



The Vendetta Defense

Lisa Scottoline

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Judy Carrier takes the case of her career to defend Anthony Lucia, fondly known as "Pigeon Tony," who freely admits to killing his lifelong enemy in order to settle a personal vendetta. Her client's guilt, however, is only the beginning of Judy's problems. The victim's family wants revenge and is determined to finish off Pigeon Tony and Judy before the case goes to trial. Then there's Pigeon Tony's hunky grandson, who makes Judy think about everything but the law. In a case steeped in blood and memory, it will take brains and a lot of luck to save Pigeon Tony. But if anyone will see justice done, it's this gutsy girl who'll risk everything to win -- including her life.

The Vendetta Defense Details

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Saleh MoonWalker says

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J says

BEWARE. I DON'T FLAG SPOILERS. BUT I DON'T PUT MY REVIEWS OUT ON ANY FEED, EITHER.

Disclaimer - my "reviews" are not truly that. Rather than a critical analysis, each "review" is mostly my quick summary of the plot -- so I can refresh my unreliable memory. Also, I find that once I journal a book, it's easier for me to give it away. That's important, as our house is getting "overgrown" with books.

One of my favorite Scottoline titles. It delves into atty. Judy at the Rosato all-female law firm. She's one of the tall heroines (With Scottoline, they're all either tall or small).

Tony Lucia, Judy's elderly client -- up for murder -- is the true hero. The book traces his personal losses from Fascist '40s Italy (a rival suitor kills Tony's young wife) to America, where he located w. his motherless toddler son after the war. In America decades later, he loses his now-grown son to an apparent traffic accident - driver error on a winter-slippery road.

Novel begins on the day that Tony killed his rival.

Tony and that old rival -- who also emigrated and settles in the same Italian neighborhood in Philly -- come to blows in a back room at the pigeon-racing club they both belong to. Both men are senior citizens; the rival ends up falling in the brawl, hitting his head, dying.

The case looks open-closed -- with Pigeon Tony guilty -- until Judy (who btw falls in love w. Tony Lucia's brawny contractor grandson) and the grandson find evidence to prove Tony attacked the rival only after said rival bragged he'd killed Tony's son some months before (which everyone including police had thought was a simple accident.)

Solving the heretofor-unrecognized crime turns on learning that the son's VW pickup was a diesel, so that the abundant gasoline traces found on the totaled vehicle point to a gasoline-based explosive. (Along w. extremely tall or short heroines, Scottoline also likes VW's - Judy drives a Bug, the female character who's a fed prosecutor has a Cabriolet convertible, there's another novel where there's talk of Jettas. i.e. a lawyer's Jetta is demoted to "railroad station car" for commuting after he/shoe moves fr. public service to better-paying private sector, and buys some hot, expensive car model).

In the end, Pigeon Tony's jurors go for jury nullification (finding defendant innocent despite the law and evidence, because of belief in a higher principle - namely that Tony's rage was natural when his son's

murderer taunted him for getting away w. the crime. Also, that he couldn't have foreseen that the physical fight - no weapons but fists -- could drop a man dead). Verdict seemed right to me, too.

Shawn says

A very interesting premise. What makes a person guilty of murder? Does the act of killing someone automatically make one a murderer? Does the motive and reasoning behind the act make a difference? And should it? Ms Scottoline poses these questions in a very entertaining story.

Ed says

#6 in the Rosato & Associates series.

Rosato & Associates series - The star here is the somewhat manic Judy Carrier, who has played supporting roles in the past. The story, however, revolves around Anthony "Pigeon Tony" Lucia, a lovable septuagenarian who killed his longtime rival, Angelo Coluzzi, who murdered Lucia's wife in their native Italy 60 years ago. Coluzzi, the wealthy, mob-connected owner of a big construction firm, always seems to get the upper hand until Pigeon Tony breaks his neck during a showdown at the pigeon-racing club where they're both members. Pigeon Tony freely admits he killed Coluzzi, but maintains he was justified because of the long-standing Italian tradition of vendetta; Carrier knows it will be a big stretch to make that argument fly before a 21st-century American jury. Aided, however, by Tony's many friends in South Philly's Italian neighborhoods, Carrier mounts a sparkling defense while dodging innumerable attempts on her life from Coluzzi's gang and trying to keep in check her amorous feelings for Pigeon Tony's ruggedly handsome grandson, Frank.

Tabitha Quire says

The sixth book featuring Bennie Rosato's law firm, this time with Judy Carrier, one of Bennie's attorneys, defending Pigeon Tony, who admits that he killed Angelo Coluzzi, but insists it wasn't murder but justice. The basis of this was very intriguing. I mean what really does make a person guilty of murder? I really liked this one as well. Another hit for Scottoline!

jennifer says

thank you grandma!

this kind of had it all: 1930s fascist Italy subplot, lots of South Philly local color, girl lawyers with inappropriate outfits and professional demeanors, and a love interest who's a hot Italian traditional stonemason. a lot can be forgiven for that, I guess.

Andrea says

My first Scottline and I'm hooked! I was glued to the book all week and hated to put it down. The story had some great mystery, action, and love aspects which really made it a lot better than a lot of books I have read that are similar in style. I'm looking forward to reading others in the series and hoping that I get to see more of the great Frank and Pigeon Tony :)

Teri Pre says

Even though the narrator leaved a lot to be desired, this was an awesome book!! If you haven't read this series, you should!!

Amanda says

This is my favorite book so far in this series. I enjoyed the narrator and the storyline was sad but very good. I wanted to meet and give Pigeon Tony a hug.

JBradford says

I gather, without having been told, that Lisa Scottoline is going to write a different novel about each of the lawyers in the all-women Philadelphia firm of lawyers headed by the ever-feisty Bennie Rosato. This one is about Judy Carrier, who was a minor character in *Courting Trouble* (whose protagonist, Ann Murphy, is a minor character in this novel), and who is asked to take on a case by Mary DiNunzio, her good friend and another of the firm's lawyers, who currently is staying at home because she got shot (which suggests to me that there is a novel I have not read yet). The interest here is that we get told in the opening sentence that the client did in fact do the dirty deed ... and we get told in successive flashbacks why he did it ... which leaves the reader wondering how Judy is going to get her client off (which, of course, we will not learn until the last chapter). Along the way, Judy fights with her boss, with her client, with the Philadelphia version of the Mafia, with the Philadelphia police, etc., and especially with the client's handsome son, and we all know where that is going to end up. It all adds up to a pretty good tale, but I hope my lawyer daughter does not live this way!

Wendell says

This was my first Scottoline novel and it will certainly be my last. I don't entirely understand why someone with such modest writing skills has become so popular, and I definitely don't understand why the Italian-American Anti-Defamation League isn't picketing her publisher. In this novel, Scottoline takes evident pride in depicting the Italian-American community she grew up near (if not exactly in), employing a sort of "you can't be mad at me, I'm Italian" approach to trotting out stereotypes so broad that not even *The Sopranos*

would have thought of using them. And let's be clear: I'm not arguing that they're "offensive"; I'm saying that they're overdone, repetitive, unoriginal, graceless, tedious, and ham-handed. In this book, one of Scottoline's two main characters is an elderly Italian immigrant who (despite being in America for some fifty years) still speaks the kind of broken English that you'd expect from a Chef Boyardee commercial. In print, Scottoline has chosen to represent that dialogue so absurdly and so unnaturally that at times you wonder whether she has a chronic tin ear or whether she thought she was writing ethnic satire. Clearly, her lawyer-protagonist (blonde and WASP) suffers from a kind of internal-dialogue Tourette's syndrome that causes her to think in ceaseless puns and seventh-grade double entendres, all of which are about as amusing as leprosy. Scottoline also likes to throw in Italian words and phrases—it adds so much color, dontcha know. Unfortunately, she gets about half of them wrong, writing "come se dice" instead of "come si dice," for example, or "io lo fatto" instead of "io l'ho fatto." They're stupid, embarrassing errors—for her, but also for her editor, who ought to have checked the Italian before letting Scottoline make a fool of herself. For someone who was a lawyer before she turned to potboiling, Scottoline also doesn't shy away from playing fast and loose with the law—in one scene, she has witnesses sitting in the courtroom audience, watching the trial before they are called to testify. Sorry, but it doesn't work that way--witnesses don't get to listen to the other witnesses. For all of that, the storyline is respectable enough – as "legal thrillers" go – but Scottoline seems to do everything she can think of to stand in its way. I find her voice so intrusive and so (for want of a better word) silly that I won't be coming back for more.

Mahlet says

I have read and loved Scottoline's work in the past, but this story was just too unbelievable for me. I couldn't imagine a judge allowing some of the testimony put forth by the defense, so I did a lot of wincing and eye-rolling during this one.

Pigeon Tony admits to killing Angelo Coluzzi, but he says it's payback for Coluzzi murdering Pigeon Tony's wife nearly 60 years ago, and his son & daughter-in-law in a more recent "staged" car crash. Since the prosecution makes brief mention of these events during opening statements, that has apparently opened the door for expert testimony on a car crash that occurred YEARS ago, while the court's in progress on a murder trial involving different people...that just didn't fly with me. But Pigeon Tony, the defendant, was one of the most lovable characters I've come across, and he really saved the book for me. I also loved the little things, like Pigeon Tony's buddies showing up for client meetings at the law firm with coffee & pastries :) Fun characters to keep the story moving. I'll give Scottoline another try in the future.

LJ says

THE VENDETTA DEFENSE – VG

Lisa Scottoline – Stand alone(?)

Attorney Judy Carrier, member of the Rosato law firm, is asked by her best friend's father to defend his friend, Anthony Lucia, known throughout their South Philadelphia neighborhood as 'Pigeon Tony,' who is on trial for the murder of Angelo Coluzzi. However, Judy isn't prepared for a confession that Tony did, in fact, commit the crime—the result of a generations-old family feud that has spanned two continents. Judy needs to find a way that this feud can help to defend Pigeon Tony, while beginning a relationship with his grandson.

This has a bit of everything; humor, suspense, delightful characters, romance, history, pathos, and good

courtroom scenes. Scottoline has had a couple misses for me, but this was not one of them. This was a definite 4-hour read.

Shannan says

This is a funny book with an interesting take on the ethical relationship between defense attorneys and guilty clients, but somehow it never really caught hold of my attention. Just to be clear: I attribute this to a taste/mood issue and not to any fault in the writing. When I am sitting down reading the book I enjoy it, I just don't have any drive to pick it up again once I've stopped.

Beth says

Lisa Scottoline's novels present interesting legal dilemmas.

In Scottoline's *THE VENDETTA DEFENSE*, an old Italian man, "Pigeon Tony," who lived in prewar Italy under Mussolini and the Black Shirts and fled to America with his young son, is now accused of murdering another Italian-American, Angelo Coluzzi. Coluzzi is a rich man who is corrupt and has ties to the Mafia.

During flashbacks in the book, we see why their ages-old feud, back to their lives in Italy, where Coluzzi was one of the Black Shirts, led to the killing. And, according to Pigeon Tony, that's what it was—killing, not murder.

THE VENDETTA DEFENSE is one book in Scottoline's series about a Philadelphia law firm. One of the associate lawyers in the firm takes on this case, made more difficult by Pigeon Tony's ongoing insistence that he tell the judge that he did, in fact, kill Coluzzi. Pigeon Tony was sure the killing was justified because it wasn't murder; Coluzzi killed Pigeon Tony's wife in Italy many years ago and his son and daughter-in-law more recently in Philadelphia.

While this book wasn't a not-put-downable thriller, it was interesting and did make me want to keep reading. Scottoline seems to like to set herself up to solve unsolvable legal dilemmas.
