



The Case of Madeleine Smith

Rick Geary

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A scandalous secret affair in 19th century Scotland between an upperclass woman and a gentleman of lower standing ends in his murder by poison...

The Case of Madeleine Smith Details

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Author : Rick Geary

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From Reader Review The Case of Madeleine Smith for online ebook

Mike Aragona says

Rick Geary, it seems, has put together quite a number of these True Crime/ Unsolved Murder books. The stories, fascinating already, are very much helped by the static/ graven images which make up the art. Obviously researched in detail, this is another example of a quality book by NBM Publishing. I will indeed be ordering more from them!

Emily says

I saw the David Lean film about Madeleine Smith so I was excited to read Rick Geary's version of the story. Geary is definitely more sympathetic to Emile L'Anglier than Lean; Geary paints him as the crushed dismissed lover where Lean's Emile is far more rascally and conniving. As with all of the books in the Treasury of Victorian Murder, The Case of Madeline Smith is thoroughly entertaining and somewhat unnerving and extremely well illustrated and written.

Brandon says

While perhaps not the most interesting case, this volume still manages to engage with its beautiful artwork and compelling presentation.

Jemidar says

My interest in Madeleine Smith was first piqued years ago when I came across David Lean's 1950 movie 'Madeleine' on late night TV. I always meant to find out more about her and her life after the trial but as often happens my life got in the way and she remained mostly forgotten by me until recently. What renewed my interest in her story was that I found out Wilkie Collins' The Law and the Lady was inspired by Madeleine's court case and the unsatisfactory and peculiarly Scottish verdict of *Not Proven*.

Anyway, in my mad rush to reacquaint myself with Madeleine and learn more about her, this was the first book that came to hand. Not my usual fare admittedly but enjoyable all the same. This is nonfiction despite being a graphic novel, and is the potted story of her life. Despite it's format and relative brevity, it contains more information than one would think and had quite a bit in it that was new to me. It was a fun read and did what it was supposed to well, although I do intend to now move onto meatier tomes.

Overall, a great place to start if you are unfamiliar with Madeleine and her story.

Katherine Addison says

All the usual superlatives for Geary's work, plus he captures the fascination of the *did she or didn't she?*

beautifully. Madeleine Smith may or may not have poisoned her lover in 1857. The jury at her trial came back with the Scottish verdict "Not proven," which is like the perfect commentary on the case. Madeleine had all the motive in the world to kill Emile l'Angelier, and she was proved to have purchased arsenic (for cosmetic purposes! no really!), but the prosecution could not prove that she met Emile on the night that he died. Geary traces the progress of Madeleine and Emile's relationship, the ins and outs of the trial, and then what happened to Madeleine afterwards (she moved to London, married, and became a prominent Fabian; after her first husband died, she moved to New York, married again, and died at the age of 92 in 1928). Geary does *such* a beautiful job.

Paul Bryant says

What connects this maybe could be murderess Madeleine Smith

who maybe could be poisoned her now-surplus-to-requirements wouldn't-take-no-for-an-answer boyfriend Emile L'Anglier with arsenic

which *she said* she had purchased as a cosmetic intending thereby to maintain a blooming complexion and an appearance of exuberant health with **Mary Poppins** is that after all the infamy and brouhaha of the trial she understandably relocated to London from Glasgow, took watercolour lessons, was courted by her teacher, a Mr Wardle, married him, and then became embroiled in socialist politics, where she hobnobbed with George Bernard Shaw, who, hearing her remarkable story, took his coffee from her "to no ill effect", as he remarked at the time, this being a few years before he wrote *Pygmalion*, which was the basis of *My Fair Lady*, the 1964 film in which Audrey Hepburn was cast, infamously, over the obvious choice of Julie Andrews, who had been playing Eliza on stage between 1956 and 1959. The point here was that Julie could sing (like an angel) and Audrey couldn't (not like an angel anyhow). So they had to get Marni Nixon to dub the singing for Audrey, which I had no idea about until years after I saw the film. Not surprising, really – when any Marni-sung tunes were on the radio the dj would say "that was Audrey Hepburn" and Marni's name was nowhere to be found on the album sleeve either.

They liked to keep very quiet about the dubbing, even though exposing this frankly deceptive procedure was one of the key plot points in *Singin' in the Rain*, everybody's other favourite musical.

Ain't no justice in this damn world, as Emile L'Anglier might have said if he hadn't died horribly on 23rd March 1857.

David says

This particular lurid tale comes to us from an era in which the kind of double-faced behavior of woman

(and men!) was not so uncommon at all. This obscure series of events plays out before us in Rick Geary's trademark style and skill- giving us that half nosy newspaper style, and half cold hard facts and thoughts on the situation... in this case, the story twists and turns and leaves so many things that seem not to add up, it's very easy for the reader to get involved in making his or her own decisions about what was REALLY going on...

I've been very fond of this series (A treasury of victorian murder) and I hope that I get to read all of them. They've varied in how much they interested me, but they always impress me that the author has gone to such effort to document and back up some of the tale so the reader knows where to go to read more, if he or she wishes!

Sheri S. says

I had never heard of the case of Madeleine Smith, and since I appreciated the last book I read by Rick Geary, I thought I would give this one a try. This case is definitely interesting and the central character, Madeleine Smith, sounds like a woman who was somewhat ahead of her time. By the standards of her era, she was a bit promiscuous and definitely had a rebellious streak towards her parents. Whether she had the will and ability to commit murder, I am not entirely sure (despite the jury's findings). However, the decision of the jury was slightly surprising as was the rest of the course of her life...

Megan Anderson says

For such a short book, The Case of Madeleine Smith certainly felt much longer. The art takes some getting used to; it's not quite as realistic as true Victorian art would be, but it's drawn in the same sort of crosshatch, black-and-white style. Many of the characters end up looking the same, so it can be difficult telling them apart if you're not paying attention. The flow of boxes makes sense, though, and it should be easy to follow for any struggling reader who chooses to use this book for an assignment.

To be honest, this book would most likely be appropriate for middle-school students, despite the fact that it's about a murder. Students in ninth or tenth grade would probably appreciate it, as well. Where the problem lies, however, is the fact that Geary routinely quotes letters by Madeleine and Emile in his narrative.

Full review at A Writer Reads.

Jasmin Mohd-zain says

An interesting way to present historical crimes!

Alex Panagiotopoulos says

Another one of Geary's illustrated murder cases, this time from the victorian era. A balanced graphic novel about the chronicles of the Madeleine Smith murder case in Scotland back in 1857.

It's enjoyable and provides the info you need to research further by yourself. Drawing style is, for one more time, procedural at first but it gets under your skin when you give it time.

Shawn says

As always, Geary's artwork is top notch, but the material of this volume, the 8th in the "Victorian Murders" series, is a bit of weak tea (I find it interesting that Geary subsequently moved on to the "20th Century Murder"). The true story of Madeleine Smith, who poisoned her lover, is fine but less compelling than earlier subjects. Still, interesting for those who may not realize how convoluted the societal rules and expectations for relationships were in the late 1800's.

Wendy says

I had been putting off reading a graphic novel, but I found this one that didn't have super heroes or anime and it wasn't as painful as I had anticipated. This book covers the true story of Madeleine Smith, an aristocrat who has a love affair with a clerk. When the clerk dies of poisoning, she goes to trial. Interesting story and kids who like a good mystery will enjoy this. For me, the story was a little choppy. I felt like I was reading something from a crime scene rather than a story. This was a quick read, and the pictures were very interesting, even though they were in black and white. I would recommend this book to kids who like mystery, or who want to try a graphic novel that isn't anime.

Sam Quixote says

Set in mid-19th century Glasgow, Madeleine Smith, a well to do young woman, embarks on an affair with a young man of lower class. When she becomes engaged to a wealthy older man, she breaks off the affair. Afraid that the affair will come to light, it's suggested, she kills her former lover by serving him hot chocolate laced with enough arsenic to kill 40 men. After his death she is arrested, tried, and found not guilty. She might have done it but then her former lover had a dramatic side and had attempted suicide before- maybe this time he succeeded? After the trial she moves to London and then New York where she dies. The end.

That was it?! I expected Geary to throw a curveball into the story to explain why he'd chosen such a bland, uninteresting case to explore in his excellent series. But nothing - that's the whole story. She might have poisoned one man or she might not have. In the end, you don't really care.

The book is taken up with the mundane life stories of Madeleine Smith and her lover Emile L'Angier, and we're forced to read the lovenotes of the usual calibre of the lovesick "I miss you" "I love you" blah blah blah. This was the first book in the "Victorian Murder" series where I was counting the pages til the end.

When you look back at the triumphs Rick Geary has produced in his series - "The Beast of Chicago" H H Holmes with his sick house of death and scores of victims, or the assassination of Abe Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth and the turning point of American history as a result, or Jack the Ripper, possibly the most famous serial killer in history - you have to wonder why Madeleine Smith, an unknown possible murderess, was included at all.

Do give this book a miss. Do check out other books in Geary's excellent series.

Sam Quixote says

Set in mid-19th century Glasgow, Madeleine Smith, a well-to-do young woman, embarks on an affair with a young man of lower class. When she becomes engaged to a wealthy older man, she breaks off the affair. Afraid that the affair will come to light, its suggested, she kills her former lover by serving him hot chocolate laced with enough arsenic to fell 40 men.

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That was it?! I expected Geary to throw a curveball into the story to explain why he'd chosen such a bland, uninteresting case to explore in his otherwise excellent series. But no, nothing, that really is the whole story unfortunately: she might have poisoned one man or she might not have. In the end, you don't really care.

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Do give this book a miss. Do check out the other books in Geary's excellent series.
