

Krishna & the philosopher's stone

This might not be the first review of the most-awaited book by Ashwin Sanghi - *The Krishna Key*. This also might not be able to tell you whether I like the book or not. Because honestly, even I don't know if *The Krishna Key* is a good read or not. What I do know is that it is fun, interesting and certainly goes with Sanghi's previous work.

The Krishna Key is the story of Ravi Mohan Saini, a simple history professor who is accused of killing his childhood friend - Anil Varshney, a research scientist. Saini along with his doctoral student Priya Ratnani embarks on a journey to clear his name and to find Varshney's killer. The villain happens to be Taarak Vakil, a Krishna devotee who believes he is Vishnu's tenth incarnation - the Kalki avatar. Vakil is obsessed and has been ordered by a certain woman he addresses as 'mataji' to find the Krishna key, an object said to give the bearer immense powers.

So overall, this seems like



Title: The Krishna Key
Writer: Ashwin Sanghi
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a plot directly 'influenced' by Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code*. I mean, you can't deny the similarities - a middle-aged academician, a sexy sidekick, an obsessed villain, religious symbols, secret codes and anagrams as well! But don't throw it away for its similarity with the best-seller, read it for the amazing and

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extensive research Sanghi has done in order to write this novel. I would love to applaud Sanghi for making the well-known Hindu mythological stories even more interesting as if you are reading them for the first time. Sanghi also brings in myths associated with Hinduism and transforms them into

crazy facts. For example, Sanghi proves that the Brahmastra is nothing but a nuclear weapon! Also, the Heracles that Plato talks about while mentioning Heracles's column is Krishna with the column being Mount Kailash. The biggest surprise is calling Mount Kailash as a man-made structure! Sanghi also explains the scientific role of Bael leaves, and proves that cloning was known during Vedic period.

What I dislike about the book is the way it changes from an interesting cat-and-mouse chase to scientific facts and conspiracy theories. The character of Sir Khan was not needed at all. Taarak Vakil's character too, starts off as a murderous psychopath but midway turns into a puppet in mataji's hands. The worst was throwing a love story at the end. Why do you always need a mismatched couple to find love at the end? And again, to weave Taj Mahal into the story; Ashwin Sanghi, let me tell you, Manreet Sodhi Someshwar beat you to that!

- SHALAKA NALAWADE