



The Philadelphia Quarry

Howard Owen

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Black is back. Willie Black was last seen, in *Oregon Hill*, risking the final tattered remnants of his checkered career - and his life - to free a man almost everyone else believed was guilty. Willie's still covering the night police beat with its DDGBs and dirt naps, still avoiding the hawk that periodically swoops down to pluck away a few more of his colleagues in a floundering business. He still drinks too much and disobeys too much. The only thing that keeps him employed: He's a damn fine reporter. Even his beleaguered bosses would concede that.

Willie finds himself neck-deep in a part of Richmond that a boy growing up in Oregon Hill could only experience through illicit midnight sorties at the city's most exclusive swimming hole. The Quarry was where Alicia Parker Simpson identified Richard Slade as her rapist, 28 years ago. Then, five days after DNA evidence freed Slade from the prison system in which he had spent his adult life, Alicia Simpson is shot to death.

Hardly anyone doubts that Richard Slade did it. Who could blame him? But Willie has his doubts. When the full weight of the city's old money falls on him, trying to crush the story, he only becomes more determined to chase the thing that always seems to get him in trouble - the truth. The fact that Richard Slade is his cousin, a link to his long-dead African-American father, only makes Willie more tenacious.

In the end, Willie will be drawn back to the Philadelphia Quarry, where it all started so long ago and in whose murky waters the truth lies.

The Philadelphia Quarry Details

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From Reader Review The Philadelphia Quarry for online ebook

Teresa Lavender says

won this here on goodreads. Great story! Perfect rollercoaster ride.

Richard Theobald says

A great read... Wonderfully constructed characters, a plot full of twists and turns, and descriptive detail that takes the reader well inside the author's mind...Willie Black embodies the best of everyday slobs....via his smoking, his drinking, his cynicism and his lusting after at least one of his ex-wives....and yet there is an heroic aura about him as he persists in chasing the TRUTH.... he really and truly believes he is on a mission, and it goes well beyond the fact that the aggrieved is a distant relative...and it certainly has little to do with his job description as reporter-writer for a third rate newspaper that places little value on scruples or righteous indignation... He is, essentially, a neanderthal with a conscience....driven to pursue facts that will right a wrong...and drinking his way into oblivion as he does so...[return]Nevertheless, this is a terrific read because the reader learns something in virtually every chapter....can relate to at least one of the myriad characters.....and there is enough suspense and mystery on these pages to propel even the most jaded reader forward in a quest for illumination....And, alas, after 200+ pages...we find illumination and a weird sort of justice, not totally satisfying....but justice nonetheless.[return]Read it...then wait for the next chapter in Willie's World!

Barbara Mitchell says

The Philadelphia Quarry is Howard Owen's second Willie Black mystery. I must go back and read the first one because I love Willie despite myself. He chain smokes unfiltered cigarettes, drinks way too much, cusses like an old-time sailor, and other assorted sins, i.e. has neglected his only child until she is a grown woman and now he's trying to make it up to her. And yet you just have to like this guy. For all his faults, his heart is in the right place and he is (miracle of miracles) a true journalist, a man who actually tries as hard as he can to write the truth regardless of whose toes he steps on.

That last fact is what gets him in trouble in this story. DNA has freed a black man, Richard Slade, who served 28 years for the rape of a teenage girl from a wealthy white family. She had identified him, but he didn't do it. Then a few days after his release, the woman who had been raped is murdered. Of course everyone believes Slade killed her. Who else had a better motive? As Black investigates the story he first believes Slade did it, but comes to see that he might be innocent.

This novel has an excellent plot, some wonderful characters who are either endearing (like Black) or craven cowards, poor folks or snobbish rich people. Love 'em all. Willie Black's family will make you laugh. His mother, for instance, is a pot smoker and alcoholic, but when Black starts to light a cigarette in her living room she makes him go outside to smoke. Meanwhile, she and a guy who lives with them are sitting on the couch sharing an ashtray and a toke. Scenes like this just made my day.

If you like offbeat characters, a good story, and a hero who thumbs his nose at pompous bosses, and gets

away with it, you must read *The Philadelphia Quarry*.

Recommended.

Source: LibraryThing win.

Deb Mj says

The second in the Willie Black series, this book is just as solid as the first. Willie is a great character, the plot is solid and the tone of the book is gritty and entertaining. Hope we'll get a third Willie Black book sooner rather than later.

Sheila says

Willie Black works the night cop beat at a Richmond Virginia newspaper, where technology and the economy's downturn combine to darken his prospects. He and his colleagues await the day when they'll be told to clear out their desks, but surely there's still a place for honest reporting and investigation; it's just hard persuading those paying the bills that real news shouldn't be silenced.

Howard Owen's *The Philadelphia Quarry* is his second Willie Black novel. Favorite characters are back, but readers really don't need to have met them before; the story stands alone as a fast-flowing, deeply evocative, character driven mystery, with just occasional enticing reminders of what has gone before.

A black man is released from jail after DNA evidence overturns his conviction for rape. But the victim's family carries lots of weight in town and on the newspaper. When questions are asked about the past, the powers that be go to great lengths to silence them. Meanwhile Richard Slade is arrested again for another crime, and Willie finds himself teamed with his ex-wife, searching for evidence to support his growing belief in the other man's innocence. The paper's somewhat racist opinion columns make Willie's welcome on the wrong side of town rather uneasy. But Willie Black has secrets and sources of his own.

A modern noir mystery with convincing characters, evocative locations, and a wonderful feel for the changing world of news, *The Philadelphia Quarry* offers a plot that's neither overly complex nor too simple, while exploring the relationships of parents and children through families rich and poor, black and white, and in-between.

Disclosure: I received a free bound galley of this novel from the publisher with a request for an honest review.

John Kues says

First book of Howard Owen that I have read, really enjoyed it. Smart dialogue and interesting plot. Newspaper reporter in present times, and seems to present the present day economic plight of newspapers well. Willie Black doesn't like being told what to write about or what he should or shouldn't do really. Black

man gets out of prison after DNA proves him innocent 28 yrs late, of rape of a white girl. No one really believes him innocent, and the paper's editorial lays it on thick that it is a shame this guy is released. The now woman's family is wealthy and influential. Then days after he is out the woman is killed. Back to jail he goes. Interesting twists. It seems that all reporters and private investigators these days involve heavy drinking, and divorced guys. Willie has been married three times. Anyway, this was a quick enjoyable read.

Chris says

Enjoyed the second Willie Black story as much as the first, what a great character. I would recommend reading *Oregon Hill* prior to this one, readers will miss some background about the characters if they read these books out of order.

Tony says

THE PHILADELPHIA QUARRY. (2013). Howard Owen. **.

This is the second novel by this author that features Willie Black, a black newspaper reporter in Richmond. The previous novel that introduced him was "Oregon Hill." I've ordered this earlier novel to see if Willie comes out any clearer in that one. In this novel, he gets involved with the release of a black man who was convicted 28-years earlier of raping a white girl by a quarry on the grounds of Richmond's wealthier class of whites. Because of the magic of DNA tagging, he has been subsequently cleared of that crime. Soon after his release, however, the girl who had identified him as her rapist was shot and killed by someone who was identified as our freed perpetrator. It made sense to most of the white people of Richmond that resentment of having one's life taken away for that period of time could lead to further revenge, but the ex-prisoner insists he didn't do it. Willie, of course, is on the side of the underdog, and will do what he can to free the accused. Most of the characters in the novel are cutouts, and the dialogs are trite. Willie steps off the stage of "The Front Page," but with trite quips that have been used before. I've ordered the earlier novel to see if Willie had a better start, since "Oregon Hill" was a nominee for the Hammond Prize. This sequel doesn't cut it.

Ashley says

While I enjoyed reading this book, it was occasionally hard for me to follow the characters and their relationship to each other. This book was a sequel and since I have not read the first one that may have played a part in my confusion. The novel was well written and was able to maintain a sense of mystery during the whole book. It was written in the first person, which has been a writing style I have never really enjoyed reading. Overall it was book that I enjoyed reading and will recommend to my fellow readers.

Alison Hardtmann says

The Philadelphia Quarry is the second installment in Howard Owen's excellent series about Willie Black, an older journalist holding on to his job in a dying industry. He's made his share of mistakes and continues to make a few more, but he does have a degree of self-awareness and a compassion for the people around him

in Richmond, VA.

Years ago, a black man was convicted of the rape of a wealthy young lady, but DNA evidence has now set him free. Willie Black's newspaper had been vocal in their support of his incarceration, and when the lady in question is murdered soon after his release, the paper renews their editorials calling him a monster. But Black has his doubts, and while he isn't convinced of the man's guilt, he isn't sure he's innocent either. And so Black goes to work ferreting out the truth, no matter who he offends and whether he'll have a job at the end of the day.

Owen's series is a pleasure to read; well plotted and adeptly written, Owen has also created a fascinating protagonist. Black is deeply flawed, but compassionate and very likable. He may not be dependable, but he does try. And he'd be great fun to have a drink with, as long as you aren't depending on him for a ride home.

Cindy Joyce says

This book is really only Three and a half stars but gets the extra half because it is literally set in my back yard. I would love to know how the author came to know about the Quarry. It was a decent mystery and having another mystery set in Richmond is always fun.

Nicole Hood says

My second Howard Owen book. He lives in my mother's building here in Richmond (and writes about places that I know). It was fine, but time for me to move on from him. Perhaps I'll return to him during the summer when the weather is hot and I want easy entertainment.

Betty Dickie says

Oh, Willie! Another good solid mystery from Mr. Owen, with lots of local color and stuff only Richmonders would know. Yummy.

David Marshall says

This is beautifully written but ends up a rather uninspiring story about an investigative journalist managing to prevent a miscarriage of justice.

<http://opionator.wordpress.com/2013/0...>

Don Gorman says

This is a fun little page turner. The ending is a little too easy to deduce but it is very well written and Willie

Black is a great protagonist. Mysteries based around newspaper writers always seem to be fun and this one is no exception. There is a lot of relationship intrigue, old family money power brokers, good old fashioned racism in modern times, and a full quota of the weakness of man. It was a good time.
