



Revenge of the Wrought-Iron Flamingos

Donna Andrews

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Every year, Yorktown, Virginia, relives its role in the Revolutionary War by celebrating the anniversary of the British surrender in 1781. This year, plans include a re-enactment of the original battle and a colonial craft fair. Meg Langslow has returned to her home town for the festivities--and to sell her wrought-iron works of art. Except, of course, for the pink-painted flamingos she reluctantly made for her mother's best friend--she's hoping to deliver them secretly, so she won't get a reputation as "the blacksmith who makes those cute wrought-iron flamingos."

Besides, she has taken on another responsibility--making sure none of her fellow crafters ruin the historical authenticity of the fair with forbidden modern devices--like wrist watches, calculators, or cell phones. She's only doing it to keep peace with the mother of the man she loves. And Michael himself will don the white-and-gold uniform of a French officer for the re-enactment--what actor could resist a role like that?

Meg's also trying to keep her father from scaring too many tourists with his impersonation of an 18th century physician. And to prevent a snooping reporter from publishing any stories about local scandals. Not to mention saving her naive brother, Rob, from the clutches of a con man who might steal the computer game he has invented. It's a tough job--at least, until the swindler is found dead, slain in Meg's booth with one of her own wrought-iron creations.

Now Meg must add another item to her already lengthy to do list: "Don't forget to solve the murder!"

Fortunately, the more trouble Meg faces, the more fun the reader will have--and Meg faces plenty of trouble in this lighthearted and funny novel.

Revenge of the Wrought-Iron Flamingos Details

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Andrea says

Donna Andrews stories are leaving me in stitches! Meg Langslow and her family are at their quirky best when they find themselves as part of an annual historical re-enactment festival in their home town Of Yorktown, Virginia. Of course there is a murder, and the body turns up in Meg's booth with one of her creations looking like the murder weapon. Will the Langslows survive the weekend without injury or arrest, will Meg and Michael ever have time alone to discuss their relationship, and will Spike the dog ever stop biting people and escaping his leash? For answer to these questions and many more be sure to read this third story in the Meg Langslow mysteries that are suspenseful and entertaining!

Ana T. says

Yesterday I finished another cozy mystery for the monthly discussion at the cozy group. I'm sad to say that for the first time I didn't much enjoy the book chosen.

A reenactment of the siege of Yorktown features a crafts fair, so ornamental blacksmith Meg Langslow dresses in costume and peddles her wares. An entrepreneur working with Meg's brother comes to near-blows with several craftspeople--including Meg, who has hidden a dozen modern pink flamingos under her counter. When the man is killed by one of Meg's birds, Meg is determined to find the culprit.

I think my main problem was the type of humour that I didn't find humorous in the least. Like when Meg finds the body and her first thought is "Well at least he's in period!". I'm afraid this doesn't sound funny to me. And most of the characters seemed like some sort of caricature of real people, talk about extended families with weird members.

From my point of view the first half of the book suffers from too much dialogue, too many characters introduced... it ruined the suspense as the villain, victim is immediately set apart and then it takes forever for the murder to happen. After the murder I think we spend too much time with Meg's crazy relatives and after a while the action just couldn't hold my interest anymore.

I had thought this theme would be just my thing with reenactment of an historical battle and a craft fair but the truth is that it didn't work for me. A C.

Julie says

Revenge of the Wrought-Iron Flamingos by Donna Andrews is a 2002 St. Martin's Press publication.

This series so fun!

A craft fair and annual revolutionary reenactment celebrating the anniversary of the British surrender gives Meg a chance to set up a booth and sell her wrought iron art work. But, she must also contend with her boyfriend's mother, who has become the 'authenticity' police, making sure everyone is strictly adhering to the customs, dress, and speech of the period. Not only that, Meg's not so favorite reporter is snooping around constantly, and generally being a pain in the neck. Then there is her father, who is enjoying impersonating an eighteen- century doctor a bit too enthusiastically, *and* her brother Rob, who may be entering into a bad business arrangement, *and* Michael's increasing pressure to have Meg move closer to him so they can see each other more often. If that weren't enough, a murder is committed and one of Meg's friends could be arrested, meaning that once more, she must don her sleuthing cap to keep an innocent man from going to prison.

I'm reading through a great many series, but there are three I'm hoping to catch completely up with by year's end, and this was one of them. But, I hit a major snag when my library lost the digital license to loan these books out. It's going to take me a little longer to piece the series together than I originally thought, as a result. All the same this book was worth the extra time, money and effort. It got off to a slow start, with the mystery being more about who the victim might be, rather than a whodunit. Finally, almost a hundred pages in, a crime was committed, and we were off the races. From that point on, the story was utterly absorbing, with plenty of surprising developments and revelations. The screwball antics and hilarious dialogue were a nice compliment, propelling the story along at an even faster pace. The mystery kept me guessing until the end and the conclusion was very satisfying. Can't wait to what happens with Meg and her offbeat family next!!

4 stars

Carrie says

This series is starting to make my head hurt. I don't really care about the characters, and the story wasn't very interesting, but I found that I couldn't just leave this book in the middle to read something better. I had to find out "who dunnit." And I'll probably end up reading the next book in the series because that's how I get about mystery series, and I'll probably give it two stars as well. Sigh...

Trish says

Wonder how I managed to arrange it that for two out of the last three books I've read have ornamental flamingos as the murder weapon! Still, the main reason for reading this series is Meg's crazy family, as much as the actual mysteries.

Rebecca says

Blacksmith Meg Langslow has been roped into running a craft fair at a Yorktown Battle reenactment, organized by her boyfriend Michael's mother, and Meg is already regretting it. Michael's mother is running rampant over everyone and everything, particularly Meg, and fining the crafters hundreds of dollars for any

modern anachronisms (including things that the "Town Watch" think are anachronisms even though they aren't). As if that weren't enough, Meg's brother is contemplating a deal with a shady software developer whom some friends of Meg are planning to sue, another blacksmith keeps (badly) plagiarizing Meg's designs, the cannons are firing all night, and Michael keeps wanting to talk about their future--which will involve Meg moving back to her hometown. All hell then breaks loose when the shady developer is found dead in Meg's booth, stabbed with Meg's dagger, and the new local police detective just wants a fast arrest--whether he gets the right person or not. So once more, it's up to Meg to sort out the true murderer before anyone else gets killed.

This is another fun series, completely and delightfully unbelievable, peopled with an excess of quirky characters and situations you only wish could be real. If you're looking for a light, humorous mystery series that still has sympathetic characters, try it out.

Ronna says

Donna Andrews' bird mysteries are a total treat. In book three, Meg and her boyfriend Michael, are participating in an enactment of the 1781 siege of Yorktown. Michael's demanding mother is in charge and allows nothing from present day to be seen, said, or tasted anywhere during the celebration.

Meg is participating in the crafts fair, selling her exquisite iron works. She has competition with some second class crafters, but she's also trying to keep her special order, flamingos under wraps so buyers will consider her a serious blacksmith. Unfortunately, the flamingoes are brought out from hiding and one ends up stabbed in the back of a local businessman disliked by one and all. Her birds, her murder? Or her brother and good friends who were seen arguing with the dead man?

This book was full of history and tales from present day re-enactments. The characters from this series continue to grow, and the competition between the couple's moms gets more complicated. Meg's Dad's love of mystery is tested and he tries to get himself accused of the murder. Humor abounds and the mystery follows a number of possible suspects until the very end. These books have shown their merit by the long list of this series to date. Excellent cozies and fast reads!!

Jonathan says

Very, very good. This kept my attention throughout and I loved all of the characters. The one star was taken off simply for it taking me so long to finish and for Micheal's sometimes moodiness. Besides that, however this was an excellent book that I loved. I already have the next on my shelf, so expect me to be reading that soon!

Mark Baker says

Meg is participating in a reenactment of the Battle of Yorktown. While she's watching for things that don't fit into the period, she also finds a dead body. Worse yet, Meg's brother Rob is the chief suspect since the victim wanted to buy his computer program.

Another fun mystery filled with laughs, twists, and great characters.

Read my full review at [Carstairs Considers](#).

Aya says

Meg Langslow: 3

After the slow pacing of the previous book, the author seems think returning to the formula of the first, where Meg is harried left and right by people making demands on her, will return things back to the success of the first book. Unfortunately, that just makes for a frustrating read, and this one also lacks of the humor of the first book. I'm going to give the next book a shot, but am really considering not going further with this series.

Betty says

To make points with Mrs Waterson Meg agrees to be her assistant at mock Battle of Yorktown's craft fair. Everyone is dress in period clothing. Michael is a stickler for authentic items. several of Meg's family are at the show. Rob is dispose to meet with a software person Roger Benson. Meg and Rob learns he might be scammer and don't want to give the source code.. They want to know more before dealing with him. Later Roger is found dead in Meg's stall with her handcrafted stuck in him. Will the sheriff arrest Meg or Rob, who kill RB.? Mrs Fennigan has problems with the "yard police" about her plastic pink flamingos. She commissioned Meg to make her a dozen pink iron ones. Rob finds and in very funny scenes get Meg a lot of orders

Susan says

How does a community ban on plastic yard ornaments fit in with a revolutionary war reenactment, a murder, and blacksmithing? Leave it to Meg Langslow's character to bring the story together in Yorktown VA where she and the handy boyfriend character Michael, who we really know far too little about, are participating in the festivities of encampment and craft show in period garb and with cannons firing.

Not much meat on the bones of this one in the series, but the story behind her making iron flamingos is believable to any condo or Homeowners' association resident and the rest of the book is lightweight entertainment with amusing conversation and colorful characters.

Angela says

Like a slower, less interesting episode of *Murder She Wrote*. The actual murder (i.e. the story) didn't happen until half-way through the book.

Jamie says

Everyone's geared up to celebrate the anniversary of the Revolutionary War's siege of Yorktown, Virginia, and this year they're going to party like it's 1781! But Meg Langslow might have taken on a bit more than she can manage when she volunteers to help her boyfriend's mother with her plans for the celebration. While Michael is off having fun preparing for the big battle re-enactment, she's stuck in period garb policing her fellow crafters and making sure no anachronisms slip into sight around the power-mad Mrs. Waterston. All the more worrying is her own batch of contraband; a flock of hot pink wrought-iron flamingos hidden under her table, awaiting delivery to a relative, and definitely not period accurate. But that order is indefinitely delayed when a con man is found dead in Meg's booth and a fellow craftsman is accused of the crime.

There's a whole lot going on with #3 in the *Meg Langslow* series and Meg's extended family is front and center. The Yorktown sheriff (cousin) is facing off against Mrs. Fenniman (cousin) for the coming election. Rob (brother) is trying to get his table-top game published as a video game and is meeting a software company rep who turns out to be in a lawsuit against some other craftsmen for stealing their business management program. A sleazy tabloid reporter (cousin) keeps poking his nose where it shouldn't be, and he won't stop badgering Meg because she's under orders to 'find poor Wesley a nice story that will keep his editor happy'. Her father, a mystery buff, keeps trying to prove his air-tight alibi is full of holes so he can be considered suspect. Mother is doing her damnedest to upstage Michael's mother, and does so with the grace and ease of a true Southern lady. About the only side plot that doesn't involve Meg's family in some way is with a blacksmith who's been caught ripping off the designs of other craftsmen, including Meg, and stealing their customers with his lower quality copies. And on top of all this drama Meg has to deal with acting as both the babysitter for the over-enthusiastic Town Watch and as the complaint department over Michael's mother's more annoying decrees, trying to keep the new deputy from jumping the gun, and avoiding her and Michael's relationship developments.

Flamingo also gives us something lacking in the previous books (probably because of how many of Meg's family members statistically must be police officers). We get our first bad cop, and this time I only partly mean incompetent. He's a transfer from a larger city and he's a rude, sexist, stereotype. The first time we meet him is when he's called to the scene of the murder and immediately accuses Meg of killing him while leering down her period appropriate décolletage and ignoring the discovery of her stolen cash box.

"So, can you think of anyone else who might have a reason to dislike the deceased?" Monty said, finally. He stared intently at me, as if he suspected I was holding something back. Which I was. For the past half hour I'd been fighting the overwhelming urge to say that if disliking someone was reason for murder, Deputy Monty had better hire a bodyguard if he planned to stay in town much longer.

(Donna Andrews, *Revenge of the Wrought-Iron Flamingos*, p.124)

Unfortunately for Meg, most of the locals are near or distant relatives to her, and all the crafters had been

cajoled into coming by her pleading and calling in favours to impress Michael's mother with a thriving craft fair, so she's related to or close friends with every suspect.

Because the Siege of Yorktown was an actual historical event which signaled the end of the revolutionary war (and which I now understand many more of the references to thanks to *Hamilton*, the 2016 Tony Award winner for best musical), and because Meg's been overseeing most of the work to keep the celebration authentic, *and* because Meg is a local and Yorktown's understandably big on civic pride, we get a ton of history dumped on us. I mentioned in a previous review this December (it might have been yesterday, but they're already starting to blur together) that history in a murder mystery helps to ground the book. Since Yorktown is a real place and poor Meg's had its history drummed into her much longer than her friends and boyfriend have, she's rattling off great little tidbits throughout the book. Plus there's a scene where Meg and Michael stumble upon the artillery crew and we get a lesson preparing blanks for black-powder weapons. (Sorry to butt in again, but there's a scene in the musical *Hamilton* where the war has ended and *Hamilton* says/sings that he hears people singing in the streets "The World Turned Upside Down" and I didn't get the reference, but according to *Flamingos* that was the name of the song played at the surrender ceremony. Isn't that just fascinating?)

Meg's character has been defined by the last two books as someone who takes on all the responsibilities thrown at her with little complaint, defined by her notebook-that-tells-me-when-to-breathe. The notebook isn't in this book, probably because it's an anachronism, and theoretically her organizational work has already been completed by the opening of the festival. Everything that happens in the book is spur of the moment responsibility that she shoulders automatically, and we're given a clearer look at what kind of person she is. Level-headed and very quick thinking (the Town Watch keep bringing her things they believe violate the no anachronism rule and she's excellent at bullshitting them), but also with a sharp tongue and temper that gets her into a bit of trouble in *Flamingos*. We learn her blacksmithing was actually one of many attempts at finding a safe outlet for her aggression. One element that I'm amused at only because it highlights Deputy Monty being a bad cop, is that this is also the first (and I'm sure, only) time Meg withholds information from the police and tries to solve the murder herself. Even then, when she gets the clue that breaks the case she still sends it right to the cops, just under the orders that her messenger not give it to Deputy Monty unless the sheriff is with him to witness the handover.

Michael, likewise, gets a little less Prince Charming-y as we find out that he's rather vain; taking hours to dress and more likely as not spending most of that time in front of the mirror if he's in costume. He's a drama professor at a college and an actor (it's unknown whether or not he already has the steady part in the TV show that plays a large role in *We'll Always Have Parrots*), and he and Meg have been in a long distance relationship for a year at this point.

The plot was very engaging and the solution caught me by surprise. As I said above there's a lot going on in this book with many sub-plots and other responsibilities that need to be taken care of. But the murder mystery very slowly creeps into the limelight at the perfect pace, and everything slips right down into own their levels of importance beautifully.

The verdict? The *Meg Langslow* series continues to blow me away every time I pick it up. I'm already planning on moving on to the next book, because after two years of Summer Reading Lists I'd forgotten all the plot points and characters and even the identity of the murderer and could love *Flamingos* like it was my first time with it. The book is big on humor and even the final confrontation isn't spared, first in the reactions of others when they don't believe Meg's accusations, then in the restraining of the murderer when they realize she's right. The tenseness and breathless adrenalin leading up to it really brings out the laughs at

the situation. The characters are memorable as hell and a lot of them become regulars, unlike every other cozy I've ever read where maybe four or five characters join the main leads and the rest are rotated out each book, but even better are the ones who stay in the background. They become a source of comedy themselves, like a never ending streams of clowns coming out of a clown car. The plot is wonderful and will keep you interested right until the end. I can't brag about this book enough. The whole series just gets better and better from this point forward. If you take away anything from this month, let it be that you should go read *Thyme* and *Flamingos* (ok, technically you should read *Peacocks* first, but you get what I'm trying to say).

Linnea says

Such a fun mystery. This is one of the earlier ones of the series and I still enjoyed it.
