FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Death and the Easter Bunny
Linda Berry
Write Way Publishing
978-0-373-26326-4
(September 30, 1999)

> *When I found myself arguing with Caroline Smithfield at the Garden Club one day over the right formula to feed hydroponic tomatoes, I looked around and realized I was leading the life of a 70-year-old and decided that I'd be better back in Atlanta.*

Except Trudy Roundtree's grandma hid her suitcases, so Trudy was persuaded to stick around and take a job as Deputy Roundtree, the only woman on the tiny Ogeechee Police Department. Ogeechee, Ga., is the kind of town where your cousin is your boss and the arson investigator/ fire chief also runs the local newspaper.

When the ramshackle house of Reed Ritter catches fire and burns down with Reed in it, an investigation begins with the idea it was an accidental death - until the state medical examiner determines that Reed was dead of a crushed larynx before the fire started. Luckily for Trudy, the entire force catches a severe case of poison elder during a drug raid in the woods, giving her one day to investigate before the "good ol' boys" on the force take the case away from her.

Peopled with believable characters, Death and the Easter Bunny is a warm, gentle look at the often incestuous and claustrophobic life of small towns. It is also a deft, well-written mystery. Although it starts out rough - Ms. Berry seems to have trouble finding her voice and establishing her pace in the first two chapters - it settles down into an enjoyable read with a mystery containing more than a few unexpected plot twists.

Mark Terry