



Roost

Ali Bryan

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Winner of the 2014 Georges Bugnet Award for Fiction

One Book Nova Scotia Selection 2014

Claudia, single mother of two young children, pines for her past independent life. Her ex, after all, has moved on to a new wardrobe, a new penchant for lattes--and worst of all, new adult friends. But in Claudia's house she's still finding bananas in the sock drawer and cigarettes taped to wrestling figures. Then Claudia receives the unexpected news that her mother has died.

Shared through the hilarious, honest, and often poignant perspective of a single mother, Roost is the story of a woman learning about motherhood while grieving the loss of her own mother. And as she begins to mend, she's also learning that she might be able to accept her home--as it is.

Roost Details

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Author : Ali Bryan

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From Reader Review Roost for online ebook

Ian says

Ali Bryan's debut novel *Roost* is the amusing and oddly touching story of Claudia, single mother and marketing professional. Narrated in Claudia's edgy, fast-paced, plain-spoken voice, the novel takes us through a series of personal crises as she struggles to wrangle her children—Wes (four) and Joan (two)—and cope with her father's erratic behaviour following the death of her mother. Separated from Glen, who is still in the picture but showing distinct signs of moving on with his life, Claudia's days are already complex and hectic before her mother's sudden death during a Caribbean vacation. After this her father becomes an additional worry. But Claudia cannot slow down or take time off. Life and career continue to make demands and she has no choice but to meet them head on. Ali Bryan's Claudia could very well be the prototypical 21st-century single mom: a young woman for whom emotional fulfillment is elusive and who makes it through the day with her head hovering just above the waterline, thankful for any stray moment of peace she can snatch, a glass of wine in one hand and soggy diaper in the other. Though none of them are particularly capable, and all of them have troubles of their own, she is unashamedly reliant on sympathetic friends and family to hold it all together. Not above bribing her kids with fast food and ice cream to get them to behave, and calling her kitchen appliances assholes when they don't cooperate, Claudia is hardly a candidate for mother of the year. But she does what she has to and succeeds (more or less) against sizable odds, and by these means wins over the reader. Her business trip to Calgary is a brilliant set piece, in itself worth the price of admission. Ali Bryan has written a witty, sharply observed and genuinely entertaining novel that will appeal to readers who can appreciate its ironic perspective. And for the sociologists among us, it is also a wry and astute commentary on family, sibling rivalry and contemporary life in urban Canada.

Sharon says

I'm obviously in the minority here, but I am not enjoying this book at all. I guess it simply isn't my type of book. I started it because of One Book Nova Scotia, but after 89 pages I'm finding it simply too lightweight, uninteresting writing style, and not very funny, which it is supposed to be. In short, boring. It's taken me until now to figure out where the author is taking us with it. If I had read the dustcover I would have known sooner, but I never read dustcovers as they always give away too much. The fact that it was selected for a provincewide book club and was thought to be very good was enough of a recommendation to give it a try. I'm sending it back to the library.

Faith says

I really enjoyed the humour and the reality of the book. The ending is abrupt but completely understandable. I love each and every character, even the romance. Although normal books would've ended in a clichéd manner, I much prefer this one. The book is so unique with the routine that I feel as if I can vividly see it and I love it! I hope to read more books from Ali Bryan! This book was given to me through the contest on here and I feel so lucky to have read it and be one of the rest to have done so.

Elle says

A lovely and quick read. Claudia is the single mother of two children who is forced to grow up quickly when her mother unexpectedly passes away and she is left with a brother who can't cope and a dad who falls apart. The book is told as a series of very quick chapters - almost vignettes - and gives us a clear picture of a woman who is barely keeping it together in all aspects of her life - as a parent, as an ex-wife, as a daughter and sister, as a woman. Moments ring true to anyone who has ever felt less than spectacular in their parenting, or feels that their life is out of control. The moments surrounding her mother's funeral especially struck home, particularly the line "By the second visitation I want nothing more to do with my mother's death." which was precisely how I felt in the midst of all the formalities of my (much-loved) father-in-law's funeral. Despite the seemingly maudlin topic, there are moments of real humour here, and at the very least, fist-bumping solidarity for any woman trying to juggle the many balls of life. While the book is written without a true resolution, I never felt cheated for a moment by the story or the ending. It is almost as if we are allowed a brief snapshot into Claudia's life, and while it may not be perfect, the ending brings just enough comfort that I felt good about sending Claudia off, even in her imperfect way.

Jenn says

I absolutely loved this book. It was hilarious. You will cheer on the very loveable (and dysfunctional) main character to the end. I went out and bought a copy for my friend. I would recommend this book to anyone. A fun summer read and an exciting debut for Ali Bryan!

Kimberly says

I won this book from First Reads and was asked to write a review. Roost is a story about the life of a single mom and the challenges she faces in raising her children while being the glue holding the family together after her mother dies. I thought it was a good story. It was not a book that I couldn't put down. It wasn't a mystery or a thriller. Just a nice story that was very well-written with touches of humor that vaguely reminded me of Erma Bombeck. There were many parts of the story that made me laugh out loud. I genuinely liked the main character and could relate to her. The chapters are short and there was nothing was wasted in the book. Every page and scene written was relevant to the story. This book was the first for this author. I think she is well on her way to becoming an excellent story teller. I look forward to reading more of her work. If you are looking for a light read, I recommend this book.

Laura Frey (Reading in Bed) says

A funny thing happened while I was reading Roost. I was on a flight from Nova Scotia, author Ali Bryan's home province and the setting of Roost, on my way home to Alberta, where Bryan now lives. I was nursing Henry while Ben played on his iPad. Ben's legs don't reach the floor, so he braced himself on the seat in front of him to adjust his position. The woman in front of Ben turned around and said, "If your son kicks my seat again, I am going to come back there and pour a glass of water over his head." I said, "He's three. I'm doing my best." She told me to "do better" and turned around, huffing and puffing. This woman threatened my three year old son and called me a bad parent. As shame burned just below the skin on my reddening

face, I thought, “this is exactly the type of thing that would happen to Claudia. Except she wouldn’t give a flying fuck.”

Claudia is our heroine, a woman smack in the middle of various family dramas, with barely enough time or energy to register it all, let alone deal with the fall out. She’s got two young kids, a prissy brother and sister-in-law, eccentric parents, and an ex who’s moving on with his life entirely too quickly. A crisis occurs when her mother dies, and everyone around her starts to unravel. Her family seems to think, Claudia is already heaped on with responsibility, so, why not add more? Why not have her deal with funeral arrangements, and take care of her nieces and nephews while sister-in-law is treated for postpartum depression? Why not leave her holding the (garbage) bag when her father’s hoarding comes to light? I think about Claudia when I’m feeling busy or stressed or hard done by. I’ve got it easy.

This all sounds a little heavy, but the book is hilarious. I love Bryan’s deadpan style. Claudia says, of her two-and-a-half year old daughter,

...when you first held her in the hospital and she weighed five pounds and she gazed in your eyes and you fell in love, did you ever imagine that you would one day think she was an asshole?

Anyone who’s had a two-and-a-half year old gets this.

See the rest of my review: <http://reading-in-bed.com/2013/08/24/...>

Laura says

This book is for anyone with the perfect brother, aging parents and children. Light and funny, sweet and at times funny, it was a great quick read. Canadian references throughout.

Liana Kreamer says

This book is funny! It's like Susan Juby's "Alice, I Think" for grown-ups. Imperfect moms everywhere will appreciate the chaos.

I spotted this book on the list of eligible books for the 2013 Scotiabank Giller Prize. It will definitely be a contender for the Stephen Leacock Award.

Alice says

I received a copy of this book for free through goodreads first reads. I got really into this book. The main character Claudia felt real to me and it was like I was experiencing all of her pain and frustration along with her. Her ex-husband was so irritating and the strain felt in all of her relationships was stressful to witness as she processed through her mother's death. I enjoyed this book because it was cathartic and had me crying at times but also cracked me up.

Brie says

I hope Ali Bryan has more books in the works. It's so rare to literally laugh-out-loud while reading a book. I enjoyed every bit of this book, even the hard parts (ex. Claudia's mother dying) as the family dynamics were so honest. The mess, the chaos and the hurriedness of Claudia's home (and life) was palpable and I felt like a fly on the wall, observing it all. As an expectant mother, I appreciated the underlying theme and candidness that while you will always love your children, sometimes you might not be able to stand them.

Nancy says

I received this book for free from Goodreads First Reads. Claudia is a single mother of two children, aged 4 and 2. Just reading about her life exhausted me because it is hilariously chaotic. She has a near perfect brother who makes her feel inept and inferior. He gifts their parents with a trip to Cuba (this story is located in Nova Scotia). While on the trip, Claudia's mother suffers an accident that proves fatal. While the family seems to cope with this tragedy on the surface, as the book continues it becomes obvious that Claudia's father is in deep denial and has serious problems living alone. Claudia has to try to keep her own family functioning while interceding in her father's life.

Ali Bryan writes with great humor. Her descriptions of Claudia's conversations with her children are amusing and very believable.

Jenny says

Roost is a fun, quick read that you can easily finish in a day or two. I don't think that I have ever read a romance novel, but I imagine Roost would read much like a romance, only without most of the romance. The chapters are short, which makes it satisfying to read and easy to fly through.

Roost is hilariously funny all the way through. The conversations that Claudia has with her 2 and 4-year-olds crack me up. Don't expect kids that age to have a conversation that makes any sense.

Even though Roost was enjoyable, I really can't give it more than 3 stars due to its simplicity and straightforwardness. It is a good book to read purely for its entertainment value, when you would rather not think.

Read the rest of this review, and more of my reviews at: www.bookwookie.ca

Kelsey says

I genuinely love this book, and it made me laugh out loud several times--and it takes a lot to make me laugh while reading! I'm not a parent myself, but I feel like this book captures parenthood in a way that feels real--never fake or over-simplified, but as something that's complicated and messy and overwhelming and wonderful and terrible. An extremely funny and moving novel.

Alexis says

Absolutely loved this book. It's kind of weird when a domestic book about home life seems fresh and original. This was a story about a single parent and her two children, and how she deals with parenting when her mom dies and her family sort of falls apart.

I loved the voice and the humour in this book. It was actually funny.
