



Honest Doubt

Amanda Cross , Carolyn G. Heilbrun

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Professor Charles Haycock is dead from a hearty dose of his own heart medication. The mystery is not *why* Haycock was murdered-very few could stomach the woman-hating prof?but *who* did the deed. Estelle "Woody" Woodhaven, a private investigator hired to find the killer, naturally enlists the help of that indefatigable amateur sleuth, Kate Fansler. Together, they start to pull at the loose ends of the very tangled Clifton College English Department. The list of suspects is longer than the freshman survey reading list. And as the women defuse the host of literary landmines set out for them, Woody suspects they're only scratching the surface of a very large and sinister plot. . . .

Honest Doubt Details

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Author : Amanda Cross , Carolyn G. Heilbrun

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From Reader Review Honest Doubt for online ebook

Meagan says

I wasn't a fan of this book. I couldn't get into the story or follow the characters or plot. I don't think I will be reading anymore books by this author.

Susan says

Kate Fansler is only peripheral in this one but its still an academic setting .The woman private eye who is the main character rides a motorcycle, has her flaws and is relatable. Just a touch of romance when she consults with a retired cop.

Richard Fursland says

Another superbly crafted Fansler mystery. Credible atmosphere, characters and denouement. The negative reviewers seem to be in denial about the realities of fat peoples' self defence mechanisms, sexual attraction and academia.

Laura says

Ugh. This is not really a Kate Fansler master. The protagonist is a PI who is investigating a murder in an English department in a small New Jersey college, and calls upon Fansler periodically to help her decode the language, culture, and politics of academia. Being in academia myself, I found it a bit too close to home. (Although I'm nowhere near even wanting to murder one of my colleagues.) The protagonist also has a lot of body image issues, which was tedious to wade through. And the resolution is also very unsatisfying.

Pamela McLaren says

Boy, this book hit home. When you work on a college campus, you find out that no matter how often they talk about working collaboratively, they only mean it so far. In this book, the situation has become toxic: the murdered professor hated everyone and the feeling was just about mutual. And for what it was worth, I don't think the other professors were that chummy either. In that regard, it did seem a little unusual for usually there are people who believe similarly and work together.

One of the things I'm really surprised about is that this was written in 2000 but it sounds really like its more from the 1950s: the way they talk about male professors feeling about female professors is really dated and unrealistic. But all in all, this was a good read. The book had just the right amount of the main character (sometimes she has annoyed me) and I really did like the one who really was the main character this time out, Woody. She is a hoot and a lot of fun.

Elizabeth says

I really enjoyed this cozy, well written mystery, but I thought the ending was weak. I really enjoyed Woody with her cycling skills and insecurities about her weight. As a former academic, I was a bit skeptical about the poisonous (pun intended) atmosphere of the Clifton College English department, but Heilbrun was an academic herself. The book made me think that I need to check out Tennyson again. I haven't thought much about him since college.

Donna says

This book is interesting mostly as a thinly disguised rant, a fictional depiction of the world as seen through the eyes of Carolyn Heilbrun, the English professor who eventually disclosed her identity as the pseudonymous Amanda Cross.

It's a world of old-boy networks in which women have to scratch and scabble for any type of recognition and professional relationships are built on mistrust, dishonesty, and ruthless game-playing. The picture Heilbrun paints of the academic world, both in fiction and in her memoir, *The Last Gift of Time: Life Beyond Sixty*, is cynical and sad. The elements would probably be much the same if she happened to be one of the first women directors of a large corporation or one of the first women astronauts or one of the first women to do anything. She was a feminist (a *literary* feminist), and she was chronically angry.

Perhaps that's why this book seems to have disappointed many readers whose comments appear below: it's not really a *mystery*, and it's not really about her usual protagonist, Kate Fansler, or any other character. It seems to me that *Honest Doubt* was all about *her*, Carolyn Heilbrun, and the bitterness that was an established part of her take on the world at the time the novel was written.

Avid Series Reader says

Honest Doubt by Amanda Cross is the 13th book of the Kate Fansler series set in late 20th century New York City. Similar to the rest of the series, it involves solving a murder in academia. Far different from the rest of the series is the primary protagonist - a fat motorcycle-riding young female detective with attitude. The English department at Clifton College hires a private detective to solve the murder of universally disliked Professor Haycock. P.I. "Woody" Woodhaven consults with Kate Fansler for academic jargon, insights into power struggles and bureaucracy in general. [But there is nothing special about the department; entrenched male chauvinists resent and try to block women from success in every profession, every office - Boring repetitive theme]. Woody refers far too often to her overweight status, as well as how confused and overwhelmed she is by the mystery. Most of the characters are unlikeable. A police detective who shares the case openly with Woody, to the extent of inviting her to join him and participate in suspect interviews, is not believable. Kate eventually "solves" the mystery. Rather than develop her budding relationship with Don, Woody just drops it at the end of the case. Overall, an uninteresting mystery, unpleasant protagonist and unsatisfying ending.

Ruth says

advertised as a Kate Fansler mystery, but she's playing an advisory role to main character, the very large PI Estelle "Woody" Woodhouse who is hired to find the murderer of Prof. Charles Haycock. All of his colleagues had motive and opportunity and Woody learns that they all did kill him in a group effort. Did not like characters, plot or writing style. No more Amanda Cross.

Margaret says

Is it cheating to openly base your mystery plot on a famous Agatha Christie one? And I can see why an author would like to write about her main protagonist from a second person's point of view, but that second person seemed more than a bit hero-worshipping, which struck me as being self-serving on the part of the author. I didn't care for how the lead character's self image so thoroughly revolved about her excess weight, but that is understandable in view of the current prejudices, and turned out, as I had hoped, to be relevant to the plot.

Ms. Fansler writes so well that I would eagerly devour any other mysteries she writes, whether or not I have minor quibbles with them.

Judy says

Amanda Cross aka Dr. Carolyn G. Heilbrun, the Avalon Foundation Professor of Humanities (Emerita) at Columbia University intimately knows the academic world and it shows. This is the 13th book in the Kate Fansler series but, in this outing, Kate only plays a minor role. Professor Charles Haycock of the Clifton College English Department is killed at a faculty party from an overdose of his own heart medication which had been placed in a bottle of Greek retsina. And who is sorry that he is dead? No one. Haycock hated women, was nasty to his colleagues, and his removal from the department was met with across the board relief. I've been teaching in colleges since 1980 (Good Lord, that is a long time. I'm going to have to lie down after I finish typing this.) and Heilbrun captures with an expert eye the political infighting and backstabbing that is so widespread among the faculty in many institutions of higher education. Much of this book was like a trip down Memory Lane. And the "solving" of the crime is an homage to a classic mystery novel by one of the genre's best known authors. Very enjoyable.

judy weaver says

pseudonym. Amanda Cross is Carolyn Gold

Jason says

I actually couldn't finish this one. I was so turned off by the main characters' obsession with pointing out that

she is fat and how everything is tied in to her being fat and how everything is seen through the lens of her being fat. I couldn't connect with the main character because of this and I found it extremely distracting to the story and annoying on a personal level.

Caer Glas says

A pretty standard, really predictable private eye mystery, with lots of arcane literary references, and many irritating asides by the main character, especially about her weight. Looking at the number of books this author has produced, I'd say she has either been writing a long time, or is none too picky about quality and churns them out as fast as possible with little regard for quality. My guess is the latter.

Text Addict says

I'd probably like this book more if the narrator, Woody, wasn't so anxious to prove she's not miserable about her weight that she talks about it all the time. I don't know where the heck Cross was trying to go with that, frankly, and it made me annoyed and uncomfortable. Otherwise the character has an interesting perspective (and Kate Fansler appeared as a consultant helping Woody out). But as perhaps an attempt to develop a new series character, it just didn't work for me.
