

*A CLAIRE ABBOTT MYSTERY*

# RACE AGAINST TIME

Gail Anderson-Dargatz

# RACE AGAINST TIME

*A CLAIRE ABBOTT MYSTERY*

Gail Anderson-Dargatz



RAVEN BOOKS

*an imprint of*

ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS

Copyright © 2016 Gail Anderson-Dargatz

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system now known or to be invented, without permission in writing from the publisher.

**Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

Anderson-Dargatz, Gail, 1963–, author  
Race against time / Gail Anderson-Dargatz.  
(Rapid reads)

Issued in print and electronic formats.

ISBN 978-1-4598-0843-0 (pbk.).—ISBN 978-1-4598-0844-7 (pdf).—

ISBN 978-1-4598-0845-4 (epub)

I. Title. II. Series: Rapid reads

PS8551.N3574R33 2016 C813'.54 C2016-900467-8  
C2016-900468-6

First published in the United States, 2016  
Library of Congress Control Number: 2016931821

**Summary:** Small-town journalist Claire Abbott investigates a bomb threat in the local high school in this work of crime fiction. (RL 3,3)



*Orca Book Publishers is dedicated to preserving the environment and has printed this book on Forest Stewardship Council® certified paper.*

Orca Book Publishers gratefully acknowledges the support for its publishing programs provided by the following agencies: the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund and the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and the Book Publishing Tax Credit.

Cover design by Jenn Playford  
Cover photography by Getty Images

ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS  
www.orcabook.com

Printed and bound in Canada.

19 18 17 16 • 4 3 2 1

*For Mitch, as always*

# ONE

I nside the school, the bomb squad tried to find a bomb that could go off at any moment. Police cars and fire trucks surrounded the building. Their emergency lights blazed in the dreary light of this winter afternoon. I shivered from cold as I waited beside the cop cars.

The students had been evacuated. They now stood in the snow-covered sports field below the school. The kids knew someone had made a bomb threat. They were also watched over by their teachers. So I was surprised to see a teenage boy run into a

side entrance of the school. He wore a red hoodie with a black skull on the back.

“Hey, stop!” I cried. Then I turned to the nearest cop, Officer Banks. “A kid just ran inside.”

“We have things under control,” Banks said. “All the students have been evacuated.”

“There’s a boy in that building,” I insisted. “If that school blows, he’ll die!”

The cop turned his back on me. When I tried to tell him again, he ignored me as if I wasn’t there.

I tried the firefighters. “There’s a kid in there!” But they also acted as if I was invisible.

I bolted inside the school after the kid, hoping to stop him. The rows of lockers seemed to go on forever as I raced from room to room. I had only minutes to find the boy and get out of this building before it blew.

Yet as I turned the corner to race down another hallway, I saw a janitor calmly

mopping the floor. "Can I help you?" he said.

"What are you doing here?" I yelled as I ran toward him. "There's a bomb. This place is about to explode!"

The janitor looked at me blankly.

"Didn't you see the cops and their sniffer dog?" I asked him. "They cleared the building. They're trying to track down the bomb before it goes off."

"Why are *you* here then?" he asked me.

"I followed a kid inside. Did he run this way?"

"You shouldn't be here."

Yeah, I thought, tell me something I don't know. "I tried to tell the cops the boy was here, but they wouldn't believe me." I started off again down the hall. "I've got to find him." I glanced back briefly as I called, "Get the hell out of here!"

"I can help," the janitor said, but he didn't run after me. He just stood there

in his gray uniform, holding the mop. Even so, as I turned the corner and started down the next hallway, I heard him repeat himself. He sounded as if he were right behind me. "I can help."

Then the boom of the explosion sounded, throwing me to the floor. A moment later a ball of fire shot down the hallway toward me. I knew in that instant, before the searing heat hit, that I would certainly die.