



Thursday the Rabbi Walked Out

Harry Kemelman

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A vicious anti-Semite is murdered and Rabbi Small must defend his congregants from being falsely accused in this thrilling *New York Times* bestseller

Barnard's Crossing, Massachusetts, is thriving. Every year, more young couples move to this cozy New England village to raise their families, and many of them join Rabbi David Small's synagogue. But the town is jolted out of domestic tranquility when Ellsworth Jordon, the town selectman, is murdered. An outspoken anti-Semite, and one of the town's richest and most powerful men, it seems like everyone had a reason to dislike Jordan. When he's murdered, not even the rabbi is surprised.

Police suspicion falls on several upstanding members of the synagogue, so Rabbi Small endeavors to clear them the way only he can—with God at his back and the Talmud in hand. Surprises lurk at every turn as the rabbi narrows down the long list of suspects to find the killer.

Thursday the Rabbi Walked Out Details

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Author : Harry Kemelman

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From Reader Review Thursday the Rabbi Walked Out for online ebook

Kim says

This book was interesting in a variety of ways. For one, I learned quite a bit about Judaism. I liked the characters developments and it was interesting to see the way the Rabbi viewed women. The mystery slowly unfolded and was tied up neatly at the end.

Rhiannon Grant says

A fairly run of the mill mystery story; overall, told quite slowly, with the emphasis on small town life rather than detective work. Some nice character points. Enjoyable, though not the thriller the cover art might lead one to expect!

Geneva says

I think the rabbi is finally starting to get on my nerves.

Sharon Barrow Wilfong says

The most interesting parts of Kemelman's stories are not his murder mysteries, although they are entertaining, but his analysis and comparisons of the different branches of Judaism (orthodox, conservative, reformed) to Christianity and other religions.

It gave me insight into one man's view of his own beliefs as well as others.

All of his stories take place inside the context of a Jewish community and the relationships with each others and the non Jewish believers they interact with in their neighborhoods and work.

Lora says

This series is always satisfying. In this installment, the dead body doesn't show up until 41% of the way through the book. That's a bit late, but the first half was good nonetheless. with interesting conversations about anti-Semitism, the essential meaning of Bar Mitzvah, the push towards gender equality in religion and Judaism as a religion centered around the home.

One fun moment in the book was when the rabbi's wife showed ingenuity and nerve by doing some undercover detective work on the phone, impressing the police chief. The silliest moment in the book was when an 18 year old reacted to being sent to his room by saying "Oh, stink!" Who says that?!

Carol says

This was my least favorite book of the series. It just didn't seem to have the "zing" of the previous ones that I've read. Usually the reader is treated to the thoughts of the major characters. With short chapters, this is feasible and desirable. The thoughts of the characters in this volume seemed to be edited for brevity and not the usual chattiness that I became used to. The women characters were either included as a foil for a male character or extremely typecast, as the whining mother-in-law. Also, in this volume the author seems to be making fun of the women's lib movement, which irritated me. One character even says that he had "his girl" make copies for everyone. I'm sorry to say this is a book I'm not recommending.

Sherrie says

This is a new author for me and a new series. Although this is also a great stand alone book. I really enjoyed reading this book. The author explains lots of things about the Jewish religion in this book. Which I like as I've always found the Jewish religion kind of mysterious. But now lots of things I didn't know makes sense. When the clues started I had no idea who the murderer was, but as the suspects were slowly taken out of the picture I finally figured out who the killer was. Very good book.

Cate says

Fascinating read.

Susan says

I enjoy the Rabbi Small books very much. I was not too surprised by the identity of the murderer (although I wavered from time to time as there were so many suspects who had cause to murder the victim). What I hadn't figured out was the actual reason for the murder and how the culprit managed to provide himself with a bogus alibi. I didn't learn as much about Judaism in this book as is in the previous books although there was an interesting discussion of anti-Semitism.

John R. Goyer says

A good and enjoyable read, but nothing special. Made me think of a made for TV movie that's ok to pass an evening but not much more - perhaps a little too much of his boiler plate drama diluting the murder mystery.

Sandy Shin says

A great series of mysteries with a Talmudic reasoning, and very human problem solver. If you haven't read them, you should. Z

Also available as an audible book

Jamie Collins says

Another neat little murder mystery, which serves as an excuse for lessons in Judaism. The mystery is slight, and some of the characterizations are downright odd, but I like Rabbi Small and his implacable resistance to the whims of the temple board of directors.

He refuses to participate in a Bar Mitzvah ceremony for a rich man who never had a party when he was a child.

“Mr. Segal was Bar Mitzvah when he was thirteen whether he knows it or not. There’s no special rite or ritual required. It’s automatic. It’s not like baptism. It isn’t integration into the religion or the tribe....

“If you want to throw a party in the vestry for this Ben Segal, I can’t stop you, although I might question the propriety and the good taste of having a party to celebrate the signing up of a new member just because he’s rich. But what happens before the Ark and the Scrolls of the Law is within my jurisdiction, and I cannot permit it.”

The rabbi is also unmoved when some members of the congregation want to integrate women into their rituals, to allow women to make up a minyan, for instance. (This was published in the late 1970's.) The women aren’t impressed with the rabbi’s explanation that this wouldn’t be a mitzvah; that they get no “points” for performing a task they weren’t commanded to do; neither are they satisfied with the reason women aren’t required to perform public prayer: they have more important things to do (housework).

Oh, and there is a mystery: a cranky, opinionated old man is murdered (one of his opinions was anti-semitic) and the rabbi gets involved on behalf of a young Jewish man suspected of the murder.

John Mcnamee says

I like this series. I really like the character Rabbi Small. I am close to finishing the series. I have also learned so much about the Jewish faith.

Matt says

One of the series both in terms of social commentary and mystery

Meredith says

In the backdrop is the rise of women in the workforce and an increased press for women to have equal treatment. Some people adjust to that alright, some don't (particularly overly involved mother-in-laws).

Rabbi Small's take on whether women are fully respected in Judaism since they are not required to be a part of the daily morning prayer in order that they can keep the home - the center of Jewish life - is interesting. Believably late 70s. It would be interesting to hear current interpretation and thought.

There's also something sad and tragic about a man who believes himself free by saying whatever he wants whenever he might want to. But that freedom is at the cost of having anyone with whom he has a genuine and honest relationship.
