

Judy J. Johnson

THIEF
of
REASON



a novel

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**A novel view of
dogmatism**

BY JUDY J. JOHNSON



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What people are saying

"This lively tale captures family conflict in a most entertaining manner while, without being preachy, teaching important lessons along the way. The story involves family dynamics that will be all too familiar to many. Johnson expertly presents the difficulties that arise when well-entrenched, emotionally-laden beliefs are challenged, and the damage this brings to valued relationships. Readers will not only be entertained but will come away with important psychological insights that are likely to resonate in their own lives."

—Professor James Alcock, PhD, Department of Psychology, York University, Toronto. Author of *BELIEF: What it Means to Believe and Why Our Convictions Are So Compelling* (Prometheus Books, 2018) as well as many scientific and academic articles.

Judy J. Johnson

AUTHOR, ACADEMIC



about the author

Judy J. Johnson is Professor Emerita, Psychology Department, Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta. Her M.Sc. and Ph.D. theses, and her postdoc fellowship at the Ellis Institute in NYC, explored the biological, social, and psychological forces that insidiously shape thirteen characteristics of dogmatism's rigid, unique profile.

Following her experience as a therapist and supervisor of therapy, Johnson taught clinical psychology courses—The Theory and Practice of Psychotherapy, Personality Theory, and Abnormal Behaviour—for twenty-two years to Mount Royal University students, inmates in two of Alberta's correctional institutions, and Indigenous women on the Sarcee Reserve. In the summers of 1990 and 1991, she also taught students in Gaza, Israel, during the intifadah.

Johnson has given numerous presentations on dogmatism to academics at Canadian and international universities, including Cambridge, U.K., and psychology conferences, including the Canadian Psychological Association (Toronto), and American Psychological Association (New York City).

She has also provided lively, interactive sessions for business organizations and nongovernmental agencies in the general public.



■ synopsis, *Thief of Reason*

Like pesky wasps buzzing circles around us, people who act as if they're the sole expert on a subject put us on edge. We bristle at their arrogant, rigid certainty and refusal to change their minds in the face of abundant evidence that should give reason to pause.

Thief of Reason opens with a gripping scene of rising tension during a family dinner conversation. Polarized viewpoints spark a heated argument between an intolerant, dogmatic father and his son, Rick, a bright, twenty-eight-year-old university student who's determined to understand his fractured relationship with his father and capture the heart of his new love—a political neophyte who, unlike himself, is devoutly religious.

With a lively injection of humour, Johnson skillfully contrasts closed-minded characters with those who are more open-minded, respectful, and inclusive—those who get second dinner invitations. Readers will think of people they've met or are related to, partners they've loved and left, bosses and coworkers they've endured, or candidates they've unwittingly voted for.

Compelling, insightful, and unforgettable, *Thief of Reason* peers through a powerful psychological lens that's delightfully original and life-changing.

Press Release

March 19, 2021



TORONTO and CALGARY—Iguana Books is pleased to announce the release of *Thief of Reason*, a timely and engaging novel by award-winning teacher and Calgary psychology professor (Emeritus) Judy J. Johnson.

In *Thief of Reason*, Johnson confronts one of the most pressing dangers of our time—dogmatic thinking in all its forms. Written for a general audience, this book is a powerful and fascinating portrayal of characters who will remind readers of people they've met or are related to, partners they've loved and left, bosses and coworkers they've endured, or candidates they've unwittingly voted for. Given the perils of dogmatic certainty in these uncertain times, this novel offers a timely probe into a personality trait that ruins the best intentions of science, politics, religion, and interpersonal relationships.

Johnson asks: Why do some people act as if they're the sole expert on a subject? Why do they refuse to change their minds, even in the face of abundant evidence that should give reason to pause? Like pesky wasps buzzing circles around us, characters in *Thief of Reason* put us on edge. We bristle at their arrogant, rigid certainty that ruptures close-knit families and friendships, especially during holidays and special celebrations.

This novel engages the reader with dogmatic characters who are in sharp contrast with their more open-minded counterparts—people who get second dinner invitations. It opens with a gripping scene of rising tension during a family conversation on Boxing Day when Rick, a bright, twenty-eight-year-old who's finishing his fourth-year of university, breaks a promise to his sister not to raise or respond to polarized topics during a traditional holiday celebration with his extended family. At the family dinner table, political and religious viewpoints spark a heated argument between Rick and his intolerant, dogmatic father. Later that evening, when his father brutally attacks him, Rick counterattacks with uncontrollable, explosive rage that exposes the depths of his life-long, repressed anger.



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Determined to understand his fractured relationship with his father and recapture the heart of his new love, a devoutly religious woman whose devotion he arrogantly questioned, Rick does something he never thought possible: he goes for therapy. The challenge is daunting, but throughout various scenes in which an intriguing range of characters challenge him, Rick gradually glimpses and integrates aspects of his personality that were formerly hidden to himself. As well, he also gains a more generous understanding of his father, a man driven by demons from his past.

With a lively injection of humour, Johnson, a clinical psychologist, peers through a powerful psychological lens to skillfully craft a compelling, insightful, and unforgettable story that's delightfully original and life-changing. *Thief of Reason* is a triumph of character insight that, throughout its 243 pages, shifts the dynamics of relationships such that, in the final scenes, readers will take their own emotional journey inward.

Author Judy J. Johnson, a compelling presence for decades within academe and a highly engaging speaker, is available for readings, speaking engagements, including podcasts, and other media appearances to discuss her book in connection with current events.

For speaking engagements,

Judy Johnson's contact link can be found at:
www.dogmatism.ca

For all other media inquiries, contact:

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