

That Day the Rabbi Left Town

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Rabbi Small comes out of retirement to solve his final case

Retired from his job at the synagogue in Barnard's Crossing, Massachusetts, Rabbi Small now teaches Judaic studies at a Boston college. Finally able to enjoy theological contemplation without the annoyance of temple politics, the rabbi is shocked when one of his colleagues is found dead in his car—and the clues at the scene point to murder.

The deceased English professor was notoriously selfish and held long-standing grudges against other members of the faculty, so the list of suspects is long. But when the rabbi who took over Small's position in Barnard's Crossing is implicated, it falls to Small to clear his name and find the true killer, one last time.

That Day the Rabbi Left Town Details


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Author : Harry Kemelman

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From Reader Review That Day the Rabbi Left Town for online ebook

Fred Eisenhut says

OK

Cate says

Very enjoyable, finally found out what pilpul means in Hebrew, lol! Interesting insights into education and philosophy.

Julia says

Rabbi Small has been the rabbi of the Temple in Barnard's Crossing for 25 years. That's long enough, he decides. He resigns to teach at Windermere College, where they are starting a Judaic Studies department. Sure, there's a murder, which it takes a lot of setting up and borders on the tedious, but at one point Rabbi Small's successor says he is not a man of the cloth.

That confused me. Turns out, the phrase came from liveried servants, and that priests wore God's cloth. Jews don't and didn't wear uniforms, and rabbis don't have a "uniform," so they are not men (or women) of the cloth. It's for little moments like this-- that cause me to do research that I enjoy these slight mysteries, that Rabbi Small doesn't so much detect, as explain.

Alex Shrugged says

"That Day the Rabbi Left Town" is one of the Rabbi Small murder mysteries. It's pretty good in that it doesn't dwell too much into Jewish politics and it doesn't date itself too much like previous Rabbi Small novels.

The Story: Rabbi Small has finally resigned from the synagogue and a new rabbi has taken his place. If you will recall the first Rabbi Small novel, Friday the Rabbi Slept Late, Rabbi Small was the new rabbi in town (over 20 years earlier) and he was connected with a murder when a body was found in his car. Now the new rabbi is connected with a murder and Rabbi Small helps to solve the case.

Any problems with the novel? Well... it has adult subjects in the sense that it talks about sex occasionally but I've seen worse stuff in commercials on TV. The novel also moves along a little more quickly than I think is credible. The characters seem so self-revealing as if they have been in therapy a little too long to be good for them.

Finally, it is clear that law enforcement is doing things that would not be allowed in the current day, so that tends to date the novel. You see... most people of my age and older would find what the police do in this

novel to be reassuring and normal. Young people today would get the impression that the police are doing something terribly wrong (and technically it is wrong) and that the police are corrupt. If you get the impression from this book that the police are corrupt then you are reading the book out of context.

This is my second time reading the book but it's been so long since the last time that forgot who had committed the murder. It was a mystery to me... again.

Meredith says

Definitely a better ending to the series than the previous book that was originally to end the series, though not as good as the earlier ones. There's definitely a cynicism that's snuck into the later books. Particularly a cynicism about higher education.

The other short-coming is that the guy-you-know-will-end-up-dead is overly similar to the previous book. Nothing redeemable in him and as much as not, I didn't really care if they figured out who killed him, other than to clear the new rabbi's name.

The ending of this one (and the previous one) even lean a bit toward noir.

Carmen says

Kemelman's books are easy and relaxing to read. The characters are well rounded and the story lines clean and uncomplicated. I love the series.

Sandy Shin says

I wish this series had many more volumes

Melissa says

I enjoyed this book. I have not read Rabbi Small before, and enjoyed the information he shares on the Jewish faith as he works through his communities and the mystery at hand. A little choppy writing off and on, though, in my opinion. There were several places where I turned back to see if I had accidentally skipped pages, only to discover that I had not! Not Chaim Potok, but a stimulating enough mystery that I am willing to try another to see what else I can learn.

Rachel says

Great

Joan Horkey says

Entertaining

Melissa says

I believe this is the last book in the series. The Rabbi goes back to teach at Windemere and a despised Professor is found deceased after the new rabbi has threatened him since he had peeped at his wife. Did the man die of a heart attack? Did the rabbi indeed kill him? Of course Rabbi Small solves the puzzle.

Hapzydeco says

Harry Kemelman combines the tenets of Judaism with mystery. However, this attempt seemed to fall short of the standards that Kemelman set for his previous novels in this series. Perhaps it is just hard to say good-bye to an old friend.

Adele says

Read all the other "Rabbi" books 20 and plus years ago. Didn't even know about this one until I saw it in a used bookstore! I liked it well enough... like seeing an old friend.

Willa says

Another airplane mystery -- I buy them at the library dime rack and save them for trips. Novels are like boxes of chocolates -- I can only read them when I have a few straight hours and no responsibilities, because I can't let them go.

I've read several Rabbi Small mysteries and this was a good sample of the type. David Small is older now than in previous books I've read, in his 50's, and works as a teacher at a local university. The body of an elderly and disliked colleague is found buried in the snow and in reading what results you get a glimpse of small-university politics and scandal.

I tend to like slow-paced, rambling mysteries and this one fit the bill. If you like more excitement it might be better to start with one of the earlier Rabbi Small mysteries where he is usually more directly involved and the murder has immediate repercussions in his life.

Alberto says

The last Rabbi Small novel, published just a few months before Mr Kemelman's death. I just learned about this book, having read the previous ten books over a decade ago. It was like running into an old friend.

The pacing is not as good as his other books, the murder doesn't even occur until almost 2/3 of the way into the book. Also, despite the introduction of many potential suspects, the actual killer is quite obvious (not the case in any of the previous books).

Nevertheless, if you're a fan it is a good read. And if you're not yet a fan, then definitely don't read this. Start with Friday the Rabbi Slept Late.
