

The Word Is Murder

Anthony Horowitz

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SHE PLANNED HER OWN FUNERAL. BUT DID SHE ARRANGE HER MURDER?

Buried secrets, murder and a trail of bloody clues lie at the heart of Anthony Horowitz's page-turning new detective series. If you enjoyed BBC's Sherlock, you'll LOVE The Word is Murder!

A wealthy woman strangled six hours after she's arranged her own funeral.

A very private detective uncovering secrets but hiding his own.

A reluctant author drawn into a story he can't control.

What do they have in common?

Unexpected death, an unsolved mystery and a trail of bloody clues lie at the heart of Anthony Horowitz's page-turning new thriller.

The Word Is Murder Details

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From Reader Review The Word Is Murder for online ebook

Marialyce says

4.5 extremely clever stars

You can see my reviews at <https://yayareadslotsofbooks.wordpress...>

This was my very first foray into the writings of Mr Horowitz. It will not be my last as its clever writing, easy style and the ability to draw one into the story line is quite alluring. Most alluring is the fact that the author himself is one of the main protagonists. and his being so made this book just plain fun. True, it was a murder and mayhem mystery, but the telling of this tale with Mr Horowitz being exactly what he is an author, made for an excellent way to both get to know him as well as read of his interaction with the very astute but totally weird ex detective Daniel Hawthorne, a bit of a British Detective Columbo.

Just imagine planning your own funeral. Diana Cowper, a wealthy woman with a movie star son, Daniel, does such a thing. The mystery begins when Diana is found strangled in her home only six hours after the master plan of her funeral is arranged. How could she possibly have known she would be dead shortly after seeing the funeral director? Diana had a checkered past being involved ten years ago in a hit and run that left one young boy dead and another irreparably disabled. She also had seemed to get away with it with only a bit of a slap on the wrist which might be another little clue to the story.

Therein lies the case who killed Diana, and as Hawthorne meets with Horowitz we learn that the ex detective wants Horowitz to write a book on his exploits. They develop a kind of tenuous relationship as "Tony"(by the way he hates being called that), learns more and more about the elusive Hawthorn and his uncanny ability to see clues and solutions where none seem to be apparent. It is their interchange and search for the killer which drives this story forward with quite a few twists and turns with a nice amount of shady characters with possible motives.

This was such a great read. I absolutely loved that the author inserted himself into the story and quite honestly had to ask myself could this be real? The interplay of the characters was a draw as well as the ending which was quite threatening to our author, or was it?

I highly recommend this book for those who are looking for a different way of both writing and telling a story that was hard to put down. Clever and witty and one in which I do hope to see "Tony" and Daniel meet up once again and get that Hawthorne book written.

Thank you to Anthony Horowitz, Harper Publishing, and Edelweiss for forwarding me an advanced copy of this totally engaging novel. Well done "Tony"!

Publishing on June 5, 2018

Barbara says

3.5 stars

This book is structured like a 'Sherlock Holmes' story in which Dr. Watson accompanies Sherlock Holmes

on an investigation, then chronicles the case.

In "The Word is Murder" Anthony Horowitz (ostensibly) accompanies detective Daniel Hawthorne on an investigation, then writes a book (this one) about the case.

As the novel opens, wealthy middle-aged Londoner Diana Cowper goes to an undertaker to plan her funeral, so - when the time comes - it will go off exactly as she wants.....with her chosen hymns and music. The funeral will occur much sooner than expected, though, because Diana is strangled in her apartment a few hours later.

Diana's death, which is clearly a murder, draws extra attention for two reasons: a decade ago Diana's car hit twin eight-year-old boys, Jimmy and Jeremy Godwin, killing Jimmy and leaving Jeremy brain damaged; and Diana is the mother of the famous actor Damian Cowper - who's currently a big sensation in America.

The cops in London's Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) need Diana's case solved fast. So an MPS official prevails on a former police detective, Daniel Hawthorne - a brilliant sleuth who was fired for bad behavior - to 'consult' on the investigation. Hawthorne agrees, and - to make an extra buck - asks writer Anthony Horowitz to shadow his probe and pen a book, for which they'll share the profits 50:50. Horowitz, author of the 'Alex Rider' series for children and several mysteries for adults - as well as the creator of the TV series 'Foyle's War' and 'Midsomer Murders' - is reluctant to embark on a non-fiction tome, but agrees in the end.

Horowitz is immediately impressed with Hawthorne's ability to wrest information from almost imperceptible clues - just like Sherlock Holmes. However, the writer is put off by the gumshoe's personality, since Hawthorne is abrupt, rude, intolerant, and secretive. Moreover, Hawthorne never picks up the check for drinks, meals, train tickets, taxi fares, etc.....seriously draining Horowitz's wallet.

In any case, Horowitz accompanies Hawthorne as he runs around questioning people, including: the undertaker and his assistant - who were the last people to see Diana alive; Judith and Alan Godwin - who are still distraught about their dead/injured sons.....and think Diana got off too lightly; the judge who gave Diana a slap on the wrist; witnesses to the automobile accident ten years ago; Diana's actor son Damian - a conceited snob who abuses his girlfriend; and others.

Hawthorne constantly warns Horowitz to just shut up and take notes during interviews, but the author - who thinks of himself as more than just a tape recorder - throws in the occasional question anyway.....which seriously annoys the detective. In fact - unlike Watson and Holmes - Horowitz and Hawthorne have a very contentious relationship. At one point, Horowitz tries to skive off an interview because he has an important business meeting with legendary filmmakers Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson. Hawthorne blithely interrupts the conference and drags Horowitz off, much to the writer's chagrin.

In the end the crime is solved and Horowitz and Hawthorne warm up to each other a tad; in fact Hawthorne pays the writer a small compliment, to Horowitz's immense pleasure.

The story is structured like an intricate puzzle, and I didn't guess the murderer until the end. I enjoyed this well-written novel, and highly recommend it to fans of traditional murder mysteries. ?

FYI: In an interview with NPR, Anthony Horowitz said that inserting himself into the book as a character was an attempt to 'turn the murder mystery format upside down' and that he was very careful not to give himself the best lines, but to give them to Daniel Hawthorne instead. Horowitz also notes that his mysteries

are an homage to Agatha Christie, but he has the advantage of being able to insert modern technology, like texts and emails. I've finished several of Horowitz's mysteries, and look forward to reading more.

You can follow my reviews at <https://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot...>

Tucker says

I hope "The Word is Murder" was as much fun for Anthony Horowitz to write as it was to read. I was not familiar with Horowitz until I read "Magpie Murders" last year and was totally captivated by his reinvention of an Agatha Christie style mystery. In the "The Word is Murder," Horowitz reimagines a Holmes and Watson mystery, with a fictionalized version of Horowitz as Watson. I've read novels where authors inserted themselves as characters in their books, but the manner in which Horowitz does so is clever and entertaining. Many of the details about Horowitz in the book are based on his actual life and career. And he's not the only character with some basis in fact. Part of the fun of the book was trying to guess what actual famous person or persons Horowitz had in mind when he created various characters. While the characters were a significant part of the enjoyment I had from this novel, the mystery was top-notch and ingeniously written. I think I'm a fairly astute and observant reader, so I was convinced at different points throughout the book that I knew who the murderer was. And it wasn't until the very end of the book that I realized how wrong my previous identifications were. "The Word is Murder" was a delight from start to finish and I was thrilled to learn that it's not a stand-alone but the first book in a series. Highly recommended.

Beverly says

Bravo! The Word is Murder has many of the tropes of mystery fiction, including a brilliant, but acerbic detective, and his dim-witted partner, but manages to mix them together with details of the author's real life and work, so it was hard to tell what was made up and what was real. Horowitz, is the none too bright writer who becomes the Watson for ex-detective Hawthorne's Sherlock Holmes. Again and again the author pokes fun at the image of the mystery writer who actually couldn't solve a crime or even discover a clue of his life depended on it. This is brilliant and self-deprecating and a damn fine mystery to boot. I read it in a couple of days and it's 387 pages long!?

Liz Barnsley says

The Word is Murder is eccentric and totally brilliant – like reading an Agatha Christie novel if Agatha Christie placed herself at the centre of the action and engaged with Sherlock Holmes. It is a long term reader's dream novel almost quite literally. In this case Mr Horowitz does just that, telling his own (?!?) story, getting sucked into a murder mystery of the classic locked room type with a modern twist and keeping us all guessing all the way through.

Quirky and extraordinarily readable, The Word Is Murder has an ironic, indelible tone that sucks you straight in – alongside little gloriously entertaining commentary on the authors real life, we also have Hawthorne (the Sherlock Holmes of this story) with his throwback personality, his acerbic witty asides and his intelligent mind, alternatively dazzling and frustrating Mr Horowitz as he tries to write a book he has no control over.

The mystery itself is gloriously twisty with proper clues and proper red herrings – in a way it feels like a

homage to those crime stories of old, but now in a very modern setting – it is endlessly charming and utterly engrossing, I devoured it with all the fervour of the religiously converted.

Loved it. Delightful, funny and completely alive on the page The Word Is Murder is a distinctive, unforgettable novel with a huge touch of class.

Highly Recommended.

Karl says

This copy of the hardcover edition is signed by Anthony Horowitz on the title page.

Holly B says

4.5 STARS

Who plans their own funeral 6 hours before their murder?

I loved playing detective alongside Ex-DI Hawthorne and trying to make sense of the growing trail of leads. What was the motive? Did the victim know she was in danger? What is going on? Who left an important clue? Did I catch that clue? Nope

Horowitz plants himself in the story as well. He is a fictional character working with the detective as a writer to document the case as a true crime novel.

This was ridiculously entertaining and I flew through it, trying to spy the murderer the entire way through. Hawthorne was like the master murder solver and Horowitz was always questioning his tactics and getting on his nerves.

A good old-fashioned murder mystery with a dash of modern day life to give it a contemporary feel. Brilliant! I adore a twisty who-dunnit!

Publication on June 5, 2018 / Review will also post to my blog

Annet says

When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions... - Hamlet

Yes, now I know I like this writer. The writer also of Magpie Murders, which is widely read across Goodreads. This, again, is a great crime mystery, with antiheroes Daniel Hawthorne, a recalcitrant detective, and his sidekick Anthony (would that be Anthony Horowitz himself.....).

What I understand is that this is the first of a series of crime novels starring these two gentlemen. And I'm

already looking forward to the next.

Great writing, entertaining story, relaxing, witty read. Quality crime writing.

Four stars plus, great book!

Here's the story outline (from bol.com this time):

SHE PLANNED HER OWN FUNERAL. BUT DID SHE ARRANGE HER OWN MURDER?

One bright spring morning in London, Diana Cowper – the wealthy mother of a famous actor - enters a funeral parlor. She is there to plan her own service. Six hours later she is found dead, strangled with a curtain cord in her own home. Enter disgraced police detective Daniel Hawthorne, a brilliant, eccentric investigator who's as quick with an insult as he is to crack a case. Hawthorne needs a ghost writer to document his life; a Watson to his Holmes. He chooses Anthony Horowitz. Drawn in against his will, Horowitz soon finds himself at the center of a story he cannot control. Hawthorne is brusque, temperamental and annoying but even so his latest case with its many twists and turns proves irresistible. The writer and the detective form an unusual partnership.

Tammy says

Cleverly meta and cool! Horowitz writes himself into his own novel which is the cleverly meta part. It's cool because he references his career as the creator of Foyle's War, the original adapter of Midsomer Murders and as the author of the teen series, Alex Rider. This mystery is deceptive, devious and revels in devilish games. The author had to have had a ball when writing this. It's as entertaining as all get out.

Susan says

Having greatly enjoyed, "Magpie Murders," I was thrilled to receive, "The Word is Murder," to review. Author Anthony Horowitz has shown that he is adept at writing many different genres of books, but it is clear that he was certainly meant to be writing anything but this particular novel. For, you see, Mr Horowitz himself is very much the narrator of this novel and he tells the story as it happens; which is a clever literary device and throws the reader immediately into the action.

In his varied career, we learn that Anthony Horowitz has written many television scripts and one of the advisors he consulted was a former detective inspector with the Met; a murder specialist, since thrown out of the force, named Hawthorne. Hawthorne is something of a throwback, with his shabby suits, secretive air and unpleasant prejudices. However, he also does consulting on unusual cases and he asks the author to accompany him on his most recent investigation and write a book about him.

Horowitz should be concentrating on a script he needs to show to Stephen Spielberg and Peter Jackson (the scene involving these two men is worth reading the book for alone), plus he has other projects clamouring for his attention. Still, he finds himself drawn into the strange murder of Diana Cowper. A widow in her sixties, Diana Cowper planned her own funeral before being murdered only six hours later. Mother to famous actor, Damian Cowper, involved with the theatre herself, wealthy and well connected, it seems too much of a coincidence that she walked into a funeral parlour to discuss her own burial on the day she was killed. Hawthorne and Horowitz immediately begin to investigate her life; including a tragedy she was involved in nearly ten years previously.

This is a wonderfully unusual crime novel. Horowitz's voice is ever present in this book, as he bemoans the fact that Hawthorne is calling all the shots, yet begrudgingly admires the fact that he always seems able to uncover the secrets beneath the facts. There is an intriguing plot, lots of twists, some wonderful characters

and Hawthorne himself, who I would love to see in another book. For, although Horowitz spends much of this book worrying about whether anyone will read this, he needn't have been concerned. If I loved Horowitz's previous crime novel, I have to say that I adored this. I received a copy of this book from the publisher, via NetGalley, for review.

Linda says

And the words certainly take on a life or death of their own in *The Word Is Murder*.

Anthony Horowitz moves over ever so slightly and allows his readers to have a front row center seat in the unfolding of this quick-witted mystery. We readers sidle up alongside Anthony as he meets up with Ex-Detective Daniel Hawthorne. (Emphasis on the "Ex", folks) Hawthorne elbows his way into convincing Horowitz (the real real author) to write about Hawthorne's current investigation. Horowitz drags his feet, but he eventually buckles to the pressure and to the intrigue.

Enter: Diana Cowper, a sixtyish Londoner, who begins our story with an unusual event that should really be termed as an ending. Diana enters into a neighboring funeral home to plan her own funeral. Before her signature is barely dry on the funeral forms, Diana enters once more into her London home. And the word is murder spelled out brutally for Diana.

Hawthorne allows Horowitz to accompany him to the murder scene. It's here that Horowitz reveals the ease of writing about murder, but viewing it first hand sends him into a near faint. Careful steps are taken around the body as Hawthorne eyes misplaced objects and the last movements of the ill-fated Diana. As the investigation broadens, Hawthorne muzzles the curious writer from asking any questions. Frustration sets in and Horowitz feels compelled to walk away from the deal. But can he or will he?

The Word Is Murder takes us into the highly creative and original thought processes of the very talented Anthony Horowitz. He's turned the tables on us readers. Instead of a passive reading experience on our usual part, we become more privy to the writer's approach to developing his characters and his storyline. We get inside the author's head which makes for a wild ride through this one. There's even a revealing dialogue between Hawthorne and Horowitz at the end.

The Word Is Murder is like an out-of-body-Agatha Christie moment with a dash of Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. Delightful!

Phrynne says

Horowitz writes rather unusual books due I guess to his other career as a script writer. In *'The Word is Murder'* he includes himself in his own fiction, sometimes standing aside to report on events and at other times being part of the story. It works well.

Apart from Horowitz himself the main character is an ex detective who is called in to help when a murder is

too difficult for the police to solve. He is a bit of a Sherlock Holmes character in that he reads tiny clues and draws huge conclusions from them which are always correct of course. There are plenty of real clues throughout the story so that the reader can come to some of the answers as well. This reader failed to guess the murderer although with hindsight I realised I should have done so!

This is a good old fashioned type of murder mystery told in an interesting way and with lots of references to popular culture. Horowitz is a man of many talents.

Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says

4.5 innovative and page-turning stars to The Word is Murder! ? ? ? ? 5 (rounded up)

My first book from Horowitz was an indulgent and clever mystery I tried my hardest to solve!

A woman has already planned her own funeral, but when she is found dead six hours after she finalizes the arrangements, it has the police wondering if she planned her own death, too?

An extremely private, private detective, Daniel Hawthorne, is skilled at solving crimes by blowing up secrets and has a wealth of secrets of his own.

And somehow, (this is in the synopsis, so not a spoiler!), the author is drawn into the story as well! The back and forth between Hawthorne and Horowitz was shrewd and witty and brought the whole story together for me.

The Word is Murder reminded me of the game of Clue. Growing up, my poor parents and brother had to indulge me in endless games of Clue because my analytical nature was drawn to it. In the same way, I had the best time putting the intricate pieces together to try to solve this crime, and I was absorbed in every second of it! Bravo, Anthony Horowitz! You know how to play your cards!

Thank you to Anthony Horowitz, Harper/Harper Collins, and Edelweiss for the ARC. The Word is Murder will be released on June 5, 2018.

My reviews can also be found on my blog: www.jennifertarheelreader.com

Liz says

Ok, so I knew the premise of this book. Author inserts himself into the story. But how it would be handled was the big question. Well, let me tell you. Horowitz is bloody brilliant! I loved how this is some crazy mix of mystery, memoir, essay on how to write, how a tv show is created, all rolled into one.

And his ability to paint a character! He had me truly wondering who was real and who was imagined. That's

how vivid his portrayals are.

Horowitz was authorized by the Conan Doyle family to write a Sherlock Holmes novel a few years back. It's interesting, because my impression was that Hawthorne is a modern day Holmes. I had absolutely no idea who the murderer was This kept me engaged throughout.

This works beautifully as an audio book. You have the sensation of being in a conversation with the author. One of the best audio books I've ever listened to. Highly recommend.

PS- of course, based on this book I had to check out Injustice. I can recommend it as well.

Amy says

This was such a highly original and clever read, I honestly can't recall a book that I've read that even comes close to it, it blurs the lines between fact and fiction in the coolest way. Horowitz is actually a character himself in the story and solely narrates things, it was a straightforward, good old fashioned murder mystery and it was executed flawlessly while also implementing a fresh, unusual tactic that I enjoyed immensely.

Horowitz teams up with an ex police officer named Hawthorne after he recruits him, you see he works now as a consultant to the police and is investigating the murder of a lady who was killed six hours after she planned her own funeral. Hawthorne thinks he would make a fabulous character in a book, he just wants Horowitz to do the writing, tag along as he investigates and keep his mouth shut. Their partnership is not one of those with amazing chemistry and two people who immediately work well together, they type who can finish each other sentences. These two are the unlikeliest of duos and have the sort of relationship where one tiptoes around the other, you're never sure if they like each other or merely tolerate each other, one minute they seem to be having fun and the next you're wondering if they'll kill each other. This was highly refreshing and just so different, the entire investigation unraveled in a strange way, but one that was satisfying as hell. It was twisty without being over the top, it was subtle but really sharp too.

If you want a different kind of crime novel, a throwback to Agatha Christie, add this to your TBR. It's smart and well written, I felt like I had a 400 page intimate chat with Horowitz and absolutely zoomed through it. I enjoyed it so much in fact that I'm hoping one of my new favorites duos teams up again in a future installment!

The Word is Murder in three words: Ingenious, Crafty and Creative.
