



Sammy Keyes and the Curse of Moustache Mary

Wendelin Van Draanen

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"The most winning junior detective ever in teen lit. (Take that, Nancy Drew!)" --*Midwest Children's Book Review*

When Sammy and her friends meet Lucinda Huntley walking her 200-pound pig down the middle of the road, their quiet weekend in the country quickly becomes an adventure. Lucinda tells them a true tale of the Wild West, her great-grandma Moustache Mary, and a century-old family feud.

But this feud is hardly ancient history. Past and present collide--and combust!--when Mary's pioneer cabin burns to the ground. Sammy thinks the cause of the fire may be a hundred years old, but still, the gas can she finds near the scene of the crime is shiny and new. . . .

The Sammy Keyes mysteries are fast-paced, funny, thoroughly modern, and true whodunits. Each mystery is exciting and dramatic, but it's the drama in Sammy's personal life that keeps readers coming back to see what happens next with her love interest Casey, her soap-star mother, and her mysterious father.

Sammy Keyes and the Curse of Moustache Mary Details

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Author : Wendelin Van Draanen

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From Reader Review Sammy Keyes and the Curse of Moustache Mary for online ebook

Erin says

One of the best entries in the Sammy Keyes series, everything in this book -- from the tale of Moustached Mary to Heather Acosta drinking orange juice -- will make you giggle with joy.

Shubhi says

Casey is the sweetest thing to hit Earth!

Maywoodbooks says

I actually loved this book- super fast read and really entertaining. The character is spunky and confident (a wonderful modern female character)!! definitely enjoyed!

Allison says

I just loooooove Casey he's the best! in every other one he's in too.

Katy says

I love Sammy.

To date, I think this is my favorite of the series because the side characters were so great. Lucinda Huntley, her pig, and Moustache Mary just added so much to an already great series. I'm also interested in seeing where the Casey storyline ends up.

Sue says

I LOVE all the Sammy Keyes books! There's some wisdom in each-good old common sense :-) and Sammy herself is such a good kid. Wendelin takes on some tough subjects kids may be exposed to and this book is no exception. Sammy finds out that some kids she knows are drinking and into drugs. This book shows that it's okay to not give into things to be cool and that good friends really do help each other and stick together.

Bailee Walsh says

I picked this book up because I've been in the mood to read a mystery but nothing too heavy or complicated or something that would engross me for hours on end. So, going with a light mystery that wouldn't take me long to read, I decided I should continue with the Sammy Keyes books I have that I haven't read, yet. Mystery books have always been a main interest and growing up I loved Nancy Drew and Sammy Keyes. Fortunately they are books that even adults would enjoy!

At first I had, not like a HARD time getting into it, but it's been years since I read Sammy Keyes and I sort of forgot who people were specifically. I obviously figured out things like Marissa, Dot, and Holly are Sammy's friends but I couldn't remember much else about them. I couldn't remember who Brandon was and I thought we already knew Casey- there's a reason I remember Casey in the books and that is because I read the first four books and the 10th book growing up. I did a project on it in upper elementary school, otherwise I would not have read any part of the series out of order. So, as I read I was reminded of things that happened in the previous books and things that are part of the overall story or repeated throughout. But when Sammy was thinking about Brandon I was like, "Who's Brandon?" It bothered me too much so I looked it up and read the character information for most of the characters on the Sammy Keyes Wikipedia page. I refreshed my memory that Brandon is Marissa's brother who Sammy sort of has a thing for, that Dot became a part of the series in the second book and that Holly became a part of the series in the fourth; and, of course, that Casey is introduced in this book and continues to be part of the series. I can't believe I can remember things from the first Sammy Keyes book I read, which was the 10th book, but I can't remember books 2-4 very well. Anyway, despite me just going along with things in the beginning because it had been too long since last reading the series, this book is great! I was able to read a chapter or two every day just to keep up the reading habit. It was still intriguing. I don't think of it as a lesser mystery because it is technically a middle grade series. But THIS BOOK got intense, and scary, and went in directions I didn't think the series would go. When I would update my progress on the Goodreads app I saw other people's reviews for it and a lot of people were saying that it has more mature/adult content and this is a book in the series that maybe kids should skip. At first I just thought those reviews were talking about a party that takes place because there are older high school kids and beer and probably other alcoholic beverages at this underage party. BUT THEN METH became part of the story and I was like, "Whoa! WHAT?!" I just was NOT expecting that! I know the last time I read one of these books I was in 13 or 14 but I did not think the series would go into serious drug territory. And I don't mind that at all, and had I read it when I was 13 or 14 (after I read the 4th book) it would have been fine, too, it's just that I did not expect it. I honestly think it's that aspect that makes this a 5 star read instead of 4 stars.

With my rating, and all other ratings, I try to rate books with thinking of the sole book and taking into consideration the audience/age range. So, this is a 5 star book to me, a 5 star middle grade mystery series book. The language is easy, not simple necessarily, but not complex. The characters are interesting and there's a lot of characters in this one! There's character development that I really appreciated and I'm looking forward to where that goes in the rest of the books- I'm mostly thinking of Sammy individually, Sammy + Officer Borsch, and Sammy + Casey. It's definitely engrossing but in a different way than I consider most adult books to be.

The Sammy Keyes series is a series I would recommend to young readers who are looking for mysteries to read. You can't help but like and become attached to the characters and the mystery they tangle themselves into- by "they" and "themselves" I mostly mean Sammy, but her friends are always willing to do things with her and stay by her side even at times when they are creeped out or scared.

I'm actually thinking of rereading the first four books to refresh my memory. It's not really the right time, because of other things going on in my life, but I'm really considering it. It would definitely be better than reading summaries online. But if I'm really going to do it I have to do it soon before details of this book start fading.

Garry says

The second in this series I've read. A good mystery wrapped around some essential challenges of some challenging years...those awkward, awesome, oh-so-memorable years of 7th and 8th grade when some friends begin heading down different paths and it's hard to know which is the path you should be taking. At first I did not like what seemed like an out-of-place diversion to a High School party, but Van Draanen ties it all together in a compelling and realistic way. A series that could easily get too sweet by half is kept realistic and yet still grounded in the world of its protagonist and target audience. Now I just need to find a library that has more of Sammy Keyes.

Cinnapatty says

Hmm. #5 in this series and it has HEAVY issues in it. If your child isn't in 7th or 8th grade I would skip this book. Sammy finds herself in over her head. All the confusing emotions involving boys and to top it off, some boys who are involved with drugs. But some are not.

So while the story about Mary and her moustache is right out of the wild west and the feuding families are still at it, the whole story is swirling and twirling around drugs and alcohol. The good news is that Sammy knows that's definitely NOT the path she wants to take and her decisions in the end are good ones. Her girl friends also.

So, on to the next book, but just a warning that if you have a grade schooler reading this series skip this book unless you want to get into discussions with them about parties and weed and meth and underage drinking and why those are all bad choices.

spoiler alert

Sammy and her friends end up finding a meth lab.

Sella Malin says

i like these books- it's my favorite mystery series. the mysteries are really interesting, and sammy keyes is awesome. I love it when I find out who's the culprit a second before sammy does.

Reeny says

I love the Sammy Keyes books and this one in particular. Sammy is smart and sassy, the mysteries are fun, and Van Draanen does a great job of getting middle grade right. A lot of times I find the characters in middle grade books to be too childish or too precocious, but Sammy thoughts and actions are realistic for a smart and tough girl her age (not to mention she is very funny).

For some reason, this installment sat with me enough that I have read it 3 times in the last decade. I really like how Sammy deals with the idea that some people she knows have chosen to get into things that she isn't comfortable with. The drug use aspect of this book was not a preachy D.A.R.E lesson or a melodramatic Lifetime movie. It realistically showed how young people you may now may go down this slippery slope.

If you only read one Sammy Keyes book, read this one!

Laurie Gray says

The first book in this series (Sammy Keyes and the Hotel Thief) was on my daughter's summer reading list between 4th and 5th grade. I read it with my daughter, and we were hooked. We read this book together as a family. Inquisitive and resourceful, Samantha (Sammy) Keyes makes a great tween protagonist. Be forewarned that there are some alcohol and drug references (marijuana, cocaine and meth) in this book which provided us with the opportunity to talk about these issues very frankly with our 10-year-old daughter. I recommend reading this series in order because the characters and relationships develop from one book to the next.

Muhammad Salman says

A thrilling book about mystery. Kept me at the edge of my seat and never stop reading. Sammy and her friends are talking when a lady passes by and tells them a story about Moustache Mary. Her name is Lucinda Hartley. She is the great granddaughter of Mary. Lucinda asks help for the riddle that Mary left to find the gold.

A theme that is present throughout the whole book is for a successful sleuthing mission, it requires more than just one sleuth. Sammy cannot solve the mystery by herself. She will need help, and so she asks a police officers and tries to figure out and solve crimes with a police officer and her friends. That can also be taken as a moral or lesson that "Two heads are better than one." The benefit of others is very helpful in being successful, and that is what happened in this book. Sammy and friends together solved the case and found out where the gold had been, near Mary's house all along. Determination is very important as Sammy and her friends and the police officer, Officer Borsch were determined to find out who burned the cabin and where the gold was.

Rachel Kulik says

I review books like this and hundreds of others on my blog [Rachel's Reading](#). Check it out!

As is probably extremely evident at this point, I really love the Sammy Keyes series. It's so fun, and is a childhood favorite. I stopped reading at some point in my childhood, but am now returning to these as an adult, and find that they make me feel at home. I'm always astounded with the more adult topics that Van Draanen seems to handle with ease, that makes the adult and young reader equally entertained.

In this book, Sammy finds herself entwined in a mystery after meeting an old lady who tells her the story of Moustache Mary. Her cabin burns down, and there's a shiny new gas can near the fire. However the mystery just seems to start there. This book is full of old west family feuds, and honestly reminds me a lot of Holes by Louis Sachar in the same tone. Van Draanen does it again, and it does touch on some heavy subjects in the end. However, it's not done in such a heavy handed way that doesn't seem realistic, in fact, it seems very real, and age appropriate. Another job well done.

Tara says

I love Sammy Keyes. She is an awesome friend and detective. I love how she tries to solve mysteries but she is also trying to solve the mysteries of life. This one deals with family history and teen drug use. I loved it.
