



A mythological roller coaster

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The *Krishna Key*, the third novel by writer and businessman Ashwin Sanghi, adds a new leaf to the genre of mythological thrillers made popular by the likes of Dan Brown (*Da Vinci Code* and *Angels and Demons*) and, closer home, Amish (the Meluha trilogy). Set against the backdrop of historically and religiously significant sites in India such as Mathura, Dwarka, Agra and Mount Kailash, this racy, riveting book plunges into the depths of the highly complex ancient Vedic literature and the Hindu epic the Mahabharata, often examining various myths and beliefs through the prism of scientific rationale.

The book follows Ravi Mohan Saini, a professor of History of Mythology, as he embarks upon a journey to unravel the mystery of Krishna's most prized possession, triggered by cryptic clues

provided by his friend and the four seals procured from the sites of the Indus Valley civilisation. On his trail is the police, who believes he is responsible for a series of murders, all of which seem to be connected with the secret that Saini is trying to unlock.

Alternating between first person narratives of the Mahabharata by Krishna and the main story, Sanghi ensures that the reader is able to place the tale in its relevant historical context and its mythological moorings. This is further buttressed by the simplicity of the language and numerous illustrations that are interspersed with the text.

Another aspect of the book that is worth appreciating is the well-defined, no-frills-attached manner in which Sanghi builds each character, precisely to the extent that the story requires. Saini, then, is the typically intellectual,

good-looking professor and a helpless victim of circumstances; Radhika, a staunch, aggressive police inspector; and Taarak, the cold-blooded murderer for whom you cannot help but feel sorry.

While Sanghi states that *The Krishna Key* is purely a work of fiction, the in-depth research that forms the structure on which this fictional thriller stands, is both evident as well as commendable. Sanghi has truly gone to great lengths to unravel the innumerable mysteries of Indian history and mythology. Add to that a spate of brutally symbolic murders, a murderer who suffers from identity crisis and a convoluted mastermind, and you have a book which is a less preachy and more intriguing lesson in the subject—a must-read for those interested in mythology, those looking for a heavy dose of conspiracy theories and general thrill seekers. 🌟