



And When She Was Good

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When Hector Lewis told his daughter that she had a nothing face, it was just another bit of tossed-off cruelty from a man who specialized in harsh words and harsher deeds. But twenty years later, Heloise considers it a blessing to be a person who knows how to avoid attention. In the comfortable suburb where she lives, she's just a mom, the youngish widow with a forgettable job who somehow never misses a soccer game or a school play. In the state capitol, she's the redheaded lobbyist with a good cause and a mediocre track record.

But in discreet hotel rooms throughout the area, she's the woman of your dreams—if you can afford her hourly fee.

For more than a decade, Heloise has believed she is safe. She has created a rigidly compartmentalized life, maintaining no real friendships, trusting few confidantes. Only now her secret life, a life she was forced to build after the legitimate world turned its back on her, is under siege. Her once oblivious accountant is asking loaded questions. Her longtime protector is hinting at new, mysterious dangers. Her employees can't be trusted. One county over, another so-called suburban madam has been found dead in her car, a suicide. Or is it?

Nothing is as it seems as Heloise faces a midlife crisis with much higher stakes than most will ever know.

And then she learns that her son's father might be released from prison, which is problematic because he doesn't know he has a son. The killer and former pimp also doesn't realize that he's serving a life sentence because Heloise betrayed him. But he's clearly beginning to suspect that Heloise has been holding something back all these years.

With no formal education, no real family, and no friends, Heloise has to remake her life—again. Disappearing will be the easy part. She's done it before and she can do it again. A new name and a new place aren't hard to come by if you know the right people. The trick will be living long enough to start a new life.

And When She Was Good Details

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Download and Read Free Online And When She Was Good Laura Lippman

From Reader Review And When She Was Good for online ebook

Kaethe says

This should fill the sweet spot that's craving another *Gone Girl*. It is both clever and marvelously prosaic, so that the reader fully enters into the story of Heloise, a hard-working suburban single mom who runs an escort service to provide her with the time and money to raise her child.

I had the weirdest feeling throughout the first two-thirds or so that I had already read this, even though I couldn't recall any of the plot. Turns out I've read some other stories about Heloise. And now I can't decide who I love more, Heloise or Lippman.

Both entertaining and thinky, an excellent book for a winter's day binge-reading.

Library copy

Cora ? Tea Party Princess says

Although it felt that nothing happened for long stretches of this novel, when things did happen they were executed perfectly. You may think this would lead to a boring read, but *And When She Was Good* is far from boring.

The main character, Helen/Heloise (Hel?) seems so sure of herself for the majority of this book, and i'd be lying if I didn't admit that the ending was the best part - but that's because Hel stopped being so superior and aloof and putting everyone down. It took her being out-smarted - seriously out-smarted - to seemingly get a grip.

When it comes to other characters, they seem a little like an afterthought. Hel's father made my blood boil and I guess that's why she is how she is. He is a nasty and selfish man who quickly engendered feelings of hatred from me, as I am sure he was meant to. Hel's mother seemed quite timid and unsure - she was so in love, but with that monster? It didn't seem to fit that she could be that naive for her whole life.

Overall I thought it a good enough read. It's not one of my favourites and for being a mystery there isn't much mystery at all, but it was nevertheless enjoyable and interesting.

Drink a really expensive coffee while you read this - you know, the ones from pretentious coffee shops.

I received a copy of this for free via NetGalley for review purposes.

Mickey Reed says

See full review [here!](#)

Laura Lippman's Tess series is one I've read in the past. I've never tried her stand-alone work, and I'm always

game for a good stand-alone. Especially an adult one. I read a lot of YA fiction, but this is a GREAT adult novel to pick up! I might say that this would make a great book club novel. It has great themes and discussion elements. It's addicting and curious. It wasn't predictable in the way that I knew how it would all play out, though I did guess at a couple things and get them right. Overall I really enjoyed this book.

What I really liked about this book was that it is so different than anything I've read recently. Who has read a novel recently about prostitutes?? I started reading Nancy Grace's book, but it didn't keep my attention. And I think maybe one of the James Patterson's WMC books might be about hookers. But this is a sex-worker book I will never forget. Heloise's story is interesting, creative, and surprising. She's a fascinating character, and I loved reading about the intricacies of her life and work. I'd definitely recommend this one to a friend. I'd love to try the audio book, too!

Mitch Duckworth says

Maybe I'm guilty. Okay. LL could write spit and I'd call it transcendent.

That said, I have to admit, re AWSWG, there are one or two little nagging elements about several characters that bothered me, badass pimp Val and his previously undisclosed Filipino common-law wife living upstate with whom he has three children. She is—we are asked to believe without question—an incredibly unsophisticated foreign-born woman who believes for over ten years, that her very bad husband is trapped overseas because of a false conspiracy that makes it impossible for him to return to the US legally. Yes. He is trapped and society is the better for it. He's serving a life sentence for a murder he committed. The little Filipino wife never thought of trying to visit him overseas? For over a decade—for over ten-plus years and she never thought it odd that maybe he could travel to Montreal for a quiet weekend for a tearful reunion with she and the kids? The infrequent and monitored telephone calls never raised an eyebrow? Unless Val's heretofore private-life wife is extremely dysfunctional, it would seem to me that we could expect a woman with responsibilities for raising three children in contemporary America to acclimate to life more quickly than she evidently had.

Even with now twenty-year old technology, she would have had to have been sophisticated enough to ask those questions herself; the kids would have educated her. They would have instructed their mother and taught her American English everyday.

Questions do arise in the readers' minds: the porous international borders serviced by the biggest luxury airliners with the most comfortable first-class cabins of any fleets in the pre-9/11 international routes international air carriers? Really.) The history of another minor character rang untrue, and occasionally, events surrounding plot-turning action seemed illogical or unlikely. In a lesser writer, the nagging I felt as I read a paragraph here and there would have signaled an impending derailment, and probably a complete rupture in the suspension of disbelief. The end. I would have finished a long time before the concluding words of the story on the printed page. I would have closed the book and turned to my shelf. Next!

None of that matters with LL. I just read on, a damned happy and more than willing passenger in the capable hands of a modern master, a former full-time beat journalist on a major metropolitan newspaper, a decade and more ago now, when major cities had major newspapers (plural). LL is a thoroughly modern twenty-first century woman, and family oriented mother; she has seen an awful lot of life in her just-barely-fifty years. She is more than a little knowledgeable about the surprising twists, the poor choices, the bad luck, and the unexpected speed bumps in the everyday life of the modern American, and she is keenly aware of the

proximity of life's dark underbelly. She knows what a brush with the criminal element can mean to a well ordered life, and understands the complexities of the human psyche lurking just beneath our skins, even in the suburbs of Baltimore.

I always know (or believe I know) what I'm going to read next, and I always know how much I liked a book when I am at its end. If I'm particularly saddened by finishing the last page, and the act of closing the cover seems painful, distressing even, I have been blown away by something extraordinary. What I will read next sometimes changes based on how I feel at the end of each book. I want either something complimentary, or something completely different.

And *When She Was Good* is a wonderful book, despite the few objections noted above, and they were trivial offenses, which I can forgive. Just as with every one of her novels, I enjoyed it from beginning to end.

Seriously, it may not be her finest, but still, having said all that, it is one damned satisfying read. Happy page turning!

Berit??? says

Well, people definitely reviewed this book pretty harshly, I don't think it was necessarily deserve though.... This definitely was not the most thrilling of thrillers I've ever read.... however, I did find it interesting, definitely an interesting perspective on prostitution.... Heloise while not always likable was sympathetic, and I did find myself wanting the best for her and her son... maybe part of the problem with this book was expectations? It is labeled as a thriller, and I really would not classify it as such, maybe just fiction, there really weren't any surprises or twist or turns that I expect with a thriller... interesting story though...

Sandi says

I've read two other books by Laura Lippman and really enjoyed them. I was really looking forward to her latest stand-alone novel, but ended up disappointed. It's supposed to be a suspense/mystery/thriller, but it offered little of any of those things. It starts off well enough. A madam in a suburban neighborhood is murdered. Heloise Lewis debates a woman in a store who thinks the madam was asking to be murdered. We find out fairly quickly that the reason Heloise jumps to the dead woman's defense is because she herself is a suburban, soccer-mom madam. Sounds promising, doesn't it? Instead of a story in which Heloise is fearing for her life/being stalked by a murderer/figuring out whodunit, we get a story detailing how Heloise keeps her profession separate from her personal life, the terrible childhood she had, and how her earlier life was generally effed up. Nothing happens until the very end and by that time, I just didn't care.

For what it's worth, Linda Edmond did a fabulous job of narrating and was probably the only reason I made it through this snoozefest of a novel. I'm not ready to give up on Laura Lippman. I just picked up one of her earlier novels on sale as an ebook.

William Thomas says

The libraries around here are running low on audiobooks that appeal to me, so I picked one up by Laura Lippman. I didn't really know anything about her going into this, except that her books seem to be mystery/thriller based and I thought I'd go for it. I might never go for it again. I'm embarrassed I read this, and I'm embarrassed that she wrote it. I didn't even want to add it here, but I figured I would rate it on here because I did not shut it off and listened to the whole damn thing start to finish.

This book is a pointless bit of nonsense that read more like the outline of a mainstream thriller than the actual final draft. Lippman had some strong points, though. Well, one strong point. Well, one point that is fairly alright and that was her characterization. Outside of this, there is no reason for this book to exist.

There are no twists, no turns, just a pat and rote course from start to finish. A happened to B. B went to C. C drove to D. D thought about A. And so on. It was infuriating. Like watching a made-for-tv movie based on a real life event where you've seen and heard everything that could possibly be gleaned already through the countless news outlets and watch it anyway and then get mad at yourself because how exactly did you expect that to be worth the time you invested in it and then delete it from your DVR post-haste. It's like that. Because it's a tabloid-type story that might as well have been a terrible biography for all the plot it had.

Grade: D

Sarah says

A quick read, but not one I loved. I've read a handful of Lippman books because I enjoy the way she works Baltimore into her books as a character of its own. This one tipped a line into something I didn't like. The character was somewhat sympathetic, but there were asides that seemed more like authorial interjections than things the character would notice. She ended up reminding me of a group of women at my gym who talk loudly about vacations and their teenagers' cars and their husbands' careers in a way that is totally foreign to me. It's odd, since that's really who the character was pretending to be, so she would look at those same women with the same anthropological curiosity, but I could somehow feel Lippman herself hovering around the edges. I dunno.

Kerry says

Laura Lippman is one of my favorite authors; I can always count on her to deliver a solid thriller with a special combination of ordinary setting (Baltimore and its surroundings), superficially ordinary characters with extraordinary pasts, challenging and interesting perspectives, great pacing, and terrific writing. I enjoyed this book for all of those ingredients, but not as much as I normally do.

I found Helen/Heloise a difficult character to warm up to - not because I didn't like her or understand her or sympathize with her (I did), but, I think, because the modern Heloise has deliberately made herself aloof and isolated, and that's the character we spend a lot of time with initially. I learned from the Afterword that Lippman introduced Heloise/Helen in a couple of earlier short stories; perhaps if I'd had those backstories in my head my response would have been different. She is still a very interesting character, and I'll be thinking

about her and her relationships with her mother and her son for quite a while.

I also found the pacing to be a bit slow for a suspense novel. I enjoyed reading about Helen/Heloise's life, and was intrigued with her relationship with Val - definitely one of those challenging perspectives Lippman is so good at presenting. But I never felt that buildup of tension and fear that keeps me, as a reader, both frantically turning pages and wanting to close my eyes so as to not see the killer jump out from behind the door. I knew who the killer was going to be pretty immediately. I knew who was going to be behind the attempt, and more or less why. And rather than being surprised by the timing, I could see by the page count that it had to happen soon because I was getting to the end of the book.

All this is by way of saying it's not my favorite Lippman. But a not-favorite-Lippman is still a darned good book, and I enjoyed it a great deal, if not as a suspense thriller, then as a really interesting character study that gave me lots of food for thought.

Stephanie says

Honestly, I never know how to rate a book when I don't like the main character. If the story is interesting (it was...) and it keeps my interest (it did....), I should probably give it 4 or 5 stars. But I find Heloise to be just unlikable. She comes across as aloof, unsympathetic and self-pitying. She seems to think she's smarter than everyone else.

While Helen/Heloise is in high school, her verbally abusive jerk of a father insists she go get a job. This job leads her down a twisted and ugly path toward her eventual employment as a prostitute and then a madam with a business of her own. And as far as she's concerned, it's pretty much all her parents' fault for their lack of love and support. The story from this point is actually reasonably entertaining.

But considering that many of my classmates had to work part-time and put themselves through college (myself included), all I can say to her is "Waahh....grow up and quit blaming everyone else for your problems." Millions of kids have had worse childhoods than Heloise, and they managed to lift themselves up by their own bootstraps. I just can't relate to her issues, so I can't root for her either.

Shaun says

I listened to this book on audio, thanks to a job change and a one hour commute.

This is my first Lippman book. It takes place in Annapolis, which just happens to be close to where I live.

Aside from being a competent albeit unconventional pseudo mystery, I felt as if it offered some interesting commentary on a controversial topic, the sex industry, specifically high-end prostitution. And by the end of the book, I have to admit, I was hard pressed to come up with a valid argument against the legalization of prostitution. I mean, at least on face value, it seems kind of strange that something a woman can "give" away as much as she wants, something that has value to others, so much value that they will pay for it illegally, often at great risk and consequence to themselves, is illegal. On the surface, it seems as if legalizing prostitution would only make it safer for all parties involved, both the prostitute and her customer.

The discussion has made me want to read a more serious and in depth exploration of the pros and cons surrounding the issue.

I really liked the protagonist here. Some reviewers seem to feel she lacked emotional depth, but I felt that rather than lacking emotional depth, she was simply extremely pragmatic, which seems realistic given her profession and history.

I also like the way the author weaves Helen's past into the present day story.

The ending felt a little rushed to me. I know authors are told to wrap things up quickly, but this was just too quick and seemed incomplete.

My first book on tape in decades, I wonder if I would have enjoyed this more or less if I had read instead.

Michael says

Along with Elizabeth George and Michael Connelly, Laura Lippman is mystery writer whose usual who-done-its transcend the genre. So it's interesting that for her latest novel, Lippman steps outside the familiar ground of a straight-forward mystery novel and gives us a character study of a suburban madam.

Alternating between the past and the present, Lippman lays out the circumstances that led to Helen changing her name to Heloise and trying to escape her past. Fathered by a man cheating on his wife and stringing her mother along that maybe he'll someday leave his wife and other family for them, Helen grows up desperate for her father's attention and approval. Told at an early age that she has a "nothing face," Helen hitches her wagon to the washed up, drug addicted son of her boss at a local Italian restaurant. He convinces her to drop out of high school, rob the restaurant and head out to the big city with him.

Before you know it, Helen is caught up in a life of prostitution as she tries to escape one bad situation and ends up in a worse one. Out of options, Helen's one solace is sneaking to the library to read the great classics of literature and trying to improve her mind while finding a way to improve her station in life.

Eventually her on-again, off-again pimp boyfriend is sent to jail for murder and Helen decides to try and leave her past behind. As a single mother, Helen sets up an escort service, full of rules and regulations for her girls to follow and adhere to. But the past is coming back to haunt Helen (now known as Heloise), just as she's thinking of looking for a new lot in life for she and her son.

A stand-alone novel by Lippman, this one is less a mystery (though there are some elements of your typical mystery included here) and more a character study thriller. Lippman alternates between the present and the past, filling in details on what led Helen to her current situation and information how and why she's made certain decisions in her life. On one level, the stakes are lower than your typical Tess Monaghan mystery, but on other levels, they're much higher.

An atypical Lippman novel, this one works because of the crafting of Helen/Heloise as a character. A bit of an anti-hero, Lippman keeps up close enough to feel for what she's going through and the events that led her to this point in her life, but at enough of a distance so her life isn't being necessarily celebrated. It's a fine line to walk and Lippman does it with ease. Don't expect the happy hooker with a heart of gold here. Heloise is fiercely devoted to her son but also ruthless in keeping what she does in her business on the straight and

narrow...well, as straight and narrow as an escort service can be.

This is a very different novel from one of the best writers on the market today.

Rebecca Martin says

I really want to give this one a 4.5 because it was so very entertaining. Yes, there is more than one murder and more than one mystery here, but it's the protagonist at its heart, Heloise, who kept my interest. I see that other reviewers say they didn't like the book because they didn't like her. What I found very involving about the book is the way my feelings changed about her over time. They were positive at first (young woman makes the best of a really bad situation)--Heloise (or Helen) is smart, sharp and even funny and self-deprecating, though as a young person she made a lot of serious mistakes. As the narrative goes on, I began to hear more stuff that made me realize "She's fooling no one but herself." "She thinks she's got it all under control, but she should think again." Come on, readers, we all tell ourselves lies that make us more comfortable with our lives. Her character was gradually revealed in ways that made me think twice, three times about how I felt about her. That's not a bad thing in a book, at least in my opinion.

Also, isn't the whole thing about the parallels between lobbyists and prostitutes hilarious??!

This is a very movie-ready narrative, so let's start casting the film now. I'd go see it.

Brooke (Brooke's Books and Brews) says

Hmm. I really don't have a whole lot to say about this book. First of all, I did not read the synopsis when I checked this book out at the library so I had no idea what the premise of the book was so I was surprised when I learned that Heloise was not a lobbyist but actually a madam. This is learned early on in the book. Heloise Lewis, previously Helen Lewis, grew up in an abusive household and was eventually forced to get a job to get contribute to the household bills. She eventually leaves her home and becomes involved with very bad company. Heloise gains success (in her mind, anyways) when she becomes a madam. Honestly, there's really not much more than that but I don't want to give away any spoilers so I will leave it at that. The story is told from Heloise's point-of-view and really just focuses on how Heloise attempts to keep her life as a suburban stay at home mom from her life as a madam. That's it. It's supposed to be a thriller but honestly, the plot was just kind of bland. I think the story had definite potential. Heloise does have to watch her back from her transgressions from her former life as Helen. It was just so slow going. I was too far into it to put it down and I really was curious about what was going to happen to Heloise but by the time the big twist was revealed, I was just ready to be done with the book. I think the story just felt bogged down in many places. Learning about Heloise's past and how she got to where she is today was interesting. Hearing about Heloise's day-to-day life as she tries to operate as a madam and a mother in suburbia was like reading someone's planner, only the details are more risqué. The big twist really wasn't that surprising given that the character appeared early on but had no real ties to the story. This character would show up randomly, act oddly, and then disappear over and over again. It was easy to figure out that this person would be involved in the end since they really didn't have a place in the rest of the story. I also had a hard time with the book because the characters really were not likeable. Many of them just got on my nerves or seemed pointless to the purpose of the story.

I will never say that a book is bad. Someone has put in a lot of effort, time, and heart into seeing their book come to fruition. I will say that a book is not my taste. While this book was a psychological thriller, which is right up my alley, the plot left something to be desired for me. I haven't read any other of Laura Lippman's books but I will. I don't want to let one book that wasn't my taste effect my view on books I haven't read yet.

Marla says

I found this a very interesting storyline. What happens to someone when they think they don't deserve much and end up down the road of drugs and prostitution. How do they turn their life around when that is all they know? I always enjoy a Laura Lippman story. She does a great job of entertaining the reader and keeping them interested in the characters and what is happening. Well worth my time.
