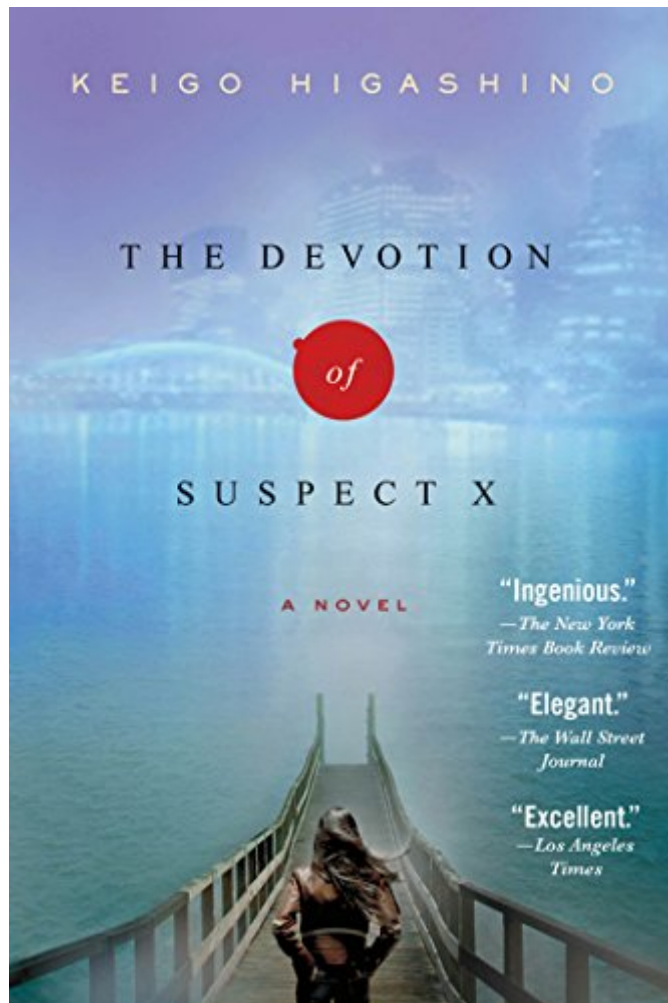


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The Devotion Of Suspect X: A Detective Galileo Novel (Detective Galileo Series Book 1)



Synopsis

This e-book now includes preview chapters from Higashino's newest mystery, *SALVATION OF A SAINT*. 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.

Book Information

File Size: 773 KB

Print Length: 305 pages

Publisher: Minotaur Books; 1st edition (February 1, 2011)

Publication Date: February 1, 2011

Sold by: Macmillan

Language: English

ASIN: B0044781ZQ

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #37,261 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #13 in Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > Asian > Japanese #236 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > International Mystery & Crime #267 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > International Mystery & Crime

Customer Reviews

This is a very clever mystery novel originally written in Japanese and translated into English and is this author's first major English publication. Apparently this novel is a continuation of a popular serial drama, Galileo, and has also been made into a Japanese film, Suspect-X that was released in 2008. The recurring character in the series is Manabu Yukawa, a brilliant physics professor at Imperial University who is respectfully called Detective Galileo. He assists the local police sometimes with particularly vexsome cases, and this murder is one of those. Yasuko Hanaoka is a divorced mother working in a box lunch shop. She left her old life as a hostess behind and is trying to live a quiet existence while raising her teenage daughter, Misato. Unfortunately for her, she has a deadbeat ex-husband who is looking for her and who wants to get back together and who wants money. When he comes to extort her and threatens to harm her daughter at her apartment on that fateful evening, she and her daughter murder Shinji Togashi. Overhearing the scuffle, next door neighbor -- a mathematics teacher named Tetsuya Ishigami -- comes to her door and offers Yasuko total salvation. He tells her that he will take care of everything and will help them avoid prosecution and imprisonment if only they do exactly as he says. Although the lead detectives on the case suspect that the alibis of Yasuko and Misato aren't quite ironclad, police are confused about whether or not they are truly suspects in the murder. With fantastic misdirection and precise circumlocution directed behind the scenes by Ishigami, the pair are continuing their daily lives as if innocent.

The Devotion of Suspect X is a different kind of crime novel. It isn't a whodunit: we learn in the opening pages that Yasuko kills her ex-husband, Togashi. Nor is the manner or motive of the killing a mystery: Togashi's aggressive behavior toward Yasuko and her daughter, and Yasuko's strangulation of Togashi with her daughter's assistance, are vividly described. For much of the novel, The Devotion of Suspect X seems like a police procedural combined with a detective story. The role of private detective is played by a physicist, Yukawa, who happens to be a good friend of the investigating police officer, Kusanagi. Yukawa also happens to be an old classmate of Yasuko's neighbor, a mathematician named Ishigami, who assisted Yasuko in the aftermath of the killing. Initially, the mystery surrounds the body that turns up days later -- with a pulped face and charred fingertips -- and whether Ishigami's scheme to keep the police from proving Yasuko's complicity will be successful. Yet about two-thirds of the way through the novel, the plot takes a sharp turn, and a new mystery emerges: Why is Suspect X doing something so completely unexpected? I enjoyed The Devotion of Suspect X. Keigo Higashino's writing style (or perhaps the translator's) is straightforward; the prose doesn't soar but neither does it distract. The novel is tightly constructed;

there's nothing in it that doesn't need to be there. Yasuko is a remarkably bland character (given that she's a killer) but the Buddha-like Ishigami and his friend Yukawa are interesting and their battle of wits brings the story to life. Ishigami's interaction with Kusanagi (another bland character) is less interesting but it serves to advance the plot.

Too bad I read it in January. By the end of the first chapter, you will already know who did it and how. That's not why *The Devotion of Suspect X* by Keigo Higashino is a compulsive page-turner. This is not a run of the mill whodunit nor an elaborately staged mystery. When you get to the end, when you race to the end, you'll slap your head like I did and realize how simple, but brilliant the story is. "...you science types all seem to say the same things." "What do you mean?" "When I visited him, Ishigami said something a lot like what you said just now." Kusanagi told his friend about Ishigami's mathematics test. 'Blind spots due to assumptions, eh? How like him.' Yukawa grinned. But the next moment, the physicist's expression changed. Suddenly he stood, and clutching his head in his hands, he walked over to the window... 'Hey, Yukawa?...' "Impossible," Yukawa muttered. 'There's no way he could have...' "So there's a little bit of science and math in here - after all, a physicist and mathematician are pitted against one another. But it's not some DaVinci Code with math or anything like that. The premise is that the murder has been laid out by Ishigami much like a mathematical proof, luring the police detectives and the physicist into solving it the way he would want them to - but that's all I'm going to say because I don't want to divulge too much. I'm not sure if I've ever read a book where I rooted for the "bad guys" as much as I did here. But that's just the thing - the murderer and her unexpected accomplice aren't evil at all; they were just caught in an impossible situation. Will they get away with it or will the suspicious physicist figure it all out?

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