

LoveReading Reader reviews of The Unexpected Inheritance of Inspector Chopra By Vaseem Khan

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

Phylippa Smithson

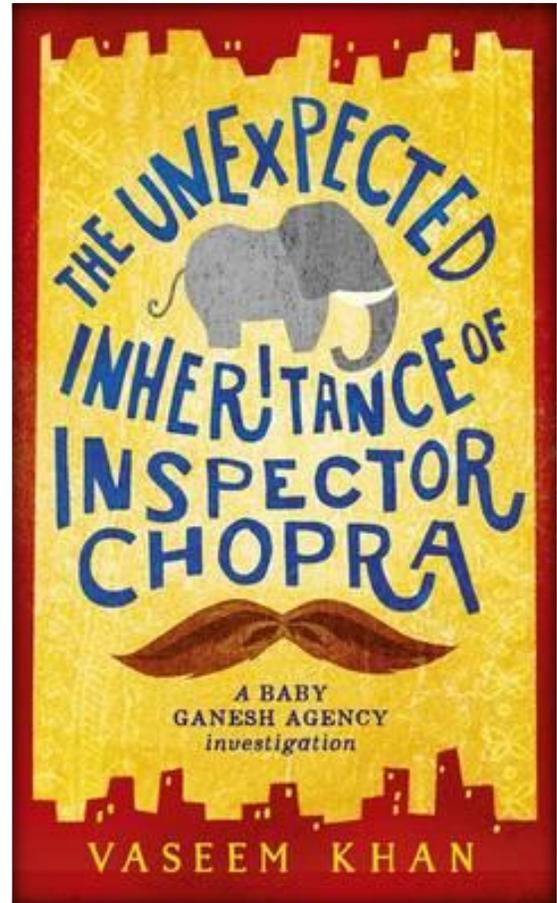
This is a gentle and warming tale that is a wonderful insight to the Indian culture, the way of life living in Mumbai, and oh yes, a murder and an elephant.

Inspector Chopra has been forced to take early retirement due to ill health, a decision made more by his wife than himself. He leaves his final day in the Mumbai police haunted by the words of a bereaved mother who alleges that her poverty will result in their being no investigation into the death of her son who she believes to have been murdered. Justice is not served to the poor only those with 'white Mercedes' she claims.

As Chopra seeks to prove the Mother's words wrong, he faces the challenge of doing so behind the back of his former superiors and his replacement who want to close the case as a suicide and quickly.

He also has his own personal issues to resolve. A baby elephant who he has inherited from an uncle he had adored as a child but whom he had become estranged for 10 years. A childless wife who desperately seeks to hide her disappointment but who yearns for a baby. And his own guilt that the man she thinks she has married, loyal, devoted and honourable, is not quite true.

At times light hearted and humorous and at times demanding and cruel as it delves into the reality of every day life as an Indian in Mumbai. Far superior to the 'No 1 Ladies Detective Agency Series' with more real characters, more credible story lines and sub-plots and a creative style of writing that leaves the



reader drained from the heat, the noise and the smells of Mumbai and enchanted by its colour and people.

Alan Brown

A cosy mystery in Beaton or Christie genre but with an insight into human life as well.

This is, apart from the language of India, a simple book to read. This does not detract from the book one little bit.

The elephant is a brilliant hook that sustains the suspense and brings emotional colour to the story.

This camouflages an horrific murder investigation also told in a gentle captivating way. The story is told in police style but it is nothing like a procedural tale.

Not only does the story follow Inspector Chopra but also his wife Poppy. This means that the story is not just a detective story but also a writing describing human adjustments to major events in life. This extra dimension makes the book even more enthralling.

I am looking forward to reading the sequels of this easy to read book. It could be that Inspector Chopra will become a hero of this genre

Catherine Bryce

An excellent book from a new author, a definite first read so don't delay, order your copy today you will not be disappointed!

A brilliant and exciting new book from author Vaseem Khan. If you only read one book this year then this is it!

Inspector Chopra retires from the police, but policing is in his blood and he dreads having to retire. The story takes on a journey with Inspector Chopra as he deals with an unexpected but intriguing case, albeit he is no longer a policeman, with the help of his 'associate' Baby Ganesha, his inherited elephant. Dealing with his own personal feelings, Poppy his wife, Mrs Subramaniam the unofficial housing warden, his acerbic mother-in-law and Ganesha, the plot is intriguing as is the ending surprising and heart-warming.

There are superb 'one liner' replies that Inspector Chopra gives people and these made me laugh out loud, together with some of the antics he gets up to had tears

rolling down my cheeks.

The plot of the story is well written and the author's style makes this an interesting thriller and allows your imagination to flow as he takes us on a tour of Mumbai and surrounding areas.

A superb first novel from Vaseem Khan and really looking forward to the release of his next novel.

Pam Kennedy

This book was an absolute pleasure to read, I loved everything about it. Vaseem must be a very nice man to create a character like Inspector Chopra, or he knows someone like him.

This book is beautiful and I am not really sure why, it is I think very honest when describing the sites, smells and hustle and bustle of the city but it is Inspector Chopra, he is such a lovely man, Poppy so loving and caring, they are a lovely couple. Ganesha, well who could not love him, this gorgeous little elephant. Everything about this book is good it has everything, the sadness of the slums the excitement of the story of what Chopra discovered. I just cannot praise this book enough. It is one of those books that when you have finished reading it you put it down smile and say with great satisfaction 'mmm'. I am excitedly waiting for the next book to come out. great book Vaseem.

Robin Little

A delightful insight into Mumbai life & death. A gentle meandering murder mystery which brings to life one of the most vibrant cities in the world. I look forward to future stories.

The story is clearly written and easy to follow. Inspector Chopra is an appealing figure if a little dull, although his sidekick the crime fighting elephant is a bit too prominent.

This is a good introduction to the sub continent and the setting offers a rich source of future material which I look forward to reading.

Glenda Worth

A delightful easy to read book about Inspector Chopra who is retiring from police life and not looking forward to it. He inherits a baby elephant, Ganesha,

from his Uncle who he is told is 'no ordinary elephant'.

Chopra investigates one last case even though he is technically already retired and goes against his successors wishes. In doing so he discovers an old enemy has not perished in a fire and sets out to investigate in the murky depths of Mumbai.

His long suffering wife Poppy is convinced he is having an affair and as she cannot have children considers adopting her cousins soon to be born grandchild so avoiding their shame at a child born out of wedlock and solving her own problem with Chopra.

Ganesha proves to be the hero of the hour, wading into rescue Chopra more than once, even after nearly drowning in the monsoon weather.

A light hearted look at life in India cleverly told by Vaseem Khan with humour and great descriptions.

Janette Skinner

If this is the start of a series, I would be delighted to read the next book.

I was given this book to review and enjoyed reading it very much. It is a story about a newly retired police inspector who gets involved in a murder investigation which gets out of control. This is a well written book, quite concise and the pace is steady. The characters are very likeable and the villains are very bad, there is not a lot of grey area. This is not fine literature and not meant to be, but the plot is flawless and there is a pleasing satisfactory ending. If this is the beginning of a series of detective stories, it is a very good start.

Inspector Chopra is a tenacious investigator who receives some help from a baby elephant, won't say much about that as it would spoil the story. All in all I would be happy to read the next instalment.

www.best-book-review.co.uk

Kerry Bridges

A different and clever description of life in India, seen through the eyes of one reluctant elephant owner!

Uncle Bansi has left Inspector Chopra (Rtd) a present - it's a baby elephant! Chopra knows nothing about elephants and anyway, he's far too busy

investigating the death of Santosh Achrekar and keeping his wife Poppy from finding out what he is doing because, after all, he is supposed to be retired.

This is a very busy book. There are lots of descriptions of life and activities in India and, as someone with no knowledge of that country, I did find that a little bit overwhelming. It does, however, summon up the colour, noise and excitement of the area very well, and the story rushes along at breakneck speed, rather like everything else there.

Inspector Chopra (Rtd), Poppy and Ganesha are fantastic characters brought to life really well. The little elephant is a really different idea as a detectives "sidekick" and I found that very clever. The fact that Poppy is an interesting character in her own right is also very well done, and I found I was worried for Chopra; not about what would happen at the hands of the gangsters, but at what Poppy would say when she got hold of him!

This is clearly the opening to a series of novels and I will be interested to see how that progresses as they obviously won't be able to go down exactly the same lines as this one has. How the characters and situations progress and adapt will be very interesting and I will certainly be looking out for the next one in the series.

<http://iamalwaysreading.wordpress.com/>

Kathy Howell

This is a really good read and I look forward to reading more in the series.

The book is about Inspector Chopra who has had to take early retirement from the Mumbai Police force due to ill health. However, he is not really ready to retire and on his last day he promises a bereaved mother that her son's murder will be investigated. It becomes clear that his successor doesn't think this crime is important enough as the family is poor.

When he returns home from his last day he is greeted by his inheritance from his Uncle Bansi which is a baby elephant. The story of how the elephant becomes part of the family and also helps Inspector Chopra with his investigation is really lovely.

Inspector Chopra also has a secret from his wife which he has been working on since it became clear that he would have to retire and the book ends with him revealing this to his wife and also setting up the structure future books in this series.

I really enjoyed this book and look forward to the investigations which follow.

Jennifer Merville

This is the story about Inspector Chopra - or soon to be EX inspector as the book starts on the day he retires from the police force.

On his final day he is confronted by a woman torn with grief as her son has just been found dead. Thinking he can leave this in the capable hands of the new Inspector, Chopra heads off home only to find that a baby elephant has been delivered to his homea gift from an ailing relative.

As a new day dawns Chopra cannot forget the woman he met the day before and decides to look into the boys death. The new Inspector says it is merely a simple case of drowning and orders the boys body released for the funeral . But Chopra can't believe that an autopsy hasn't been given and secretly orders it himself. The results are that the boy has actually been murdered. Chopra finds himself again confronting the new Inspector who is fuming at what Chopra has done and informs him that he is no longer a police officer and has no rights and again insists the boy merely drowned.

*On first receiving this book I honestly thought I was going to get through perhaps the first chapter and be bored. On the contrary, **it lifted my spirits with intrigue and some humour whilst all the while leaving me wanting more to find out about the murder.***

A very interesting and easy read.

Angela Rhodes

Inspector Chopra was retiring, it was a time for relaxing or so he and his wife Poppy thought, but this was not going to happen just yet..

Inspector Chopra had been left an inheritance of a baby elephant that he names Ganesha.

On the day of his retirement he finds himself promising to find the murderer of a poor mothers son. So begins the adventures of an Inspector and his unusual side kick...

Holmes has Watson, Scott has Bailey and Chopra has Ganesha, an Indian elephant.

For everyone who loves Alexander McCall Smith, this will win your

heart... A fantastic debut. You will, as I did, fall in love with Gabesha.

Clare Turner

After more than thirty years service in the Mumbai Police Force, the well-respected and incorruptible Inspector Chopra is retiring, with great reluctance but forced by his health and his consideration for his much loved wife Poppy. But his life is not over, as he had feared, not least because two other things happen on the same day; firstly he takes delivery of an unexpected inheritance, a depressed baby elephant, and then he feels honour bound to involve himself in a murder case that his replacement has decided to ignore. And so the Baby Ganesh Agency springs into being!

*This is **a delightful book. Inspector Chopra is a most engaging character, as indeed is his baby elephant.** We learn quite a lot about modern India, not always good - but in the end honesty and decency win out, after an exciting investigation. And best of all, we are promised at least another three books.*

An intriguing factor is that the author works at University College. London, for the Department of Security and Crime Science.

A great read, especially for a holiday!

Linda Rollins

This book is the beginning of what promises to be a charming and quirky series.

On the same day as Inspector Chopra retires from the local police force, he also inherits a baby elephant. At the same time, faced with a crime that no-one else is willing to investigate, Inspector Chopra realises he isn't quite ready to completely give up his detective work.

Vaseem Khan conjures up the magic and misery of India: the sights, smells, beauty and poverty. He gives us a light-hearted story with a steady pace but with some tense and energetic moments.

It's a fun story that will make you chuckle, but I would have liked to have seen a little bit more interaction between the elephant and Inspector Chopra. It is a sweet relationship, but with a rough edge, not especially sentimental. Also, I would have hoped for more explanation about the elephant but I guess that's

something that will come along as the series develops. I was actually quite concerned for the elephant, probably more than any of the characters in the story seemed to be.

The idea for the series is good, the writing is great (although there is a lot of internal dialogue, it doesn't get boring). I just hope that the baby elephant features a little more in future books than it does in the first and that we'll find out more about him – and that someone will start looking after him properly!

Gill Wilmott

*A story about a newly retired policeman in India who has just inherited an elephant is about as unlikely a scenario for a book that I can think of! However having enjoyed the series of novels 'The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency' by Alexander McCall Smith, set in Botswana, I wondered if this would be similarly interesting reading, although based on a different continent. **I wasn't disappointed; it has the same clear descriptive writing style, evoking the atmosphere of Mumbai very effectively.** As with the NO.1 books it deals with the ordinary life of the characters at least as much as the crime element. The personalities of these various characters come across exceedingly well especially the wife, a mixture of traditional subservience to her husband yet coupled with a strong determination of her own. There are some Indian words that I didn't understand, but not too many and the context usually gave me the general idea of them.*

The ending clearly signifies further sequels are envisaged and I look forward to them greatly.

Siobhan McDowell

This novel is set in India..a vast continent that is described in a most evocative fashion.

The character of Inspector Chopra is portrayed in a gallant manner and it is clear that the author sees him as a lively, quirky yet old-fashioned personality.

The author describes the teeming hordes in the slums that he passes through in his investigations and the heat and odours of the backstreets come alive on the page.

This book reminds me very much of another detective who was based in India: Inspector Ghote who featured in the works of HRH Keating. This writer I

believe has been loved by Vaseem Khan and so I feel that he has honoured the memory of Keating by contributing to the genre.

*He has succeeded and the book is **a trip into a world where by solid detection, hard work and charm the Inspector always gets his man!***

Ed Robson

Vaseem Khan's debut is a by-the-numbers detective novel that has an interesting setting but suffers from a predictable plot and a lack of dramatic tension.

The central character is a newly-retired police detective who investigates the death of a young man on his last working day: his superiors say suicide, Inspector Chopra has his doubts. This scenario will be familiar to any reader of detective fiction but unlike, say, the Rebus novels the main character is portrayed as essentially faultless and is consequently too bland to evoke any feeling of identification from the reader. Another weakness of the novel is the lack of strong characterisation elsewhere, with too many of the supporting characters simple stereotypes – the bad-tempered mother in law, the insincere politician, the suave criminal.

In addition, Khan relies on too many tired tropes of detective fiction such as the stakeout and the obligatory scene where the hero is kidnapped. The novel is set in Mumbai but whilst there are references to the changing of the city in the modern era, these are only made at a superficial level. The inclusion of a baby elephant with suggested powers of perception is humorous and original but overall this feels like a plot device rather than part of any compelling narrative.

This all adds up to a lifeless story because the plot is neither diverting nor original enough to command your attention. Khan will doubtless draw comparison with Tarquin Hall's Vish Puri novels although he does avoid Hall's patronising presentation of Indian vocal mannerisms. Overall this is a disappointing read.

Rachael Anderson

The first book in a new, quirky detective series. Well worth reading.

At the commencement of the book, we find Inspector Ashwin Chopra at pivotal point in his life. He has been forced to take early retirement from the Mumbai police force and has just found out that he has inherited a rather unusual baby

elephant, Ganesha.

Chopra is a man of integrity, and when nobody will look into the suspicious death of a young man, he takes on the case, not stopping his investigation even when he has officially left the police force.

'The Unexpected Inheritance of Inspector Chopra' kept me captivated from start to finish. There is a certain humour and lightness of touch, in terms of Vaseem Khan's style of writing, that draws in the reader and keeps him hooked. The story centres around a sinister underworld and its effects on both high and low ranking individuals in Mumbai society. However, the relationship, the reader sees between Ashwin and Poppy, his wife, and moreover, their relationship with Ganesha is heart-warming.

I only hope that Vaseem Khan quickly writes the second book in this series.

Dana Captainino

*'The Unexpected Inheritance of Inspector Chopra' is **a wonderful book - charming and engaging throughout.** It is Vaseem Khan's first novel and I hope that this is the first in a very long series of Baby Ganesh Agency investigations.*

The book begins on Inspector Chopra's final day in the Mumbai police having been forced to take early retirement due to bad health. On the same day his Uncle Bansai sends him a present of a baby elephant (Ganesha).

The ex-detective is determined to look after and nurture Ganesha and an unlikely bond begins to develop. Meanwhile Inspector Chopra is intrigued by the murder of a young man Santosh reported as he is leaving work for the final time. He is determined to solve the case and we are taken through the seedy and dangerous slums of Mumbai to the upmarket mansions of the city in pursuit of the truth.

The reality of Uncle Bansai's message that Ganesha "is no ordinary elephant" soon comes to light as the two pursue the truth unearthing a shocking story from the murky and corrupt machinations of the city of Mumbai.

The human relationships Inspector Chopra enjoys and the descriptions of life in the city draw the reader into the quirky and captivating intricacies of Indian life. And as someone who has spent a great deal of time there - it is immediately recognisable.

A must read!

Julie

A great read for fans of Alexander McCall Smith. Inspector Chopra's retirement begins with a baby elephant arriving at his apartment and an unsolved murder to investigate.

Inspector Chopra is a good man, having dedicated his life to Police work it is difficult for him to relinquish his job when ill health forces retirement upon him. With the arrival of a baby elephant to look after and a wife who is keen for him to stay at home, Chopra cannot resist the need to get to the bottom of an unsolved murder of a local boy for whom he feels there will be no justice. This story is very similar to the style of Alexander McCall Smith and his readers would do well to try this new novelist. Very entertaining.

Helen Clark

A quirky and engaging thriller, mixing suspense and humour in such a way that one minute the reader is frightened for Chopra's life, and the next, laughing out loud at Ganesha's exploits.

After over thirty years service in the Mumbai Police Service, Inspector Ashwin Chopra enters the station for his last day prior to his early retirement. Two unexpected happenings occur that change his life - the arrival of a baby elephant and a murder case that threatens his life but when solved affects the whole of Mumbai.

Cutting a memorable and authoritative figure, Inspector Chopra is a dapper gentleman proud and honest, equally comfortable investigating crime in the slums of Mumbai as the high rise apartments in the affluent areas. His investigations into a boy's murder takes him to a dangerous and murky underworld, accompanied by his gifted baby elephant, Ganesha.

Their joint exploits are hilarious and embrace everyday life in a bustling city, painting a picture of survival through loyalty and determination for justice.

An interesting book showing an insight into Mumbai life and how an elephant really does have surprising powers.

Alison Burns

On the day he retires early from the Mumbai police force, Inspector Ashwin Chopra inherits a baby elephant from his uncle.

Inspector Ashwin Chopra and his devoted wife Poppy are likeable characters who are not sure how they will cope with his early retirement from the Mumbai Police Force on medical grounds. But on that final day before his retirement, two big things happen; a poor young man is murdered, and Inspector Chopra inherits a baby elephant from an uncle he hasn't heard from in years.

The story centres around Inspector Chopra's determination to solve the murder case when he realises his successor at the police force has closed down the investigation. The murder is solved in due course, but story of the little elephant is largely secondary to the investigation and, although amusing in places, it felt disconnected from the plot. The reason for this 'inheritance' from his uncle remains unexplained.

The book cover tells you that this is 'the start of an irresistible series' and the book does read like a scene setting pilot for a series. It ends with Inspector Chopra, Poppy and Ganesha looking forward to their new lives post-police force and it seemed to me that this was the whole purpose of the book; getting us to this point.

I will read the next instalment of the series when it arrives to see how the plot develops, ***but on reading this first instalment I'm not sure there is enough to hold my interest in a series.***

Carol Tuckett

*Who would want an Uncle like Inspector Chopra? He has left him a baby elephant. Chopra lives in a flat on the 15th floor, not really a suitable gift. The poor little elephant has to be chained up in the courtyard. Chopra recently retired is bored so decides to solve a case that has been closed. Chopra is not convinced that the young man drowned, he thinks he was murdered. With the help of Ganesha his baby elephant he goes to work. **I really enjoyed the book. It took me to a country I have never visited.***

Kelly Silcox

With wonderful descriptions of Mumbai life and a storyline that drags you in, this is a perfect introduction to what I hope will be a long series of books.

A fantastic book that I could not put down.

Inspector Ashwin Chopra already had his own ideas on how to keep himself

busy when he took early retirement, although he kept these hidden from his wife. What he didn't reckon on was an unusual inheritance from his Uncle and a suspected murder that no one was willing to investigate, all on his very last day.

Baby elephant Ganesha, is soon discovered to be 'no ordinary elephant' and helps Ashwin Chopra with his own investigations as he travels Mumbai's grand high rises, slums and its underworld in his bid to solve the suspected murder and bring answers to the drowned boy's parents.

Set in Mumbai, this book brought back memories of my time spent in India. The crowds, animals wandering the roads, the sights, smells and food are all detailed to perfection. Add in the wonderful story line that drags you in and it is perfection. I can't wait to read more from this author.

Judith Sharp

Lovely book about present day India which fans of Alexander McCall Smith will enjoy. Gives a flavour of what day to day life is like in Mumbai & also how western life is encroaching on the old India.

Inspector Chopra is an honourable man who has had to retire early due to ill health. On his retirement he becomes the owner of a baby elephant Ganesha, which as he lives in an apartment building does create a problem. Through the inspector we see the daily lives of the people of Mumbai, the corruption & the lack of justice for the poor. The inspector does his best to work against this & becomes involved in the death of a drowned boy whose death is suspicious but is not being investigated.

Significant others are the inspector's wife Poppy & of course the baby elephant.

Les Wood

I suppose that with the latest title format 'a la Harold Fry' I was expecting something different.

Having visited Goa and its slums and experienced the lifestyle I was with the character as he takes us through a gentle yet stark depiction of India, real, raw and uplifting, describing a lifestyle that us mollycoddled westerners could never accept.

The detective story element expects you to suspend belief and all thoughts of credibility, as most fiction does, and is full of typical, almost horror film, situations where the hero knows danger is present yet still puts himself in those

situations.

The characters are well described and rounded although I didn't feel empathy towards any of them, other than Chopra's long suffering wife, knowing that the unemotional, almost business-like, way that the main protagonists spoke and acted are typical of their race and traditions.

It was a gentle read where not a huge amount happened and was a novel idea in itself, however I cannot see it progressing in a manner similar to The Ladies Detective Agency.

A one off storyline of this nature is enough for Inspector Chopra and myself.

Disha Gulati

"They say an elephant never forgets. What they don't tell you is you never forget an elephant."- Bill Murray

In his debut book Vaseem Khan makes this quote ring true. His elephant is a novel, endearing and unforgettable character, capturing the hearts of a ruthless inspector and half an Indian village.

Khan's fun-loving narrative unfolds out of the early retirement of a leading inspector. It's a more complex story than the reader initially appreciates: the delivery of an unsuspecting baby elephant unfolds into the investigation of an intriguing murder case. A drowned young boy whose death no one seems concerned or aware of becomes the centre of this policeman's life, much to the despair of his loving and comical wife Poppy.

An eye opening glance into new India, Khan's debut novel has a chilling twist. The murder has many connotations which one does not appreciate at the outset of the novel. Inspector Chopra has the experience and the intelligence to dig deeper, and he and the reader will both be surprised at what he finds.

Khan's debut novel is an entertaining and penetrating read. A page turner, it presents modern India in an accurate light: open, warm, family orientated but with a cruel and unforgiving underbelly. The characters are heart warming, in particular the elephant and Chopra's wife, who insists on tracking his every move and housing the elephant in their Indian apartment block!

*An excellent debut novel, with a multi dimensional perspective, this novel lays precedent to a series. **I eagerly await my next instalment.***

Sharon

I loved this book! Vivid atmosphere of Mumbai mixed with humour and crime.

The author gives the reader an insight into life in a bustling Indian city. His characters are wonderful, especially that of the title character. I would recommend this book to all those who enjoy the Ladies' Detective Agency series.

Vaseem Khan provides just the right balance between humour and the crime aspects of the novel. The inclusion of Ganesha the baby elephant was a brilliant touch; we even see his personality!

I'm really looking forward to reading others in the series.

David

An interesting and enjoyable read; travelogue and detective novel in equal measures with the novel twist of using an elephant to sniff out the baddies. One for fans of the The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency.

When I first read the short description of this book it intrigued me - how could an elephant be woven in to a detective novel? Would this be a novel way of sniffing out the baddies? Apologies for the truly appalling puns!

What the author has written is a very gentle and undemanding read that intrigues and informs in equal measures. It also will be a very popular book for the Indian Ministry of Tourism as it captures the sights and sounds of India perfectly; it's the first book I've read that makes me wonder what it would be really like to visit this fascinating country.

The fact that I'm including tourism in the review is an indication of the content of the book: yes, it's a detective novel and the first of a series that I'm sure will rival The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency. But it is also a travelogue of the sites and sounds of Mumbai and an insightful description of the personality and culture of India and its inhabitants.

The detective story itself is not complex and has a very well telegraphed twist; the manner of the involvement of the elephant was done very well and without it being unbelievable.

In summary this book is well worth a read; yes, it does suffer (slightly) from being the first in the series but I am positive that the groundwork laid here will benefit the books to come.