



Murder in Mahim

Jerry Pinto

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A young man is found dead in the toilet of Matunga Road station, his stomach ripped open. Retired journalist Peter D'Souza joins the investigation with his friend Inspector Zende and is drawn into a world of secret desire, blackmail and unspoken love—a world that he fears his son may be a part of. Driven as much by fear and empathy as by curiosity about men who seek men, Peter tries to track down the killer, with some help from the flamboyant Leslie Siqueira, 'the Queen of the Queen of the Suburbs'. But time is running out.

Jerry Pinto's new novel—set in Mumbai, the city he writes about like no other—is a gripping murder mystery. It is also a compelling exploration of loneliness, ambition and greed in the great metropolis.

Murder in Mahim Details

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Author : Jerry Pinto

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From Reader Review Murder in Mahim for online ebook

Adhismay says

Gripping read and excellent story telling around Mumbai and a view of another facet of the city. Towards the end however, I felt the story became very predictable. Finished in one go!

Bhargavi Gopalakrishnan says

Have you ever taken almost an entire year to finish a book? I seem to have started reading this in March'17 and finished it in Feb'18. Now, let that speak only of my nimble reading skills and state nothing about the author or his writing.

Jerry Pinto never ceases to amaze with the kind of versatile content he can dish out. *Em and the Big Hoom* struck a massive chord with me, and I would not miss another one by the same author for anything under the sun. But the fact that he wrote a murder mystery shook the bejeezus out of me - almost like a whodathunkit moment.

You can tell Pinto is a sensitive writer and the treatment he gives his subjects and his plot is perhaps his USP. *Em and the Big Hoom* revolved around mental health - it was heart wrenching and beautiful at the same time, how he had spun that tale. *Murder in Mahim* takes you through the everyday lives of a subculture in Mumbai one is not even aware of. Every character is well detailed and has a defined role in his stories. There is no clutter, and I personally find joy in the way he defines the chemistry between any two characters.

Lovely read!

Ravi Gangwani says

So I am the victim of this Murder who thought that as this mystery is written by Jerry Pinto then it will be good. Had Jerry Pinto's name not been there in the cover I don't doubt I would have touched this book. I mean it's just that for me '*Em and The big Hoom*' was godly book and this was just something trashy.

Too stretchy.

Too dramatic.

Too much emulated (it seems) from Agatha Christie.

Too much TRIED to create suspense.

A man, with a stupid name Proxy, died in public urinal who was earlier appointed by some local police to stand in public toilet and try to lure some middle or upper class gay man, so that police can catch and extort some money. And a stupid trail mystery goes on who-killed-whom and dark tunnels through consensual sodomy performed.

It was like: I KILLED HIM BECAUSE HE EITHER MURDERED MY FRIEND or LIKE THEY DESERVED PUNISHMENT BECAUSE THEY DID INJUSTICE.

And little bit butter of gay-sex applied on the bread.

A very big disappointment.

Saritha says

Much as I love Jerry Pinto's keen observations and insights on the urban mindsphere, this one wasn't quite my cup of tea. It's not as effective a mystery as I would have liked, but the relationships between the protagonist Peter and his wife, his son and his classmate, had a lovely texture to them.

Vivek Tejuja says

Before I begin this review let me tell you that this book is very different from 'Em and the Big Hoom' by the same author. If you are going to pick up 'Murder in Mahim' thinking it will be like his earlier novel, then don't. It is different and refreshingly so. I would also like to add that it moves beyond just being a murder mystery (in the loose sense of the word) and goes to explore other themes, which I thought was very-well managed and achieved.

Being a Bombay (Yes, to me it will always be that) boy, I could identify to most of what is there in the book, in fact, even all of it – from the glitzy and glamorous to the dark underbelly, nothing was new and everything was a reminiscence of a time gone-by. This is precisely what I love about Jerry Pinto's books – the description, the eye for detail, the nuances of not only the characters, but also the city (which also happened in Em and the Big Hoom in large doses) and that to me is some superlative craft.

I didn't think much of the story in this one, but the only reason I kept turning the pages is because I cared for some characters and the language which is par excellence. Jerry Pinto's writing embroils you in it, it makes you think, and before you know it you are also a part of its world.

So what is the plot of this book? A young man is found dead in the toilet of Matunga road station, with his stomach ripped open. Peter D'Souza, a retired journalist becomes a part of this investigation with his friend Inspector Jende and that's when the story begins. It is also a book about unspoken love, about Peter's fear that his son might be involved in the killings (yes, there are more than one) and it is about the city that never sleeps – the one that comforts and the one that can also be mercilessly cruel.

This is all I have to say about the plot. Now to the writing – I was taken in like I have mentioned earlier, by the raw energy of the city pulsating throughout the book. The nuances are meticulously and most certainly effortlessly thrown in – from the Barista at Shivaji Park, to the beaches, to the stench of urine and sweat at railway station platforms, and Marine Drive included. Mumbai (I have to call it that now) has come alive in this book.

Jerry's writing is peppered with humour, sorrow and lots of ironic moments in the book which make you guffaw a lot. There is this straight-forwardness to his prose and yet the characters are more complex than ever. From Peter's wife Millie who plays a minor role and yet shines with her complexities to Leslie (my personal favourite character) and the various shades there are to him, each character is crafted with a lot of deftness and logic. At one point, I felt as though I was in Bombay of my college years – there is no timeline

as such in the book which works very well to its advantage. 'Murder in Mahim' is relevant, topical, fast-paced, and a book that will grab you by your throat.

Rahul Nair says

Murder in Mahim by Jerry Pinto is about a murder that happens in Matunga Railway Station and the subsequent resolution of mystery by a retired journalist Peter D'Souza and his friends Inspector Shiva Jende. To solve the murder mayhem he needs to further dive deep into the parallel world of homosexual men in Mumbai, their secret lives and how police becomes a cog in this vicious wheel using them as tools for exploitation.

I had quite a hard time getting through the book, not because of the theme, but rather I found the mystery quite dull. If you approach the novel as a crime novel (from the title) you are in for a disappointment. You can solve the mystery one third to the book and then it's a drag page after page. Not to mention, the ending and the stress on Article 377 by the characters was something I felt quite forced and would have better served if handled with more subtlety.

Still there are quite a few enjoyable moments in the book. For one, Pinto absolutely nails the language and the characteristics of the characters. They come to life in the dialogues but as Pinto switches back to Peter the narrative once again dulls. Peter doesn't come across as a really interesting character unlike others around him.

A friend mentioned that I should have rather picked Pinto's 'Em and the Big Hoom' which is a much different and realized book.

Vaidya says

First up, a little rant.

I started off looking for the character of Peter D'Souza only to have a Peter and Millie and their son Sunil Fernandes. Turns out the blurb writer, bless his/her soul, couldn't be bothered about the correct surname. Even the blurb itself wasn't too accurate in who helps whom to solve the crime how much. The obvious question is, did said blurb writer even bother reading the book? Or was he/she in a hurry? Too many blurbs to write?

Then comes the print itself. I have been noticing this with newer prints, books from the past 2-3 years, with Indian publishing houses, that there's a hell of a lot of misprinting. There are typos, bad grammar, repeated words, missing words, form for from, what have you! Maybe the publishing industry is going through a crisis and is not able to pay good proofreaders or hire good printers. But it takes a lot away from the reading experience, a bit like driving on a road where the occasional pothole needs to be avoided.

As for the story itself, this isn't Em and The Big Hoom. That was a lot more personal for Pinto, and it was a different kind of book. Do not go looking for something like that.

This is a lot more into Mumbai, crime, LGBTQI, sec 377, you get my point. To put them all together it is a

look at Mumbai's LGBTQI scene, with 377 hovering in the background menacingly (think the big black thing in Stranger Things 2), all of this through a crime thriller.

There isn't so much thrill here, as something is missing in that. Even the mystery part doesn't hold up too well. But hey, better a murder mystery to talk about things no one talks about than a humanities lesson, no? I liked how Pinto starts off describing the little things in Mumbai initially, just that after a point, all that goes off the window and he goes only into the main plot. Some meandering would've set up the story a lot better and have also gotten Mumbai itself a lot more into the story, apart from just having to provide the localities and the beaches for the action. Might have added a few dozen pages.

All in all, it works in some parts, doesn't in others.

Priya says

Feeling letdown by this book. It doesn't read like Jerry Pinto's. It's a book that's neither here nor there - it's not a murder mystery that's thrilling and it's not a literary work that made any impact on me. I was expecting it to be one of those!

It's a discourse on homosexuality and gay rights, and the fallout of Sec 377. My problem is why bring a murder mystery into it? Either stick to the murder and go the crime genre way or stick to the literary genre where you explore and unravel people and their relationships in the backdrop of homosexuality in contemporary India. When these two collide, it's not a good thing. The book lost focus on the crime AND on the characters.

So yeah...2.5 at most, the 0.5 because of the author.

Ini says

Jerry Pinto sets the scene quite convincingly. The first few revelations and cues about the murder are exceptional. It is what truly hooks you to the book and makes you hungry for just one more page, an another, and another...

One's satisfaction with this thrilling journey is not so much to do with the surprises. It is the stories within the story, the anecdotes, personal narratives, a hidden world with its own outlook, subculture and personality that make this as intriguing for the reader. And it's mostly convincing, except for some traits and characters that make you question their authenticity.

Unfortunately, the book doesn't manage to continue to hold this power. It's hard not to be disappointed by the last few chapters. By the last four chapter, the reader has done all the guesswork. The progression of the story seems almost obvious, though not completely predictable. The story is rescued by some surprises. Yet, these remaining chapters seem like a chore.

Anaghaa Venugopal says

Advice - Read it in one go, and start seeing Matunga station differently. Interesting, well-written, characters could have been fleshed out a little better I felt, especially Sunil

Em*bedded-in-books* says

My second novel by Jerry Pinto, the first was Em and the big Hoom, which made me a fan.

This one, though seemingly a murder mystery, deals with the Indian scenario of male homosexuality, a difficult matter, which is often brushed under the carpet.

Peter is a retired journalist, who often helps out his childhood friend, Inspector Jenda, and this time too is dragged into the murder investigation of a man found slain in a public toilet in Mahim. Soon his proclivity and livelihood are uncovered, and Peter comes to know a lot about male homosexuals and their habits. He is also personally affected as his uncle Leslie is a proclaimed gay, and he is worried about his son Sunil, who behaves mysteriously.

Soon other deaths follow, and various flaws of Indian culture and subculture are exposed.

This was an informative read.

Would have been a five star read, if not for the slight feel of discontinuity between sentences and events, and mild boredom somewhere in the latter pages.

Why I chose this book?

Saw the book at 35% discount on Amazon, and decided anything written by Jerry Pinto is surely going to be above average.

Abhishek says

Took a long time to read this book as I had significant personal and professional interruptions. Typical Jerry Pinto's writing about Mumbai, his style of neat slick humour, mingling with sadness at times, vivid descriptions of the over-loved and oft-written Mumbai, its people, but what is beautiful is the character sketches of the main people in it.

Silly readers would compare this book with Em and the Big Hoom, which is so much more intense, quite personal, and it took almost twenty years to get released; Pinto worked on it meticulously. If you want to so much compare it with other books, just for the heck of it, pick up those which are about Mumbai.

Athira Unni says

More of an investigative journalist's records of the Mumbai male homosexual prostitution scene than a murder mystery. Quick read, well written in the sense that I didn't feel like putting it down until it was done. However, mostly predictable at crucial points. It pushes the anti-377 agenda to the very end and I think this

could have been done more artfully, and perhaps more effectively, if the author hadn't tried too hard. Planning to read Pinto's other books, this was my first from him.

Manu says

"Em and the Big Hoom" is a favourite book largely thanks to how sensitively Jerry Pinto deals with the issue of a person's mental health and its impact on their near and dear. *Murder in Mahim*, in terms of premise, is vastly different and as the title would suggest, a murder mystery. But once again, it is the sensitivity that the author displays in treating both the subject and the subjects that takes it beyond other fare in the genre. It would be unfair to compare this to his previous work simply because of the massive genre shift. I also feel that it might not have worked simply as a murder mystery because once the plot progresses, second guessing becomes rather easy. Two things worked in its favour. The pace of the narrative is tight. The author doesn't stretch any suspenseful plot points beyond its worth, and in that sense, respects the reader's smarts. The other part is the nuanced detailing. A subculture of Bombay truly comes to life in the book. (yes, I recognise the irony here) The author makes the effort to get the reader to empathise with the characters and their complexities. That goes for the city too - as represented by its people and places, and even the time of the day when it is seen.

The balance that the author tries to find is between a reflective commentary on how sexuality is perceived by society, and a gripping murder mystery. Largely this is achieved, though sometimes one feels that the two themes take turns in dominance, and the mix isn't homogenous. Also, given the great job in detailing, it is a little surprising to see the author making errors in keeping surnames consistent and making mistakes when namedropping celebrities.

However, all things considered, time well spent.

Balachander says

I am being a little generous to this book. I am subconsciously comparing it with the other book I finished a few days ago (Jo Nesbo's *the snowman*) and chalking up points in its favor. This is certainly better written, in the sense that the author has a certain economy of language and isn't going overboard trying to get the local patois but he still manages to root the story in the local culture. Of course, it also helps that it is set in Bombay and is otherwise recognizable though the specific setting is unique. I guess what I'm trying to say is that the author doesn't have to try too hard to make the locations and settings sound too authentic (a few Marathi words here and there, something about the local or konkani food) and that's good enough because our mind fills in the blanks via hundreds of movies set in the city. The murder mystery is patently mediocre. And I'm not sure if Peter is a recurring character in Pinto's oeuvre, but he doesn't hold much promise. The Leslie character is fun (reminded me of Stephen Fry for some reason) but quite obvious. Overall, this book is not worthy of the rave reviews it received and if you have to read it, finish off a book by Nesbo, like I did, first.
