

A Good Girl's Guide to Murder, written by Holly Jackson

A Good Girl's Guide to Murder. Sounds like the perfect handbook on how to kill without being caught; something only a goody two-shoes could do properly. Yet it isn't filled with useful advice such as how to bayonet the victim at an angle that optimises suffering, or to leave the scene without a trace. The good girl isn't the murderer. She was the detective, and let me tell you, she was a pretty darn good one.

So if you are looking for a hair-raising, suspenseful yet delightful novel to read with a cup of cocoa in your cozy pyjamas, let me introduce you to the world of The Good Girl. And trust me-you'll want to stay a while!

Little Kilton.

Yes, that town.

The town infamous for 'The Murder.'

The murder, of Andie Bell.

Everyone knew the story like the back of their hand. The murderer's name slipped off their tongues. "Sal Singh," they all said. It was clear as day.

But perhaps...it was rather clear as mud?

Pippa Fitz-Amobi. An awkward, A-grade student. She knows that babies are born without kneecaps, and that hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia is the fear of long words. Yet she doesn't know one thing for sure. That Sal Singh was the murderer. As a child, Pippa looked up to him. He was full of the joys of spring. His smile was a drop of sunshine on a cloudy day. He was the sweetest person she knew.

It didn't seem right. Something was wrong.

Very wrong.

And that's how this dormant, five year old case became the topic of her final-year project. With the help of Ravi, Sal's brother, they got closer and closer to the truth.

And oh, the story was complicated.

This book had me hooked. Holly Jackson has created a plot so intricate, so intriguing, so unexpected, that I kept flipping the pages. I stayed up past my bedtime of eight thirty, reading under the covers, begging my mum to let me read even one more word.

Questions whirled in my mind like an ballerina's pirouette. I yearned for the answers. I was bloodthirsty. Who *really* killed Andie? Or did Sal really do it? Did Andie deserve her fatal end? As the case was further dug into, secrets were uncovered, previously trapped within the dirt of the mystery. Andie, seemingly the sweetly innocent schoolgirl, was a bully, blackmailer, drama queen and drug dealer. The suspect list grew, twisting and turning like a climbing vine. It cudgelled my brain. Was it them? Was it not?

Jackson's tone is easygoing, yet mature. The dialogue is humorous. It brings the characters alive with their unique, recurring voices. The book radiates with imagery and figurative language, from how one's 'smile carved uncomfortably into her cheeks' to how 'a silver-tinted darkness took over the woods.' The topics discussed are relevant to the teenage/young adult audience, including suicide, bullying, relationships, drugs and alcohol. This might scare you off, but they are discussed in a sensible manner. Such novels are important for adolescents, so they are exposed to serious topics in a safe environment. The articles, interviews and notes updated along the journey make you feel as if you are solving the case too. However, do not be shocked that a fictional character has more wits than you! Pippa truly is a marvel.

If you are still unsure about the whole mystery idea, this isn't a book where the clues lead up to one person, and it ends up being a totally random, unrelated stranger. I applaud Holly Jackson for crafting a storyline where the 'killer', or '*killers*' lurk throughout the whole story. Once all has been revealed, you can understand how it all fits into place, like a complex jigsaw. But even so, as you read the novel, it's impossible to deduce who did it.

Then again, I mustn't go on with the plot, it would be unfair to spoil such a masterpiece; it would be like wrecking a beautiful painting. Instead, I think it would be best if *you* read it for yourself. In fact, you must. Pippa Fitz-Amobi has stayed in my mind, a bright young character who solved the mystery that Little Kilton was known for.

I hope Pippa will stay on your mind too.

The case is closed.