



## BOOK REVIEW: THE MUSSOORIE MURDERS



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Author: Divyaroop Bhatnagar

The premise is 'suspense personified'

Two parallel plots involving two ghastly murders, with about 60 years in between them. That's the premise of this story where the author has brilliantly weaved the plots together of their accords and finally merged them into an unbelievable climax.

When Margaret Maynard-Liddell is murdered in 1909 in a hotel room locked from the inside, the shockwaves traverse across the systems involved in solving the high-profile murder but it remains unresolved. Decades later, a wealthy heiress, Anahita Billimoria is murdered strikingly similarly and the MO appears to be alarmingly identical. However, with the advent of technology and communication services, Avijit Sarkar an Oxford returned detective plunges headlong into the case to help the police. The needle of suspicion points to several people, right from an old housekeeper to an estranged brother, an absentee husband a fraud godman and his apprentice.

As Avijit joins the dots the mystery unravels.

As each layer of the saga unfolds, unbelievable pieces of evidence show up and Avijit succeeds in nailing the culprit this time. How uncanny is the similarity of the murders separated by decades? Is there a true connection? Is the old cold case also resolved in the undercurrents of the present one? Who is responsible for the crime... is it someone close to the heiress?

The author has succeeded in maintaining the pace of the narrative and the language is lucid. The language takes you back in time and is apt for the periods of plot occurrences.

The book has been taken up for screen adaptation and I eagerly look forward to watching the characters come alive.