

## Meat is Murder: A Mark Hawkshaw Mystery

Mark Aton



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Synopsis of Meat is Murder by Mark Aton. [52 000 words] Meat is Murder is genre fiction (Anglo-African noir) and draws on the American hard-boiled while dealing with the theme of muti/medicine killings. It is based on a real story. The harshness of the subject matter is leavened by the dry humour exhibited by the protagonist, Mark Hawkshaw. Hawkshaw is a private eye, who straddles two worlds: Africa and England. The book is written in the first person with Hawkshaw as the narrator. He describes himself as African-English and is set the task of finding a missing teenager, a task that leads him from the seedy underworld of East London and stately homes of 'Upper Essex', to the townships and shanty towns and mountains of South Africa. There is a fair bit of sex and violence but this is consistent with the sensationalist nature of the subject matter and the target market. The story starts with a muti-killing of a young boy in South Africa. The two perpetrators of this atrocity develop into very successful, powerful criminals and eventually are contracted by a seemingly affluent and respectable family in London to perform an outrageous fraud involving the son of a divorced couple. When Hawkshaw is contracted by the mother of the boy to find her missing son he is not supposed to succeed. He is hired to create the illusion that the family are 'doing the right thing' but as he draws closer to the truth they become anxious and he finds himself battling on two fronts to finish the job. His old benefactor also has a task for him that dovetails nicely with his main job and reaffirms his faith, such that it was, in humanity. The story moves from London to South Africa and back; and in true hard-boiled fashion Hawkshaw is still standing at the end, albeit a little battered and bruised.



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