



Murder on Nob Hill

Shirley Tallman

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The year is 1880, the place San Francisco. Intelligent, outspoken Sarah Woolson is a young woman with a goal and the fortitude to achieve it. She has always dreamed of becoming a lawyer. The trouble is, everyone believes women belong in the home---that it is not only unnatural, but against God's will for them to seek a career.

When Sarah finagles an interview with one of the city's most prestigious law firms, no one thinks she has a prayer of being hired. Except Sarah. Using her brains and a little subterfuge, she not only manages to become the firm's newest (and only female) associate attorney, she also acquires her first client---a lovely young society matron suspected of brutally stabbing to death her wealthy but abusive husband. Sarah is sure of her client's innocence, but the revelation of the woman's secret lover may make that innocence impossible to prove.

When four more victims fall prey to the killer's knife, Sarah fears she has bitten off more than she can chew. Bucking her boorish employer and the judicial system, Sarah finds herself embroiled in shady legal maneuvers, a daring Chinatown raid, and a secret and very scandalous sex club in this irresistible blend of history, romance, and murder.

Murder on Nob Hill Details

Date : Published June 1st 2004 by Minotaur Books

ISBN : 9780312328559

Author : Shirley Tallman

Format : Hardcover 280 pages

Genre : Mystery, Historical, Historical Fiction, Historical Mystery, Cozy Mystery, Fiction, Literature, 19th Century, Thriller, Mystery Thriller, Adult, Audiobook

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From Reader Review Murder on Nob Hill for online ebook

Kari says

I had never heard of this series before it was recently uploaded onto my Library's Overdrive site, Murder on Nob Hill is the first in a series taking place in 1880. Sarah is one of a handful of women to have earned their law degrees and passed the bar exam. The law firm she applies to reluctantly hires her and she immediately gets involved in a murder case. Her client is accused of aiding in killing her husband. Sarah must prove she didn't do it.

This was enjoyable little mystery. It was a real eye opener to see how women didn't have many rights in the late 19th century. We have it so good right now! I liked Sarah's character. Sarah was a strong minded character and I admired her bravery in a time when men still thought women should be at home and seen, but not heard.. The peripheral characters were strong as well. I loved the banter between Sarah and Robert. He is probably going to be a love interest in later books, at least it looks like that way.

My only complaint about the book was the amount of potential suspects. I lost track of people at times, so when the reveal happened it took me a few minutes to figure out who the culprit was. There were also a couple of red herrings in the story and I found those frustrating. But in all, it was a fun read. I might track down the next book and give it a try as well.

Jessica says

Disappointed by the lack of character development and failure to "flesh out" some of the peripheral people. This book had a lot of people who obviously will be a part of Sarah's world in the future, but told nothing about them. For instance, Sarah's father is alluded to frequently as the person who most influenced her desire to pursue law and yet, we barely heard from the guy. Sarah's father was given the role of being amused by her antics, (as noted by his twinkling eyes and barely restrained smile at dinner) and encouraging them by saying things like "There's more to this story...I can't wait to hear about it..." and then drifting off with nothing substantial coming from the conversation. I found that frustrating. I may read the next in the series to see if some development takes place, as I recognize that this is the first in a series.

Cindy says

I don't want to be too mean with my review, but this book was bad.

Sarah Woolson lives in San Francisco in 1880 and she has just passed the bar exam. Too bad no one wants to hire her, but women are too emotional and illogical to practice law, right? Well, I don't buy that one, but Sarah IS pretty silly. She is such a crusader for women's rights and she doesn't think ahead much. She has completely modern views on politics, marriage, and romance.

And besides that, the book itself was too predictable. I picked out the murderer on page 10 and the love interest on page 12 or 13. It's the sort of book where the MC has a client who is completely innocent, investigates the scene of the crime and finds all kinds of clues the police missed, meets Chinese warlords, visits a brothel, an opium den, and a place where Satanic rituals involving bizarre sexual rites takes place. Seriously, what's left for the next book in the series? She's already done everything!

My favorite line from the book (and one that tells you exactly what kind of book it is):

"With a shock, I realized my assailant was Chinese!"

You may enjoy it anyway, if you view it as pure escapist fare that doesn't have to make any sense, just be packed with adventure. But if you want more, you will be disappointed.

Staci says

What a lovely young feisty character Sarah Woolson is!! She's a lawyer in San Francisco in 1880, a time where women who work outside of the house are frowned upon. Sarah does not care because she does not want any MAN telling her how to live her life. The mystery was very well written and I wasn't sure of the guilty party until almost the last page. I loved learning historical facts about San Francisco and the city is a major character in this book. I'm most definitely going to continue on with the next book in this series- The Russian Hill Murders!

Luffy says

Finds often are rare, and this book belongs to that group. I've rarely, if ever, derived so much from so obscure a book. The last time was the Pizza Lovers' Mysteries. That's what I like about cozy mysteries. They contain more finds than any other genre. There's not as many obscure but delightful books in other genres, like Sci Fi, Horror, Young Adult, Chick Lit, Historical Fiction, Thrillers, etc. The cozy mystery genre has logically and unhesitatingly become my number one genre.

Sarah Woolson faces a can of worm's worth of prejudice, ignorance, bigotry and stupidity in her struggles for being accepted in the labor force as a bona fide lawyer. She displays a cool demeanor whose limits, when they are tested, expand further on as the story progresses. Her environment is volatile and stressful. The vitriolic behavior from so called rational men is nauseating. Now I know what type of gutsy females it took to give the world women's suffrage(this book is placed in the 1880's, prior to that breakthrough).

Amid all that there is the plot (a story with a very good pacing, involving three major murders that never sway away from this reader's attention) which is well written in the kind of language I revel in. The prose is usually the deciding point for me between liking a book and loving it. I'm also of the opinion that the scarcity of lyricism and economy of distractions heighten the value I place on this book. If J.D Robb's books are too hot and Mills and Boons books are too cold, then Shirley Tallman should be congratulated for writing a book which is just right for me.

Qiana says

In the end I liked this book and will read the next in the series. However, the main character insistence that's she just as good as a man and just as logical--while basically stomping her feet saying so and so is innocent--got really annoying.

Hopefully now that the author has established the characters, she can focus more on the mystery and less on the "I'm so different than the average woman of the time" nonsense.

dOnnabud lewis says

Sarah Woolson is a determined, competent lawyer battling her way into the male-dominated, female-shunned legal field during 1880. I started enjoying the story more after I got a bit into the book. The mystery which Sarah becomes entangled in is set amid the bustling post-Gold Rush days of San Francisco. On her quest for answers, she journeys deep into Chinatown, the Barbary Coast, and other historic, iconic regions of the great city.

As a side note, Sarah observes escaped and released parrots in the city, which led me to do some research. I stumbled upon *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill* [A love story ... with wings], written by Mark Bittner (2004). I'm currently reading and enjoying the story tremendously. In 2005, Judy Irving's Pelican Media released a movie based on the book. It has the same title, and is a delightful, insightful, emotional journey. I highly recommend both :o)

Favorite passages (2004 hardcover edition):

"Guests mingled to create a living kaleidoscope of colors." (page 39)

[in Chinatown] "Through the moonlight I could make out signs whose graceful characters identified restaurants, barbershops, laundries, vegetable, fruit and fish markets. By night the pungent smells of the Chinese Quarter seemed all the more intoxicating, and it was possible to imagine I had been transported to some exotic land across the sea." (page 145)

[still in Chinatown] "Next to the theater was a brilliantly painted pagoda advertising a Chinese temple. In contrast to its noisy neighbor, it sat in eerie silence, patterning the moonlit street with exotically shaped shadows." (page 145)

"The awful shackles of powerlessness hindered my movements and slowed my thoughts." (page 222)

#thewildparrotsoftelegraphhill #shirleytallman

Michelle says

(3.5 stars) This is the first book in the series. Sarah lives in San Francisco in 1880. She wants to become a practicing lawyer and has passed the bar exam, but is having trouble finding a firm to hire her because she is a woman. By a little misdirection, she gains an interview, and while there, steps in to help a wealthy woman client whose husband has been murdered. Her assistance leads to a begrudging offer of a position at the firm and when her client is accused of being part of the murder, she works tirelessly to prove her innocence, despite the lack of interest from the male partners. She gets begrudging help from a fellow young Scot attorney, Robert Campbell, who has been assigned to keep an eye on her. Sarah uses her wits and social connections to ferret out clues to prove her client's innocence.

Juliana Philippa says

I'm glad I happened upon this book in the library, as it ended up being an enjoyable read and a good mystery.

The heroine, Sarah Woolson, is a real spitfire and very opinionated; while sometimes annoying, she is for the most part a great lead character - and at times very funny. Her family is very interesting and they are a great addition to the cast of characters. I also loved Robert Campbell, a fellow associate attorney at their firm, a big and loud Scot always objecting to Sarah's ideas and plans, but then getting involved despite himself. Their bickering and squabbling is often amusing and I'm personally hoping that their relationship develops into a more, umm ... harmonious one, shall we say ;-).

Tallman's writing is very simple and her storytelling straightforward, not that either of these things are bad. One criticism I do have is that sometimes it seemed like she needed a better editor, as you have the same word that would appear twice in one sentence or in two consecutive sentences. May seem like a picky objection, but for me it was noticeable and bothersome.

The mystery itself was very well-done and definitely keeps the reader engaged. You start to develop a theory, which gains shape as additional things are revealed. It *is* a mystery, though - not blatantly obvious - and has some great twists and turns. Another great aspect of this book is that the historical setting feels very authentic. I look forward to reading the other books in the series!

The Sarah Woolson Mystery Series

Book 1 - *Murder on Nob Hill* (4 stars)

Book 2 - *The Russian Hill Murders* (4 stars)

Book 3 - *The Cliff House Strangler*

Book 4 - *Scandal on Rincon Hill*

Connie says

I thought this was a delightful first book by this author. I loved Sarah Woolson and found her to be quite refreshing for that time frame. She reminded me of Sarah Brandt, the character in the Victoria Thompson series.

I would love to read where Sarah is off to next or what cases she will work on in the future. I just can't picture anyone going up against society like she did.

I loved the unusual alliance between herself and Mr. Li Ying. I also hope to read more about him in future books.

I am giving this 5 out of 5 stars. I can't wait to read the next one.

Naomi says

I must say that I thoroughly enjoyed this book. Written in the style of author Victoria Thompson, the book was well written and had a good storyline with a strong heroine. I will seek out more books from this author.

Susan says

I found the pacing of this book slow and the plot, from what I read, didn't hold my interest. At the beginning,

the main character goes to a law firm to apply for a position, gets refused an interview, then proceeds to usher a potential client of the firm into one of the offices and locks to the door to listen to this case. Seriously?!? I could suspend belief as well as the next person, but I found this action a little ridiculous.

Ann Boytim says

A pioneer for women attorneys Sarah Woolson is trying to get her first position in an attorneys office in San Francisco. Sarah;s father is a judge and he has encouraged her in her career. Sarah has a lot of determination and faces a lot of prejudice but manages to connect with a women who is accused of murdering her husband . Sarah fights on all sides and is determined to be the bet she can be.

Stacy says

Sarah is take no prisoners kind of gal and this really irks the lawyer who is assigned to following/helping her with the case. And her brothers prove helpful as does her judge father. She is not afraid of getting her hands dirty, but her mind is her best asset. There is a lot to like about Sarah.

The mystery was good. I didn't figure it out until right before Sarah did and it was a satisfying ending. The family was a warm and fun and accepting of Sarah, well except for one brother running for California Senator, and I look forward to learning more about them as Sarah continues her adventures in the next book.

Massanutten Regional Library says

Judy, North River staff, July 2017, 5 stars:

1800's San Francisco. Feisty young woman lawyer solves crimes. She is resented by her boss and her colleagues, people are suspicious of a lady lawyer. She gets involved and befriends the leader of one of the Chinese tongs, who becomes her adviser and finally, one of her fellow lawyers comes to her aid as well as a brother who secretly writes for the newspaper.

I love the time period and San Francisco. Would recommend this book and that the library order more.
