

## Juba Good: A Ray Robertson Mystery

**Vicki Delany**

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*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)

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