



Bye-Bye, Black Sheep

Ayelet Waldman

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A new arrival in the bestselling mystery series.

Private Investigators Juliet Applebaum and Al Hockey finally have a steady stream of clients coming through their garage-turned-office. But they'll realize it's no child's play tracking down the killer of a gorgeous transsexual's sister.

Bye-Bye, Black Sheep Details

Date : Published July 3rd 2007 by Berkley (first published 2006)

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Author : Ayelet Waldman

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Ingrid says

I really liked this installment in the Mommy-Track series. It was a sad story about the murder of a street walker and the fact that no one cared except for her family. Once again the best part of the book were the characters not so much the mystery. It's a sad commentary that the murder of some people are viewed as unimportant compared to others. I really hope she writes more in this series. The main characters are just so fun to hang out with.

September says

I never warmed up to this book. I think it was not "tight" enough or something. I finished it, and thought, "um, okay..." which is unusual for me. I really can't give it much of a review because it was not gripping in any way.

Shallow and uninteresting. Nothing to write home about, a disappointing read.

Laurie says

Another in the clever series of mysteries in which a former public defender becomes a private detective and solves murders while breast-feeding and taking her kids to play dates. This one involves prostitution, drug addiction and transgendered person. It moves along at a headlong pace like a toddler chasing a balloon, but the ending slightly resembles the air leaving the elusive globe. Nonetheless, it's sprightly and topical and the characters are likeable. What more can we ask?

Sarah says

Bye-Bye, Black Sheep. Ayelet Waldman. 2006. Berkley. 259 pages. ISBN 9780425216392.

Bye-Bye, Black Sheep is the final book in the "Mommy-Track" cozy mystery series by Ayelet Waldman. Mom and ex-lawyer Juliet Applebaum is back to help a transsexual named Heavenly solve a mystery surrounding the death of her prostitute sister, Violetta. Because the cops have discarded the murder case given Violetta was not only a hooker, but a drug user too, Juliet becomes aggressive to obtain justice for Heavenly and her family.

The tone of Bye-Bye, Black Sheep is much darker and more somber than the series' previous books. The humor is sparse if at all present, and Juliet's narration voice is much more powerful, sending a serious message about the dangers in today's world from the standpoint of a mother. I really love Juliet's soliloquy-ish pieces throughout the book about being a realist versus a pessimist, as well as her mothering fears and worries about keeping her children safe. What mother doesn't feel the same way these days? These specific components are what really make this book great!

This book is excellent and engaging without any lulls, my only disappointment being the abrupt ending for a

series finale. With Bye-Bye, Black Sheep being a cozy mystery, I would have enjoyed a more solid ending or snapshot involving Juliet's family.

I have delved into Ayelet Waldman's work outside of the "Mommy-Track" series and am pleased to see she is continuing to write outside the cozy mystery scope. I highly recommend Love and Other Impossible Pursuits and have Daughter's Keeper on my to-be-read shelf.

Ayelet Waldman is married to Michael Chabon, famed author of Wonder Boys and The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay.

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LittleDeadRedGoddessPersephone says

The only problem with this book is that it is the last in the Mommy Track Mystery series. I am going to miss Juliet and her family so much. I always enjoy spending time in her world even though the answer to her mysteries are often as tragic as the case it's self. In this series it often seems that family is your biggest enemy.

Vilo says

Juliet Applebaum had been a defense attorney before becoming a full-time mother. She loves her children but not necessarily every moment of long days of isolation. She kept getting involved in detection and finally sets up an agency with a retired policeman. These books are hilarious and right on in their details of modern motherhood and involve interesting cases in the L.A. area. Ayelet Waldman, Michael Chabon's wife, is also a master at exploring the tensions and intimacy of a loving, healthy marriage.

Sherry says

This was the first book in the Mommy Track series that I've read, but apparently it's the last in the series. Juliet Applebaum is an ex-public defender, now the mother of three and a part-time private investigator. She is hired by a transsexual named Heavenly to find out who killed her sister, a drug-addicted prostitute. The police don't care about the murder, so Juliet takes the case.

I thought the book was very well written, although darker than most cozy mysteries and not exactly what I was expecting. The author is clearly a very gifted writer, and I have no negative comments about the writing itself or the plot. The only thing that keeps me from rating this book higher is the fact that I didn't connect with the protagonist. That surprised me because as someone who has spent time working in the legal field (though not as an attorney) and who has raised children of her own, I expected to connect with Juliet. Instead, I found myself wondering why Juliet even had children since she didn't seem to like them much.

I also found myself wanting to skip the long bits of introspection about how the world works because they felt preachy to me -- less the character's opinions than the author's. As I read reviews from other readers, I notice that those are the parts of the book some people liked best . . . which only goes to show how subjective this whole business of books and reading is.

Grey853 says

I found it rather slow-going and tedious. I didn't care for the main character at all. Her constant flipping back and forth about the case and the family grew old around chapter four.

I won't be looking up the rest of the series.

Kat Chan says

This is the first book of the Mommy-track Mystery series that I've read, although the seventh and author-proclaimed last in the series. Juliet Applebaum is an ex-lawyer and full-time mother of three, while a half-time private detective. Juliet Applebaum seems to be a homunculus of the author and Wikipedia seems to agree, stating, "Like Waldman, Juliet is a 5-foot-tall (1.5 m), red-headed former public defender, with a nocturnal-writer for a husband, who has become a stay-at-home mother but finds it boring."

I picked this up off the shelf at the library this morning when there were slim-pickings. Although a very quick read, I set it down at page 113 of 259 because I just wasn't enjoying the pace. For a cozy mystery, this book is not very happy. It does not have the comic breaks that I would've enjoyed. Further, there didn't seem to be much action or interest going on with the protagonist regarding the murder mystery. The easy-to-read made the pages go by fast and yet the pace seemed slow due to the lack of anything of much interest going on. The protagonist, and by extension, the reader, doesn't really have any great experiences of connecting with another character by this point and we're already 100 pages in.

I would've preferred something funnier and having more supporting character development.

daniella says

My usual mystery fluff, begun and finished in a day.

Different from the usual Mommy-Track novels, but with more of a social conscience. More thoughtful, more contemplative than the others. Waldman's first Mommy-Track since her stand-alone Love and Other Impossible Pursuits, an obvious shift shows clear in her writing. I should be more specific, an obvious shift for the better and a sincere testament to the social justice obsession that detective Juliet Applebaum often mentions but has finally illustrated.

Muriel Kudera says

I did not think there was much depth to the story. Perhaps the writing was not good.

Jacqui Ainsworth says

This is the first one of this series that I have read. I really enjoyed it. The author really gets what it feels like to be a mother. At least what it feels like to me. I had a lot of "Right on!" moments while reading. The story was good too. I will definitely be searching out the others in the series.

Hope says

I read this only because the author is coming to the lecture series. shallow mystery series. Too political and the plot line wasn't that great either. maybe her new book is better

Lain says

I really, really liked this -- the latest entry in Waldman's "Mommy Track" mystery series. The plot seemed more robust than in Waldman's earlier books, the characters were rich, and it was a lot of fun to read -- that is, until I got to the end and realized there was no clear resolution. Yes, I realize that that's how life is -- not everthing is tied up in a neat little bundle, with all the loose ends clipped. But if I wanted ambiguous, I don't need to pick up a book to get it! To me, mysteries are formulaic, and that's why I read them: Bad guy commits crime. Good guy investigates crime. Bad guy gets caught and punished. Good guy lives to solve another day. Period. Instead, I was more than a little disappointed when I was left hanging at the end.

I also thought the book would have been stronger without the occasional author's-rants-hidden-as-character's-thoughts about the fairness of "society," and the injustice of the world. Enough is enough! We get the picture already

Jennifer says

I think this is the last one in the Mommy Track mystery series, which makes me sad. What other fictional private investigator obsesses about the dilemma of staying home with her children vs. working like this: "I had been unprepared for how slowly the time would creep along, how interminable a day would feel. I'd been unprepared for how lonely and bored I would be. But I'd also been unprepared for the intensity of my passion for my children, how their lives would consume and subsume my own." I love the issues Waldman decides to tackle in her books, whether it's how we want our crime victims to be blameless or what constitutes being an overprotective, over-the-top parent...
