



The Devotion of Suspect X

Keigo Higashino , Alexander O. Smith (Translator)

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Yasuko Hanaoka is a divorced, single mother who thought she had finally escaped her abusive ex-husband Togashi. When he shows up one day to extort money from her, threatening both her and her teenaged daughter Misato, the situation quickly escalates into violence and Togashi ends up dead on her apartment floor. Overhearing the commotion, Yasuko's next door neighbor, middle-aged high school mathematics teacher Ishigami, offers his help, disposing not only of the body but plotting the cover-up step-by-step.

When the body turns up and is identified, Detective Kusanagi draws the case and Yasuko comes under suspicion. Kusanagi is unable to find any obvious holes in Yasuko's manufactured alibi and yet is still sure that there's something wrong. Kusanagi brings in Dr. Manabu Yukawa, a physicist and college friend who frequently consults with the police. Yukawa, known to the police by the nickname Professor Galileo, went to college with Ishigami. After meeting up with him again, Yukawa is convinced that Ishigami had something to do with the murder. What ensues is a high level battle of wits, as Ishigami tries to protect Yasuko by outmaneuvering and outthinking Yukawa, who faces his most clever and determined opponent yet.

The Devotion of Suspect X Details

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From Reader Review The Devotion of Suspect X for online ebook

Leonard says

When Yasuko Hanaoka's ex-husband shows up to extort money, she and her daughter kill him. Her neighbor Tetsuya Ishigami, a high school math teacher, volunteers to help dispose of the body and divert the police's attention. What results is a scheme to deceive the police into solving the wrong crime.

Sumida River in Tokyo (Photograph by Ian Muttuo)

A dead body whose face is smashed to hide the identity shows up near the river and Detective Kusanagi must identify the murderer and find the perpetrator. On reaching a dead end, he solicits his friend and schoolmate, physics professor Dr. Manabu Yukawa, to sift through the clues and red herrings. Thus, pitting the two masterminds against each other.

Tokyo Metropolitan Police

In *The Devotion of Suspect X*, Ishigami and Yukawa try to outwit each other in this cops and robbers game. What Yukawa couldn't fathom is the depth in which Ishigami is willing to devote himself to and ultimately sacrifice for Yasuko. This mystery is among the handful of mystery novels whose plots surprise me. And though I wish the key characters have more depth, the plot more than compensates for that flaw and the sparse prose pushes the plot along without extraneous verbiage. Smart and powerful. I almost wish Ishigami could triumph over Yukawa.

Keigo Higashino

Abhinav says

Whoa! I finished reading the final 220 odd pages in less than 3 hours. That must be some kind of a personal best for me.

All of the crime thrillers I had read before this had the same template of the classical whodunit, with a few alterations here & there. But it was always on me to try & guess the identity of the culprit until the end when the book finally provides the revelation.

But what if you're already told 'who done it' in the first couple of chapters itself? Believe me, I thought that was the end of the book. I mean, how can a crime thriller be kept interesting when you already know who the killer is? After all, we're not expecting something like 'Crime and Punishment'.

And that is perhaps the biggest achievement of Keigo Higashino's '*The Devotion of Suspect X*', the first in the Detective Galileo series. This novel achieved cult status in Japan & sold more than 2 million copies while also being made into a successful screen adaptation. When I was done reading this, I could see why.

The story starts off in a quiet neighbourhood of Tokyo where a single woman Yasuko & her daughter Misato are living peacefully. Their neighbour Ishigami is a talented mathematician who now works as a school teacher. When Yasuko's ex-husband turns up on her doorstep on a fateful night, a moment of indiscretion from both mother & daughter results in wheels being set in motion. Ishigami somehow gets involved in all this & the situation develops into something from which no one can turn back to living their normal lives. Think I somewhat spoiled it for you already? Be rest assured, I haven't revealed what forms the essence of the plot. What follows is a fascinating cat-and-mouse game between Ishigami & Manabu Yukawa, an assistant physics professor & an amateur sleuth also known as 'Detective Galileo'.

This book is not as much about the consequences of the crime as it is about how the crime was done & the possible reasons of committing the crime from the investigating officer's point of view. You know already who is guilty, but there are still so many aspects that remain unclear, which draws the reader into the tale. There are also a few sub-plots - one of them being an old connection between Ishigami & Yukawa, which makes their conversations delightful to read as they talk science & mathematical logic.

But the narrative perhaps emerges as the biggest winner in this novel. The unique approach could have gone all wrong if the narrative would not have been tightly-written & perfectly paced. Full marks to the author as well as the translator Alexander O. Smith who retain the interest of the reader till the end & render us an absolute page-turner. I also liked how themes like infatuation, platonic love & devotion (yeah, it's in the title itself) were explored throughout the course of the story.

I'm going with 4 stars for 'The Devotion of Suspect X' by Keigo Higashino. This is my first brush with Japanese literature, and my appetite craves for more. Highly recommended for fans of international crime fiction.

Marita says

Devotion indeed...

Having read the fifth novel in this series, *Salvation of a Saint*, I was intrigued enough to read this one. To say anything at all about the plot might spoil the book for other readers. But what I can say is that Keigo Higashino shows how very ordinary, likeable people can commit murder given a particular set of circumstances. Writing with subtlety and gentle humour, he creates interesting, believable characters and weaves an intricate plot. Even though one knows from the start who the murderer is and how and why the deed was done, the suspense builds to an almost unbearable crescendo, particularly as the characters are so well portrayed. There are surprises to the very last paragraph.

This novel was an enormous success in Japan. Not only was it on the best-seller list, but it also won the prestigious Naoki prize for best novel and it was subsequently turned into a film which was a box-office hit.

Rincey says

Wowwww I loved this so much. It was so great watching this puzzle come together.

Watch my full review: https://youtu.be/_8bLtNauZyA

Poonam says

This has been one of the top thrillers I have read this year and this story is like nothing I have ever read. I will talk more about this in my review.

Firstly this is originally a Japanese novel and has been translated into English. The translation is done pretty well and the flow of the story is really good.

Basic Plot: A crime is committed and then a plan is formed to cover-up the crime.

"What they needed was a perfect defense based on perfect logic."

What happens when the investigation is being done by a genius and the cover-up by a mastermind.

This book was like an intense chess match and after each move from one end there was another counter-move from the other end.

The twists in the last few chapters had my mind reeling. I think part of the main twist in the book is somewhat similar to a twist in one of Agatha Christie's novel (view spoiler)

The final end was like a punch in the gut. It made me sit back and think about everything that happened in the book and if the ending any different would have been more satisfying. Not sure, maybe this is the best way it could have ended...

Carol ?? says

Subtle, skillful, sad.

& quite unlike anything else I have ever read.

This made me think of two intelligent people playing a game of chess. Shogi is also known as Japanese Chess

Impossible to review without spoilers, impossible to stop thinking about.

Thanks to real life friend Peter for pressing this in my hands, last time I was in the library.

Read it now.

B?p says

Ây là tác ph?m có c?m giác ???c vi?t b?i Shakespeare : tràn ng?p tính k?ch và tràn ng?p bi k?ch Thiên tài ?n d?t s?ng 1 cu?c ??i ch?ng ra sao. Bi k?ch c?a anh là “ch?ng có lý do g?i ?? ch?t” nh?ng anh v?n chu?n b? s?n thòng l?ng cho mình b?i “ch? là anh không có lý do g?i ?? s?ng th?t”

Th? r?i khi con l?c s?p d?ng l?i sau quá trình dao ??ng ?i?u hòa c?a nó thì 1 l?c ??y r?t nh? ch?m vào. Nó ti?p t?c hành trình l?c qua l?c l?i nh?ng theo 1 biên ?? khác. Thay ??i cu?c ??i sau 1 ti?ng chu?ng Th?nh tho?ng ?ôi khi nh?ng th? x?u xa, th? ?o?n nh?t c?ng là nh?ng g?i ?áng th??ng, ?áng trân tr?ng, ?áng c?m th?ng nh?t.

T?i sao con ng??i có th? ác ??n th? là 1 câu h?i khó ?? tr? l?i nh?ng d? hi?u

Dù sao v?n trân quý anh trên 1 góc ?? nào ?ó khó ?oán ??nh

R?t cu?c trái tim ?ã th?ng, không nh?ng th? còn th?ng ??m

B? m?e ho?c b?i ti?ng gào...

update sau khi xem xong phim : l?i 1 b? phim chuy?n th? c?c k? xu?t s?c n?a c?p m?c Keigo :3 nghe n?i b?n H?n ?óng b? ch?m t? là s?c m?i ng?n t?nh, cái h?i s?n súa m?u h??ng ?y th? bi?t cái kh? g?i mà c?ng ?oi làm phim trinh thám t?m l?y x? h?i, th?t là ch?ng m?ng vào ngh? thu?t :|

Menia says

[ηθικ? τ?λος με απ?δοση δικαιοσ?νης, ωστ?σο θα προτιμο?σα να σωθο?v αυτο? που παραδ?θηκαν (hide spoiler)]

Suzy says

3 1/2 stars

I was excited that one of the mystery groups I belong to here on GR picked this as the June/July group read since the audio had been hanging around in my iPod for a couple of years. I had no idea of what to expect and was pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed this, my first outing with a Japanese murder mystery.

I especially liked the cerebral nature of the story where we follow a police detective and his physicist/professor friend Dr. Yukawa, aka Professor Galileo, as they try to determine who killed the ex-husband of a sandwich shop clerk, Yasuko Hanaoka. We, the readers, know from almost the very beginning that she killed him and that her neighbor, a shy math teacher, offered to help dispose of the body. So for us, this isn't so much a whodunit as a story of will they get caught . . . will the police with the help of their friend Galileo, figure it out. And to add another layer, Galileo and the math teacher, Ishigami, went to school together and are both brainiacs! I loved the cat and mouse game of the police trying to figure this all out, and once Yasuko and her accomplice are suspected, trying to determine what they did and how to prove it. Galileo and Ishigami have a respect for each other's brain power, and I loved the conversations they had about constructing and solving difficult problems like this one. I did not figure out the solve, which slowly unfolded in a series of conversations, making this book a satisfyingly different read.

Someone pointed out in our group discussion that in all Higashino's books, the victim is not a sympathetic character and the reader almost always is rooting for the perpetrators of the crime, something I don't think I've experienced before. This has whet my appetite for the next book in the series, *Salvation of a Saint*, which I've already downloaded. Well, the next book that has been translated, that is. There are eight books in this series in Japanese, but just three - 3, 5, and 6 - have been translated so far.

Recommended!

Carol says

The Devotion of Suspect X is a must-read for anyone who appreciates police procedurals, mysteries, math, Japan, literature . . . I could go on. The Devotion of Suspect X is the third in the Detective Galileo series, but I didn't once have the impression that I lacked background or relationship information gleaned from the initial 2 books. In fact, there were no references to prior cases or mysteries to suggest that earlier books existed. If not for the publishers blurbs on the book, I'd not have guessed they did.

So why is The Devotion of Suspect X an excellent read?

1. The lead detective, Kusanagi, is a normal, standard, by-the-book, thoughtful, straight arrow. What distinguishes this novel from other police procedurals is Kusanagi's friend, Yukawa, a physicist. Yukawa solves the mystery and cares deeply about the outcome. Because
2. Ishigami, a high school math teacher whose brilliance and devotion to math are here allocated to assisting his ordinary, likable next door neighbor in covering up a murder, by employing masterful misdirection to focus the police on time-wasting, unimportant questions and issues. His efforts to motivate apathetic high school students won my respect and, at the same time, my pity. Otherwise, he's not an easy character to get to know or to feel anything about, except that Yukawa's concern for him makes the reader care. Nonetheless you respect his genius.
3. The ending is one of the best I've ever read. The mystery is solved 20 pages before. It doesn't matter. There's many a thriller or mystery novelist who get an A+ for plot, but don't have a clue how to write a compelling ending. I read the last several paragraphs a few times over - they were just that good.
4. Japan. The style of this novel is insanely plot-driven and at the same time calm, quiet, methodical, and thoughtful. No screeching tires. No bickering between the detectives. No threatening with guns. In an alternative universe where Lee Child is raised and lives in Japan, this might be the series he'd have written instead of the Jack Reacher books (which I also love, for different reasons, and which are culturally and quintessentially American).

Off to find my next Detective Galileo book....

Carol. says

Both unusual and familiar, *The Devotion of Suspect X* is an unassuming mystery with an astonishing approach.

It is a book that will toy with the very definition of the concept of 'spoilers:' it begins with a few hours in our main characters' daily routines, then quickly jumps into an emotional scene that results in murder. I admit that I was doubtful; how was I to stay interested in a mystery where I already knew the answers to the 'who-what-where-why-when?' But Higashino is quite masterful, drawing a veil over the disposition of the body. The reader is left in a unique position of knowing more than the police about where the investigation should end, but discovering clues with the police as they work backwards.

The narrative follows both the police investigation and the viewpoint of the perpetrator(s), leaving me marveling at the chess game. Something in it puts me in mind of Agatha Christie, although it could be that she's just the one I always think of when it comes to non-gory murder and a more nuanced form of suspense. It is a book that is as much about characters and social protocols as much as mystery, but don't let that frighten you away. There's a distinct whiff of literary-fiction about this as well, a story that is also about the everyday lives and the future dreams of the characters.

My complaints are very small; there was a preponderance of characters whose names began with 'K,' and I believe at least two had first and last names with 'K.' A switch from first to last name use depending on who was talking proved initially confusing and left me glad I could flip back a few pages. The ending... sigh. Appropriate, but leaving me ambivalent. The air of melancholy is too strong for me to want to add this to my library, thus the less than 5 stars.

The fact that this was a best-seller in Japan left me bemused. According to the author's GR page, "*The Devotion of Suspect X* was the second highest selling book in all of Japan—fiction or nonfiction—the year it was published, with over 800,000 copies sold." I find this especially interesting when I think of the ~~mysteries~~ thrillers that routinely top American best-seller lists. This is almost the exact opposite kind of story, and for me, a *far* more fulfilling one. It leaves me curious to check out Higashino's other works.

Four and a half bento boxes.

Thanks to the Carols and Vivian for having left such thoughtful reviews that intrigued me enough to request it!

Nandakishore Varma says

The classic whodunit works by misdirection, same as a magic trick. As is the case with the magician, so with the mystery writer - the more the skill in the smoothness of execution, the more mystifying the trick seems. But unlike the magician (who never tells), the author tells everything in the end: as the clever detective reveals how the public have been duped by the villain, the reader is also equally dumbfounded. The success of the mystery is in direct proportion to the amount of mystification.

In this novel, Keigo Higashino presents a clever variation. The murder happens during the first and second chapters, *and we immediately know* who committed it! Yasuko, a single mother living alone with her daughter is forced to kill her ex-husband in self-defence. When she plans to turn herself in, her neighbour Ishigami, a reclusive mathematical genius who is obsessed with her, prevents it. He concocts a seemingly

unbreakable alibi for mother and daughter: however, unfortunately for Ishigami, the physicist and amateur sleuth Manabu Yukawa, his former classmate and genius of equal standing is on the case. What follows is a absorbing cat-and-mouse game between the two, with really devastating denouement.

The core of the mystery is not new - I can remember the same plot device used in at least three more stories by other authors (no, I won't reveal which stories they are!). I should have seen the ending coming, but I was taken in by a simple ploy by the author. There is a big plot hole - the police immediately zeroing in on Yasuko and her daughter is unbelievable - but we can condone that in such a tightly written story.

What fascinated me, and raised this book to four stars, was the tussle between the mathematician - who delights in creating insoluble puzzles - and the physicist interested in tweaking out nature's laws from her behaviour, and building mathematical models for the same. The P=NP problem - whether it is easier to work out a solution to problem by oneself, or to check whether another's solution for the same is correct or not - seems to me fascinating.

PS: I read this book because of the Malayalam blockbuster movie *Drishyam* ("Visual"), rumoured to be plagiarised from it. While the movie is in all probability inspired by this story, it is not a copy, and a refreshingly new take on the "unbreakable alibi".

Dyuti says

The Devotion of Suspect X is the third book of the 'Detective Galileo' series by the author Keigo Higashino. The reason why I believe it has managed to attain such popularity, is because the book has broken free from the shackles of the typical 'whodunnit' format. The author presents us with a greater challenge than wondering who the murderer is: he keeps us guessing about how the murder can be hidden, in order to make it a *perfect crime*.

The premise of the story, as oft-repeated, is simple.

Yasuko is a single mother to her teen-aged daughter Misato. She is frequently troubled by her ex-husband who reappears intermittently to extort money from her. One day, things go a little out of hand, and Yasuko, in a terrible fit of rage, ends up killing him. Her neighbor Ishigami, a high school maths teacher, comes to her rescue. He gives her the perfect alibi, with the perfect plan to cover up the murder.

Investigating the murder is Detective Kusanagi, who finds himself drawn into one of his most puzzling cases. He can sense something is wrong, but can't put his finger to it. Thus, he takes the help of his friend, Yukawa, a physicist with a penchant to solve crimes, thus earning himself the title 'Detective Galileo'.

What follows next is the ensuing battle of wits between the two geniuses: Ishigami and Yukawa. As the story progresses, we are forced to wonder, in the author's own words, "*Which is harder: devising an unsolvable problem, or solving that problem*". I believe these two characters are the best sketched out, and they interested me the most.

However, one down-side to the novel was the abysmally bad translation. The sentences were jerky, and the flavour of the book was destroyed by the limp sentences. So, it took me a while to ignore that and get drawn

into the story. Also, towards the middle, it kind of did get a bit slow, and I wished there were some more twists or actions.

On the whole it was quite an enjoyable read, but a few things were off the key which stopped me from *loving* it. However, I HIGHLY RECOMMEND it to all those who would like to savour something out of the ordinary, on a wintery or rainy night.

3.5 stars.

L.A. Starks says

Perhaps a cultural mismatch for me: I found the pace of the book far too slow, the romantic element Victorian at best, and the idea of that brilliant physicists and mathematicians would be also brilliant in sleuthing unrealistic.

The Japanese setting is interesting. The book has good twists at the end, but the plot takes way too long to get there.

Victoria says

Jusqu'à la toute fin, j'ai cru que ce roman était une simple histoire policière très agréable à lire. L'intrigue était originale et intelligente, avec une construction rarement vue dans d'autres titres du genre, et une ambiance propre à la culture japonaise, mais sans émotions fortes. Et puis il y a eu les explications, et j'ai tout vu d'un autre oeil, avec la gorge toute serrée. Je suis très touchée par "le dévouement" en question, qui dépasse ce que l'on peut imaginer au départ, et les dernières pages... Ça me serre le coeur. Tant d'absolu dans cet amour !

Eve says

When the crime, perpetrator(s), and motive were revealed within the first few chapters, I was sure I would be in for an anticlimactic read. How would an author keep a reader interested for the remainder of the book?! Higashino succeeded, and in a phenomenal way, in that even when I thought I understood the basics that the investigation was based on, that plot twist at the end was like a slap in the face. You don't really realize that you're involved in a cat and mouse game until the end. I was told that going in, and it still didn't occur to me until after I finished. What a fitting title, too! I love it when everything comes together like that. Like butter!

Jr Bacdayan says

Keigo Higashino: =)

Translator: You want to read this? Mwahahahaha. Eat mah shit!!!!

Me:

Meh. Hmmm..okay. Ohh it's getting interesting. Ayt. Who the fuck translated this??! Ohhh well. Still pretty good. Awesome. What.the.fuck. Ahhh!!! Ahhhhh!!! Whoah really??? Ahhhhhh!!!! * welp* Whewwww. Wow. Whyyyyy. Wow!!!

You:

{grade school review but I should probably click like for the effort}

\
(-_-)

Boring Person:

A totally different spin on the much-covered grounds of murder mystery, this novel is sure to bring chills to fans of the genre and casual readers alike. I'm not going to ruin the fun by spoiling anything but I'm just going to say that it's been quite a while since I really enjoyed one from this genre. The crime is committed in the first two chapters without hiding the identity of the culprits and you might be left wondering what more is there for you to read. Don't make the mistake of assuming that. Keigo Higashino carefully concocts a layered façade to a crime that trumps other so-called crimes of passion. On top of that an intellectual battle, like a chess match, goes on in the background. You just can't stop reading. For me, the strongest suit of this novel is the characters; they really take hold of you and you can't help but empathize. Not since Crime and Punishment have I rooted for the culprit, or culprits in this case, to walk free. The tension mounts steadily and never slackens. Then the reveal takes you unexpectedly and I didn't even get close to guessing it. Like a magician, Higashino carefully employs misdirection to suit his sleight-of-hand. Up till the bitter-end it'll take your breath away. My only problem with this is the translation by Alexander O. Smith. It feels a bit too rough, and sometimes the flow of the book feels stilted. Not that it's unreadable, but in better hands this experience would've been so much better. All in all, a great crime-thriller novel that's both terribly smart and affecting.

Quote:

“Not knowing the truth could be a crime in and of itself, she realized.”

Irene says

Not only is *THE DEVOTION OF SUSPECT X* a multi-faceted cultural reading experience, but it also acutely complements the familiar psychological suspense/thriller/mystery genre by infusing Japanese philosophy. Keigo Higashino shrewdly and subtly induces the reader to contemplate the immeasurable

complexities of the human psyche by questioning what motivates one human being to judge who is worthy of life, and who is not.

Tetsuya Ishigami's daily schedule is precisely what one would expect of a Japanese mathematics' teacher. His unsuccessful attempts to motivate visibly bored and apathetic students discourage Ishigami, and his one true passion of solving a complex mathematical formula, lies outside of the classroom within the confines of his small apartment. A barren life carved out of necessity dramatically changes when Yasuko and her daughter Misato introduce themselves as his new neighbors. He imagines a fantasy life with them, listening to mother and daughter through the thin apartment walls, and his daily walk to school includes a stop to purchase his boxed lunch at the small shop where Yasuko works. Within this fictitious context, Ishigami surprisingly exhibits a fierce desire to protect both mother and daughter, and so begins a bizarre tale that originates with the unexpected arrival of Yasuko's nefarious ex-husband Togashi.

To divulge the minute intricacies of this suspenseful tale would require *spoilers.* Ishigami's masterful, methodical, and devious scheme demands a skillful exposé by the incongruous, yet highly likeable duo of Dr. Yukama and Detective Kusanagi, the intrepid investigators who are destined to unravel the shocking and mind-boggling conundrum. Imperial University graduates in different fields, Ishigami, Yukama and Kusanagi, seem equally matched; Ishigami, unappreciated mathematical master of a methodical crime committed to protect Yasuko and Misato, and Yukama, preeminent master of rare intuitive observations of human frailties, and Kusanagi, resolute advocate of justice match their unparalleled wits to a stunning unbelievable conclusion. The factual drama predominantly hinges on the intellectual "cat and mouse" chase between Ishigami, "Buddha" at University and Yukama, affectionately known as "Professor Galileo" by the police.

Initially, the translation was a bit stilted, but once engrossed in the book, it was hardly noticeable. In addition to the utterly fascinating and distinctive premise, the cultural milieu depicted an informative contemporary view of Japanese life.

***TANYA* says**

I have to say this book was a delight!! The plot was very good!! I had to google some stuff, lol, but I learned a few things I didn't know before this book. Thanks to my Goodreads friend, LaTonya for the recommendation.

Rohit Enghakat says

What a fantastic book ! Brilliant plot narration by the author. One of the best books in the thriller genre I have read so far. It is about a murder and how the protagonist helps the culprit cover up the crime recreating the crime scene (not disclosing the details here). The climax is absolutely surprising and it definitely keeps the reader on tenterhooks.

I wonder if the Hindi / Malayalam movie "Drishyam" was inspired by this book. Enjoyed this immensely !

