

A DEATH IN THE FAMILY BY MICHAEL STANLEY

4 stars

A very readable detective story

Faced with the violent death of his own father, Assistant Superintendent David 'Kubu' Bengu is baffled. Who would kill such a frail old man? Kubu's frustration grows as his boss, Director Mabaku, bans him from being involved in the investigation. The picture becomes even murkier with the apparent suicide of a government official. Are Chinese mine-owners involved? And what role does the US Embassy have to play?

This is the fifth instalment of the author's Detective Bengu series and I enjoyed it very much without having read the previous four books. Set amidst the dark beauty of modern Botswana, it is a thrilling insight into a world of riots, corruption and greed. When Kubu defies his orders and sets out on the killers' trail, startling and chilling links emerge, spanning the globe and setting a sequence of shocking events in motion. Kubu has to do this in conjunction with investigating murders relating to a mine explosion in a small local town.

The story line and characters were very well developed and it was a breath of fresh air for a leading character to be normal and not have a dysfunctional family or several skeletons in the closet. I really bonded with Kubu and his relationship with his boss was one of the best features of this book. I also enjoyed the author's descriptions of Botswana, and it led me to reading up a little about that country, of which I know very little.

The investigation in A Death in the Family is a very complex one with many threads, and it was fascinating to read about those threads being woven into a satisfying conclusion. The facts the writing team called Michael Stanley (Michael Sears and Stanley Trollip) include in the story are fascinating and kept me reading at a good pace. In conclusion, this is yet another author that I have not heard of but have really enjoyed their book and I would recommend this one to all readers of crime fiction, especially those who prefer the story set away from the UK or the US.

Digger 95

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review