

Book Review: The Unraveling
By Vi Keeland

It's my understanding that author Vi Keeland has built her literary career writing romance novels, and that "The Unraveling" is her first psychological thriller. I have not read any of her romance novels, but I hope they hold together better than her first venture into another genre.

"The Unraveling" is written from a first-person perspective, that of psychiatrist Meredith McCall, and alternates – at least for the first half of the novel – between past and present timelines. Meredith has a thriving practice, and an envious marriage to Connor, a New York hockey superstar. But their lives "unravel" following a devastating accident.

To this point, the narrative feels real yet tragic. But when Meredith begins an unhealthy obsession over Gabriel Wright, parts of the story seem to loosen at the seams. From a positive aspect, Keeland's description of Meredith gradually coming unglued is appropriately disturbing. The pacing is solid and details are raw, just as you would expect when someone begins to lose their mind.

On the negative side, some aspects just don't hold together. How does such a well-educated, well-balanced person trained in the psychology of the mind allow herself to crumble like a cheap suit? Like the story of the shoemaker who walks around with holes in the soles of his shoes, Meredith fails to recognize the depths to which she has fallen, and within such a relatively short timeframe. It just seems a bit unrealistic.

And in a city as large and heavily populated as New York, no one has seen or is aware of anything? No surveillance or doorbell cameras have picked up on some of the bizarre chain of events? I mean, if someone stalks another person for blocks at a time,

day in and day out, something would have been captured *somewhere* on camera, don't you think?

I've read some other reviews commenting on the jaw-dropping ending, and having been kept guessing until the very end. Honestly, I wasn't guessing until the very end. And I have a hard time fully accepting the ending's plausibility. I don't want to give anything away, but suffice to say I don't know if there are human beings out there capable of pulling off such a ruse.

One thing for certain, it's easy to dislike Meredith. Her actions are completely inappropriate for a highly trained professional, and completely illogical by any stretch of the imagination for any human being. If that's what Keeland intended, then she succeeded.

"The Unraveling" is an interesting read, despite many of its flaws. And I would certainly consider reading future novels in this genre should Keeland venture down that path again. Albeit, hoping she mends some inconsistencies.

Three out of 5 stars for "The Unraveling."