

## No. 10 Doyers Street

**Radha Vatsal**

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In Radha Vatsal's exciting crime novel *No. 10 Doyers Street*, a reporter navigates the diverse political climate of New York City.

In the early 1900s, Archana—an Indian immigrant married to a white doctor—is swept up in the criminal underworld of Chinatown. She feels connected to the plight of Chinatown's citizens when the mayor unveils his plan to tear down the "slum" in favor of a park. In pursuing this story, Archana—often a fly on the wall in the larger political story concerning Chinatown—is forced to reckon with how the American justice system views race and heritage.

Archana's personal life comes into gradual focus as the novel goes on. She and others are authentic and memorable, with colorful habits and flourishes in their voices that leave a vibrant impression. Archana develops an alliance with a notorious gangster in Chinatown, Mock Duck, and decides she must find out who in the New York government is trying to separate him from his daughter. This mystery is unraveled with skill.

The novel maintains boisterous energy while treating its complex themes with care. It thrives in its descriptions, capturing bustling New York City with heightened spirit to complement Archana's quest while revealing her keen observational skills. The city is imbued with a moving life force, packed with diversity and historical import; this is done through evocative descriptions of the people and places burrowed within the city. Ample focus is given to the everyday, and to people and moments on the street that others might pass by without noticing.

*No. 10 Doyers Street* is an immersive historical novel in which social constructions of race impact politics on a grand scale.

ANNA KARNEDY (March / April 2025)

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