



Friday the Rabbi Slept Late

Harry Kemelman

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First in the *New York Times*–bestselling series and winner of the Edgar Award: A new rabbi in a small New England town investigates the murder of a nanny.

David Small is the new rabbi in the small Massachusetts town of Barnard's Crossing. Although he'd rather spend his days engaged in Torah study and theological debate, the daily chores of synagogue life are all-consuming—that is, until the day a nanny's body is found on the rain-soaked asphalt of the temple's parking lot.

When the young woman's purse is discovered in Rabbi Small's car, he will have to use his scholarly skills and Talmudic wisdom—and collaborate with the Irish-Catholic police chief—to exonerate himself and find the real killer.

Blending this unorthodox sleuth's quick intellect with thrilling action, *Friday the Rabbi Slept Late* is the exciting first installment of the beloved bestselling mystery series that offers a Jewish twist on the clerical mystery, a delightful discovery for fans of Father Brown and Father Dowling or readers of Faye Kellerman's suspense novels set in the Orthodox community.

Friday the Rabbi Slept Late Details

Date : Published August 4th 2015 by Open Road Media Mystery & Thriller (first published 1964)

ISBN :

Author : Harry Kemelman

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Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Literature, Jewish, Crime, Cozy Mystery

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From Reader Review Friday the Rabbi Slept Late for online ebook

Jo says

A brisk and interesting read, the mystery was less compelling than the setting. The one question I had was when exactly this was supposed to be set, I guess the 1950s? It was one of those books where everyone was vaguely likable, had their quirks, and were basically genial even though murder was involved. Kind of a like a Jewish The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency

Patrick J. McAdam says

After seeing on Bookbub that Amazon was offering this on Kindle for \$1.99, I decided to purchase. What a great find! The storytelling was excellent and I learned some things about the Jewish religion. I'll definitely download the next in the series!

Steve says

Rabbi David Small leads a temple in Massachusetts outside of the big city. He and his wife are just finishing their first year with the congregation and the board is considering whether or not to retain the rabbi. He did manage to make a detractor in one of his judicial decisions, so when a young woman's body is found on the temple grounds with some evidence that could implicate the rabbi, things get sticky. The local police force, including Chief Lanigan, work on finding the young woman's murderer. Small does what he can to help, and works with the Chief on evaluating evidence more than one time. This was contemporary when published fifty years ago; the stereotyping sometimes rings uncomfortably. But within these pages lie two things which prove a mystery's worth. The evidence to solve is all there. (I didn't.) And for a mystery-lover who cut his teeth on Sherlock Holmes long ago, getting resolution in thoughtful ways, as do Gamache, and Poirot and Sidney Chambers in Grantchester puts this opening to the series in good stead.. Book two is surely on the horizon.

Sue Dix says

This is the first in the Rabbi Small mystery series and it was charming. In the course of the book, we learn a little Talmudic law and become acquainted with what a rabbi is and does and learn differences between Judaism and other religions. A really good mystery and an extremely tolerant police chief round out this delightful book. I look forward to reading more books in this series.

Greg Rothenberger says

I've always enjoyed this series, and have decided to read them all again. Rabbi Small has always been one of my favorite characters. It may have something to do with this being the first "adult" mystery I ever read. You

know, something other than the Hardy Boys or Nancy Drew.

In terms of sub-genre, I'm tempted to classify this one as just about a "cozy." With the obvious differences that the main characters are male, it's set in New England, and religion figures heavily in the book. The plot is pretty simple; what makes the book is the characterizations and the little subplots of temple life. The religious discussions between Rabbi Small (Jewish, obviously) and Chief Lanigan (Roman Catholic) are also a big part of the book's charm. In fact, I enjoyed Kemelman's book *Conversations with Rabbi Small* for that very reason. Published in 1964, it's somewhat dated today, but that's just another reason I like it.

This is one of the two mystery series I like to read again and again, along with Joseph Hansen's Dave Brandstetter series. I would very much recommend it to anyone who likes well-crafted mysteries with a touch of religion, and enjoys early 60's nostalgia.

Dawn says

Out of an entirely random find at the library, I've found a great little mystery series.

The charm of this book was not so much in the mystery itself, which was middling, but in the Jewish culture portrayed and explained and in the character of Rabbi Small, who is a naive but clever intellectual with out of the box solutions to Temple matters and murder mysteries.

Nolan says

First, even those who don't think much of mysteries may well like this book. Indeed, this entire series is a pleasant read. Rabbi David Small finds himself in a nasty situation as this book opens. He's a bit of a scholarly type, and he doesn't necessarily do what other rabbis do in terms of easily mixing with other congregations in the community. As a result, the members of his temple question whether he should be reinstated when his contract is out at the end of the high holy days in September. He's quite sure he's about to be ousted, and he prepares to begin the search for a new position.

In the meantime, young Elsbeth, Bleech, a nanny in the employ of a nightclub owner and his wife, is murdered hours after she learns she's pregnant. Her body is dumped in the temple yard and her handbag is found the next day in poor Rabbi Small's car. Clearly, this lovable thoughtful rabbi needs whatever kind of miracle he can get to save him. In the end, it's his love of the Talmud and his own thoughtful detective work that makes the difference. If you're unfamiliar with the gentle, thoughtful, philosophical Rabbi Small, you're missing a great literary friend.

This is a super short read, and it's very well written. All of the characters are people you will quickly come to appreciate, and the ending isn't necessarily one you'll see coming. For those who want a nice clean mystery devoid of strong language and sexual descriptions, this may well be your kind of book. As for me, I hope to visit Rabbi Small and his synagogue filled with its fascinating characters again in the not too distant future.

Ed says

#1 in the Rabbi Small series. "1965 Edgar Award for Best First Novel; Finalist 1965 Gold Dagger Award " Auspicious start to a wonderful series.

Rabbi Small mystery - A young woman's body is left on the grounds of the temple and the renewal of the rabbi's contract is debated.

Dorine says

That was a fun, clean, and interesting whodunit that kept you guessing right to the end. Would like to read more in the series. It was especially interesting to learn about Jewish lifestyle and beliefs.

Tony says

FRIDAY THE RABBI SLEPT LATE. (1964) Harry Kemelman. ****1/2.

I came late to the discovery of Kemelman's novels featuring the exploits of Rabbi David Small. This was the first novel in his series featuring the rabbi, and won the Edgar in its publishing year for "Best First Novel." This is one terrific series – many of which I have previously read. Since I read them so long ago, I had forgotten most of the details of Kemelman's techniques, but was pleased to rediscover them. The novel ultimately brings out the reasoning power of the rabbi in solving a murder mystery, but also takes the opportunity to explore various facets of the Jewish faith. If you have not found Kemelman yet, you will be delighted.

Stephanie says

When I was a small child, my mother read this series about a Rabbi who solves mysteries using his Talmudic exegetical skills. I guess that is why I picked this book up at the library when it caught my eye. It's hardly deep reading, but it was really fun and engaging. Also, I have no idea where this particular book is in the series, and I didn't feel like I was missing anything. Fun read.

Jim says

I was skimming through my TBR shelf and having a hard time deciding what to read next. Although I had read this a long time ago I had picked it up when I saw it on sale at Amazon. It is a short book (208 pages) and I decided now was a good time to reread this gem.

Friday the Rabbi Slept Late was published in 1964 and won a 1965 Edgar Award for Best First Novel. At the

time it was a huge bestseller and was the beginning of a new series ... the Rabbi Small mysteries. One of the charms of the book was not only do we have a mystery but the opportunity to learn something about Jewish culture.

David Small is the rabbi in the small Massachusetts town of Barnard's Crossing. He is young and relatively new having been there for about one year. In fact his contract is up renewal. He has supporters but there are those who do not see him as their view of what a rabbi should be. When the body of a young nanny, Elspeth Bleech, is found on the temple property and her purse in the rabbi's car he becomes a suspect in the crime.

Hugh Lanigan is the Irish-Catholic police chief of Barnard's Crossing and initially questions Rabbi Small because Elspeth Bleech's body was found on the temple grounds and her purse was in his car. But a bond develops between the two and what appears to be the start of a friendship. They have several enjoyable and scholarly conversations. When things start turning nasty in the small town Rabbi Small employs his Talmudic wisdom and scholarly skill to solve the crime and reveal the identify of the murderer.

Although this story centers around the murder of a young woman there is not a lot of violence. The crime itself is described briefly and only out of necessity. Rabbi Small is a very likable character as is Hugh Lanigan. There are several characters who are not so likable so you are left guessing which one may be the murderer. Overall this was a very enjoyable little mystery. In the summertime perhaps a nice choice for a beach read. Or a good bedtime read at anytime. Now that I have read this I am going to have to read Saturday the Rabbi Went Hungry.

Michael Brown says

The thinking man detective has been the staple of Mr. Kemelman's style in the short story. Many asked for a full length version of his work but he said many times that his Professor Wert character just did not fit in any of his attempts. While working on a non-fiction piece, things came together where he could create a new character in the style of Wert and by adding a religious touch as so many other authors had done, he could make the old idea work for him. So we now have Rabbi Small in a New England suburb of Boston tasked with gaining the trust of his congregation and solving a possible murder where he is the prime suspect.

Leslie says

4½ stars.

I had been vaguely aware of this series before but hadn't paid it much attention until I was introduced to the Guardian newspaper's list of 1000 Novels Everyone Should Read and found this first book of the series in the Crime section.

I am so glad that I finally read this! I found the rabbi David Small very likeable, although he played a smaller part in the story than I expected. The relationship between the Catholic chief of police and the Jewish rabbi promises to be an ongoing pleasure. I hadn't realized until I started reading this that it was set in Massachusetts, which as a MA native is a plus for me.

The mystery itself was excellently crafted. The pointers to the culprit were there yet the revelation of who it

was still surprised me (even though I had noticed one of the biggest clues!).

Della says

very enjoyable light reading-- perfect for a few long train rides. its a simple murder mystery without any gore, and if you are the careful reader, you will figure out the suspect quite quickly. if that poses no challenge, you do also get to learn a bit about the role of rabbis in general, and how they fit within their congregation.

funny thing is, the rabbi character is quite a scholar, which is sort of why he is mixed up in this murder business to begin with. you could almost substitute the rabbi and his congregation with any group that has has a scholar as their go-to-guy. imagine a research scientist in the place of the rabbi. the story would work just as well, except that the rabbi is incredibly patient rather than anxious and frustrated at the slow progress of the investigation.
