



## Petticoat Detective

*Margaret Brownley*

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## Petticoat Detective Margaret Brownley

Pinkerton detective Jennifer Layne is no stranger to undercover work. But posing as a lady companion named Amy at Miss Lillian's Parlor House and Boots is a first for her. She's finally landed a high-profile case and is on the trail of the notorious Gunnysack Bandit, when one of Miss Lillian's girls essential to her investigation meets an untimely demise. Only a handful of people are in the house at the time of her death, including handsome Tom Colton, a former Texas Ranger determined to clear his brother's name. Amy has many reasons to suspect Tom of murder—and one very personal reason to hope that she's wrong about him.

## Petticoat Detective Details

Date : Published December 1st 2014 by Shiloh Run Press

ISBN : 9781628366266

Author : Margaret Brownley

Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Christian Fiction, Mystery, Romance, Westerns, Christian, Historical Romance



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## From Reader Review Petticoat Detective for online ebook

### **Tim says**

Amy, a female Pinkerton agent, is mistaken for a lady of the night when she arrives at the brothel to investigate the famous Gunnysack Bandit. Since this disguise works with her undercover assignment she plays along. But when Tom, a man in search of his brother's killer, keeps showing up she considers working with him to solve the case. But she can't allow the lines to blur between her attraction to Tom and her job. Especially since he thinks she actually works at the "hotel".

This was an entertaining and often amusing story. The two main characters worked well together and I liked the back story the author gave each of them. The secondary characters were a great addition to the plot as well and I hope to see some of them in the next book. The author did a great job of portraying how ostracized, hopeless and shamed the women felt. The message of forgiveness and salvation was subtle, but woven throughout the story. I enjoyed this book, as I have all of the author's other books and look forward to the next book in this series.

I received this book free of charge from Barbour Publishing in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Rebekah Gyger says**

3.5 Stars

The Petticoat Detective is a romance that reads with the feel of a mystery. Unfortunately, because the author does not include a lot of information about the secondary characters which later turns out to be the very information which Amy uses to solve, there is little chance you will be able to follow along and make a guess like you might for a regular mystery novel. For example, a perfume scent is used to identify a female suspect, yet until it was important, there was no mention of any of the women wearing perfume.

It is the romance that holds up the best in this novel. Tom is a truly amazing guy who is not afraid to be seen with a soiled-dove, or to treat her as a human being. Even when he has been betrayed, he still gives people the benefit of the doubt and does what he can to trust their word. While Amy's role at Miss Lillian's is a barrier in their relationship, he doesn't give up on Amy all together.

There is a great message in this novel about treating people with love and respect, no matter what their sins. It is nice to see that message told from the perspective of someone who has become a social outcast (the summary does not seem to include that Amy is undercover as a prostitute) rather abruptly. I think that the only issue I had with Brownley's portrayal was the one woman who did not change her career at the end of the novel. While there was mention that she could still change her ways, it was almost as if to say that any woman who didn't take any opportunity leave such a life, must be a nasty person.

I did enjoy the Petticoat Detective. There was a good message and a sweet romance. My issue was that it seemed so much like a mystery, which I would have loved, and yet did not deliver that mystery. Hopefully the next book will be different. I fully intend to read it either way.

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## Beverly says

Former Texas Ranger Tom Colton was on a mission. His brother Dave's last letter to him had indicated a change of heart and a desire to be reconciled with his young son, whom Tom was raising. Now his brother was dead, and Tom wanted to find his murderer and bring him to justice. His recent investigations brought him to Goodman, Kansas, right to the doorstep of Miss Lillian's Parlour House and Fine Boots. Dave had written about a Rose, one of Miss Lillian's girls, whom he had fallen in love with and intended to marry. Tom wanted to talk with Rose, hoping to elicit her help in finding Dave's killer. This part of his quest made him uncomfortable, but he would do whatever it took to get his man.

Jennifer Layne was a highly trained agent for the Pinkerton Detective Agency. Her job often placed her undercover on a case where she could accomplish more than a man often could. Her quest had also brought her to Miss Lillian's Parlour House where she was to talk to a Miss Rose whom the Pinkertons believed was a key to their investigation to the identity of the Gunnysack Bandit. She decided to apply to become a "resident." She had just become established in a room and been made over to look more "decent" in Miss Lillian's estimation, to get close to Rose. But a complication occurred when Miss Lillian discovered Rose in her room, killed but without evidence of a struggle. Jennifer's job suddenly took a serious turn for the worse. She wondered if Rose's death had anything to do with her investigation of the bandit.

This is the first *Margaret Brownley* book I have read. I'm pretty certain it won't be the last. There are many reasons why I like this one in particular. First, there is a "who done it" thread running all throughout the story that's well written. Tom wants to find his brother's killer. In the process of picking up clues, he believes they lead him to the Gunnysack Bandit. Finding who this bandit is becomes his central focus. Between the Tom and Amy, clues begin to look as if Dave Colton might be the bandit. Disheartened, Tom returns home after the Pinkerton Agency concludes the same thing. But Jennifer doesn't like the way the clues don't exactly add up. Eventually she has an idea after the case was closed. The end solution took me completely by surprise. Kudos to the author for keeping the readers guessing right up to the end.

Second, the pull of attraction between Tom and Jennifer (as Amy) is everywhere in this tale, twisted up in the main plot, complicating the urgency of their respective tasks. It is especially evident in Tom, a man of faith. Since he believes Amy is a "sporting woman" he fights his attraction to her all the way to the final chapters. In the meantime, Jennifer has her own conflicts because she too is a person of faith. She barely manages not to compromise her convictions without revealing her involvement with Pinkerton. I was a little surprised whom she took into her confidence. I think you may be too. But it works out well in the end.

Third, the book is heavily laced with good humor from mixed up identities to misunderstandings to just plain silliness. The strands of humor and adventure work well together. This coupling brought me back to re-read the book more than twice.

Finally, I was given this book on CD to review. *Jaimee Draper* reads the book with so much talent and gusto that her acting ability made the story come alive. She added accents, hesitations, and mispronunciations at all the appropriate places with hilarious results. I thoroughly enjoyed listening to this audiobook. For all the above reasons, I highly recommend you read it too.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received a complimentary review copy of this book from The Book Club Network on behalf of the author. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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### **Hilary says**

A light-hearted, fun read set in the Old West. Jennifer Layne is on the trail of the Gunnysack Bandit when she runs into Tom Colton, the Ranger-turned-rancher determined to find the truth about his brother. Unfortunately for Jennifer, she can't enlist his help because she's posing as a lady of negotiable affection, and it's hard enough allaying the suspicions of the other workers in the house...

It could all go horribly wrong, or wonderfully right, and we share Jennifer's emotions as the story cycles rapidly between the possibilities before finally resolving. (view spoiler)

Disclaimer: I received a free copy from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Kara Peck says**

I really enjoyed reading this book. There's romance, suspense and humor laced throughout. All things I look for in a book. The main characters draw you in and keep you by their side. While not the most suspenseful of books, it certainly kept my attention easily. I wanted something light and easy to read since at this time it's the holiday rush, and this book was just the thing I was looking for! I hadn't planned on being so taken in, but I found myself reaching to read this much more often than I expected. I was most pleasantly surprised by the humor throughout the book. You see, I am afraid I commit the sin of judging a book by its cover and the tidbits of humor were not expected. I am glad to have found this gem and can't wait to get my hands on more in the series as well as the authors other works.

\*I was given a copy of this book for review purposes, however I am under no obligation to provide a review and do so of my own free will.\*

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### **Rachael says**

One of Jennifer's big struggles is the constant falsehoods required by her occupation; as an undercover agent, she has to play a role. Given her role in this case, she cannot attend church or fellowship with believers, and, "Friendships require honesty, trust, and transparency--all the things her clandestine activities prevent" (221). As such, she is basically alone, and she cannot build relationships. That reality understandably weighs on her, especially when she finds that she really wants to make friends and be loved for who she is, not what she appears. The author finely balances that dilemma and her love of detective work in a believable character.

While I think bordellos offered a grimmer reality in real life, the author does a good job of bringing out the humanity of the working girls--their hurts, their history, their hardness, and their hearts. The secondary characters are gems, providing opportunities for both humor and serious subjects. I enjoyed learning more about the Pinkertons and their rules. While sweet and a touch cheesy, the story has a number of important points to make about judging, double standards, and who we are behind our appearance. A fun detective story of the old west, Petticoat Detective has both humor and heart.

Thank you Barbour and NetGalley for providing an e-copy for an honest review; I was not required to make it positive, and all opinions are my own.

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### **Kathy \* Bookworm Nation says**

I really enjoy Ms. Brownley's Westerns. She is always able to weave in a fun western setting with humor and romance.

Even after reading the synopsis I didn't realize the story takes place at a bordello, our heroine Amy has to pose as a prostitute in order to track down the Gunnysack Bandit. Even though the story takes place at a bordello and the mystery around two murders, it was an uplifting and pretty lighthearted read, never felt too heavy even though the subject matter was pretty serious.

Amy works for the Pinkerton Detective Agency, I remembered studying them a little while in college and it's always fun to see them references in my historical novels. Anyway, Amy has a hard time with this assignment, but it was interesting to get a "behind the scenes" look into a bordello and your heart can't help but hurt for ladies forced into this profession. One of the girls, Rose, is killed the day Amy arrives, she was also supposed to be Amy's contact so she's having to start from scratch. A mysterious stranger in town, Tom Colton is also investigating the case and the two pair up to try and solve the mystery. Tom doesn't realize Amy's true identity and purpose and is torn when he starts to have feelings for who he thinks is a prostitute. There are some funny situations that arise from Amy's deception and I was impressed that the author was able to keep things light. I also liked how things wrapped up at the end.

Overall, a fun western romance.

#### Content

Romance: Clean

Language: None

Violence: Mild

Religious: Moderate

Other: Mild (view spoiler)

Source: Received ARC from publisher for honest review.

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### **A.M. Heath says**

What I Loved: First of all, Margaret Brownley is one of those authors that is on my good side. I can always count on her to give me a solid story with just the right amount of suspense, humor, mystery, a message for my soul, and romance.

Petticoat Detective is one of those mystery novels that you're not able to solve within the first chapter which is something that I greatly appreciate. Jennifer finds herself in a pretty awkward position much longer than she ever meant. This leads to some humorous situations as well as a change of heart for both her and myself. It left me thinking harder about how I view people.

The main characters were well developed and the supporting cast was a major hit. I absolutely loved Petticoat Detective and I can't wait to finish the series.

Caution: I do want to point out that Jennifer is working undercover as...a lady of the night. Young or sensitive readers may want to be aware of this. However, as a super sensitive reader myself, I can honestly say that everything was handled tastefully. This can be a difficult setting to work with without shocking your audience, but Brownley handled it like a pro.

It was a little odd to me at first to find the main character actively dressing the part of a prostitute and living with them throughout the duration of the novel, but she never "walks the walk." And her placement in the home brings a new light to the type of situations that led so many women down such a dark and hopeless road.

While the setting makes the novel sound gritty, the execution really wasn't. I hope this helps fellow sensitive readers make the decision that's best for them.

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Rating and Recommendation: I'm giving Petticoat Detective 5 stars and recommend it to anyone who enjoys Christian Historical Fiction.

### **Aerykah says**

I enjoyed this book more than I expected.

I didn't read the blurb because the title was enough to make me want to read the book. After I started reading, though, I wasn't too sure about the setting-- much of the story takes place in or near a bordello, which surprised me. The heroine lives there and pretends to be a "lady of the night" while investigating a case and the hero visits the place too. While I'm not too sure about the accuracy, I did think it was portrayed... tastefully?

The pervasive mention of previous cases and how different people reminded the heroine of outlaws she had tracked down was a bit annoying because, though it seemed to be intended to make the heroine more believable, it did just the opposite. And some of the "historic, western lingo" seemed a bit forced and overdone.

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Other than that, though, I really did like this story. It was fun and enjoyable. I'm looking forward to the next book. :)

### **Cassandra says**

This book drove me insane.

"Tom stared at his milk, startled by the vision of green eyes that stared back. Drat! Now he was seeing things" (78). Really? A former Texas Ranger thinks like that?

I felt like the author assumed I am an idiot. Every single detective know-how was spelled out. "She dropped on all fours. People look up, not down, and she had less chance of being seen close to the ground. She peered around the corner. The dark form of a man stood outside the cellar door. He was dressed in black, which made him easy to pick out. Many criminals made the mistake of wearing solid black, a color that doesn't appear naturally in nature. Dark blue or gray was a better choice for blending in at night. She sat up and ever so quietly pulled off her boots. Stocking feet absorbed sounds better than leather soles" (212). Yes, thank you

for telling me things that I should already know or could infer from the story. Thank you, Captain Obvious.

Not a fan.

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### **Vickie McDonough says**

I had the privilege of endorsing Margaret Brownley's newest book, Petticoat Detective. Here's what I said:

What a hoot! Petticoat Detective is a rollicking mystery set in the Old West, with an unconventional heroine, a hurting hero, and a very unique secondary cast that will keep you chuckling. Margaret Brownley certainly lives up to her brand of Love and Laughter in the Old West with her latest book.

Vickie McDonough, Best selling author of more than 30 books and novellas, including Gabriel's Atonement.

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### **Meagan Myhren-bennett says**

Petticoat Detective  
Undercover Ladies 1  
Margaret Brownley

There are times when only a woman can do a proper investigation. And this is one of those times, though posing as companion is the last thing Jennifer planned on doing. But when her lead ends up dead Jennifer has no choice but to take on the identity of Amy, a woman living in a house of ill-repute. After all who would suspect a Pinkerton detective of working out of a Bordello. And Jennifer is determined to capture the notorious Gunnysack Bandit.

But her investigation is about to get a bit more complicated when Tom Colton (a former Texas Ranger) determines to clear his dead brother's name. And the fact that Tom's brother David and Jennifer's lead Rose had a connection seems to be of importance to this case.

But evidence seems to point to David and nothing Jennifer or Tom discover seems to lead away from this conclusion. Could they both be wrong?

The setting isn't what one would expect to find in Christian fiction, but this is clean if you have any reservations. There are several humorous scenes especially when Jennifer decides to set a trap for a suspect.

This is historical fiction with romance and it spotlights how few choices women had when seeking to support themselves at this period of time.

I was provided a copy of this audiobook by the publisher Barbour (Shiloh Run Press) through TBCN/BookFun in exchange for my honest review.

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## Amy says

Petticoat Detective is really a great and fun read. I couldn't help but laughing out loud throughout the book. It was so good and so fun. I loved the characters, setting, history, and story line.

I definitely highly recommend it.

5 stars.

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## Lindsey (Books for Christian Girls) says

About this book:

*“Pinkerton detective Jennifer Layne has a past full of identities...*

*But posing as a lady companion named Amy at Miss Lillian’s Parlor House and Boots is a first for her.*

*Amy’s current assignment has her on the trail of the notorious Gunnysack Bandit, when one of Miss Lillian’s girls—Amy’s best hope for a lead—meets an untimely demise.*

*Former Texas Ranger Tom Colton has every reason to distrust the green-eyed beauty at Miss Lillian’s who calls herself Amy. Determined to clear his brother’s name, he’s convinced she knows more than she lets on, and he means to find out what it is.*

*As Amy’s investigation continues, her biggest problem is Tom and his stolen kiss. The closer she gets to tracking down the outlaw, the harder it is to keep Tom from finding out the awful truth about his brother. The Gunnysack Bandit she can handle, but it’ll take a whole lot of faith and a little help from Miss Lillian and her girls to snag the man who stole her heart.”*

Series: Book #1 in the “Undercover Ladies” series.

Spiritual Content- Genesis 28:16 at the beginning; Prayers & Crossing; Talks about God & His opinion on things; ‘H’s are capital when talking about God; Strong Faith & Witnessing.

\*Note: Fortunes are told and talked about (Both Tom and Jennifer/Amy don’t believe in them); “*It would be a cold day in Hades before that happened.*””

Negative Content- Minor cussing including: a ‘hush up’, a ‘what in blazes’, two ‘blast it all’s, two ‘blimey’ and nine forms of ‘dumb’; Curses are said but not written; Blood & Murder (barely-above-not-detailed at the highest); Fighting (barely-above-not-detailed); Mentions of drinking & Jennifer’s father drank himself to his grave; Mentions of saloons & smoking.

Sexual Content- a barely-above-not-detailed kiss and Three semi-detailed kisses; Noticing & Staring; a ‘strumpet’, a ‘wanton’, three forms of ‘pimp’, five ‘harlot’s; Miss Lillian’s Parlor House and Boots is a brothel/bordello (“*Clients were called “guests,” working girls “residents,” and anything that happened behind closed doors, just plain old “hospitality.”*””); Low necklines on dresses & mentions of virtues; Love, falling in love, & the emotions. \*Spoiler\* (view spoiler) \*End of Spoiler\*

-Jennifer Layne

- Tom Colton
- P.O.V. switches between them.
- Set in 1883
- 310 pages

## Pre Teens- One Star

## New Teens- One Star

## Early High School Teens- Two Stars

## Older High School Teens- Three Stars

### My personal Rating- Three Stars

I've always been fascinated by the history of the Pinkerton Agency. Needless to say, I was very excited to read this book! Sadly, it wasn't as good as I was hoping—only because of the brothel & hints. While the ending was great and made it a lot better, you just have to get there. But, all that said, I plan on reading the rest of the series when they come out.

Link to review:

<http://booksforchristiangirls.blogspot.com>

\*BFCG may (Read the review to see) recommend this book by this author. It does not mean I recommend all the books by this author.

\*I received this book for free from the Publisher (Shiloh Run Press) for this review.

**Andrea Cox says**

by Andrea Renee Cox

The mystery and crime-solving aspects are what attracted me to this book. A couple of major things disappointed me, though. The lead character compromised her morals for her job, and she grew comfortable doing so through the course of the story, which seemed to contradict the moments when she thought the other girls in similar positions should stop the bad things they were doing. This came across as very hypocritical. For me, compromising one's God-given moral code is inexcusable. The back-cover copy was deceptive. It was so understated and used vague terms that I did not understand the majority of the plot would take place in and around a bordello. This was very off-putting to me because it felt like I was being rooked and deceived into accepting something I never would have chosen to read had I had knowledge of the setting and themes of this story. Lastly, there was not one mention of who was home watching over the main man's eleven-year-old nephew. I was concerned about his safety through the entire book, which distracted me from the meat of the story.

This turned out to be a really disappointing read for me, especially since I'd been looking forward to this book for a long time and was finally able to borrow it from a friend. However, I might try another Brownley novel. She was fantastic at setting the scene and characterization. Surprises came often too, which I liked since twists make for fantastic complexity in a story.

Content:

- \* prostitution & bordello
- \* compromising morals as a main theme
- \* nudity
- \* profanity
- \* tobacco

There were several typos, including "perpetuator" used when "perpetrator" was intended, but this did not affect my rating.

I was not compensated for my honest review.

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