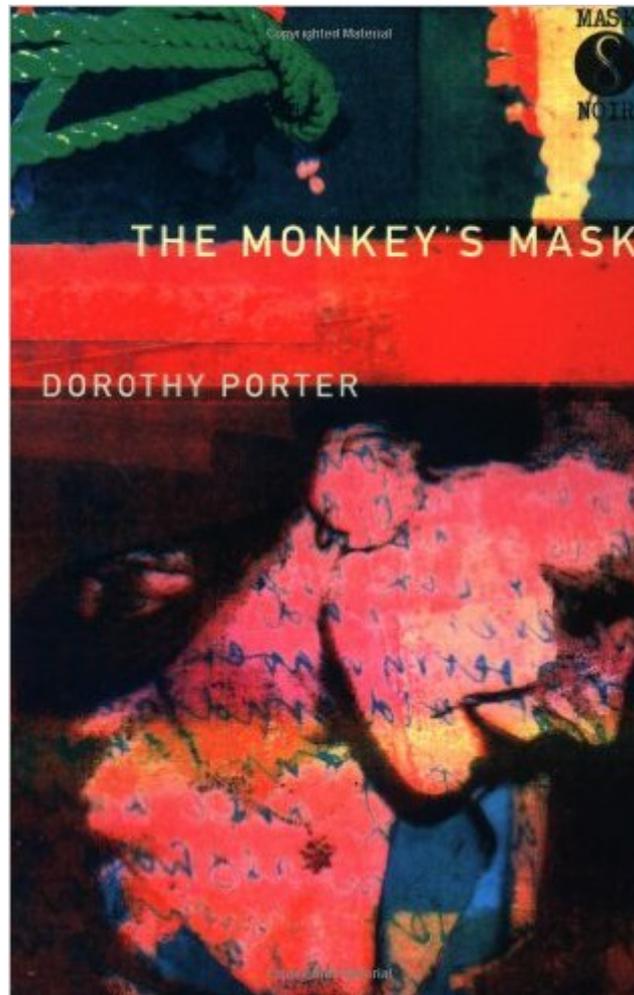


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# The Monkey's Mask (A Mask Noir Title)



## Synopsis

The Australian publishing sensation: a lesbian thriller in verse.

## Book Information

Series: A Mask Noir Title

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Serpent's Tail; New edition edition (November 1, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1852425490

ISBN-13: 978-1852425494

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.7 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,975,239 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #94 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > Australia & Oceania](#) #6437 in [Books > Gay & Lesbian > Literature & Fiction > Fiction > Lesbian](#) #29378 in [Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > Women Sleuths](#)

## Customer Reviews

Dorothy Porter's *The Monkey's Mask* is stunning: a novel written entirely in poetry that is almost impossible to put down. Even if you usually run a mile at the sight of poetry, you're likely to find this book irresistible. Dorothy's heroine is a lesbian private detective, who uncovers as much about herself as the mystery as the novel progresses. Set in Sydney and the Blue Mountains, *The Monkey's Mask* is rich with Australian idioms and imagery. It's also, very simply, a great mystery tale and a great read.

Another must read for poetry fans would have to be the book - *The Monkey's Mask*, by Dorothy Porter. It's a verse novel and a hybrid genre that is taking off in Australia. Les Murray, Australia's poet laureate, has one and so does Alan Wearne. Porter wrote this detective thriller around the Sydney poetry readings scene. What is remarkable about the book is the interweaving of Porter's poetry on the page, within a sordid scene of a missing angst-ridden, confessional poet. So as the story goes.. the protagonist, Jill Fitzpatrick, is the PI investigating... Mickey's disappearance - (the angst poet). I read the book back in my university days and it was the only book I have ever read in three nights. A sign, that when one sinks into a book so deep, it has achieved and captured the

reader's undivided attention. The book's greatest achievement, on the subliminal level, is that not only is it written as poetry, but it incorporates Mickey's love poetry in the narrative. Porter's book, moreover, not only works through its compression of language, but it is power-driven by its structure, characters, plot, storyline and conflict. It's also just been made into a film, which gives much kudos to the book when a director like Samantha Lang (who did Elizabeth Jolley's book - *The Well*) has given a very close, erotic and visual adaptation of this verse novel. 'The Monkey's Mask' truly has to go down as one of the best reads, not only for its delicate handling of female homosexuality and eroticism, but through its sparcity of language that is, as we know it - accessible poetry. Congratulations to Dorothy Porter for this hybrid literature that is both inspirational and a great work of art.

Poetry is a distillation of thought and action. Murder mysteries are a search for truth and--sometimes--justice. *The Monkey's Mask* travels erotic yet brutal, dark byways as Australian PI Jill Fitzpatrick pursues answers to a missing teen's death. Each chapter, each scene distilled to its essence in a short poem to thrill in its sexuality or abhor the consequences. "Mickey's murder on Page Three under the big black headline the photo taken by her dad at her eighteenth birthday party 'petite, pretty and only nineteen' like a line from a sixties song 'sexually assaulted, strangled and dumped.' Mickey in a police lens chinks out of her arms and legs from the pack of dogs that found her barefoot, her shirt round her neck no pants her face swollen with rot laid out by her killer in the fetal position." Many thrillers and mysteries have claimed to leave you "haunted and gasping." This one will.

Jill Fitzpatrick is a private investigator hired to find a missing student. When the girl is found murdered, Jill promises the girl's parents that she'll find who did it. The girl's former poetry professor, Diana, weaves an intoxicating spell of seduction that overwhelms Jill. Is Diana just a simple, thoroughly enjoyable distraction to Jill's mission, or is there something darker hiding behind the woman? After another professor is killed, Jill finds that she herself might be next. Porter's saucy thriller, told through a series of poems, electrifies the senses and rockets the reader to its shocking end. Not only is it a spectacular mystery, but it's also a taut, dazzling story of obsessive, flooding desire.

Dorothy Porter breaks the mold with 'The Monkey's Mask' - a lesbian detective poetry text which questions attitudes towards poetry, detective novels, gender, class and the myths of Australian

society. Interlaced with an investigation into the disappearance and later murder of Mickey, Jill the protagonist enters into unfamiliar territory with her exploration into the world of poetry. She encounters people and situations which cause her to question her ideas about the identity of art as well as to begin to see beyond the surface in other aspects of life. Mixing Jill with characters of varying classes, Porter also asks the reader to examine their attitudes to the myths of Australian society, in particular the dominance of the idea that Australia is a classless egalitarian society. The much used themes of the Australian character as an unsophisticated, no-nonsense person in a society with limited acceptable roles available to its people, (particularly in regards to gender) is questioned and the suggestion is that this view (or myth) may be outdated and overrepresented. This text is a fast-paced, metatextual piece which captures the attention of the reader and takes the reader (well, this reader anyway) willingly along to emerge at the end with new ideas of current society, text genres and characters. I highly recommend this text to anyone who is interested in delving into something innovative and thought-provoking.

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