



The Final Reveille

Amanda Flower

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As the director of Barton Farm, a living history museum in Ohio, Kelsey Cambridge is underpaid and underappreciated, but she loves every minute of it. Determined to keep the struggling farm open, she plans to impress the museum's wealthy benefactress, Cynthia Cherry, with a Civil War reenactment on the farm's grounds.

Unfortunately, the first shot in the battle isn't from a period soldier. It's from Cynthia's greedy nephew, Maxwell, who fires a threat at Kelsey to cut the museum's funding. The next morning, things go from bad to worse when Kelsey discovers Maxwell dead. Now Kelsey is the police's number one suspect, and she must start her own investigation to save Barton Farm . . . and herself.

The Final Reveille Details

Date : Published May 8th 2015 by Midnight Ink (first published May 1st 2015)

ISBN : 9780738744735

Author : Amanda Flower

Format : Paperback 336 pages

Genre : Mystery, Cozy Mystery, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Final Reveille for online ebook

Jenna says

Living history museums have always fascinated me. We have one here in Wisconsin - Old World Wisconsin - but, unfortunately, I haven't visited there often enough. In the summer, I can never imagine walking through the area in the heat (and how the costumed docents make do!) and in the winter, the museum is only open limited hours. But every time I do visit, I always think I should go back more.

Amanda Flower's first Living History Museum mystery, *The Final Reveille*, takes place at Barton Farm, a living history museum in Ohio. In an effort to boost visitors and revenue, director Kelsey Cambridge has staged a Civil War encampment. Battles between the North and the South take place daily and the long weekend is scheduled to conclude with the first annual Blue and Grey ball.

Deaths are expected in any war, of course, but in a fictional re-enactment, they are most certainly not. When Kelsey stumbles upon a Union soldier standing over a body in the Farm's brick-making pit, she knows something is terribly wrong. Before she knows what's happening, Kelsey finds herself the prime suspect in the murder of the nephew of Barton Farm's benefactress. All the evidence seems to paint her as a murderer, but Kelsey is determined to save the re-enactment, the Farm, and her own reputation.

I enjoyed the story, the specifics of the Farm features and artifacts, and the details of the Civil War battles staged to take place during the re-enactment. Kelsey is a fresh face among cozy mystery heroines and I'm already a fan of the budding relationship between her and Chase. *The Final Reveille* has many of the classic elements of a crime story with a couple of new creative components mixed in.

Disclaimer: I received a copy of this book from the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Cari says

Full disclosure - the author is my friend. I love her writing! My favorite part of this book was the history and the connection to the farm. It's loosely based on a place close to me, and I couldn't help picturing myself there as I read. I felt like the book could have gotten some better line editing, but that isn't Amanda's fault!

Sara says

A fun romp into the Southern reenactment world, this cozy is a well-paced and entertaining mystery. Kelsey Cambridge is the director of a living history museum and a recently divorced single mom (a different type of character than we usually see in cozies, and that was a great aspect of the novel). Trying to make ends meet, she is dismayed and more than a little angry when the nephew of her benefactress threatens to pull all funding when he comes into the inheritance. Things get a little complicated when the nephew turns up dead the next day – and all evidence points to Kelsey.

I enjoyed not only the mystery but the building of Kelsey's character. Flower is a talented enough writer that she can do both without slowing down the novel. Sure, the mystery wasn't too complicated and there were a few grammatical errors (I would blame the publisher on that), it was just what I wanted in a cozy; unpretentious, likable, and well-rounded characters; a possibility of romance; and a dramatic mystery. I can't

wait to see what is in store for Kelsey in the next book, The Final Tap!

Ian says

Kelsey is the director of Barton Farm, a Living History Museum with a focus on life in the 19th century and the civil war. When the arrogant nephew of the museum's main benefactor is murdered on the grounds there is no shortage of suspects and considering Kelsey was seen arguing with him just hours earlier she is right at the top of the list.

With the help of a reluctant civil war re-enactor she sets about finding the killer and saving the farm.

There is a fair bit to like about this book. As far as cozy mysteries go it was unique enough to hold my interest. It didn't redefine the genre but it's the first book I've read with this particular setting. That said, it feels a little like a draft copy of a great book. I have a fairly high tolerance for spelling and grammatical errors (people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones), but it really got to the point where I was thinking the book needs a good editor. And the ending could have been much better.

So it's a promising start to a new series but there were a few shaky moments.

Dawn Frazier says

This is the first book in the Living History Museum mysteries, and what a great book it is! I have to admit, I was hesitant about reading it when it first came out, I am not really a huge fan of history/war books. I can now say I was wrong, I am so glad I finally read this book!! It has made it onto my list of favorite books of the year. I finished it in two nights, it was so hard to put down. The story follows Kelsey Cambridge, who is the director of Barton Farm. She is doing everything she can to keep the museum open, so she decides to hold a Civil War Reenactment on the grounds. This book is so much more than the reenactments, it is a great mystery, I loved the characters, the setting is fantastic, it has some twists and turns, some suspense, and even a touch of romance. When a dead body is found on the grounds, Kelsey throws herself into the investigation to find out what happened, especially since she is considered a suspect. She doesn't need any more bad luck for the farm, or for herself. But will she find out who did it, before it is too late? I recommend this book to anyone who wants a great read, I don't think any review I write can do it justice, you have to read it for yourself to see how great it really is! I absolutely cannot wait until the next in the series!

Patrizia says

Apprezzando molto le serie mysteries che questa autrice ambienta in comunità in parte Amish ed essendo appassionata di storia, ho comprato questo libro non appena è uscito, salvo poi dimenticarmi della sua esistenza. Ehm... Finalmente mi sono decisa a leggerlo: mi è piaciuto, ma non mi ha appassionato come altri di questa autrice o come i due che ho letto della serie, simile per ambientazione, della Ernst. Probabilmente, prima o poi leggerò anche gli altri due che compongono questa trilogia, ma non credo che questo avverrà nell'immediato futuro.

Lake County Public Library says

I like the author's writing, characters, setting, and the theme. I did guess who the killer was much earlier. Recommend for those who enjoy cozy mysteries, and don't need the surprise ending.

-- Jo, Merrillville Branch

LORI CASWELL says

Dollycas's Thoughts

We have a living history museum here in Wisconsin, Old World Wisconsin, and there is a mystery series set there as well by Kathleen Ernst. I love that series so I knew this new series would fascinate me as well and it didn't disappoint.

Kelsey Cambridge is the director at Barton Farm where history comes to life in Ohio. She decides to have a Civil War reenactment weekend to bring more people to the museum and help its bottom line. But the weekend gets off to a rocky start with the nephew of the farm's benefactress is found dead in the village. The guy was planning to cut funding for the place so Kelsey becomes the prime suspect in his murder. So while cannons fire and fights continue on the battlefield Kelsey needs to fight her own battle and try to find the real rebel to save herself and the farm.

This is an excellent start for this series. We meet Kelsey, her son, her father, her ex and his new fiancée'. We are introduced to some of the farm's employees and the woman responsible for funding the amazing site. We also meet Chase who would like to get to know Kelsey much better.

I especially enjoyed the reenactors and the way many of them try to stay in character for the whole weekend and those the work at Barton Farm staying in character even when the tourists tries to throw them off.

Amanda Flower does an excellent job at bringing her characters to life no matter what part they are playing and she has left them will plenty of room to grow. Kelsey has a huge amount of responsibility but she also has a big heart.

In addition to introducing the setting and the characters Flower gives readers a very well written mystery readers can sink their teeth into. I did figure out the killer well before it was revealed but I was actually surprised I was right because that rarely happens.

I am truly looking forward to the next installment of this series as Kelsey is going to have her work cut out for her. It should be very interesting.

Kellene says

This seems to be a lesser read series but Flower, and that's a shame. The concept of murder during a Civil War reenactment at a Living History museum grabbed me immediately and I was hooked. As per usual for this author, the mystery was nicely written, the characters well-rounded and developed and the setting realistic and skillfully brought to life for the reader. Research into reenactments was obviously part of the beginning of the writing because she did an excellent job describing the mindset of devoted participants.

I will say that initially Kelsey grated my nerve. She is suppose to be a strong woman, but she came across to me as bitchy about her independence. As the story developed and her backstory was revealed, I chalked it up to her insecurities, but had I been a part of her world, I might have told her where to go. She was actually more hateful (in my opinion) at the beginning than the detective, who was suppose to come across that way. Thankfully, she mellowed.

As to the mystery, the method of death was incredibly creative and I appreciated that. It's refreshing to see something new when you read a lot of mysteries and see the same method repeatedly. I did have the culprit pegged about half-way through the book, but the motive was not what I had originally expected. All-in-all, it was a well-written story, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I look forward to moving forward in the series.

QNPoohBear says

3.5 stars

Kelsey Cambridge loves her job as director of Barton Farm, a living history museum. She's done a great job bringing the museum up-to-date with what today's visitors want to see, as evidenced by the 400 Civil War reenactors staying at the farm for a weekend. Casey also loves the museum's generous benefactor, Cynthia Cherry, which is why it comes as a shock when Cynthia's nephew Maxwell informs Kelsey he's taking over the Cherry Foundation from his ailing aunt. Kelsey gets an even bigger shock the next morning when she finds Maxwell's body in the mud pit! Also on the scene is Chase Wyatt, a flirtatious reenactor and EMT. Kelsey finds herself suspect #1 on the detective's list. Her father is also a suspect and Casey's newly engaged ex-husband wants full custody of their son. Wyatt wants to team up to solve the mystery but Kelsey isn't sure she can trust him. Kelsey is determined to find the murderer on her own and protect her family and the museum at all costs.

This mystery was fairly formulaic as far as cozy mysteries go, but I enjoyed the story. The pacing was pretty good and there are several red herrings thrown in. I did not figure out the murderer until late in the story though still before Kelsey. The ending was very rushed and some loose ends didn't really get resolved. The setting is the best part of this book. I love history and living history museums. They're always fun to visit and I wish I could visit Barton Farm. I especially love the Civil War era and have been to a reenactment at a farm. I could easily picture Barton Farm with 400 Civil War reenactors.

I liked Kelsey a lot. I can identify with her love of history and her dedication to Barton Farm. I thought she was a bit too intense at times, delegating menial tasks to her assistant while she sparred with Chase or poked around trying to solve the murder when she should have been working. I also found her a bit too overprotective of her son and unnecessarily nasty about her ex's fiance, but I'm not a mother or ex-wife so I can't relate. Her romantic plot suffers and just doesn't really go anywhere. It would have made the book a little more enjoyable if Kelsey wasn't so snotty to Chase.

Most of the secondary characters are really flat. They suffer from the book having too many suspects. There is another character who is killed and that mystery doesn't really gel with the rest of the book. Chase Wyatt is a manchild and I don't blame Kelsey for not liking him at first. Obviously he reminds her of her ex, another

manchild. Kelsey's dad is the best minor character. An actor, he's always walking around quoting Shakespeare or dressed in 15th century costume. He provides a lot of comic relief. The other secondary character who was fleshed out nicely is Cynthia. She is a sweet, little, old lady who loves her community and wants to give back as much as she can. I felt horrible for her that she couldn't see her nephew's true nature and that she truly mourned him when he died. I also liked Benji, the brickmaker and Laura, Kelsey's best friend who tells it like it is.

If you enjoy cozy mysteries and love history even nearly as much as I do, you will like this book.

Leslie aka StoreyBook Reviews says

History is an important part of our culture and I find it interesting those that choose to reenact battles from American History. They have to have a lot of knowledge of history to be able to act in character from a time a century or more ago.

I thought the story was well written and there were plenty of characters to think might be the killer. I did figure it out but second guessed myself several times for a certain reason that I won't say because it would give it away!

I enjoyed getting to know all the characters, and there are quite a few! I have to say that I was not sad that Maxwell was murdered, he was not nice or up to any good.

Definitely a series to watch

Doward Wilson says

I read this straight thru, couldn't stop! One of the most entertaining debut series I have ever read! The setting, a living history farm and museum, holding a Civil War reenactment; the characters well developed and a most unusual style of murder. I really liked how well our Museum Director, Kelsey, is drawn into the murder to save her museum and job. The setting, background and characters are educational and entertaining but most importantly, believable. It's cozy and mystery in a wonderful package! I can't wait to see how this series builds.

Linda says

Overall I really enjoyed this book and I hope to make another trip to Barton Village. I liked the village and the civil war reenactment was a fun setting. I liked the characters and the mystery was pretty good although I did figure it out a step or two ahead of Kelsey. I did have two problems with the book but they didn't detract to much from my enjoyment. The first was that I found it unbelievable how much information the detective had an hour after the crime and the second was how many times a word was left out of a sentence, usually something small but it happened throughout the book.

OpenBookSociety.com says

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/th...>

Brought to you by OBS reviewer Kayt

I have to start off by saying that I absolutely love all the books/series Amanda Flower/Isabella Alan writes. When I read about this new series. A Living History Museum Mystery, I was thrilled. Having had some firsthand experience with Civil War reenactments, I was intrigued to see how this amazing author would handle the subject. I was not disappointed, far from it in fact. The Final Reveille is a super first in what promises to be a stellar new cozy mystery series. Amanda Flower writes with so much heart that her characters and storylines always radiate that care. They quickly feel like family and make a fabulous story even better.

The main character, Kelsey Cambridge, is the director of living history museum Barton Farm. Along with her young son Hayden, cat Benjamin Franklin and corgi Tippin she lives in the cottage on the farm. Her father also lives with them during the summer. The farm, including period buildings and her cottage are all thanks to the care and money of the farm's benefactor wealthy Cynthia Cherry. The cast of characters is wonderful, including friend Laura and other workers at the farm. The reenactors are great and from experience I can say Amanda Flower does a fabulous and authentic portrayal of all of them. Right down to the "cider" secretly being enjoyed by a few.

I cannot wait to learn more and more about all the main characters. I was truly impressed by the way the characters were so well written and developed in this first of the series. The Final Reveille felt more like the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th in a series to me. I felt as if I knew the characters from the start and enjoyed them so much. That is one of the many great things about this author's writing style. It always feels like coming home. The murders were surprising and the methods were definitely not any run of the mill. The twists and turns were intriguing and exciting yet believable. Kelsey is not one to go bumbling around putting herself in danger. Towards the end I had a very good idea who the killer may be, but the reveal and motive were full of suspense and unexpected.

The Final Reveille did not disappoint this diehard Amanda Flower fan. I was pulled in from the very first pages and never let go. This is a book that was almost impossible to put down. Full of great characters, authentic historical references, flowing writing style and a wonderful mystery. The Final Reveille is a true winner. The only bad thing about this book, it ended and now the wait is on for the next in this series. This is a wonderful new cozy series that promises to just keep getting better and better. You can truly never go wrong reading an Amanda Flower book and The Final Reveille is a supreme example of that.

Sharon says

A disappointing read. Kelsey Cambridge is the director of a living history museum. She lives on Barton Farm with her 5 year old son and father. During the museum's reenactment weekend, the nephew of the aged benefactress is murdered after telling Kelsey the funding for the museum would be drastically reduced when he takes over the funds. Kelsey is the prime suspect in Maxwell's murders and she takes on the task of uncovering the murderer. I think the biggest problem with this book is that lacked depth. I did not find Kelsey an endearing character. She came across as abrasive and bullying. There were too many characters who seemed to be introduced solely for the purpose of having larger roles in subsequent books like the gardener, Jason the barn boy, and Kelsey's father. I did like the banter between Kelsey and potential love interest, Chase but I sense a love triangle before smooth sailing ensues with both of their exes as recurring

characters. I was disappointed that the Civil War reenactment was merely a backdrop for the action. I guessed who the murderer was as soon as the character was introduced but could not figure out the motive. I did not feel like there were any clues as to the motive and the rationale was weak at best. I like a little more meat to my cozy mystery plots than this one had. 2.5 stars.
