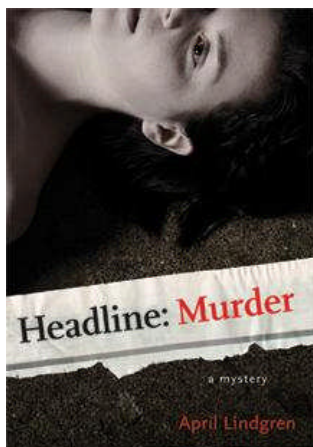


Headline: Murder

by April Lindgren



The ink might just run red if journalist Pia Keyne keeps putting her life at risk as she investigates the murder of a politician killed in the attics of Queen's Park

For years, Pia Keyne was the senior political columnist at a daily newspaper, until her sideline as a mystery writer took over her life. But now, with the murder of a high-profile cabinet minister right in the heart of the legislature building, she can't help but be drawn back into political intrigue.

What starts out as a simple headline story – and possible idea for her next book – quickly turns into something more dangerous as the killings continue and Pia's investigative skills lead her into a world of Nazi art theft, forgery, drugs, and murder.

Having spent years trying to overcome the painful secrets of her own past, Pia Keyne must now choose whom to trust, whom to love, and whom to track down as a possible source – for her story, and for murder.

“April Lindgren skillfully rips away the protective layers of Pia's aggressive and fearless personality.”

- Medora Sale, author of *Pursued by Shadows*

“Fast, frothy, delicious... a thoroughly breezy and delightful mystery.”

-The Ottawa Citizen

“(Lindgren's) got a winning investigator in political reporter Pia Keyne.”

-The Globe and Mail

About the author: April Lindgren has worked for more than twenty years as a journalist and newspaper reporter. Her last “beat” was covering provincial politics at the Ontario Legislature in Toronto for CanWest newspapers, which became the inspiration for this, her first book. She now teaches at Ryerson University's School of Journalism in Toronto, Canada where she lives with her partner Anatoliy.

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Discussion Questions

1. What coincidences take place in the novel? – e.g. Martin Geneve owning stolen art. How are coincidences integral to the mystery genre?
2. “The high- pitched singsong of children playing drifted through her window, dancing like a disjointed melody over the restrained murmur of gossiping adults.” (p. 1) Lindgren describes settings and neighborhoods vividly. If you are not familiar with Toronto, did you enjoy the geographical and cultural details about the city interspersed throughout the novel? If you are familiar with the city, do you feel that Lindgren’s portrayal of it was effective?
3. The second and third murder victims were progressively more sympathetic characters than the last. May Gatway was despicable, Wilson Scott was a harmless but ineffective and somewhat greedy politician, and Mohammed Farah was an innocent, if nosy, child from a difficult background and loving family. Did this increase your involvement in the story?
4. How does the book explore the relationship between sex and power?
5. “Fear gave way to hot, searing rage as he took another step and reached out, still full of confidence, to take the gun from her hand.” (p.298) Do you think there was an alternative to Pia shooting Jack Cleary? What effect would other outcomes (Pia injuring Jack, Sergei intervening, etc.) have had on the ending and the themes of the story?
6. What might be an effective policy to deal with art stolen by the Nazis?
7. Were you inspired to research any of the art mentioned? If you haven’t yet, which pieces mentioned in the novel seem most interesting? (Pieces from the legislature, the gallery show, Martin Geneve’s collection, etc.)
8. How does the author differentiate between financial and emotional support? Patrice dreams of being able to give Pia luxury and comforts. She says of a bracelet, “Someday you’ll be grown up and I’ll let you borrow it... You’ll be able to wear it to a party.” (p. 205) But Patrice abandons her when Pia’s physical and emotional safety become paramount.
9. Dr. Garcia tells Pia that she is “equipped emotionally now to fall in love and be loved...you aren’t fifteen anymore and you aren’t your mother.” (p. 140) Does the psychologist seem to have any effect on Pia’s psychological state? How do you think Pia’s brush with death affects her?

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10. Margaret wants Pia to “have the sort of relationship that brings you comfort and joy”. (p.136) Sergei says, quoting Margaret, “She says she’s a modern woman who doesn’t need a wedding ring. But me, I’m an old-fashioned man who is being forced to live in sin.” (p. 108) What is Lindgren’s portrayal of engagement and marriage? How does Pia’s opinion and experience of sin differ greatly from Sergei’s, even if he was being tongue-in-cheek?
11. How do you feel about the character of Martin Geneve by the end of the story? What qualities do or don’t make him a good match for Pia? Were her insecurities about him only because of her past?

The Cast of Characters:

Pia Keyne: Forty-three-year-old former political reporter and current Arts & Entertainment editor at *The Gazette*, as well as a successful mystery novelist. She distrusts men because of trauma in her past.

Bill Walterson: A security guard at Queen’s Park and a friend of Pia’s.

Nancy Morton: Pia’s close friend and information contact on the police force, an openly lesbian detective.

May Gatway: The murdered Ontario Minister of Culture, from a wealthy background. She was advocating legislation to facilitate the return of art stolen by the Nazis to the families of its rightful owners.

Cleo Leone: The protagonist in Pia’s mystery novels.

Jack Cleary: Curator of the provincial legislature’s art collection.

Jasmine Assad: Creative Arts and Entertainment reporter and Pia’s close friend.

Marcus Schmidt: Nancy’s misogynistic superior on the detective force.

Margaret Keyne: Pia’s aunt with whom she lived during high school, former senior editor at the *Gazette*.

Sergei Gagarin: Margaret’s boyfriend, then fiancé, a security consultant.

Reader's Guide

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Second
Story
Press

Martin Geneve: A telecommunications executive and art collector who has been trying to court Pia for some time.

Max: Pia's stepfather.

Patrice Keyne: Pia's mother, who went through a long string of gold-digging affairs before marrying Max, then died in a car crash when Pia was still a teenager.

Dr. Gabriella Garcia: Pia's psychologist.

Wilson Scott: Closeted gay Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, art collector, and murder victim whose death was framed as a suicide.

Mohammed Farah: Twelve-year old Somali refugee who gives Pia important information about Wilson Scott's death.

Tariq Samatar: Twelve-year-old Somali refugee, Mohammed Farah's friend and fellow aspiring spy.

Paul Stark: May Gateway's husband, cocaine addict, and owner of Educational Software Inc.

Winston: Pia's cat.