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This Examiner Rates **The Second Trial by Rosemarie Boll**: 5 out of 5 Stars

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Spotlight on Canadian Authors: Book Review--The Second Trial by Rosemarie Boll

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This week, November 14 to 20, 2010 is [Bullying Awareness Week](#), a grassroots Canadian effort to spread the word and stand up against bullying. It's now a national campaign aimed at stopping all forms of bullying and violence in our society. Reading Rosemarie Boll's novel, [The Second Trial](#) made me realize how important this initiative is in our society. Most bullying occurs behind closed doors, in the safety of our homes. Sadly, this is the bullying and abuse that is rarely talked about

In *The Second Trial*, a YA novel published by [Second Story Press](#), 13 year old Danny McMillan finds himself in the middle of a battle that his young mind can't understand, no matter how hard he tries to see both sides. His mother fights to keep his father in jail, claiming she is trying to keep them safe. Danny knows that things between his parents aren't ideal, but believes his father wouldn't harm them. When the justice system can't provide the protection that Danny's mother seeks, social services and the local police convince Danny's mother to join a protection program. Danny is furious, hurt, confused; leaving behind everything he loves and cares about. Including his father.

Rosemarie does an amazing job at the monumental task of showing how domestic violence not only impacts women, but children, grandparents and society as a whole. She writes from Danny's point of view and rather than preaching, her writing brings the reader inside Danny and allows them to experience the feelings and questions that violence torments a young mind with.

*Danny looked at his father, who stood without expression. His mother's head turned slowly toward the prisoner's box, as if gravity were dragging her eyes across the courtroom. Danny saw Dad's eyes lock with hers. A sneer pressed his lips into a thin line. In a second his face was transformed—like an open hand into a fist. (Page 60 *The Second Trial* by Rosemarie Boll)*

Rosemarie also brings the reader into Danny's mother's world, providing a glimpse of why women stay and what they risk in standing up. She does this without the stereotypical weakness that many tend to include in a victim's POV. Instead she shows the courage that Danny's mother must find in order to break the cycle. She also highlights the folly of making the decision to stay, or to 'wait out' the violence in the hopes that the abuser will change.

Domestic violence and bullying in general are topics close to my heart. I've read several books, stories of bullying, domestic violence and abuse, but none so far have been written in a way that I felt spoke directly to

young people. While they've been moving stories, they have targeted a more adult audience, exploring the adult side of the story. ***The Second Trial*** speaks to me as a parent, but it also begs young readers to understand, to know that they are not alone and they are not to blame. Neither are their abused parents. Boll's very real depiction of Danny's emotional chaos and his resulting behaviour makes this story an important one for young readers to know.

"Anger is a choice. Bullying is learned. Your dad believed your mom was worthless, and neither the law—nor society—stepped in to stop him. And he didn't destroy just your mother. He destroyed all of you." Mr. Ishii to Danny (Page 306 *The Second Trial* by Rosemarie Boll)

I recommend, young reader or old, that you pick up ***The Second Trial***. Whether you've been a victim of violence or not, odds are that you know someone who has. Understanding is a key element in making a dent in an issue that's been part of our society for far too long. Well done, Rosemarie.