



No Word from Winifred

Amanda Cross, Carolyn G. Heilbrun

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When Winifred, the niece of a renowned British novelist goes missing after she agreed to be interviewed for her esteemed aunt's biography, the biographer taps Kate Fansler to find her. Kate spots clues all right, but finding the person is a lot trickier than she thought....

From the Paperback edition.

No Word from Winifred Details

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From Reader Review No Word from Winifred for online ebook

mirole says

I liked this book a lot and would like to read other books in the series. I loved the writing style and humour.

Alton Motobu says

English professor Kate Fansler investigates disappearance of a woman who has links to the English literary world. Oddly constructed; told mostly through letters and journal entries; takes place in New York, England, and California. Major setting is Modern Language Association convention in New York City. Author gives insights into people involved in that world. Turns out the missing woman, Winifred, was involved in a love triangle with two other professors, and she left to get away from it all. This book is listed in some cozy mystery sites as a Christmas-themed book, but the only mention of Christmas happens on a single page where characters discuss negative things about the Christmas season. I don't think this qualifies it as a Christmas mystery.

Melanie says

The writing of novels, like any other barely acceptable anomaly in one's own private life, was one's own affair.

As I forge ahead through the Kate Fansler series, it seems like author Amanda Cross and protagonist Kate Fansler are becoming more and more like Carolyn Heilbrun, as if Heilbrun's pseudonym and main character are catching up to her. More feminism, more frustration with academia, more thoughts on work and aging and how to live a useful life. I know it's silly, but the further away these books get from traditional mysteries, the more I adore them. There's a scene of frenzied fact-checking at the offices of the Modern Language Association! SO SATISFYING.

CapnKath says

Enjoyed the mystery of finding Winifred.

Cathy says

I found this book on my bookshelf and decided to re-read it. I was a big fan of the Carolyn Heilbrun/Amanda Cross mystery books when I was younger so it was an interesting experience to reread this 30 years later. I still enjoyed the book but found it dated. The themes of women's friendships and careers in a male dominated culture made me realize how much has changed since the mid 1980s.

Jenny says

This is a mystery where a woman disappears for no reason. Kate and her friends and family try to figure out if she's dead or kidnapped. Winifred's connection to everyone was confusing to me (there were a lot of single women in this book!) and since readers never meet her (other than reading her journal entries), I wasn't sure I cared where she was. The ending resolved itself prettily but the book seemed more of a celebration of female independence and friendship. It seemed dated in that way, too, where maybe in the 80's it wasn't as common to be single and childless and seem content with that.

Stuart says

Like most Amanda Cross / Kate Fansler mysteries, there's not a lot mysterious going on. This book is more about relationships than anything else. It's a surprisingly modern book for one that is now 30 years old. It throws up several variations on men / women relationships and examines them in a slightly humorous fashion. It also throws in a little politics, as the Fansler household seems to be upset at the recent election. Overall, it's a short, enjoyable read, with an improbable ending. But, as I said, one does not really read Amanda Cross for the crime, it's for the language and the milieu and the discussions. enjoy!

Mary says

I picked this book up at a used book store in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania looking for something to read on a day of travel. Instead, it became a great beach read a few weeks later. As with the other three mysteries I read this week, I'll forget the plots and "who done it," but it was great for this time and place.

Carolyn Heilbrun, who wrote as Amanda Cross, was a professor at Columbia. That makes her reflections on academia, friendships among women, and women's roles realistic and honest. This is not a bloody or gruesome mystery. I'll remember the setting and the characters more than the story itself, I think.

Is Heilbrun Kate Fansler herself? Kate had a great marriage and friendship with Reed, her lawyer husband. Heilbrun however ended her life at age 77 leaving her husband to find her and survive her. How could she have done that to him? She was in good health and seemingly good spirits. Knowing this has made reading the Kate Fansler novels a somewhat poignant experience.

Elizabeth says

I think this has been my favorite of all the Kate Fansler mysteries I have read so far.

Leah says

Bought with a dozen tart-noir, feminist detective novels from Sydney's best secondhand bookshop cavern, I knew this would be decent. I specifically chose it because I wasn't in the mood for spiky spunky go-getter heroines, and it delivered precisely what I wanted.

Kate Fansler is intelligent. All her friends and acquaintances are intelligent. Her husband is intelligent (I'm assuming their relationship developed over the course of the preceding books, I haven't read any of them yet). The only unintelligent people in this book are her brother and sister-in-law, for their social pretensions and uninterested chatter, and one unpleasant character whose testimony is the hinge of the whole affair. These undesirable creatures are known for exactly what they are by Kate and her ilk; it's refreshing to watch unpleasant people not get any page time. Or perhaps more accurately, it's refreshing to see people portrayed as having depths and layers, and not just used as plot devices.

The best parts of this book involved musing: on the rarity and unplumbed depths of female friendship, on the position of women in academia, on the relative historical positions of women then and now, on family and children and deciding not to have them, on what makes a good marriage, on what makes a bad one, on what gender means as a social construct, on the life of the mind. The mystery is barely there in one way; in another it is the crux of all the musing, the disappearance of a reserved and intriguing woman the catalyst for all the self-reflection and discussion that occurs since.

Really enjoyable and worth seeking out more Amanda Cross/Kate Fanslers for sure.

Virginia Walter says

Kate Fansler is persuaded to search for a missing woman, possibly the child of a noted British academic and novelist. It has been a long time since I read one of these, and I had forgotten the erudite, artificial manner in which these sophisticated, educated New Yorkers communicate with each other. Aside from that annoying element, this was a satisfying mystery.

Kathy says

This is the 8th book in the series, so I don't have the background on the investigator, Professor Kate Fensler. Kate is fairly believable as a no-nonsense academic, and the settings are developed with detailed descriptions. The mystery requires considerable historical research and reading of incomplete journals. I'd be interested to reading some of the previous books to understand Kate's antipathy toward her brothers and how she got together with her husband, Reed, a Columbia Law School professor. Could be as interesting as the mysteries she solves.

Lee says

I had a hard time getting into this book. The basic mystery was good but there were just a few too many improbably convoluted and unnecessary twists to it, I thought. I also found some of the characters difficult to like or believe were "real". Maybe I only thought it was okay because I wanted a more escapist formulaic mystery while on vacation. As usual, though, she does do a great job of capturing and subtly poking fun at aspects of academia.

Eleanor says

I attended San Francisco Public Library's book sale the day before boarding a redeye to Puerto Rico. The book sale is a great event where paperbacks can be picked up for \$1. The tables of books are not organized other than into general categories (fiction, mystery, biography, cooking, etc.), but there is a decent selection of recent popular material. After last year's sale, I went to visit my high school friend and her four children in Seattle armed with a suitcase full of kid's book.

This year, as I was standing in line to pay for about 30 books, a family friend, who knew I was traveling that night, handed me a copy of "No Word for Winifred" with a dollar bill stuck in it. "Happy travels," he said. This is a great way to receive a book.

This is a good plane book. Interesting and different enough to keep me intrigued, but with nothing too difficult or disturbing. The best part about the book, however, is the way it captures the zeitgeist of the 80s in which it was written. A particularly avant garde party serves sushi. Sushi! The country's political right turn is referenced as is the culture of excess. The unusual experience of being a woman in the workforce is referenced. Enjoyable.

Cassandra says

[do not have much sympathy for this idea that one reads the diary of a random woman and becomes enamoured of her... I do not have good words to say it, and I can see how much it is of my time, in which the writing of random people is easily available everywher
