

Juba Good: A Ray Robertson Mystery

Vicki Delany

Raven Books (Apr 1, 2014)

Softcover \$9.95 (128pp)

978-1-4598-0490-6

Juba Good, by Vicki Delany, is a murder mystery that explores the complexity of culture, in a simple narrative.

Ray Robertson, a police officer with the United Nations in Juba, South Sudan, is part of an effort to move the fledgling country toward stability with the aid of a well-trained police force. His year of duty almost up, Robertson is about to go back home to Canada—and he couldn't be more ready to escape the dust and the chaos. But then another woman is murdered, the fourth in three weeks, and the words *serial killer* kick his police instincts into high gear. As the investigation gets deeper, Robertson comes face-to-face with the common humanity that transcends culture, and he realizes he's not finished working with the Juba police—ripe ground for a sequel.

The story feels ripped from the headlines: young nations, and the African continent as a whole, seem to be continually beset by violence. This relevance, coupled with the quick narrative pace, gives the book immediacy. Robertson's perspective is relatable and insightful. Delany's handling of setting and culture distinguish this novel from other cop murder dramas—a genre it fits into comfortably. The descriptions are focused, so they're clear and not wordy.

As part of the Rapid Reads series, *Juba Good* is a lean, simple read: fifteen chapters in less than 120 pages and a swift, easy-to-follow plot. Delany integrates unfamiliar vocabulary into the context so that it's easily understood. But this isn't like reading a kids' book—it's a satisfying, grown-up read. Delany's skill with concise plotting and characterization means that nothing valuable is left out. This book is a great waiting-room read for people who want to experience worldwide thrills from within the safety of their hometown.

MELISSA WUSKE (Summer 2014)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.