



Sammy Keyes and the Kiss Goodbye

Wendelin Van Draanen

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The final mystery starring Sammy Keyes: “the most winning junior detective ever in teen lit. (Take that, Nancy Drew!)” —*Midwest Children’s Book Review*

Sammy doesn’t go looking for trouble, but she seems to find it everywhere. She’s forever sniffing out clues and chasing down bad guys—and driving her friends a little nuts. She’s gone up against thieves and counterfeiters and gangsters and blackmailers and murderers, and always stayed one step ahead.

Until now.

Last night, one of the bad guys caught up.

Last night, someone followed Sammy up the fire escape and pushed her from the third story.

Now she’s in the hospital, out cold. And her friends are left with the questions Sammy’s always been so good at answering: Why? How? But most of all . . . WHO?

In this emotional conclusion to her beloved long-running series, Wendelin Van Draanen shows just how many lives one nosy girl can touch and pays tribute to a life well sleuthed.

Praise for Sammy Keyes:

“If Kinsey Millhone ever hires a junior partner, Sammy Keyes will be the first candidate on the list. She’s feisty, fearless, and funny. A top-notch investigator!” —Sue Grafton

“Sammy’s brave, resourceful, observant and a loyal friend, but this girl sleuth is no well-mannered Nancy Drew. She’s endearingly hot-tempered, nosy, and not always obedient—in short, she’s someone I want to read about again.” —Margaret Maron

Sammy Keyes and the Kiss Goodbye Details

Date : Published September 9th 2014 by Knopf Books for Young Readers (first published January 1st 2014)

ISBN : 9780375870552

Author : Wendelin Van Draanen

Format : Hardcover 240 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Young Adult, Realistic Fiction

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From Reader Review Sammy Keyes and the Kiss Goodbye for online ebook

Jan says

The Sammy Keyes series is one of my all time favorites. I don't think I could adequately express how much I love Sammy. She's smart and funny and inquisitive, and the most loyal friend you could ever hope to have. She's the one you would want as your wingman, or in this case wingwoman. Winggirl? Whatever. You'd want her in your corner and on your team. She's the kid I would have wanted as my best friend at 13, the kid I wish I had been at 13, and the daughter I always wanted but never had. In other words, about as close as you could get to being the perfect kid.

It's been 4 years since I read this final book, but it's taken me this long to finally write something about it. Why? Probably because I couldn't, or didn't want to accept, that this was the final book and there would be no more. I'm sad, but there's still those 18 books that cover all of Sammy's 7th and 8th grade years. All the mysteries, the friendships, the stuff she has to deal with at school, her relationship, or lack of with her mother, living illegally with her grandmother and sneaking in and out of the senior highrise every day, and tons more. So, whenever I'm a bit bummed that there's no more new books I'm going to pick up book 1 and start all over again. Looking forward to it!

Kristin Emmons says

I loved the twisted points of view; it really allowed the series to wrap up nicely, even though I was worried about Sammy the entire time!

Tim Thompson says

I'm still letting the tears dry on my cheeks as I begin this review. (Goodness! It has been so long since a book made me cry!) But I'm not afraid to say it, Sammy Keyes has a piece of my heart. Sammy has become such a dear friend over the course of reading her 18 rollicking and rip-roaring adventures. Some of these books are among my very favorites in all of children's literature (many of them I have read more than once!) I will sorely miss Sammy and her spunky ways. She is a sleuth with attitude and a heart of gold. To me, she is as real as a friend I might meet on the street and reminisce with about long past adventures. We'd share a smile, laugh a lot, and wave goodbye, with hearts warmed at the happy reunion.

It feels funny saying that 18 books weren't enough... and I'd be wrong to say that! In point of fact, I'm sure that this has been the best and most satisfying conclusion to a series I have ever had the pleasure to read. Wendelin Van Draanen is deft and masterful in her portrayal of emotion. She always does so clearly, matter of factly, yet subtly in her characters. I felt this ending so deeply, right along with the author, who so obviously loves her little junior high detective. Thank you, Wendelin for writing this book and especially for crafting this series. It is a gem in the crown of well written children's literature. Sammy has surely entertained and warmed the hearts of so many. The world is a better place having these 18 books in it!

In the end, as I've re-experienced all the highlights of this series, so expertly woven back into the plot of this 18th and final book, I'm reminded that carefully crafted plots are satisfying, but when it's all said and done,

it's the characters that matter most. Sammy was breathed to life by a loving and passionate creator in the well-wrought words of Wendelin Van Draanen. Sammy is a fictional character, but this young lady will live on forever in the hearts ad minds of her faithful readers.

So, like the author, I sit smiling through the tears watching our friend wave a sweet and slightly sad goodbye. But I don't have to remain sad for long. Sammy is as close as my stack of 18 well-loved books sitting on my shelf. I can hardly wait to meet up with her again!

Aurora Dimitre says

|4.5 Stars|

Would I have gotten more out of this if I had read the entirety of this series before reading it? Yes. Did I tear up anyway? Also yes. Good series. Good books. And this was an interesting, different, and just fantastic finale.

Natalie says

cute ending! thank god she didn't actually (ya no, spoiler). i liked how every relationship basically tied up neatly and they went down memory lane of who she helped and how much of her spirit and character inspired the people she met. but i came into this after like a decade of not reading any sammy keyes books (aside from #16 i read two days ago), so i guess i still felt detached from the ending. would have been a lot more impactful if i read the whole thing in succession / had been following along, definitely.

tl;DR - this rating is a whole lot lower because i basically decided to read this (the last book of a 18 book series) after not having read touched any of the other books in the series in 10 years.

J says

Bittersweet.

Jasmine Hariri says

Sammy Keyes and the Kiss Goodbye by Wendelin Van Draanen...I am speechless. I recommend this book to people who love mystery and you should probably read some other books in this series too! This book was one of the most confusing in the WHOLE SERIES! Sammy isn't even narrating it, but instead, the author, Draanen. I was shocked throughout the week every day I came back to read it because you never know if she's breathing or not, if she's dead or not. Everybody is worried about Sammy who may or may not have been killed by a murderer called the Nightie Napper. I definitely would want to see the rest of this series, but sadly, I FINISHED and I want to read even more of Draanen's books!

Jo says

Remember how when you were a kid and you were reading a book that you just couldn't put down, so you'd be reading it in class and during dinner and right before bed, which is when you would swear to your parents that you were just going to read "one more chapter" (and then they'd come back an hour later and force you to put the book away)? And then you'd get out the trusty flashlight and finish reading under the blankets?

Well, that's how it's been with me and Sammy, from *HOTEL THIEF* to *KISS GOODBYE*. Unfortunately, I am now working (well, that's fortunate for my book-buying ability, but unfortunate for my book-reading time), and reading a book when you should be taking care of kids is not really appreciated at my work. So I had to sneak in reading time before work, during my lunch hour, and after work.

SAMMY KEYES AND THE KISS GOODBYE is very much like the finale of a play, where everyone you care about comes back on stage to take a bow. For those who don't know, *KISS GOODBYE* begins when Sammy is pushed out of a third-floor window at the Senior Highrise and lands in some bushes (and in a coma). Her family and friends rally to try to figure out the identity of the perpetrator, and throughout the book, you get mini-flashbacks to Sammy's previous escapades, as well as reminders of the amazing people she's met and befriended during the series.

For a less talented author, handling such a large cast and so many flashbacks would signal automatic chaos. But of course, Wendelin Van Draanen pulls it off well, with the minor characters getting cameos of the right length and with the flashbacks being more like "oh, I remember that!" than "ugh, we already know this." Although I miss Sammy's first-person narration (which is one of the major highlights of the series), Van Draanen's voice has enough snark and humor to make up for it.

One interesting thing I noticed is that if there were any other fictional character who had so many people indebted to or in love with her, she would probably be accused of being a Mary Sue. Sammy has the love of almost the whole town of Santa Martina, and yet she is still very much the Sammy we know and love. There is nothing Mary Sue-ish about her. She earned the love of her many, many friends, and sure, she may have made many, many mistakes along the way, but things still worked out.

It was strange to read a *SAMMY KEYES* book without, you know, Sammy Keyes, but for fans of the series, this is worth 5 stars for sure. The entire book was just a great testament to what an amazing character Van Draanen came up with. It's always difficult to end such a beloved and long-running series (eighteen books, people!), but Van Draanen did it somehow, with just the right amount of drama, cheesiness, and magic.

Caradith Craven says

Wendelin Van Draanen packs a powerful punch with her final chapter in the Sammy Keyes series. Sammy may be lying in a coma in a Santa Martina hospital, but her indomitable spirit and omnipotent presence are stronger than ever. What better way to conclude the eighteen-book series than with the authentic, omniscient voice of the author as the narrator.

Van Draanen drives home a grand slammer with her signature writing style, intriguing characters, page-turning, interwoven plots, and humorous, razor-sharp dialogue. She answers many of the questions faithful readers have been asking throughout the series: Who's the Nightie-Napper? Does Lana have real feelings for her daughter beneath her self-absorbed exterior? How important is Sammy's newly-discovered dad in her life? What happened to the supporting characters in the series—both friends and foes? Who would really try to kill Sammy? How will Casey deal with Sammy's situation? Will true love prevail? What lengths will

Officer Borsch and Sammy's cohorts go to in solving this horrendous crime? What impact has this feisty, lovable sleuth had on an entire community, "not by trying, but by just standing up and being"?

Van Draanen does not disappoint her readers in bringing Sammy's story to a final resolution. The final "Kiss Goodbye" pages are a multi-tissue experience. Lace up the high-tops, tighten the wheels on the skateboard, and take an emotional, unforgettable ride with Wendelin (and her alter-ego Sammy) guiding the way through the streets of Santa Martina. This middle-school librarian has certainly enjoyed sharing the Sammy Keyes reading experience with hundreds of students. Thanks, Wendelin Van Draanen, for giving your Sammiac readers eighteen books and fifteen years of pure reading bliss.

Bianca says

I am sad to see her go but what a good way to send Sammy off.

Kamaria Johnson says

What if your loved one said goodbye to you? The genre of this book is mystery. I felt heart broken when the author had to tell the story, since Sammy was in a coma. This made me anxious to read the rest of the book to see who done this to Sammy.

The setting in this book is in the hospital for 22 hours. Seven of Sammy friends like Billy, Casey, Dot, Heather, Holly and Cricket wanted to figure out who put Sammy in the coma, but they didn't know where to start in the case, so they thought of enemies of Sammy's that might wanted revenge. The conflict in this book is person vs. person because Sammy's friends has to stop the criminal before it's to late. A theme in the story is faith because Sammy's friends encourages her with positive thoughts and memories for Sammy to try to want to wake up, also because they have faith themselves and hope that she is going to survive her coma.

The third person point of view affects the story because the author tells the story and I think it takes away important details from the story, like Sammy's inner thoughts. The setting adds to the conflict because Sammy's coma is a mystery.

I was surprised when Sergeant Borsch noticed that the criminal was someone that Sammy knew from her past. I was struck by this passage "This wasn't Snow White or Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty oror whatever!" It shows that Sammy's friends are trying really hard to wake up. I thought the author did a good job on explaining Sammy's friends' feelings.

In conclusion I rate this book 5 stars because I really like how Wendelin Van Draanen wrapped up the series by re-telling all of Sammy's adventures in the book. I would recommend this book to people who love mystery. I think book is the perfect way to end the Sammy Keyes series!

Lourdes says

Second time around and there are still so many feels! I wish there was more Casey but overall a great book. You can really tell that Wendelin Van Draanen was just as emotional over saying goodbye to Sammy as the readers.

Anna says

What can I say? I don't even have the words to describe how much I love Sammy and Casey, and all of the other wonderful characters. I'm sad that it's the end of the series, but what a perfect way to end it! I know that Sammy is still out there in Santa Martina, and that her adventures are never over...

"So I blew her a kiss, and that's when she did something that caught me by surprise, although it probably shouldn't have. Something that made me know that she will always be the feisty, fearless, and funny girl I love. She waved."*

See? Perfect.

*For people who haven't read the books, the action of Sammy waving is a reference to the first criminal she ever caught.

Hannah says

I am just a big ball of emotions! This got a little corny, but I'm okay that it was. I like the appearance of all the people Sammy has helped over the years and that so many familiar faces were determined to help her recover. Sammy's been with me since I was nine; I'm about to turn 25 next week. It's been a great ride and I will definitely be sharing this series with my children.

Lisa says

In the final book of the Sammy Keyes series, Sammy has been bested by one of the bad guys! As the book begins, Sammy is injured, unconscious and in the hospital. Now it's up to her friends to solve this case.

A marvelous curtain call of the characters from the other books. There's a re-cap of all the cases as the suspect list is compiled, and old friends (and enemies) visit Sammy at the hospital. Don't start with this one, although many of the other books can be read out of order, save #18 Sammy Keyes and the Kiss Goodbye for last. Goodbye Sammy!

Cross-posted to <http://kissthebook.blogspot.com>

