



Unreasonable Doubt

Vicki Delany

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From Reader Review Unreasonable Doubt for online ebook

Heather says

Quick read. I enjoy this series as I am very familiar with the area of BC where the series is set. Good story, a bit unresolved at the end for me but understandable given the storyline.

As with the last of her books that I read, I am still confused by the use of a made up name for the main community yet all other towns & villages close by are described using their actual name.

Tina Siegel says

So I've read this entire series, and I've been lukewarm on it since the beginning. Still am, although a little less luke and a little more warm, after this instalment.

'Unreasonable Doubt' brings us back to Trafalgar along with a former resident who spent decades in prison for a horrific crime. New evidence has exonerated him while revealing corruption in the Trafalgar police department. Molly Smith ends up in the middle of a very heated local response, and is forced to question her personal and professional ethics.

Meanwhile, the police are also investigating a series of violent attacks on women.

The most appealing thing about Delany's books, as always, is the setting. She does a wonderful job of making Trafalgar real, both the landscape and the atmosphere. It's both cozy and slightly pretentious, close-knit and creepy. Perfect for a murder mystery.

The least appealing thing, again as always, is the lack of nuance. Characters are either good or bad; likeable or hateful. There's no in-between, and it's just not realistic. You're always aware that you're Reading A Book, which flattens out the narrative and distances the reader.

There was also a motivation problem in this particular book. Molly makes a very serious decision regarding her perennial nemesis, Dave Evans. She provides a very specific reason for her choice. Then, towards the end of the book, she offers a totally different reason for the same choice. A small thing, I suppose, but it's sloppy and it irritated me.

Still, 'Unreasonable Doubt' is an entertaining read, so long as you're not looking for anything remarkable.

Debbie says

4.5 Stars I really liked this book a LOT. A man is proven innocent after spending 25 years in prison for a murder he did not commit. Of course, most of the town is against him and do horrible things to him. The cops being the worst.

When the investigation is reopened, and the new investigator gets involved, it is amazing what actually

happened. This one wanted to make just slap somebody to realize that there people out there like this. Of course, any book that can rile up that kind of emotion out of me tells me, it's a dang good book.

Thanks go Poisoned Pen Press for approving my request and to Net Galley for providing the free e-galley in exchange for an honest review. This one is sure to delight and get your blood boiling!

Les a says

I read most of Vicki Delany's mystery series, but the Constable Molly Smith mystery series set in Trafalgar, British Columbia is my favorite. The police procedurals are set in a fascinating town with a mixture of tourists, hippies who moved there during the Vietnam war and stayed to become activists, and righteous townspeople. And, Delany brings them together in *Unreasonable Doubt*. Molly Smith saw it as "a passionate town, full of passionate people." That's sometimes difficult for the police to handle.

After twenty-five years, Walter Desmond chose to return to Trafalgar. He had been convicted of the brutal murder of a young woman, but he's now been officially exonerated because his lawyer showed that the police had been either incompetent in their investigation, or corrupt. Walt only wants to know why the police targeted him. But, there are townspeople, including some cops and former cops, and the family of the victim, who still think he's guilty. And the attempted rape of a shop owner soon after Walt returns only heightens their anger.

Sergeant John Winters doubts that Walt was guilty twenty-five years earlier, and the description of the current suspect doesn't match Walt's. It's up to Winters to reopen the old case, pouring over the shoddy investigation, looking for answers. While he questions belligerent retirees and family members, Constable Molly Smith works the streets, trying to deal with the angry emotions stirred up by memories, fear, and the heat. It won't take much to bring tempers to a boiling point, and time after time, Molly has to step in to prevent violence. Even the police who are sympathetic wish Walt hadn't returned to Trafalgar. Why would anyone want to return to a town where people still view him with suspicion?

Delany's latest mystery may be her most powerful one. It deals not only with a cold case and the behavior of the police in the past, but it also examines mob mentality. Why do people come together in fear, targeting the person they suspect? Is it possible for someone to return to the scene of a crime they did not commit without suspicion falling on them again? It's sad to see a story in which the outsiders, tourists and newcomers to the town, are the ones most likely to give Walt the benefit of the doubt.

Delany has created intriguing characters, particularly Molly Smith, John Winters, and Molly's mother, Lucky. This time, though, the residents of the town almost become one large character, judgmental, fearful, and angry. *Unreasonable Doubt* is a thought-provoking, powerful mystery; possibly Vicki Delany's best.

Allen says

I've really enjoyed this series. The characters are believable and interesting. I hope she continues to write more in this series. As I am also reading another Canadian mystery writer, Louise Penny (and love her books as well), I tend to compare the two series and find Delany's a bit more realistic in terms of the setting and the characters.

Amber says

After a few chapters I finally got cozy with this book and breezed through it. Getting to know the many characters and their roles was the main focus to start. Beyond that point, it was a smooth read with comfortable characters and a great twist in the end. I am glad I stuck it out. I would surely recommend it. The small town feel was well known. It hit on current vs. past issues we face with generations as well. The biggest downfall I see in books lately is poor editing. This had a few moments where I found myself stuck on this fact. Seems like a good editor is hard to find these days. Luckily it didn't deter me from finishing the story. I look forward to picking up another book written by this author.

Kim says

I have been a fan of Vicki Delany for years and this is the best book in a series of great books. If you have yet to read any of the Molly Smith books do yourself a favor and go back to the beginning and start reading. You'll thank me.

Tasula says

Enjoyable, pretty straightforward mystery about a man who spent 25 years in prison for a brutal murder before being released on new evidence. Instead of counting his blessings and moving on, he goes back to the small town where the murder occurred, trying to figure out why the police were convinced he was the murderer.

John Eldridge says

One of the most fun things about this book was trying to figure out what place the mythical town of Trafalgar, BC, is based on. It sure sounds a lot like Nelson. The story is good. Kind of a cozy mystery with a gripping plot. There's a team of dragon boaters in the background which fits well with BC where dragon boating is big. I liked it.

Susan says

Although this is a murder mystery, there is no doubt – reasonable or otherwise - in the minds of most of the citizens of Trafalgar of the identity of the killer since Walter Desmond was convicted 25 years ago. Although Molly Smith does not play a prominent role in the investigation, thankfully the author seems to have gotten her through the phase of making stupid mistakes.

Violette Malan says

This is the latest in the Constable Molly Smith series. I highly recommend both the series, and this episode. If you're a mystery reader, do yourself a favour.

Linda Baker says

Walt Desmond has served 25 years in prison for the brutal killing of a young woman in Trafalgar, BC. All along he protested that he was innocent, refusing to confess even though that might have lessened his sentence somewhat. His wife died while he was in prison and he has lost everything. However, new evidence has turned up indicating either the Trafalgar PD framed him or the investigation was completely incompetent. After he is exonerated, Walt's attorney advises him to stay away from Trafalgar but Walt returns anyway. He has a pretty good idea who might have framed him but needs to know why in order to get on with his life, despite a large cash settlement coming his way.

Molly Smith was no more than an infant when the original case occurred, but if Walt Desmond didn't kill the girl, then who did? She and Sergeant John Winters are assigned to reopen the case. Feelings are running high in Trafalgar between those who remember the case and think Walt was guilty, despite his exoneration, and those who think the police were responsible. Among those most upset are the family of the dead girl, who are adamant that he was guilty. Molly and Winters must walk a tightrope between the factions, some within the police department itself. When two women are attacked in Trafalgar; one of whom is Eliza, Winters' wife, feelings begin to boil over.

Unreasonable Doubt is a nice mix of police procedural and the personal lives of Molly and her family and that of John Winters. I have really grown to like the characters over the course of the series, especially Lucky, Molly's mom. Lucky came to Canada with Molly's father during the Vietnam War and never went back. They built a successful life in Canada and Lucky's politics never changed. She is involved in every protest, knows everyone in town, and is a shrewd judge of character. I think Delany did a particularly good job in showing just what it is like to lose 25 years of your life for a crime you did not commit. Sadly, Canada does not seem to do much better than the US in these cases, of which there are too many. A nice cash payout is good, but hardly compensation for a ruined life.

Thanks to Poisoned Pen Press and Netgalley.com for an advanced digital copy in return for an honest review.

RATING- 4 Stars

Philip says

Good Read I think this is the best book, yet, in this series and I really enjoyed the read and I'll recommend it to any one that likes a police procedural mystery with some strong and well developed characters all of whom, of course, are not exactly nice and likeable. However I am even more convinced that to get the most enjoyment out of this series and to understand many of the recurring characters it is almost necessary to read this series in order. I will admit that I did not have too much of a liking for John Winters from the first book

but I will also say that he has changed immensely as the series has progressed and I have grown to like him, both as a person and as a detective, a very great deal more. Almost the same applies to Molly Smith and I still have a problem in understanding why she hasn't been promoted to detective because I can't see how John would solve any of these cases without her. I'm afraid I still don't like Eliza too much although she did become a bit more human in this book. Of all the recurring characters Lucky and Norman top the list of the best ones in the story. I liked the way Walt's story ended and although the Dragon Boat thing was very interesting it really didn't do much to advance the plot except to provide a love interest for Walt and an idea for Dawn that Molly doesn't think much of. I have only a couple of minor quibbles with the ending in that one murderer seems to have gotten off scot free and I'm guessing, hopefully, that that could lead to another book in the series and I think it would have been nice to at least learn a name for the second murder victim. I have read and enjoyed many of Vicki Delany/Eva Gates' books and I still rate as the best the Fiona and Angus McGillivray "Klondike Mystery" series, and I wish there were more of them, with the "Year Round Christmas" series a close 2nd. Ms Delany ranks well up on my favourite author list.

Betty says

Twenty-five years earlier Walter Desmond was convicted of a bloody rape and murder. He is now back in Trafalgar, B C a free man when an appeals court threw out the conviction and order a new trial. Tensions in town are high because many feel that Walter is a killer. Two attempted rapes do nothing to quiet the feelings of the residents. Molly along with all the other officers have been ordered to leave alone. His lawyer is seeking damages from the town and any contact could be considered harassment. The original case has been reopened. Molly needs to keep tempers from exploding and sees a couple of officers threatened Walter. Should report what she saw and is he guilty or framed? The descriptions describe the area and tensions it puts you on the spot. All the players in the series are present. This book can be read alone. I have read only one other and look forward to reading the rest of the series.

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

Gloria Feit says

The author turns her attention in this entry in the Constable Molly Smith Mystery series to a wrongful conviction controversy in the form of a character named Walter Desmond, who was found guilty of murdering a young woman, and remanded to the penitentiary. After 25 years, an appeal exonerates him based on new evidence and a sloppy police investigation. Upon his release, he decides to return to the little town of Trafalgar, British Columbia, where he encounters considerable resentment.

Complicating his visit, a number of attacks on women occur: on the wife of Police Sergeant John Winters; on Molly's mother, Lucky; and a visiting Dragon Boat team member. Naturally, suspicion falls on Desmond. Meanwhile, the original murder case is reopened, and Winters investigates the cold case with little hope of finding the killer.

The novel demonstrates how the mindset of a largely insulated population works. Most minds are made up; the police said Desmond was guilty and, despite the appeals court saying he is innocent, they still believe

him to be guilty. And it also shows the dramatic difference between old-time cops and modern professionals. This is the tenth novel in the series, although Molly plays a small (but crucial) part in it. Winters occupies a central role.

The author has written an interesting take on the subject, especially with regard to the advisability of whether Desmond should, so to speak, return to the scene of the crime to find out why he was picked to be the murderer, or just remain in Vancouver and not face a hostile population.

An excellent series, well-written and always thought-provoking, and recommended.
