



Death in the Andamans

M.M. Kaye

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Death in the Andamans is a masterpiece of mystery and romance from one of our most beloved authors.

When a violent storm lashes the tiny Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal, Copper Randal barely manages a safe return to Government House. She does get back in one piece with her hostess, Valerie Masson, Val's fiancé, and handsome naval officer Nick Tarrent, but one of the islanders is unaccounted for when the boats return to harbor. Cut off from the mainland and confined to the shadowy, haunted guest quarters, Copper and the other visitors conclude that one of their number is a murderer. The killer must be found before the storm destroys all trace of any possible clues. In *Death in the Andamans* M.M. Kaye has created the perfect blend of exotic setting and expertly crafted whodunit that mark her as one of our greatest literary talents.

Death in the Andamans Details

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Author : M.M. Kaye

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From Reader Review *Death in the Andamans* for online ebook

Evelyn Hill says

Location, location, location.

I have to confess: this is not my favorite book by M.M. Kaye. (The Far Pavilions was fantastic.)

This was the first book she wrote, and it shows. The characters were straight out of clichéville and the romance was pretty much by-the-book, as it were.

But the location! She did a fabulous job of making me feel as if I were there, and she picked a wonderful location. Not just the islands, but the house itself, with all its mysterious carvings and dark corners of spooky rooms.

Karen GoatKeeper says

Caroline, nickname Copper, is visiting her friend Valerie on a tiny island in the Bay of Bengal in India. This is early in the 1900's, so India is still in the British empire. Val's father is the Commissioner so Copper is staying at Government House.

There is a small community of British citizens living on the island. All of them are at a picnic party which exposes some of the tensions and hatreds between some of these people. A hurricane moves in as the party breaks up. Some of the people came in boats and were trying to sail back as the storm hits. One member of the party disappears. His body reappears courtesy of the ocean.

Ferrars is the first murder and soon followed by another. Copper and, especially, Val thought they knew everyone fairly well. At least one has depths they didn't expect.

This is an older British murder mystery. It drifts along. Lots is going on, although it doesn't seem that way. The climax is very low key.

I enjoyed the book. It is easy and fast to read. It didn't build the tension as well as it could have. The descriptions and information about the island, which does exist, are slipped into the narrative very effectively. It did seem to suffer an identity problem as romance is a strong element.

Hannah says

Another winner from M.M. Kaye's "*Death in...*" murder mystery series. This novel takes the reader to the Andaman Islands off the coast of India, circa late 1940's. Copper Randal leaves the dreary, rainy confines of her secretarial job in London and travels halfway around the world to visit a girlhood friend living with her father, the Chief Commissioner of the Andaman Islands. While there, Copper discovers that all is not as it seems in paradise. Death stalks the colonial residents during the Christmas holidays, and due to a terrific hurricane, both potential victims and a murderer are trapped on the island -- totally cut off from any outside help from the mainland.

This is a great variation of the "locked room" whodunit. Kaye makes special use of some subtle supernatural elements that she claims actually happened to her while there with a friend in the 1930's. In fact, a large portion of this book was crafted by Kaye and a friend during a rainy, dismal Christmas holiday, so the book has a realistic, intimate flavor. I especially like this one because it features a sleuthing foursome (made up of

Copper and her friend Valerie, as well as their respective love interests - Nick and Charles).

Lots of good descriptions of the Andamans and of a time period long ago lost. A period piece whodunit worthy to stand beside the likes of those penned by Agatha Christie.

Helen says

I enjoyed all of Kaye's Death in... books. The most interesting thing about them is that they were written as contemporary novels and republished later with no editing. The forward of each tells the background of how she came to write them. This one was written in about 1939-1940 but not published until later. It does not have as much on politics as some of the others. The setting and mystery are creepy! Wonderful to read on a rainy winter day.

Pamela says

This is one of my favorite books...ever. I love a good mystery with some romance thrown in, so this book is right up my alley. I have read all of M.M. Kaye's books except for Trade Winds (which is really hard to find in print) and The Far Pavilions (because it's huge). Her other mysteries (the "Death In..." series) are interesting, well-written, and occur in various exotic locations. I return to these once a year when I need a good book; for me, these are like an old pair of comfy slippers. I highly recommend all of them.

Andrea says

The last of this series, and continues with the theme of sinking into a beautiful location, with some murder and romance along the way. This one had irritating men v women banter which fell flat for me ("you two harridans" etc, in a supposedly affectionate, joking way). Local people again non-entities.

"Copper" has to be one of the most irritating nicknames I've ever heard.

Julie says

A really enjoyable, quick read that only annoyed me by other characters calling the main character "Copper" which immediately made me hear everything they said in a Cagney-esque voice. This doesn't, perhaps, make any sense, but I never claimed to.

Moonlight Reader says

I think I liked Death in Kashmir better, but this one was a fun little mystery. I like the way that M.M. Kaye combines a bit of romance with her mysteries, and her colonial British settings, are a huge guilty pleasure of mine. Guilty because I know that colonialism was terribly destructive to local cultures and peoples and

Empire building is incredibly arrogant and indefensible, but pleasure because I still love them, with their interesting rules, and their exotic settings.

Alisha says

[at the end, when the characters are summing up the solution to the mystery, and tying up al

Cynthia Hale says

This is a classic English Manor House murder mystery. i love those. It happens to be set in the Andaman Islands near India in the last day of Empire. I enjoyed the setting and the characters. It is the story of a young woman, Copper, who goes to have an extended visit with her friend Val. Val's father is Englands guy in charge for the area. While visiting Copper finds romance, adventure, and murder, all during the Christmas holiday. The ending felt a little bit "out there" but it was still good. The romances were clean and believable to me. I really liked the authors note in the beginning telling about how and when she wrote it. It added a lot to the story. I have to warn that they use some 1930's swearing. Biblical language only. If it hadn't been for the language I would have given it 5 stars.

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

3.5 stars. Murder mystery with a dash of romance, written in 1960 and set in the exotic Andaman Islands, a former British penal colony that is now part of India.

Caroline Randal, known as "Copper," is a young Englishwoman invited to visit her old school chum, Valerie, who now lives on Ross Island in the Andamans with her stepfather, the Chief Commissioner. During her visit, a tropical storm isolates their group on the island, and a man dies--washed overboard in the storm and drowned, everyone thinks. At first. As things get more complicated and the body count mounts, Copper and Valerie, together with Valerie's fiancé Charles and a good-looking Royal Navy man, Nick Tarrant, form an intrepid foursome that attempts to solve the mystery of the murders. But, of course, asking too many questions could run them into trouble ...

A pleasantly creepy, nostalgic kind of book. The murder mystery isn't up to the standards of Agatha Christie, and the romance is pretty quick and understated (a kiss here and there, in between crime-solving and a misunderstanding). It starts out a little slow: after 100 pages I was ready for the exposition to be over. There are a couple of minor supernatural elements to the story (a portentous dream and an unseen ghostly spirit) that are partially based on the author's own experiences on Ross Island, but other than adding to the creepy atmosphere they're not really germane to the plot.

Nick is a pretty good guy for an alpha male, and his friend Charles is a hoot:

"Yes, come on young Sherlock. Spill the sinister beans and put us out of our misery. Then we can tear up all those appalling notes that Val has been preparing for the purposes of spreading confusion and despair, and fall on Nick in a body. I shall direct operations from behind the bookcase, and you and Val can do the actual arresting. After which we can bury him behind the squash court, and go off to dinner secure in the righteous conviction that we have faithfully administered the King's Justice."

It's a fun, light read if you like old-fashioned romantic suspense novels.

Lisa Greer says

After reading all the great reviews, I feel like a heretic, but I couldn't get into this novel. I really like the first chapter a lot, but after that, the novel just felt so dated to me, and I know it is old-- written around WWII time in fact. I have other old novels, though, that suck me right in, so it's not that fact. I got a degree in 18th century British Literature, so I do like old books. :) I think it was just not "thrilling" or must read, so it started to stagnate for me pretty quickly. I read until the storm was starting to blow in, and I just felt meh about the whole thing. So, I won't be finishing it. I'll try another by Kaye to see if I find something I like better.

Jannah (Cloud Child) says

4.5/5

9-10/10/18

Reread. A lot of fun returning to this one and I still was unsure about the murderer until the reveal. Very well done with lots of tingly suspense, a will they won't they romance sprinkled atop with lots of fun humor.

4/5

Another cosy mystery on a deserted island with a killer on the loose. Enjoyable as usual, and the character perspective a little differently done than the usual "Death in.." style.

I'm glad also there was a proper "what happened" style explanation in the end rather than just the romance coming to its final close in the book. I do want to know why the first time Copper saw Ferrers as a nightmare that it wasn't explained, even though she hadn't seen his face before?

The wry and banterous humor and sarcasm was a good touch as usual, that's what really helps M. M. Kaye stand a little apart.

Overall fun read especially during a flight and a long car ride. Im so tired.

Bev says

Death in the Andamans (1960) by M. M. Kaye finds Caroline "Copper" Randal on one of the enchanting Andaman Islands in the Indian Ocean in time for the Christmas holidays. She recently has come into a legacy which allows her to take advantage of the standing invitation from her friend Valerie Masson. Valerie is the stepdaughter of the Islands' Chief Commissioner and wants Copper to share the beautiful island locale. At first, the only thing marring this island paradise is presence of Ruby Stock--a married woman, but one who

still fancies herself a femme fatale and who forces the attention of every available male to herself. Unfortunately for Copper, this includes Nick Tarrent, the dashing young officer from the Sapphire, docked in the harbor.

But soon there is a bigger problem. A hurricane blows in just as the house guests gathered at Government House are finishing a picnic up on Mount Harriet. The party consists of Copper, Valerie, Valerie's fiancé, Charles, Nick and his fellow officer Dan Harcourt, Ruby and her husband Leonard Stock, Rosamund & Ronnie Purvis, John Shilto and his brother Ferrers, Miss Amabel Withers and her on-again/off-again boyfriend George Beamish, the Rector and Mrs. Dobbie, and Deputy Commissioner Albert Hurridge. There is tension in the air--and not all of it is because of the threatening weather. Half the party returns by car and the others are to return in boats. When the sea-faring half finally arrive--soaked and bedraggled because their boats were all swamped in the storm--they are missing Ferrers Shilto, presumed drowned.

When Shilto's body washes up on shore, it is given a cursory going-over by the nurse and Dutt, the doctor's assistant (the doctor having been stranded off-island in the storm), and pronounced drowned. But Dan Harcourt has his doubts and vows to look at the body more closely himself. Then he turns up dead as well. There is a killer stalking the house party. Who is it? And what is the motive behind it all?

This is another solid mystery outing from M. M. Kaye using her own experiences to inform her novel. Kaye spent a bit of time on Ross, the island in question, just prior to the outbreak of World War II under circumstances very similar. When her party was caught on the island during a storm, it occurred to her what a nice place it would be for a murder--intensify the storm, knock out all communications, and strand a few important people (like doctors) off-island and you'd be all set. So, she did. The story is also up to her usual standard in terms of atmosphere and setting. The reader can definitely imagine the beauties of the island, settle back into the pre-war atmosphere, and then feel the building tensions as the storm approaches.

The mystery itself is presented with a light touch and the blend of romantic suspense is Kaye's forte. There are clues a-plenty and she does a fair job with a variation of the locked room/impossible crime motif. An enjoyable murder mystery with a good try at fair play plotting. There are a few details that are kept from the reader--but astute mystery fans should be able to piece it all together. ★★★ and a half. [Rounded up]

First posted on my blog My Reader's Block. Please request permission before reposting. Thanks.

Jaline says

"The Andaman Islands, green, fairy-like, enchanted, lie some hundred miles off the Burmese coast in the blue waters of the Bay of Bengal. Legend, with some support by science, tells that their hills and valleys were once part of a great range of mountains that extended from Burma to Sumatra, but that the wickedness of the inhabitants angered Mavia Tomala, the great chief, who caused a cataclysm which separated the land into over two hundred islands, and marooned them for ever in the Bay of Bengal."

This is the opening sentence of Chapter Two in this last of M. M. Kaye's "Death In . . ." series. In this novel, paradise is invaded by greed, by old resentments and grudges, by vengeance and an evil that fed upon itself.

Copper is invited to visit with her best friend Val who was recently engaged to Charles, the love of her life. Copper meets Nick through her friends and this foursome become entangled in a murder.

There is a huge storm that hits the island with the force of tsunami – a hurricane or cyclone that churned up the ocean, threw down rain that soaked everything in seconds, with winds that destroyed all the landing bays and jettys. They were effectively cut off from the rest of the islands and Val's home with her father the High Commissioner was filled with the people who had been cut off from their own homes by this great storm. Their large home was called Government House, although how it came to be named that, Val did not know. In this storm, every available container was placed under drips from the ceiling as the rain fought them for possession of their home.

When a murder is discovered, the foursome (Copper, Nick, Val, and Charles) decide to use this time of isolation to try and figure out who the murderer is. Better to keep themselves occupied than cooped up with nothing to do but deal with all the tensions. Their logic narrowed down the possible candidates to seven people. Just as they begin to compile 'cases' for or against each suspect, another murder occurs. Rather than clarifying the facts or shedding some light, it only becomes more confusing.

This novel is fascinating – filled with contrasts and contradictions. M. M. Kaye's ability to create atmosphere and tension shines in this book. I enjoyed the descriptions of the islands, especially near the end when the romantic aspects of these enchanted isles are given free reign.

This is a lovely ending for her 6-book series, and I am glad that she saved this exotic location for the last one. I'm sad that the series is over, but what I gained was an even deeper interest and curiosity about the places M. M. Kaye wrote about with such skill.
