



## Murder at the Mill

*M.B. Shaw*

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### **Murder at the Mill** M.B. Shaw

As featured in the Sunday Times, the first festive mystery in a new crime series from bestselling author Tilly Bagshawe - a must-read for fans of Agatha Christie's Marple and Midsomer Murders.

A picture hides a thousand lies . . . And only Iris Grey can uncover the truth

Iris Grey arrives at Mill Cottage in a picture-perfect Hampshire village, looking to escape from her crumbling marriage. She is drawn to the neighbouring Wetherby family, and is commissioned to paint a portrait of Dominic Wetherby, a celebrated crime writer.

At the Wetherby's Christmas Eve party, the mulled wine is in full flow - but so too are tensions and rivalries among the guests. On Christmas Day, the youngest member of the Wetherby family, Lorcan, finds a body in the water. A tragic accident? Or a deadly crime?

With the snow falling, Iris enters a world of village gossip, romantic intrigue, buried secrets and murder.

As featured in the Sunday Times, the first mystery in a new crime series from bestselling author Tilly Bagshawe - a must-read for fans of Agatha Christie's Marple and Midsomer Murders.

### **Murder at the Mill Details**

Date : Published November 30th 2017 by Trapeze

ISBN :

Author : M.B. Shaw

Format : Kindle Edition 304 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Holiday, Christmas, Crime, Thriller, Mystery Thriller

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## From Reader Review Murder at the Mill for online ebook

### Misaki says

A good festive mystery book contains scandalously front and back of the people.

Iris Gray escaped to the Mill cottage in Hampshire village as she has been facing the collapse of her marriage. As she was asked to draw a portrait for Dominic Weatherby, who is a famous celebrated crime writer, she starts to get to know the family of Weatherby. The day after she met people around their family at the Xmas party at Weatherby, Dom was found dead, drowned in the water as suicide. His step daughter, Jenna believes that his second son, Billy killed him, Iris was asked to sneak Billy to find him whereabouts on that day. As she tries to know what really happened, she begins to find out the scandals of the family and the truth.

The story is slow pace and a bit expectable. However I didn't get bored, many scandalous things are happening in the book and I was attached to find out all the secrets and lies. Sometimes people can't be deceived how they really are.

I really like Iris. She is well described, brave and attractive character. I enjoyed her successful career and romance.

I gave 3.5 stars.

Thank you Orion Publishing Group Trapeze via NetGalley for an advance reading copy of this book.

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### Thebooktrail says

Now this is my kind of Christmas read - not too cheesy, not too overly christmassy and some good old fashioned murder amidst the tinsel. That might sound wrong said in the wrong context of course, but in a book review this means good stuff!

My copy was called Murder at the Mill but whatever its name, it's a good one and a fun fine read!

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### Annie says

3.5 Stars.

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### Katherine says

Got this as a Goodreads Giveaway. It's the sort of book my mother would read. Saying that, it's an easy read and I enjoyed it. Liked the ending. Would happily read another book written by this author.

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## **Eileen Hall says**

I am a great fan of this genre of novels. Agatha Christie was the number one author in my opinion, but Shaw and Bagshawe come a close second with this atmospheric Christmas mystery / whodunnit.

All the ingredients are there, snow, strange characters, body - a great read for Christmas, although I must say that Iris Grey is not a patch on Miss Marple!

Very highly recommended.

I was given a digital copy of this book by the publisher Orion Publishing via Netgalley in return for an honest unbiased review.

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## **Paromjit says**

This is a great festive crime read that is in the style of the golden era of classic crime. I understand it is the first in the Iris Grey series and I really enjoyed reading it. Iris Grey's marriage to Ian McBride is in the process of breaking down after numerous attempts to have a child. So it is a relief for Iris to escape to her rented cottage at Hazelford village in Hampshire. Iris is a portrait painter, and has been commissioned by Ariadne Wetherby to paint her famous crime novelist husband, Dominic. The Wetherbys live next door at the Mill, projecting the picture of the perfect family. Dominic comes across as a larger than life character, good looking, used to getting his own way, a habitual flirt, entertaining and full of bonhomie. Ariadne is a sculptor, the ideal mother, a forgiving wife, a wonderful cook and homemaker, who loves and adores Dominic. As Christmas approaches, the Wetherbys hold their annual Christmas Eve party to which the entire village, along with celebrities and the media are invited.

Iris cannot help but be curious about the Wetherbys. She meets the rest of the family and other characters that are connected to the family at the party. However, she is disturbed by the screams of Lorcan, the teenage son, as he discovers the drowned body of his father, Dominic. At first, the death is perceived as suicide, only for it later to be revealed as murder. To distract herself from her personal misery, Iris is persuaded by Jenna to delve deeper. A myriad of suspects emerge, from sinister Russians to whom Dominic owed large gambling debts, to scorned ex-mistresses like Rachel, who was dismissed as a producer on the TV crime series. There are resentful locals, and Ariadne seems to be just a little too perfect to be true, and her son, Marcus, is rushing around to prop up the perception of them as the ideal family. Graham Feeny, a Scottish barrister and family friend takes a shine to Iris who is attracted to him, finding him a balm to her wounded spirits as her marriage heads for divorce. DI Roger Cant finds Iris a pest, and refuses to take her ideas seriously. As Iris visits Oxford to track down the killer, she comes across vital information that helps her piece together the mystery of Dominic's murder.

The author has penned a wonderfully plotted and entertaining crime story that easily draws in the reader. It is full of numerous red herrings, and a great central character in the vulnerable and observant Iris, a woman undergoing a personal crisis as her world falls apart with the breakdown of her long marriage to Ian. As readers, we see her take steps towards a new, more independent identity as she immerses herself wholeheartedly to find out who killed Dominic and the secrets, lies, corruption, abuse and more that lie beneath the facade of the Wetherby family emerge. Alongside this, her career flourishes with the notoriety attached to painting the murdered celebrity novelist. I would recommend this intricate crime mystery as a terrific read for this time of year and I cannot wait to read the next in the series. Many thanks to Orion for an ARC.

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## Maine Colonial says

It's hard to know exactly what to think of this mystery. There are so many things about it that bugged me, but I still wanted to continue reading it. This seems to be a first mystery by Shaw who, under the name Tilly Bagshawe, has a successful career writing chick lit and Sydney Sheldon follow-on books. I'm not at all familiar with those books, but I liked the look of this Golden Age-ish English village mystery. It seemed like just the thing for huddling inside with on a winter's day.

On the plus side, it's a very readable story if you're just looking for something lightweight with a little bit of a sleuth-in-jeopardy element to it. Shaw is talented at quickly delineating characters and I felt set in the time and place immediately. The story spins out pleasantly enough, though I'd say Shaw's prose is overwritten and her plotting is meandering.

The Iris Grey character is a clever young woman, but she tolerates being ill-treated by more than one man and puts herself in risky situations when she knows better. I grit my teeth at that kind of thing. I prefer a female sleuth who behaves intelligently and with self-respect.

Another issue I had with Shaw's writing is her unfortunate way of crafting similes. Early on in the book, she describes a cold, gray fall day as including "spindly tree branches swayed and shivered pathetically in the wind, like the starved limbs of concentration camp prisoners pleading for escape." I was so aghast and angry at the callous idiocy of that description that I just blurted out "f\_\_ you, lady." Much later in the book, she likens the excited tearing open of a Christmas present to starving children scrabbling at a bag of rice. Can you believe that? This woman is a graduate of Cambridge University! I can't even imagine how embarrassed her college tutor would be reading such writing.

There is also an element of Iris's crime solving that made no sense at all. She claims to have figured out something that happened in the past, but you realize that there is no way for her to know what she claims happened. If Shaw plans to continue this series, I hope she has Iris solve crimes in ways that don't involve what I can only conclude is clairvoyance.

Despite all my criticism, I continued reading the book because Shaw does know how to write a page-turner. So if you keep your expectations at that level and don't fall for the blurb's comparison to Agatha Christie, you might enjoy this one.

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## Maya Panika says

A perfectly cosy little whodunnit, packed with improbable coincidences and happenstance. For the first few chapters I thought I'd hate it, it was so overwritten, far too many adverbs but this settled down after a bit and gradually became less irksome. The plot is silly, predictable and derivative but so what? It was perfect for bedtime and kept me turning pages. If you're looking for a pleasing bit of fluff of the Midsomer Murders stamp to while away a wet afternoon, you could do a lot worse than this. Both Midsomer Murders and Agatha Christie are cited on the blurb; the first is spot on but this really is nothing like as clever or well written as an Agatha Christie, they are simply not in the same universe.

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## Emma says

Portrait painter, Iris, has left her life behind for the quiet village of Hazelford. She is commissioned to paint highly successful author and village local, Dom Weatherby. But when a body is found on Christmas Day, Iris becomes entangled in the mystery and the Weatherby's public façade soon crumbles.

This book for me was very reminiscent of an episode of my fave Murder, She Wrote and that made it very enjoyable for me to read. It is full of family secrets and lies, full of deception, full of good old red herrings and like all classic crime books, the local police force is pretty inept.

Iris is a great character. Who knew portrait painting could lead to solving crime?! I could easily see her in a second novel. She's a unique dresser, she has a love of doll houses and she has that wonderful talent you need when solving crime - people talk to her, tell her things that all slowly build up to her discovering the truth.

I did clock the murderer just after half way through, but that didn't take away from the story at all. It was a lot of fun seeing how things fall into place and how Iris stitches the truth together. If like me you enjoy a good cozy crime tale, then I recommend this. A pleasurable read, that let me play detective.

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## Carole says

Murder at the Mill is the first in a new series to feature portrait painter and amateur sleuth Iris Grey, and if the rest of the books are as good as this I'll definitely be looking out for them!

The story starts on Christmas Day when a body is found, but we don't know who it is at first, the identity is kept a secret. Next, we go back to two months earlier as the various characters are introduced and we get to know them, who they are, what they are and why they're at the Wetherby's exclusive Christmas Eve party.

Iris is having marital problems and she's glad to get away to the seclusion of Mill Cottage, where she starts painting the charismatic Dom Wetherby.

There are so many secrets bubbling beneath the Wetherby family's glamorous surface, there are resentments and jealousies.

Iris thinks the local police are useless and is determined to find the killer, especially as they arrest the wrong suspects, and she wants to find justice for the victim.

I liked Iris, she's kind and likes wearing bright, shiny colourful clothes!

There are surprises and twists, with richly drawn characters, in a beautiful setting, a slow moving but compelling story, I enjoyed it immensely.

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## Shirley Revill says

Murder at The Mill

I am leaving this review in the early hours of this morning because I could not put this book down. This is one of the best books that I have read and I now have a new favourite author. I'm hopeless at solving mystery's and every time I thought I knew who the villain was I was proved wrong. Their where so many twists and turns in this murder mystery the story kept me guessing till the end. This is the very first time that I have read anything by this author and it will not be the last. I was really impressed by this book and I would have given a much higher rating if I could. Thank you to the author,publisher and of course Goodreads for a copy of this book it was a pleasure to read. Very highly recommended.

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### **Lisa \*OwlBeSatReading\* says**

*'She was a riot of contradictions: quiet but pushy, reserved but passionate, observant yet refreshingly slow to judge.'*

Reviewing Murder at the Mill is also going to be a 'riot of contradictions' because I've gone from rating it a one star, 'this sucks' read to a near on four star 'oooooh I need some answers page-turner' read.

I have never felt so conflicted about rating a book as this one, I shall try my upmost to review this honestly and fairly without too much snark.

So, Murder at the Mill is a cosy mystery set in Hampshire, England, 'perfect for fans of Midsomer Murder and Agatha Christie'. Apparently.

To try and fathom out my star rating, I'm going to have to see how this review pans out, as I still haven't decided my final decision even at this point.

The plot itself deserves a solid 3 stars, possibly even 3.5 because the 'whodunnit' element was really very good. This, along with characters whose closet skeletons were being discovered left, right and centre was what kept me going.

The characters, in which there were many, all helped to build an intriguing mystery with their dodgy pasts and poisonous personas. A 3 star rating for sure here is deserving as I particularly liked Billy, the black sheep of the family. He was portrayed well in a sinister and menacing way. The main protagonist, Iris Grey was my least favourite, her quirkiness and terrible taste in clothes became rather tiresome as the story progressed.

The writing style. Oh god, this is where it gets *awkward*.

### **SIMILES. SIMILES. SIMILES. SIMILES. SIMILES. SIMILES.**

I am so DONE with the countless, terrible, TERRIBLE similes in this book.

*... 'the spindly tree branches swayed and shivered pathetically in the wind like the starved limbs of concentration camp prisoners pleading for escape.'* (WHAT? WHY? Editor, why? Awful. Truly awful.)

*... 'tore at the wrapping on his gift like a starving child clawing at a bag of rice.'* (No. Just no.)

And what's with all these animals? After the first two dozen, I was destined for eye-rolling moments throughout.

...*'like a smug cockerel.'* (Smug! Whaaat?!)

...*'like a wounded fox.'*

...*'listening to the satisfying crack as they shattered beyond repair like the bones of tiny mice.'*

...*'as excited as two piglets on speed.'* (What the...??!!)

...*'staggering around like a newborn fawn.'*

...*'impale them like lambs on a spit.'*

...*'attached himself like a louche limpet...'*

I could go on, it gets worse. Describing someone's anger pouring out ...*'like pus from a lanced boil'* was the final straw really. It was pretty damn dire.

Ok, maybe there's a bit of snark here, but I just can't help myself! Tell me, Ms Shaw, were you sponsored by all those brands you name-dropped throughout your book? Tesco, Smarties, Heinz, Next, H&M, Zara, Cath Kidston, blah, blah, blah. So much was described based on the brand alone, and it irritated the hell out of me.

It's also funny how so many different characters used the term 'whatnot' in their conversations. Must be a Hampshire village thing.

By now, you can probably tell why I'm still debating about this book's star rating. My main problem is I really enjoyed the story, it hooked me in and I was overall impressed by the final revelations and conclusion. There was some pretty good red herrings in there too. But for me to rate a book above 3 stars, the writing style has to satisfy me. Towards the end I started to laugh and groan at some of the descriptive text and it took away my enjoyment and marred the seriousness of the story.

After all is said and done, I've decided, I'm giving Murder at the Mill 2 stars. And strangely, I would indeed read another cosy mystery about Iris Grey and her irksome sleuthing. Even if it was just to spot all the awful, and sometimes unintentionally comical similes that are scattered *'like dandruff on one's shoulders'* throughout the book.

Check out my blog post to appreciate my fabulous piglet GIF here:

<https://owlbesatreading.wordpress.com...>

**Thank you to the author, the publisher Orion Books and Goodreads for hosting a giveaway for which I was lucky enough to win!**

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### **Sara Eames says**

This was a good, cosy mystery with fun characters and a reasonable plot. It was fairly obvious whodunit, but that didn't spoil the book for me as I kept reading to see if my idea was correct - which it was. There was a bit of a twist (again not totally unexpected) towards the end. All-in-all, a good read.

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## **Zoe says**

Thanks Orion Publishing Group and netgalley for this ARC.

Takes a little while to get into but well worth it.

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## **gem says**

Fans of Cosy Crime will love this intricately plotted novel. It aptly portrays not knowing what goes on behind closed doors, or indeed, how well you can ever know a person as secrets, lies & scandals all come to the surface following the murder of one of the main characters.

There were lots of red herrings thrown in to muddy the waters as to the potential killer, but if you are like me you read crime books \*looking\* for those small, seemingly throwaway sentences which inevitably be key to the plot. Even though I'd worked out who the killer was I hasn't worked out why, and that revelation and the one after that were total shockers!

I loved Iris, she's a wonderful character and I admired her tenacity to keep on investigating even if she put herself in danger. She's so well described, from her outfits to her love of her doll house, she felt so real I could picture her perfectly. I'm glad it's the start of a series as it'll be nice to see what she gets up to next!

It's quite a long book so I'd suggest clearing your weekend, stocking up on snacks and settling in to get lost in the story.

Perfect for fans of MC Beaton and shows like midsummer murders.

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