

Baghdad Fixer: A Novel by Ilene Prusher.  
Halban Publishers Ltd, 2012.

A truckload of factual books has been written about the second Gulf War since it ended, and particularly since the capture and execution of Saddam Hussein. They have covered every aspect imaginable, religious, historical, political, military and more in minute detail, and a very clear final picture of the disastrous nature of the invasion of Iraq is the result.

Novels related to the invasion and its aftermath are far fewer, and with Baghdad Fixer's publication a novel has appeared which takes many of the themes encountered in works of non-fiction and weaves them into a touching and challenging story. At the story's heart are the two major protagonists, Nabil al-Amari, a teacher and unmarried son of a Baghdad surgeon and Samara Katchens, a tough and fearless American journalist covering the war.

Set in 2003, just after the invasion by allied troops, Ilene Prusher evokes the terror and random violence of Baghdad combined with the societal strictures that surviving families try to maintain, in to which Sam Katchens almost literally crashes.

Baghdad Fixer, at 661 pages, is a big novel as well, I believe, as a significant one, because it gets under the surface of the big events that grab the headlines and keeps the reader focussed on the men, women and children trying to be normal in an unimaginably abnormal context.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh