



# The Emperor's Riddles

Satyarth Nayak

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**The Emperor's Riddles** Satyarth Nayak

THE NATIONAL BESTSELLER!!!

Carrying quotes from Amish Tripathi & Ashwin Sanghi on its cover, this new mystery thriller, described by Hindustan Times as 'a gripping tale of intrigue' and by The Hindu as a 'heady mix of history & mystery', has already made it to several Top 10 Bestseller charts.

More terrifying than the savage murder of historian Ram Mathur on the ghats of Ganga, are the questions that follow. Desperate for answers, Sia turns to esoteric writer & friend Om Patnaik. But what begins as a hunt for the killer, becomes an extraordinary trail of riddles strewn across the country, that must end at the gates of an enigma.

An ancient enigma so powerful that even gods would kill for it!!!

In another time and space, rules an Emperor who plays with phenomenal forces that make him supreme...who faces these very forces when they threaten the survival of the human race. An Emperor who must ultimately pay homage to the enigma...

As Patnaik and Sia race from one riddle to another, towards a royal secret that has remained alive for centuries....will the final truth, save them or destroy them forever?

The path beckons. Can you solve The Emperor's Riddles?

Check out the Online Extract here on Goodreads and the Official HD Trailer on YouTube.

## The Emperor's Riddles Details

Date : Published February 15th 2014 by Amaryllis

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Author : Satyarth Nayak

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# From Reader Review The Emperor's Riddles for online ebook

## Mita says

Great to see that the book is finally available on online retail sites. When a thriller flaunts such awesome quotes from Amish Tripathi and Ashwin Sanghi on its cover, the expectations rise ten-fold. Gladly the book lives up to its promise and how!!!

The book works amazingly on many levels. Fundamentally it's a gripping thriller with deliciously twisted murders thrown in for good measure and a climactic revelation that's nothing short of stunning. But what I loved are the powerful and beautiful layers of the Emperor's track and the journey of the Buddhist Samanera that make it such an artistic piece of writing. The ten riddles of course are the back-bone and each is an absolute joy. See if you can crack them before you read the answers. This is an intelligent book that also entertains hugely.

Some may find the use of Indian history and Buddhist mythology stories here and there a little excessive but anyone who enjoys them will be in for a treat. Also the track of the Emperor in the Second part of the book is not chronological but thematic. This can confuse some readers but it all works out fine in the end. I love how this book fuses mystery, history, sci-fi and philosophy so seamlessly. The end is beautiful and has a calm about it. Go for it.

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## Sanika says

This is an ultimate history-meets-mystery story. I absolutely loved reading it.

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## Abhyudaya Shrivastava says

"Satyarth Nayak is an author, script-writer and journalist based in Delhi. In 2011, two of his short stories were selected for the Chicken Soup for the Soul series. As a TV journalist, he has worked with premiere news channels like NDTV and CNN-IBN. The Emperors Riddles is his first full-length novel."

Now this is book that underpromises and overdelivers. Classic way to win. I didn't have great expectations as I had never heard the name of the author. The cover design looked mysterious and enigmatic but didn't quite build up the tension maybe because of the font selection. The cover didn't fall into the stereotypical Dan Brown-ish legacy where bold, embossed fonts, declaring the author name and book title leave a lasting impact. One cursory look at the front and back covers and you come to know that it falls in the genre of historical fiction with the likes of the Amish Tripathi and Ashwin Sanghi recommending it. I turned a few pages expecting a few yawn-worthy descriptions of historical events, I didn't even intend to start reading and ended up reading 50 pages non-stop! I realized I had just found a gem and had to do proper justice to it by reading it with the respect that it deserved.

"More terrifying than the savage murder of historian Ram Mathur on the ghats of the Ganga are the questions that follow. The letter carved on his face, the cryptic mail he sends his daughter Sia after he dies, more murders piling up. Desperate for answers, Sia turns to esoteric writer and friend Om Patnaik. But what

begins as a hunt for the killer, becomes an extraordinary trail of riddles strewn across the country, that must end at the gates of an enigma. Patnaik and Sia race from one riddle to another, towards a royal secret that has remained alive for centuries."

So, I began again and was overwhelmed by the writer's knowledge about ancient Indian history, I think a lot of research must have gone into making of this book. The book easily floats past eras, taking you to flashes of events in Indian history that find relevance in the present day India. (I am trying hard to give you no spoilers here). The character of Om Patnaik has hints of Robert Langdon (created by Dan Brown) in him complete with a weird phobia and vulnerable personality but I think the similarity crept unknowingly and the writer more than compensated for it by his vivid descriptions from the Indian and mostly Buddhist history. The character called Sia Mathur is given the female protagonist part but due to other powerful female characters in the book, she doesn't quite take the centerstage. Ram Mathur's character although doesn't get much space but is important in the story.

I think there were some moments of confusion in the novel when the author switches back and forth from past to present but, it all becomes clear in the later part of the novel. The novel is best enjoyed if read twice, it is a story that has multifold dimensions and repeated readings will make it even more enjoyable.

The language is well-knit, lucid and the writing style is reader-friendly. One thing is for sure that Satyarth Nayak is here to stay. There are a few typographical errors which I forgot to mark but I am sure, the further editions will take care of that.

The book is divided into multiple chapters so, you never feel burdened by the enormity of text as there is always a chapter ending and a new one starting. It can get on your nerves if you are not quite a history buff but, in that case, I think you should read the last few chapters, ruin the surprise and then come back and read the chapters that you find confusing. Or maybe just put a bookmark there and read them later with clarity.

Now, who should be reading this book. I definitely do not recommend it to those who are regular Dan Brown readers or those who have just finished reading *The Krishna Key* by Ashwin Sanghi. The book does draw a lot from the contemporary authors of the same genre and that might upset the reader's mind if it is not open enough. I recommend it to those who have been into other genres and want to test the waters before jumping into the genre of historical fiction. Also, those with keen interest in Geography and History of India will find this joyride amusing. I'd also recommend it all the first timers, believe me, it is much better to start with these books. Put that "Five Point Someone" down and pick this one up!

All in all, I'll give this book three stars out of five. Three is a factor of 9! What a coincidence! (You'll understand the joke once you read the book)

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Happy reading!

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## **Sahil Pradhan says**

The contribution of ancient Indians to the development of various sciences is substantial. Aryabhatta invented zero and gave us the modern number system. Over 2600 years ago, Sushruta conducted surgeries

like cataract, fractures, and brain surgeries. Bhaskaracharya calculated the time taken by earth to orbit the sun in 5th century. Even our epics talk of episodes which are very similar to many modern inventions. Ravana's 'Pushpaka Vimana' is an ancient aeroplane. The astras used by devas and asuras are nothing less than modern missiles. There are much more such examples from all fields of science, but the world, by large, does not know about them either because of lack of preservation of our ancient texts or because of our history of foreign rule. Satyarth Nayak has taken this idea – our rich ancient knowledge of science – and converted it into a historical fiction, "The Emperor's Riddles".

I am a fast reader. still, it took me around three days to completely read the books. the reason was the intricate science theories and the research in the book. The book progresses in two parallel timelines; one, where Om and Sia are hunting for the killer and solving the ancient riddles, and another, where an Emperor, bitten by his own Karma, decides to repent by destroying dangerous scientific knowledge.

the plot is just fabulous and the narration is crisp. the way the author pens down the story with numerous characters and their typical twists and turns makes the book a marvel. you would get a plethora of scientific theories and the connections between Indian Vedic wisdom and modern science. you would get short chapters of 2 to 3 pages which would be handy for reading the book fast. the characters are well elaborated and explained. the story is well planned and penned.

the story may sometimes turn complex if you stop your flow of reading the book. and that would be my only critic on the book, as sometimes the story of the emperor from the past even sometimes loses connections and the pace. even sometimes the characters fail to impress you.

I would recommend the book to everyone to read who want to know more about the connection between our myths and science.

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## **Nikhil says**

Although I am a proud Indian I kept myself away from Indian writers. The sole reason was because I went through the torment of reading Chetan Bhagat and Durjoy Dutta. They have lowered the standards of Indians in front of the world. I have read books from writers all across the globe and I'm a sucker of good language. With heavy heart I placed my bet on this book because of the impressive bio of the author.

Let's start the review then :

The start was mysterious justifying the cover page of novel. The tales about the Emperor felt more like misplaced anecdotes. The narration clearly didn't make any sense. I was unable to relate the tale of Emperor with the present except for the science each riddle was pointing to.

As the story progressed it became more cliched and I suddenly remembered two people the most. Sidney Sheldon and Dan Brown. The flow of story, the primary characters, the riddles, the history behind it, Associating myth with science - Everything was pointing to Dan Brown and the flow of story looked more a Sidney Sheldon style but in an improper way. I want to give full marks to the author for doing his bit of research because it was really informative and surprising.

I got frustrated in the middle. The reason was - the characters were not having any sort of connection, not even the primary characters on which the whole story was depending. They were just having a conversation which I felt hard to comprehend because half of the times the author was in a serious rush and decided to leave everything behind.

The end was really disappointing, I expected a proper closure, it was abrupt and lacking the facts. Overall, the author wrote fantastic details about many places mentioned in the book. However, it was not a story, it never felt like a story. More like a great non-fiction but never a story.

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### **Kiran Chaturvedi says**

This book is quite brilliant for many reasons. Personally I am not a reader of the thriller or mystery genre for most part, but I found this book irresistible. It is a layered, complex book, that goes back and forth between the past and the present, ancient riddles, myth, history, fantasy and current events. There is a strong use of Buddhist icons and lore, a new for a mainstream book in current times that too in this genre. There is the beautiful, flowing, fluid prose that keeps you reading without a pause. There is all the excitement and gore of murders and other sinister stuff to keep the thrill and suspense going....all in all a very enjoyable read, an intelligent entertainer.

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### **Shweta Mohanty says**

Overall a very interesting book, but I feel he rushed at the end. Revealing of the mystery and following events were too abrupt.

Loved the riddles and the info on History.

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### **Vikas Datta says**

Unsure what to make of this... on one hand, it is quite intriguingly plotted but there are some fiendishly difficult puzzles but on the other hand, the sum of the parts don't make a whole - there is no explanation for why the policeman has nightmares, some characters' appearance strains incredulity, the real villain's motive seem tacked on and laughable, there is an excess of gore which doesn't do anything for the plot and the parallel narration seems not only too esoterically difficult but also jarringly disconnecting and plain gruesome (what role does the torture chamber scene have to do?)

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### **Mukund says**

An interesting and exciting read. But many similarities to the Da Vinci Code.

The climax was interesting and the overall plot was good.

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### **Arjyarishi Paul says**

“Your journey now sleeps with your great awakening”. Does the line seem to have been pinched out of some boring, old incomprehensible religious text? Not if Satyarth Nayak holds his pen with confidence and smiles

calmly as the readers feel the hair at the back of their neck, rising, as they flip the pages of his debut novel- The Emperor's Riddles. An alumnus of St. Stephen's, Satyarth proves his genius as his tale marries Amish Tripathi with Dan Brown; and that's not all- a careful read might find you discovering generous helpings of the Bhagwat Gita as well!

So, to start with, The Emperor's Riddles is essentially a thriller that grips you like a vice but in the process, makes you feel amazed and enlightened too, if you are patient enough. Shuttling between time periods, the narrative may seem a bit convoluted in the initial chapters but that's just 00.THE-EMPERORS-RIDDLES-COVER-707x1024Satyarth tying a cloth over your eyes and shoving you in circles before you become the blind man looking for his buff. Historian Ram Mathur is brutally murdered on the banks of the Ganga. What follows after that fateful night is a journey that Om Patnaik, an esoteric writer, is never going to forget. Mathur's daughter Sia receives an e-mail after her father's death and then begins Om's quest for the vast unknown. There is a cult of theological practitioners who aspire to help humanity through an ancient secret that has been kept under wraps since ages. It's a secret so extra-ordinary, "an enigma so powerful that even Gods would kill for it"! But there is also a certain scorpion on the loose and he is hell bent to take on the scepter of might that the mystic secret has in store. There is an emperor in another dimension who has his control over nature; he too must surrender to the ultimate truth or else must witness the entire human race succumb to the feet of evil. Ably guided by Parag Suri, Om and Sia become our very own Robert Langdon and Sophie on the hunt for answers. Answers to the Emperor's riddles.

At 398 pages, the book is replete with intense intellect, racy action and unfathomable revelations. The portion where Mathur is murdered may have the faint hearted flinch at the blood and gore it unfolds. And there is a shock twist towards the end that makes you feel so ignorant in front of the immensely knowledgeable British Council Writers Circle Prize winner, Satyarth Nayak.

Well woven with history and imagination, Nayak is at the helm, deftly pulling at the strings and making the reader dance to his tunes. Nowhere does he use ornate sentences, neither a complicated syntax. But the way he writes lucidly on the spiritual, makes his already enriches content all the more effective. A Christopher Nolan of the West or our very own Anurag Kashyap can pretty well give it a thought to bring The Emperor's Riddles to life on screen.

I could have written more and gone on writing but that would be trying too hard to explain a conjurer's maneuvering of his hat and still getting nowhere! With eager expectations for your next, way to go, Satyarth Nayak. You should be blessed with nine lives. Not to meow, but to simply roar! (Spoiler Alert!)

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## **Readomania says**

Emperor's Riddles is a murder mystery and a treasure hunt, a book that takes you on a journey across times.

Om, an author is called in to the murder scene of a close friend, who happens to be a famous historian. It is there that he meets the deceased's daughter and gets started on a trail to unearth the mystery behind the murder, in the process finding some deeper secrets.

Storyline and characterization:

Author Om Patnaik goes about solving the murder of a very close friend. In the process, he unearths an age old secret. This can be the one line summary of the book and yet there is so much more in between the lines that one can comfortably say this debut author successfully paints a beautiful portrait of the present and the past, of mystery and enigma, with his words.

The narration starts with a murder of a famous historian. The murder scene is an ace up the author's sleeve as he has managed to make it so grotesque that it evokes very strong reactions in the reader.

It then moves on to bring the protagonist into the scene, called in by Sia, the dead historian's daughter. They have enough reasons to believe that something larger is involved, and the rollercoaster starts, a ride that takes you through clues and secrets, traverses deep into history, brings you back to the present and unfolds many secret legends. You could also equate the narration to a treasure hunt, where the path is an intricate mesh of clues, locations, factoids, myths and sagas.

The book crisscrosses the whole nation, right from Tamil Nadu to Jammu & Kashmir. The author has woven a lot of scientific arguments and logic into the plot, which makes the storyline believable for the common man. The author must be applauded for his brilliant research.

The climax is something to watch out for. The author has brought out a brilliant twist, completely unexpected, and makes it end on a very high note. It makes the investment of time and money in the book, worth it.

The characters are also very well structured, a bit overwhelming in some cases. Yet, they are very relatable. The protagonist Om doesn't have too much of history, yet evolves through the book in the manner of his ability to take on the challenges that hit him. The best character of the book is Sia, who is the daughter of the murdered historian and is on the trail along with Om. You need to read the book to know more...

There is one distraction too. The brilliant paced mystery is time and again interrupted with a narrative from the past, which seems disconnected with the main storyline.

Rating: 4/5

#### Pace of the Story:

The book keeps you wondering what happens next, it is almost an unputdownable book, lest some interruptions. The quick succession of events, the fast movement of plot and the strategically placed surprises makes this book a fast paced read. A big plus is the way the clues, for solving the mystery, are structured. Curiosity drives the pace here, the need to know the next clue. A mystery and thriller lover is sure to love this one.

Rating: 4.5/5

#### Literary Style:

The style of storytelling is easy and to a large extent simple. The language has a smooth flow and is



absolutely absorbing. Not too much of literary tropes have been used, nor are the sentences long and complicated and this makes it a light read, adding to the pace.

Rating: 4/5

This book is certainly a desirable read; it is for the classes as well as the masses. If you pride yourself as a good thriller reader then this one is a must read for you. The author has ensured that the audience will eagerly wait for his next book.

Overall: 4.25/5

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### **Shweta Ganesh Kumar says**

Move over Dan Brown, Satyarth Nayak has arrived.

With this beautifully crafted mystery thriller, this debutante author brings together legends from Indian history and the Buddha's origin story to create an intelligent novel bound to keep readers on the edge of their seats.

What starts off as a murder mystery quickly spirals into a journey to uncover ancient secrets wilfully obscured from mankind.

With evil on their heels, will the protagonists get to the core of the enigma in time?

This unputdownable book takes you on a thrilling roller-coaster ride.

You might think you have it all figured out.

But have you?

Though it boasts of well-rounded characters like mystery writer Om Patnaik, scientist Sia, Television show maker Jasodhara, the stars of the book are the lyrically crafted riddles that guide the protagonists on their quest. I also enjoyed the surreal feel of the chapters that focus on the emperor and Buddhist mythology.

Lately, we've seen a plethora of books based on Indian mythology flood the Indian publishing scene - what sets the Emperor's Riddles apart is the writing. It is smart, beautifully written and does not talk down to the reader.

Instead, it respects the reader's intelligence and in doing so sets the bar really high for other writers of the genre.

I highly recommend this for lovers of the mystery, Sci-fi, History and Mythological genres.

Satyarth Nayak is certainly one to watch and I cannot wait to read his next offering.

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## **Shalini says**

Its tale of our past, beautifully entwined with the present. And only a few can do that kind of justice to this kind of story. Debutante author Satyarth Nayak has shown the kind of maturity in his writing that very few are able to strike.

Although it starts as a murder mystery the Dan Brown way, it quickly becomes a very personal Indian tale. There are moments of tranquility as you journey through its pages. This book reflects all that we've grown up reading about in our text books and well, life in this country in general. It's what we've been mystified about each time we visited a fort or a monastery and wondered 'was our great past really true?' It feels like the book is but a product of the author's wonder and amusement into our great past, and finally as an ode to it.

It's a must pick not just a dose of good mystery but good writing. More power to young writers :D

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## **Vinay Leo R. says**

Review at A Bookworm's Musing: <http://wp.me/p2J8yh-2El>

What works:

- + The pace of narration kept me engaged
- + The plot of the novel is different, I liked the treasure hunt idea
- + An unexpected twist in the end
- + Simple language

What doesn't:

- Alternate timeline set in history doesn't hold interest
- Characters don't feel interesting

A book worth reading, and definitely re-readable.

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## **Anuj Shrivastava says**

As debut novel it was good but characters were little dull couldn't connect with them, it was good that it fast paced , riddles were appropriate, storyline is similar to da Vinci code

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