



# Murder Between the Lines

*Radha Vatsal*

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**Murder Between the Lines** Radha Vatsal

**Intrepid journalist Kitty Weeks returns to unearth a murderous conspiracy in this WWI saga**

In the second book in the acclaimed Kitty Weeks Mystery series, Kitty is tasked with writing a story about Westfield Hall, a prestigious girls' boarding school. Tragedy strikes when a student named Elspeth is found frozen to death in Central Park. The doctors proclaim that the girl's sleepwalking was the cause, but Kitty isn't so sure.

Determined to uncover the truth, Kitty must investigate a more chilling scenario—a murder that may involve Elspeth's scientist father and a new invention by Thomas Edison.

For fans of Susan Elia MacNeal and Jacqueline Winspear, *Murder Between the Lines* is a rich and spirited novel with irresistible charm, combining true historical events with a thrilling mystery.

## Murder Between the Lines Details

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Author : Radha Vatsal

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# From Reader Review Murder Between the Lines for online ebook

## Lisa Richards says

This book had two of my favorite things-mystery and pre-World War I New York. I adore a book that while getting me totally lost in a murder mystery will also take me on a trip to the early 1900's in New York City. I love seeing the awesome clothes and visiting the sites throughout NY City. This book was chock full of history that often had me going to my laptop to check out and read more in depth on. I haven't read the first book in this series which in no way lessened my enjoyment of it but I do intend to go back and read it as I have fallen in love with this author.

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## J. Roslyn says

In her second Kitty Weeks novel, Rhada Vatsal again takes us back to the 1910s, a tumultuous time in U.S. history, where women are demanding the long promised right to vote, and, as World War I bloodies Europe, the American government and defense industries are quietly preparing for war.

Set in 1915, New York City, "Murder Between the Lines," depicts an America that, on the surface, appears to be as it has been for decades. Kitty Weeks, the daughter of a wealthy man who simultaneously tries to protect her as he encourages her to be independent, knows that war is coming. The signs are not hidden well. Her best friend returns from nursing soldiers on the battlefields of Europe a broken woman. She has seen the horror of trench warfare first hand. At the same time, former President Theodore Roosevelt has "called for a navy that would be second in size and efficiency only to that of Great Britain," and government money is pouring in to test Edison's batteries for use in submarines.

A writer for the ladies' page of "The Sentinel" newspaper, Kitty has pushed hard against covering tea parties and has successfully convinced her editor to allow her to cover suffragettes and Woodrow Wilson's visit to New York City. When Elspeth Bright, a young, vibrant woman, connected to the Edison battery-research, is found frozen to death in Central Park, Kitty is driven to use her journalist skills to try to bring her justice.

Vatsal's meticulous historical research broadens Kitty's world to include the famous suffragette, Alva Belmont (also known as Alva Vanderbilt), and the actress Marie Dressler, known later for, among other things, her brilliant performance in "Dinner at Eight." We also attend the "first annual dinner of the Motion Picture Board of Trade of America" at the newish Waldorf-Astoria. Here, President Woodrow Wilson prophetically states: "America will always seek to the last point at which her honor is involved to avoid the things which disturb the peace of the world, ...there will come that day when the world will say, 'This America that we thought was full of a multitude of contrary counsels now speaks with the great volume of the heart's accord, and that great heart of America has behind it the supreme moral force of righteousness and hope and the liberty of mankind!'"

Rhada Vatsal is an exceptional writer and gifted historian. In the first Kitty Weeks novel, "The Front Page," and again in this second novel, Vatsal has successfully recreated the mood, the sights, smells and controversies of New York City in the years leading up to the deployment of American soldiers to fight in the Great War. As the United States enters into the centennial anniversary of America's involvement in that war, Vatsal's books allow us to reflect on the small fires that led to the conflagration, and they allow us to

recognize that the fight for female equality is not a recent endeavor.

"Murder Between the Lines" deserves more than five stars. Read it and you will agree.

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### **Korey says**

My favorite thing about this was how well Vatsal evoked the feeling of 1915. There's a lot of historical information here about the women's suffrage and Woodrow Wilson and early 20th century battery building and submarines and girl's boarding schools and old time-y medicine and it's all relayed in a very user friendly way. This information is skillfully integrated into the engaging mystery plot and written in a way that isn't overwhelming or info dumpy.

The characters aren't very deep but Vatsal does a good job making them realistic to the time period and they and their circumstances are interesting enough to keep you turning the pages. I'm also really happy that a lame romance wasn't shoe horned in. I'm not anti-romance at all, but I encounter a lot of books where a subpar romance is tacked on seemingly out of a sense of obligation and I don't care for that. It is refreshing to read a young female protagonist who isn't boy crazy.

The first book in this series is a real fun read too. I look forward to reading Kitty's future adventures.

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### **Linda says**

Three and a half stars...second in a newish series which is well-researched and provides an interesting mystery as well; will look forward to reading #3.

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### **Debbie says**

I could definitely tell that this book was set in the early 1900's. The women wearing their gloves and not allowed to go out without an escort. Oh, the shame. The author did a great job with that, I really felt like I was back in that era. And poor Kitty when she thought she was going to be found out at a women's suffragette meeting and her father told. The girl was a working woman and of age! So glad I wasn't living in those times.

I enjoyed reading this book, however, a teenage girl dies in the cold right after talking to Kitty Weeks. A smart girl full of hope and dreams. Kitty feels bad for this girl and can't believe that this happened to her and starts investigating. What she finds out is a whole different story than what she has been told. There are a lot of secrets being kept. Those secrets end up taking Kitty to the Naval Yard, to a dinner with President Wilson and to investigating a real news story instead of her usual "ladies stories"

A great mystery read that did not fail to enjoy thanks to Sourcebooks Landmark and Net Galley for the opportunity to read and review this entertaining book.

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## **Blodeuedd Finland says**

I have not read/listened to book 1, and I know that I often say it, but honestly, here it truly works as a stand alone. The author smoothly sets the reader into Kitty's life and it is like we always were there lurking.

Kitty is 19 and works as a reporter at a woman's page at a magazine. Sure, she does not get paid and she works half days, but she loves it! She wants to be real reporter, in this man's world. She is curious, nice and young. I liked that it really shows that she is 19 at times. That she still lives with her father and it dependent on him. That she does want to strike out on her own, but is not really ready for that.

What to call this book then. Historical mystery? Sure, yes, and it was light too.

The story then; A girl Kitty just met is found dead. She thinks it is weird and investigates, and this is what I love about historical mysteries, it takes time! She is slowly talking to people and following leads, not even knowing if there was foul play.

And during this there is talk of war (1915-16), submarines and what Germany might do. Suffragettes and women's place in the work place. All neatly woven in as she look for her clues. I liked that Kitty learned more about herself and what she wanted to do as she looked deeper into things.

I liked the ending, it was something to make you think

I enjoyed it and I hope Kitty will have more adventures.

Narrator Justine Eyre

She sounded so familiar, and then she did an accent and I knew! Yes I have listened to her before and I enjoy her voice. I like her male voices and accents. And the friendly tone she has.

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## **Nancy says**

Journalist Kitty Weeks is intrigued when a student from Westfield Hall, an exclusive girls' school in New York City, is found frozen to death from sleepwalking outdoors the night before. Could her research into submarine batteries have led to foul play? On the eve of war, the country needs a safe way to power these vessels, and this factor could be crucial. Then President Wilson comes to town, and the women's suffrage movement tries to get his support. When a second girl dies, an explosion occurs, and the president's wife receives a strange visitor in her theater box, Kitty is even more convinced that Elspeth's death might not have been an accident.

These ideas, somewhat disparate, could have perhaps been woven into a tighter web. The conclusion wasn't quite what I'd expected, either. But Kitty is a charming heroine and I'd want to read more about her. She's struggling for independence in an era when the country was on the brink of war and women's roles were changing.

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## **Elaine Tomasso says**

I would like to thank Netgalley and SOURCEBOOKS Landmark for an advance copy of *Murder Between The Lines*, the second book to feature girl reporter, Capability "Kitty" Weeks.

It is late 1915 and America is gearing up for "preparedness" and at the same time the suffragette movement is gaining pace. In the middle of this Kitty is sent to Westfield Hall school to write a piece on it for The Sentinel's Ladies Page. While there she meets pupil Elspeth Bright who interests her with her scientific experiments and unconventional attitudes. A few days later Elspeth is found dead in the local park after an apparent sleep walking incident. Mrs Bright asks Kitty to investigate Elspeth's state of mind with her friends but nothing goes according to plan and she finds herself in deeper waters than she anticipated.

*Murder Between The Lines* is a light read. It is full of historical detail about the issues facing young women at the time which is very interesting but it is also full of dates and timings of actual historical events which are not in keeping with the tone of the novel, weigh it down and are largely superfluous.

The plot takes a bit of a scattergun approach as Kitty's attention is diverted from Elspeth's death down various related and unrelated avenues (I don't want to enumerate these as it would give away too much of the plot) but it does give a sense of a lack of tightness and the feeling that the novel might have been better as a series of connected short stories.

Kitty is, however, a delightful heroine. Not given to introspection she sails through all the political and personal upheaval with her eye on the main prize - to be a proper reporter, not just a feature writer on the Ladies Page.

*Murder Between The Lines* is a light read with some interesting historical detail and it is an easy way to pass a few hours.

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## **Annette says**

The year is 1915, Capability (Kitty) Weeks works as a reporter on the women's page of the New York Sentinel. She lives with her widowed father in a very comfortable apartment. Her life is a life of luxury compared to many people of the day.

One of her stories will be a report on a boarding school for the daughters of wealthy parents. While at the school, Kitty meets a girl devoted to science and a girl who desires to be a reporter. Both these girls make impressions on Kitty because of their passion and their dreams. Kitty is not too much older than these girls and she spent time in a boarding school, so it is easy to feel a connection to the girls she meets.

When one of those girls is found dead, frozen in the snow, Kitty simply must find out what happened.

This is a terrific book. The reader gets to follow Kitty as she looks into a death that appears accidental. But, when the girl's mother asks Kitty to try to help her understand what happened, she can't resist the mystery.

History is a major part of this story and what is written here, is very true to what happened.

The country is embroiled in at least two major subjects which divide the country. There is a war brewing in Europe and President Wilson may or may not be trying to lead the US into becoming a participant.

Women want to be treated as equals, they want the vote. There are many women who feel very strongly that

the Constitution must be changed in order to give women the right to vote. There are a few western states which have given women the vote, but the Suffrage Movement feels that an amendment to the Constitution is what is needed for the entire nation.

Kitty is a terrific protagonist. Her personal life has its ups and downs. Her father may be considering remarrying, her editor is a woman who does not want to face the real world, and the newspaper does not allow women to enter the area where actual reporters (men) do their work.

This is a very well constructed book. I am new to the writing of Radha Vastal and this has been a wonderful surprise for me.

The characters are very well developed. Kitty's father is devoted to her but he is considering a life of his own. The other newspaper staff, the families of the boarding school girls as well as some possible anarchists all add a great deal to the texture of the story. Each secondary character is an important part the plot.

Historical events are so well recreated that the reader feels immersed in the action.

This is the second in a series. Although I have not read the first book, at no time did I feel as though I was lost.

I received this book from the publisher through NetGalley. I am voluntarily writing this review and all opinions are my own.

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## **Betty says**

An outstanding historical mystery set in in 1915 before the United States enter World War 1. The historical information has been researched and I learn a lot of new information about the time. Kitty Weeks aka Capability is a journalist for the New Your Sentinel 's Lady page interviews girls at a prestigious boarding school. She meets Elspeth's who is interested in science. Later Kitty reads an obituary of her death by sleepwalking and she feels something is wrong. As Kitty investigates she find herself involved in affairs of the Naval Conference checking out an invention by Tomas Edison. Kitty is sent to cover the arrival Woodard Wilson in New York and becomes involved with an attempt to reach the President. These two separate occasions are nicely brought together to form a tale. I highly recommend this book.

Disclosure: I received a free copy from Sourcebooks Landmark through NetGalley for an honest review. I would like to thank them for this opportunity to read and review the book. The opinions expressed are my own.

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## **QNPoohBear says**

Capability "Kitty" Weeks has been assigned to write a story on Westfield Hall, a progressive young ladies' academy. Kitty has fond memories of her own school days and is impressed with some of the subjects the students are learning, such as chemistry. When Kitty meets brilliant chemistry student Elspeth Bright, she is intrigued. Sensing the principal keeps the girls on a short leash, Kitty arranges to interview Elspeth privately at a later date, hoping to convince Miss Busby to run a story on the future scientist. Elspeth hints she is working on something big, but is not very forthcoming. Nevertheless, Kitty likes the girl and plans to meet with her again at some point. When she learns Elspeth has passed away, Kitty struggles to make sense of the girl's death. While the doctor says Elspeth walked in her sleep, brought on by nerves from too much scholarly activity, and froze to death, Kitty has a hard time believing it. She learns Elspeth was working on something about batteries. What is a battery actually? Did Elspeth's work have something to do with Edison's new electric battery to power submarines? With better batteries, subs can stay active for hours and the U.S.

Navy can become second only to Great Britain's. Kitty wonders whether Elspeth was killed for what she knew. Meanwhile, Miss Busby is acting strangely and allowing Kitty to write more progressive stories for the ladies' page. Kitty's father too has something on his mind and Kitty isn't sure she'll like what he has to say.

I liked this book a lot but there were a few quibbles I had that brought my rating down and as with the first book, the murder reveal fell flat. The writing style is improving slightly. I felt a little more connected to Kitty and the characters here. I did feel that sometimes the author stepped out of the story to tell too much history. While I appreciated the explanation of batteries, I didn't understand what they were! (If I didn't know what they do anyway). I already knew all about Alva Belmont nee Vanderbilt and the Women's Union. (I'm a proud supporter! I have a Votes for Women pin and a reproduction mini teacup ornament from Alva's Marble House china collections). A reader who doesn't know all that can look it up easily or visit Marble House in Newport. I also felt the real life historical figures speeches were way too long in a novel. I appreciate the author using their own words though. The novel is excellently researched. I loved the sources listed, especially the newspaper articles. I would want to write a novel too if I had seen the same news story. This time muttonchops is used correctly! Frustratingly for me, this time the fashion details are sketchy! Kitty has two new dresses made and I don't know what they look like! She likes to shop at B. Altman so perhaps [image error]

This story is a coming-of-age series and Kitty still has a lot of growing up to do. I liked how she felt a connection to Elspeth and wouldn't stop until the mystery was solved. She did use Mrs. Bright for her connections but Kitty was genuinely interested. Kitty learns a lot in this novel, rubbing elbows with Alva Vanderbilt and Margaret Sanger (I am SOOO jealous! I want a time machine!). These women highlight some of the important social issues of the day that Kitty is starting to think about. Kitty behaves childishly with her father but I can't say I wouldn't feel the same way.

Mr. Weeks is a kind father in his own way. He just doesn't know how to deal with a girl child who is fast becoming a woman. He loves her in his own way and his rules make sense. Yet at 20, Kitty SHOULD be independent and strike out on her own. She's not quite ready for that yet.

Miss Busby is a fun character. She's straight laced, old-fashioned, uptight but ironically has strong opinions. She is learning that the new century has brought new moral codes and if she wants new readers to read her page, she has to learn to bend and change with the times. Her secret was easy enough to guess. I think it's nice.

Mr. Musser, the archivist, is my favorite character in the series. He's kind and a little lonely. Kitty brings some joy to his day. Plus, since he's German, he'll provide an example of a GOOD German once America enters the war and Germans become the enemy.

Kitty's friend Amanda has a small cameo here. I wasn't at all surprised at how she came back. I suspected that would happen to her and she didn't even make it to the front. I can't imagine the horrors she endured but a spark of the old Amanda shines through as she listens to Kitty's gossip so I think she'll be OK.

The new characters here are the Brights: Elspeth, a brilliant young scholar who wants to be recognized and go far as a GIRL. She rebels against the roles the principal wants her girls to fill. I don't pretend to understand her mind but she is much smarter than me. I didn't like that she died so soon in the book. I would have liked to have known more about her work. Dr. Bright, a scientist, tries to protect his family. He comes across as sometimes mean and tough but I think he's just trying to keep himself, his wife and sons from being hurt more. Mrs. Bright seems like a nice woman and I especially liked that she was involved in woman



suffrage.

There are a few other school girls who appear in the story. I don't think any of them are appealing. At first I liked Virginia and felt sorry for her but when she reappears, she's being nosy and a bit cruel. I felt bad for Prudence that the other girls made fun of her. For all Miss Howe-Jones tries to keep girls from forming best friends to be more inclusive, it backfires. You can't have a school full of teenage girls and not have girls playing tricks, teasing, bullying, etc. I felt bad for Prudence for her nickname but it could be SO much worse and she does not have a nice personality. I felt most sorry for Georgina. Her story surprised me.

Another new character here is Sylvia Lane, an old friend of Kitty's father. Is it Miss Weeks or her brother that Julian is interested in? Sylvia seems nice. She's a career woman and I think Kitty could be friends with her.

Several real life figures appear in the novel as well. Alva Erskine Smith (Vanderbilt) Belmont, society matron, suffragist, and all around forceful personality. Alva is herself: larger than life and deliberately shocking people with her free speech. (Favorite Alva quote "If you need help, pray to God, SHE will save you!") Margaret Sanger makes a brief appearance to discuss birth control/family planning among the poor. I really admire her for deliberately breaking a stupid law and trying to help poor women (however racist her motives may have been). President Woodrow Wilson also appears here. He made me so mad with his wishy washy lack of dedication to giving women the right to vote. He believed in a conservative state by state approach to suffrage, yet as Kitty notes, for things he is interested in, he takes an active role in campaigning for a cause. He is about to send the husbands, sons and brothers of those women off to war and the women won't even get a say about it. I can't wait to see the suffragists chain themselves to the White House fence in 1917. I hope Kitty gets to write about it!

Though I rated both books 3 stars, I will keep reading the series to see where it goes. I hope the mysteries get better or the author leaves them out and lets Kitty develop as an observer and writer without trying to solve murders.

Content:

Margaret Sanger discusses birth control for poor women  
mild violence including descriptions of wounded soldiers  
Very light romance

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## **Cindy Burnett says**

I thoroughly enjoyed *Murder Between the Lines*. I had not read the first book in the series and easily picked up the story with book two. Capability "Kitty" Weeks is a highly engaging and original protagonist who struggles to exert her independence while navigating the strictures society places on wealthy young women in 1915. Radha Vatsal makes Kitty likeable and strong-willed while still allowing her to wrestle with how society views women and the erroneous views held by men (even Harvard professors) that working was harmful to upper class women who should instead be focused on having children and keeping house. In this installment, Kitty is assigned a story about Westfield Hall, an esteemed boarding school for girls. Soon after Kitty writes her story, a student from the boarding school, Elspeth Bright, is found frozen to death near her home. The death is ruled an accident and blamed on Bright's sleepwalking. Kitty senses that there is more to Elspeth's death and sets out to solve the mystery. Both the path to solving the mystery and the resolution are

highly pleasing, and I was glad that I read this book.

Before writing *Murder Between the Lines*, Vatsal clearly did a ton of research. I learned so much I didn't know including Woodrow Wilson's second marriage, Wilson's views on women's suffrage, the education of women in the 1910's, the Waldorf-Astoria's beginnings, and Edison's struggles to create a battery that would make submarines safer. I love that Kitty is a journalist, and the glimpses into her world as a journalist in 1915 are riveting. The historical details were my favorite part of the book.

I definitely recommend *Murder Between the Lines*, and I look forward to reading the next book in the series. Thanks to Sourcebooks Landmark and NetGalley for the chance to read this ARC in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Amy says**

Overall, it was a fairly enjoyable read. The mystery had a lot of potential and was a very interesting topic. However, the plot seemed to stall towards the end. I am also beginning to lose my enthusiasm for Kitty's character that I had in the first book. For me, her character is inconsistent and by the end, was getting on my nerves. Perhaps I am judging her from a "modern" perspective but I didn't feel this way after I finished *A Front Page Affair*.

I am looking forward to the next book in the series. I enjoy historical cozies and New York City, pre-WWI is a unique setting.

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### **Susan says**

Capability "Kitty" Weeks a feature female reporter, in 1915, is assigned to write a feature about Westfield Hall boarding school. But when one of the students is found dead Kitty decides to investigate.

I unfortunately found it difficult to get really involved in the story, I just about liked it, but not a great deal. Also I am not too sure that I cared much for Kitty, she wants to be a serious reporter but seems still too reliant on a rich father rather than herself. As this is only the second in the series that may well change. A NetGalley Book.

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### **Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says**

*Murder Between the Lines* is book two in the Kitty Weeks series and I have yet read book one. However, I found this book pretty easy to get into. Kitty Weeks lives with her father and works as a journalist, which economically she doesn't need to do since her father is financially stable. However, working as a journalist is something that she has aspired to do.

In this book is making a reportage about the prestigious boarding school Westfield Hall and there she gets to know a young bright student, Elspeth. Then Kitty, not long after meeting Elspeth's outside the school, learns

that the girl has been found dead. Apparently, Elspeth has been suffering from sleepwalking, and everyone assumes that she died because of that. Kitty, however, isn't so sure. Could there be someone out there that wanted the young girl dead?

Murder Between the Lines is a book that not really grabbed hold of me. I found the main story, the death of Elspeth to be weak and it was the things happening around that most interested me. Mainly the suffragette moment that Kitty got caught up with after getting the chance to interview Alva Belmont. I found everything concerning Alva Belmont and her impressive life to be far more interesting than Kitty's investigations into Elspeth's life. Honestly, if this book had been more about the suffragette moment than the mysterious death would I have found the story more interesting. The case was just so, meh.

*I want to thank the publisher for providing me with a free copy through NetGalley for an honest review!*

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