



The Bishop and the Missing L Train

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Millions of Blackie Ryan fans will be thrilled with his return in this exciting novel of mystery and suspense. Bestselling novelist Andrew M. Greeley has captured the imagination of the mystery reading public with the improbable Bishop Blackie Ryan, who works for the aristocratic, haughty, sometimes arrogant but often slyly good humored Sean Cardinal Cronin, the Archbishop of Chicago.

The Vatican has just assigned auxiliary Bishop Gus Quill to the Archdiocese of Chicago over the violent protests of Archbishop Sean Cronin, and the not so silent protests of Bishop Blackie. Bishop Quill is under the illusion, one might say delusion, that he has been sent from Rome to replace the good Cardinal when in fact Rome was dying to get rid of him because of his incompetence. Immediately on arriving in Chicago, he manages to disappear while riding the L Train and it is up to Blackie to find him. As the Cardinal says, "The Vatican does not like to lose bishops, even auxiliaries."

And thus begins the search for the missing bishop who no one really wants to find.

Of course, none of this is too much for the intrepid little Bishop Ryan. He faces these problems squarely and, with the kind of deductive mind reminiscent of G.K Chesterton's Father Brown, manages to find solutions to some of the most baffling mysteries he has ever encountered.

The Bishop and the Missing L Train Details

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Don says

What a mess!

My first Blackie Ryan mystery and, arguably, my last. This one first drew me in with the unique writing style in multiple first-person voices as well as the vivid descriptions of Chicago neighborhoods that I know and love. Several characters are fairly unbelievable, but I understand now that these are meant as representations of a larger message. Though I'm not entirely sure what that message is).

The parallel romances of Tommy and Jenny kept me reading on, knowing that these would somehow tie in with the mystery. They do tie in, but only inasmuch as the two characters a parishoners of the church. Instead of having anything directly to do with the mystery, the romances are there to signify God's love for us. So, in effect, 2/3 of the book has absolutely nothing to do with the mystery. Add to that the fact that Blackie's solution relies on something utterly improbable, and you've got yourself one shoddy mystery.

Oh, and the lioness thing was WAY overdone.

AngelaGay Kinhead says

Meh. Liked Bishop Blackie in "The Bishop Goes to the University " but this one, not so much. Not giving up.

Helen says

This book was published in 2000 so Greeley has the Blackie Ryan pattern set, with his 'arguably' and his three Johns, and parishioners who are very tentative and need only a slight push to become passionately sexual. There is also not a clumsy or unattractive one in the lot. Would the media, even in Chicago, be wildly interested in the appointment of a sixth auxiliary bishop to the archdiocese? His writing is luring and I don't mind having allegories thrown at me once in a while.

Alayne says

This was an enticing mystery and mostly enjoyable to read. The format was what I had difficulty with: the chapters were all written in the first person, but the person doing the telling changed often, and the only way to know was by the heading at the top of the chapter. If I missed it by being caught up in the story, I ended up quite confused and had to go back to see who was speaking.

Monica Willyard says

I find this book repulsive on many levels. First, the profanity and graphic sexual content came as a shock to me. I was expecting the book to be like G.K. Chesterton's Father Brown or maybe like Father Dowling. I thought this because of the book jacket description. This couldn't be further from the reality of the book.

The language is very raunchy, with the "f" word in liberal use. The sex scenes are pretty graphic, and the book refers to God as "she." The picture of the Catholic church is cynical and jaded. I'm not Catholic, but that still bothers me a lot. I was so disgusted that I quit reading after around 130 pages. I concluded that the book wasn't going to get any better.

I do like the concept of the character of the bishop. He is interesting. It's the garbage around him that is so disgusting. I felt like I needed a bath after reading the book.

I would not recommend this book, and I won't read any of the others in this series. I regret picking it up at all.

David Clark says

This novel was my "gift" in a recent book exchange. Ouch. This volume has some interesting characters and a decent premise. I am only sorry the author chose not to develop either. I would not typically express such an uncharitable opinion, but I am particularly adverse to mystery/detective fiction containing solutions "pulled out of a hat" to tie-up all the loose ends. The conclusion of this book is particularly egregious. Note bene.

Al Gritten says

An interesting and highly readable take on detective work. Perhaps I am biased because of my own profession, but it is entertaining to read about a pastor who moonlights solving crimes. Greeley's writing is engaging and often tongue in cheek, but much like Agatha Christie this is more about the characters and the mystery ties them together. Ryan is very low profile in his character and in his mystery solving. Greeley crafts a priest who is neither typical or expected and the characterizations are both believable and readable. I have enjoyed Greeley's non-fiction and his other fiction - though this is my first Father Ryan, it probably will not be my last.

bookczuk says

Undoubtedly, we love Blackie Ryan in this house, even if we aren't Irish! Here he's back on his home turf in Chicago to solve this mystery.

Best line in the book? When a troublesome Bishop manages to disappear while riding the L-train, Cardinal Cronin comments, "The Vatican does not like to lose bishops, even auxiliaries".

Margaret says

If an (auxiliary) Bishop disappears along with a car of the L (elevated) train, and is later found in his underwear, rolled in a tarp and injected with heroin--would that automatically disgrace him enough to be removed from service? The mysterious mastermind seemed to think so, unless they could also predict said bishop's subsequent psychotic break.

Ah well, another funny and intelligent book by Andrew Greeley, who as a bishop, "Arguably" knows more about the politics of the church of Rome than I.

Thomas Harwick says

The funny thing about this book is that it starts with a very intriguing mystery, but then it doesn't progress the mystery until the end of the book. Instead it spends most of its time on the various characters. It shifts viewpoints and voices, sacrifices the actual mystery for character development, and ties the mystery up in a rushed manner at the very end, with the villain being a peripheral character. These are all things that might normally annoy me, but for this book it just works. Greeley's characters are flawed, broken, unpredictable, and occasionally absolutely frustrating; which is why I loved them so thoroughly. When the mystery ended I found myself wanting to see more of the characters and their world. I will probably read more in this series just to see more of Greeley's character development skills.

Robert Lariviere says

A good read in an interesting series.

Karen says

short simple mystery, nothing special with happy ending.

Karl Schaeffer says

I really, really like Andrew Greeley. Again, as a passive reader, I don't get into solving the mystery. I enjoy the story and characters. Greeley's characters are very Catholic, Irish and Chicago. I like his vision of the Catholic Church. I think I learn more about the Catholic Church from Andrew Greeley books than from more official, legitimate sources. He has a positive image of Church. A less cynical image. God is love, God is peace, God is justice and equality. Why doesn't the church ordain women and married men. The only issue I have with this book is that Greeley doesn't have a good word to say about Stanford... and the Band.

Jan says

Not my favorite Blackie Ryan mystery. Seems to be more disjointed like this review. Much heavier on the internal politics and how dysfunctional people get ahead.

I learned a little more about the Catholic church and the upper hierarchy. It also shows the balance that can be achieved by priesthood as well as the continuing politics that invades all institutions.

Judith says

Good story, my first Blackie Ryan story, but sometimes it was hard to follow.
