



# Death in Kashmir

*M.M. Kaye*

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Written by celebrated author M. M. Kaye, *Death in Kashmir* is a wonderfully evocative mystery ...

When young Sarah Parrish takes a skiing vacation to Gulmarg, a resort nestled in the mountains above the fabled Vale of Kashmir, she anticipates an entertaining but uneventful stay. But when she discovers that the deaths of two in her party are the result of foul play, she finds herself entrusted with a mission of unforeseen importance. And when she leaves the ski slopes for the Waterwitch, a private houseboat on the placid shores of the Dal Lake near Srinagar, she discovers to her horror that the killer will stop at nothing to prevent Sarah from piecing the puzzle together.

## Death in Kashmir Details

Date : Published December 1st 2000 by St. Martins Press-3pl (first published 1953)

ISBN : 9780312263102

Author : M.M. Kaye

Format : Paperback 256 pages

Genre : Mystery, Cultural, India, Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Romance, Romantic Suspense

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# From Reader Review Death in Kashmir for online ebook

## mark monday says

3 Things about Death in Kashmir:

(1) beautiful opening chapter! wonderfully suspenseful and eerie. a moonlit place in a foreign land full of empty spaces. briskly evocative of an off-kilter period, a time and place that is fading away and being changed into something new.

(2) that time and place is 1947 Kashmir, as the British raj is preparing to get up & go. for a lightweight mystery, it is impressive that Kaye does justice to such a murkily complex period of time. the reason i picked this one up is because i have an unexplainable affinity to that particular time in India (also because i love reading about MURDER).

(3) the rest of the novel is, as mentioned, quite light - typical mysterious motivations, typical long middle (chock-full of very enjoyable details of the time & place), typical ramping up of the action in the last third, typical romance with a typically mysterious young gent who is full of potential derring-do on our intrepid heroine's behalf... or potential menace! but sometimes "typical" is just what the doctor ordered. this is a thin but very pleasant and cozy little mystery.

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## Moonlight Reader says

I read M.M. Kaye when I was in my teens, first picking up *The Far Pavilions*, and then stumbling on these mysteries later. I can't remember which of the mysteries I read - perhaps all of them, perhaps only a few, but it has been long enough that they are basically new to me. I had actually been wanting to pick these up, and when I saw that Minotaur Books had finally released a kindle edition on December 1, 2015, I was delighted.

I love the mystery genre, especially the golden age mysteries by Christie and Sayers. This one was originally published in 1953, so it is a bit later than those, but hits a lot of the same marks.

M.M. Kaye lived a wildly interesting life, born in Simla, India to British parents during the period of the British Raj. Her husband was in the British Army, and she "followed the drum" to Kenya, Zanzibar, Egypt, Cyprus and Germany.

This was the first of her series of whodunnits, set in the Kashmir Valley. The setting is exotic, the main character is suitably pretty, the hero is a proper handsome Brit. If you mashed up Victoria Holt and Helen Macinnes, and set in India, you might get this book.

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## Jeanette says

One of those oldies but goodies, and could M.M. Kaye write them.

This one has glorious locale of Kashmir for its situations and travel within placements to a grass filled bowl

between mountains. But water too as several of the important scenes occur on a houseboat in the summer location. We have a dozen or so possible suspects.

The whodunit is well served but what was superior upon this novel, far more than the plot was the tension. It came out of the gate, and because Sarah is sleeping alone- there are several long periods in the dark of what she can see and /or what can be seen. All mysterious and dangerous, with 2 bodies as evidence before the 1/2 way point.

If you like the Raj orphan or parental units crowd- this one is close to a 5. 4.5 stars but I can't round it up because I thought the ending too pat. Honor and all that, of course, but it still didn't sit logically. Although terrorists and anarchists murdering for collapse all around are certainly not entities that commenced within recent decades invention.

Although I did surprise myself by guessing correctly it wasn't an easy guess at all. Possibly because so many red flags were set into other directions that it was nearly by elimination. But I thought there was another accomplice and about that I was incorrect.

Great break from the dysfunctional young whodunits or stabber novels of our current decade- these singles in this period are never in the cognition of a "poor me, our group has been put upon" or "where can I hide" mode. Not even after suffering and serving in four or more years of WWII. Steely eyed veterans at 23 or 25.

I'll look for some of her others eventually. They actually do stand the test of time as well as being highly entertaining.

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## Jaline says

M. M. Kaye was born in what was then 'British India', was sent to boarding school in England when she was 10, returned to India for a brief time in her late teens and after a decade's sojourn in England, she returned after the publication of her first adult novel: *Six Bars at Seven*. She was in the process of writing her second novel when she met the man who would become her husband - an officer in the British Indian Army. When the British India Army dissolved in favour of home rule in 1947, M. M. Kaye's husband transferred into the British Army and over the course of the following nineteen years the family relocated twenty seven times.

These many changes in location gave M. M. Kaye the background for the series of mystery novels she wrote. Although none had the world-wide impact of her later novel, *The Far Pavilions* (1978), she was happy to be able to contribute to the family finances.

From my perspective, M. M. Kaye contributed far more to women in literature. As with other fore-runners, she helped pave the way for many other women writers. I'm thinking specifically here of her mystery novels. With her 1953 publication of **Death in Kashmir** (originally published as *Death Walked in Kashmir* she broke ground with a literary spy novel.

The protagonist, Sarah Parrish, inadvertently gets ensnared by a situation where she has no choice but to attempt to find a hidden message that would have utmost importance for several countries. During her highly dangerous and risky quest, she meets Major Charles Mallory and she is drawn to him even though she knows she probably cannot trust anyone.

So there is a hint of romance, an exciting mystery/spy story, and all takes place in an almost mythically beautiful locale. Kashmir. Even the word itself evokes exotic sights and scents and sounds. The Vale of Kashmir, nestled between the Pir Panjal range and the great Himalayas, appears as an oasis in the eye of a political hurricane. Yet underneath there is a sinister undercurrent building. The story begins in Gulmarg ski resort, which is in the mountains above the Vale of Kashmir and ends in Srinagar which is on the Dal Lake where Sarah lives on a houseboat called *Waterwitch*.

Although this is an early work of M. M. Kaye, those of us familiar with her later novels will experience the same magic through her words that we enjoyed in *Shadow of the Moon*, *Trade Wind*, and *The Far Pavilions*. Her characters are interesting, the plot was intricate and well thought out, the pace is exciting, and the descriptions of place are mystical.

I loved this excursion to Kashmir and I look forward to the second (of six) of her mystery novels, which takes place in Berlin. Reading M. M. Kaye's series of mystery novels will be like enjoying a world cruise - from the comfort of my living room!

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## **Andrea (Catsos Person) is a Compulsive eBook Hoarder says**

Retro Read Group BOTM April 15 -May 15, 2017.

This story takes place in the last gasp of the British Raj and is my first read of M.M. Kaye's, 7 or 8 mysteries. All of these take place in exotic locations, this one in Kashmir.

Two murders take place when a ski-club comprised of British expat's take a trip to enjoy the slopes.

M.M. Kaye's powers of description are amazing! I can feel the clean cold air in my face, the glare of the sun bouncing off snowy great outdoors and other scenic touches that the author does so well.

She also is adept at giving a the reader a good sense of the character. I feel I "know" these people in this story because of her formidable writing skill.

The mystery itself was excellent because I could not figure out who the murderer was.

After reading this book, I look forward to reading more of her mysteries.

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## **Misfit says**

This was a very well put together mystery with the added bonus of an exotic setting as we're used to getting from MM Kaye. Beginning at the ski trip where two women die under mysterious circumstances that end up with a heroine involved all kinds of mystery and intrigue. Added bonus for the author's notes and how she included a tiny mention of herself while her family was living in Kashmir.

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## Candi says

Years ago I fell in love with M.M. Kaye's writing, having read her epic tomes **The Far Pavilions**, **Shadow of the Moon** and **Trade Wind**. I felt there couldn't be anything more exotic and exciting than 'traveling' with her to these faraway places and dreaming of the day when I would certainly experience such adventures myself. Unfortunately, those dreams never came to fruition, but I am thankful that I can continue to enjoy such journeys second-hand.

**Death in Kashmir** is one of six mysteries in Kaye's "Death in..." series. Much shorter than the aforementioned books, this one offers you a taste of what you would have to look forward to if you decided to immerse yourself in one of her grander tales. Taking place just before the end of British rule in India, the setting is sumptuous, ranging from the snowy ski slopes of Gulmarg in Kashmir, to the dining rooms and ballrooms of Peshawar, and on to the lakeshores near Srinagar. Beneath the shadow of Apharwat Peak, Sarah Parrish is enjoying her holiday respite from the heat of the Indian plains until tragedy strikes the party of skiers. A sinister feeling grabs hold of Sarah and won't let go. She becomes entangled in a dangerous quest to unravel a mystery that I for one could not quite unveil until the very end. I loved the aura of danger and the very descriptive passages that so wonderfully illustrated the surroundings as well as Sarah's increasing fear.

*"Somewhere out in the darkness beyond the Club grounds a jackal howled eerily, and as other jackals took up the cry and blended it into a yelling, shrilling chorus as of souls in torment, Sarah shivered, and a sudden horror swept over her. A horror of the enormous, sun-baked land around her and the barren Khyber hills that lay just beyond Peshawar, menacing and mysterious in the starlight. Beyond those hills lay Afghanistan and the fierce and lawless tribes, while away and away to the north-east stretched the long line of the Himalayas, with somewhere among them the snow slopes of Khilanmarg."*

This is a classic whodunnit, with a touch of romance, a respectable heroine, and a satisfying ending. Everything is tied up nicely, for those that appreciate having all your questions answered. The winning elements for me were the gorgeous scenery as well as the suspenseful and menacing atmosphere. I recommend this one for those that enjoy lighter, yet intriguing mysteries that leave off from shocking the reader with the gorier details.

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## Hannah says

My very favorite of M.M. Kaye's 6 "**Death in...**" murder mysteries, and quite possibly my favorite whodunit of all time. While her mysteries haven't the same scope and reach of her 3 masterpieces (*The Far Pavillions*, *Shadow of the Moon* and *Trade Wind*), they are nonetheless well researched, beautifully described, and endowed with snippets of Kaye's own experiences in the countries that she lived in during her childhood and/or her married life.

This outing takes the reader to Kashmir, 1947. British raj rule is due to end within the coming months, and a group of holiday makers are making the most of their last days in the mountain region of Gulmarg, Kashmir. It's the final trip for members of the Ski Club of India, and Sarah Parrish has been enjoying herself until a tragic skiing accident takes the lives of one of their party (or is it an accident??). Chapter One opens to what I consider one of the most suspenseful introductions I've ever read in a mystery, and takes the reader on a journey through the snow capped slopes of Gulmarg to the lush, lovely lake region of Srinagar; to a

houseboat with many secrets.

A riveting, engrossing and beautifully detailed mystery from beginning to end. Perfect the first time I read over 25 years ago, and just as excellent today.

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### **Dorcas says**

Another brilliant mystery by M M Kaye, one that kept me biting my fingernails from start to finish.

What could be more suspenseful than a dark and stormy skiing vacation in the hills of Kashmir, where skiers are meeting with mysterious "accidents" on the slopes...

And when the scene shifts to a lake at the base of the mountains and our heroine takes over the lease of a murder victim's houseboat, little does she know what deadly riddle is hidden in those rooms...

I loved this. I loved the "edge of your seat" suspense. I loved the settings, I loved the bazaar and the paper mache shop. The skiing and the houseboats. I loved MM Kaye's realistic portrayal of the area which felt so authentic, and the moods she drew with her pen. I loved the romance which was believable and not over the top, but just right for the type of story.

Highly recommended.

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### **Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says**

This was a fun, old-fashioned whodunnit, complete with exotic location, intrepid heroine and steely-eyed hero. And now I really want to visit Kashmir.

#### *Gulmarg ski resort*

They fanned out on the crest of Slalom Hill and each took their own line, swooping down over the crisp shimmering surface like a flight of swallows, dipping, swaying, turning in a swish of flung crystals, and leaving behind them clear curving tracks on the sparkling snow.

#### *Dal Lake*

As the heart-shaped paddles rose and fell in unison, the boat glided under old, old bridges and by temples whose glittering roofs were discovered on closer examination to be plated not with silver, but with pieces of kerosene tins. Brilliant blue kingfishers flashed and darted above the quiet reaches of the stream, and innumerable bulbuls twittered among the willows.

...as long as there are no murderers there. But handsome British spies - of course, absolutely!

This is one of M.M. Kaye's better mysteries, set in the waning days of the British Raj in northern India in the late 1940s. Feisty main character, Sarah Parrish, goes on a ski vacation with fellow British expatriates and finds herself embroiled in dangerous schemes way over her head. The mystery is a good one: the mastermind criminal is well-drawn and well-hidden (I didn't guess who it was), and the clues and pieces are tied together at the end in a satisfying way.

*Death in Kashmir* is a light mystery novel, not terribly deep, but good fun, and there's a great sense of place, with wonderful descriptions of the people and places in Kashmir. Kaye actually lived in Kashmir in the early 1940s - she met her future husband there - and it shows in the affectionate details of the story.

This was my last of M.M. Kaye's six romantic suspense novels, and a very good one to end on. It reminded me quite strongly of Mary Stewart's novels, which is the highest praise I can pass out to a book in this genre. Highly recommended to those who like these types of classic mysteries!

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## **Diane Lynn says**

Really 4.5 stars

This book, by one of my favorite authors, takes the reader to India at the very end of the British Raj. It takes place in 1947 just before partition. Sarah Parrish travels to Gulmarg in Kashmir for a ski holiday. There are many interesting characters at the hotel where she is staying. One night she is woken from her sleep by a sound. Upon investigation, she discovers someone trying to break into the bathroom window of her neighbor. This starts a wonderful mystery. Murder, intrigue and just a small touch of romance follow as the action moves to a houseboat named *Waterwitch* on Dal Lake near Srinagar.

As usual, MM Kaye describes the area so well. To me personally, this book brought back many memories of summers spent on a houseboat on that same Dal Lake, as well as skiing near Gulmarg and camping in the hills above Srinagar in those huge old army tents that were so popular. I am sure I still have one or two of those Kashmiri paper mache boxes that MM Kaye describes so well and was integral to this mystery.

Overall, a very good mystery. I hadn't figured it out and was shocked by the suspenseful ending. The only thing that bothered me in the beginning was some of the conversations seemed to drag on with prattle, hence I knocked the half star.

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## **Algernon says**

An excellent thriller to read on vacation. I may be a little biased, since I've been a fan of the author for a long time, but I thoroughly enjoyed the trip to this exotic and romantic part of the world under the guidance of M M Kaye ( I read this on the plane going home and I had trouble keeping a straight face and not chuckling). "Death in Kashmir" may be considered one of her 'lesser' works when compared with the monumental historical epics "The Far Pavilions" or "Shadow of the Moon" (it is in fact her debut novel), but her storytelling talent, her enduring love for the subcontinent and her romantic inclinations are already present in this 'divertimento' that combines a whodunit with Cold War espionage, comedy with romance. Mrs. Kaye's



decision to set her debut story in her beloved Kashmir is understandable ('Write about what you know best' is a solid advice to new authors), given her family history of military service in India. Her grateful remarks to her first editor (none other than Paul Scott) remain poignant today when the region is still convulsed by civil war and religious intolerance.

*My luck was clearly in that day. I hope that it stays in, so that readers will enjoy this story of a world that is gone and of a country that remains beautiful beyond words, despite mankind's compulsive and indefatigable efforts to destroy what is beautiful!*

I know there is little chance for me to visit the place anytime soon, so I must be content for now to let M M Kaye take me skiing on the majestic slopes of Gulmarg, with Nanga Parbat peeking above the clouds, or on a night ride in a 'shikara' (the Kashmiri equivalent of a gondola) from Srinagar across Lake Dal, while the spicy breeze blows from the Shalimar Gardens.

*The white peaks ward the passes, as of yore,  
The wind sweeps o'er the wastes of Khorasan;  
But thou and I go thitherward no more.*

**Laurence Hope, 'Yasin Khan'**

The impulse to write the story had probably more to do with this melancholic lament for a lost paradise than with any immediate financial considerations. Luckily for the reader, the author doesn't get bogged down in whimsical reminiscences, but sets up an energetic and often wickedly gender subversive criminal investigation into a series of mysterious deaths among the members of a Sky Club vacationing in the mountains above the Kashmir valley. Inclement weather serves both to increase the tension and to limit the number of suspects in a variant of the classical 'locked-room' set-up. Later developments take the group to Lake Dal for a deadly showdown.

Another welcome variation to the typical detective story is to choose as protagonist an innocent bystander turned into amateur sleuth : the Honourable Sarah Parrish is a young lady enjoying a last season in India before the Partition of 1948. She is athletic, determined, resourceful, independent-minded and courageous - a true poster girl for the Post-War feminist movement. As a side note, the role model for one of Sarah's friends is the heroine of Stella Gibbons' enchanting "Cold Comfort Farm":

*That's what comes of serving in the WRAF and wearing uniform! The sight of a really womanly woman, complete with fluttering nerves, timidity and the vapours, not to mention migraine and a horror of mice, inspires you with acute irritation.*

Did I mention that Sarah is also single and quite capable of casting a roving eye over the eligible bachelors in her entourage? Solving crimes is all very patriotic and guaranteed to raise your adrenaline, but why not have a little side dish of romance on the menu?

... if only that insufferable hulk Charles would stop treating her like a child!

**'I think,' said Sarah with dignity, 'you are the most insufferable man I ever met.'**

**'And you,' said Charles, 'are without any doubt at all, the most attractive and infuriating woman I have yet encountered in the course of a long and varied experience of crime.'**

I did enjoy the adventure, but I would be hard pressed to call it a masterpiece. The novel hasn't aged all that well, and the politics are typical of the Communist Scare propaganda ("You mean - you're one of them?" gasped Sarah. 'A RED?'), domino principles and of the British imperial nostalgia. Almost the whole cast is

made of the 'white' people having a last party while surrounded by hundreds of humble yet faithful local servants. The plot is pleasantly complex, but not all that original. A couple of scenes were quite poorly written. My personal pet peeve is having the evil mastermind laughing manically with a gun in his hand while explaining his plans in detail to his bound victim. Yet, overall, the magic of the place and the touches of humour helped me ignore all the perceived shortcomings and enjoy My Kashmir vacation.

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### **Christopher Bunn says**

M. M. Kaye certainly knows how to write, and her upbringing in India lends legitimacy to how she paints her scenes in this one. There's a very short list of authors (women, mostly) who wrote excellent books grouped mostly in the thriller-suspense-murder mystery-mild romance genre. M. M. Kaye, Mary Stewart (Moonspinners, Touch not the Cat, etc), Helen MacInnes...I've run out of names. I think there's two more, but they escape me at the moment. Anyway, M. M. Kaye is in good company. I need to read her other books. I think I read Death in Berlin a long time ago, but I'll have to re-read that one, along with Andamans, Kenya, and Cyprus. Not sure if there are more. She writes in what I think is a deceptively difficult genre to write. Lord knows there are a lot of dreadful books written in that one. At any rate, I heartily recommend this book.

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### **Tweety says**

Spooky!!! So glad I read this in daylight. I finished it one day, the joys of having the flu. I have to say, of all the wonderful suspense authors, M.M. Kaye is my favorite, surpassing Mary Stewart, even. (don't get mad at me, Mary Stewart fans!)

Up at a ski resort in Kashmir, things are going downhill. On a still, moonlight night Sarah sees someone sawing through a window latch and goes to warn her fellow skier. What she learns from this one night of watchfulness in Kashmir will follow her to The Waterwitch houseboat on a lake near Srinagar. Will she find the answer to two skiers' deaths too late?

Very atmospheric! You can tell the author had been to the places mentioned, and she writes the suspense perfectly.

And that's all I can think to say. Read it! Just Read it! It's wonderful.

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### **Erika Nerdypants says**

This is one of my most loved books. It's true that I have read deeper books with more substance, even in the mystery genre. But M.M. Kaye wrote a top notch mystery for her time. She truly transports the reader to Kashmir, I could feel the house boat rocking as I was turning the pages. The ending came as a complete surprise and was absolutely stunning. Yes, it is a light novel, but hey, isn't it entertainment we want from mysteries?

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