

The Good, the Bad, and the Emus

Donna Andrews

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Life will never be the same for Meg Langslow after family secrets are revealed, introducing a whole new layer of intrigue in Donna Andrews's beloved series. Meg's long-lost paternal grandfather, Dr. Blake, has hired Stanley Denton to find her grandmother Cordelia. Dr. Blake was reunited with his family when he saw Meg's picture—she's a dead ringer for Cordelia—and now Stanley has found a trail to his long-lost love in a small town less than an hour's drive away. He convinces Meg to come with him to meet her, but unfortunately, the woman they meet is Cordelia's cousin—Cordelia died several months ago, and the cousin suspects she was murdered by her long-time neighbor.

Stanley and Meg agree to help track down the killer and get justice for Cordelia. Grandfather even has perfect cover—he will come to stage a rescue of the feral emus and ostriches (escaped from an abandoned farm) that infest this town. He dashes off to organize the rescue—which will, of course, involve most of Meg's family and friends in Caerphilly. But then, the evil neighbor is murdered, and not only Cordelia's cousin but also the entire contingent of emu-rescuers, who have had conflict with the neighbor, are suspects. Only Meg and the cousin—who seems to share a lot of telling traits with Meg—can find the real killer and clear the air in *The Good, the Bad, and the Emus*, the newest beverage-spittingly funny installment in this uproarious series from the one-and-only Donna Andrews.

The Good, the Bad, and the Emus Details


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
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From Reader Review The Good, the Bad, and the Emus for online ebook

Mary Ann says

It is summer and Meg is trying to cut her bushes and keep her yard nice while watching her four-year-old twin sons and niece, Natalie, who has come to help watch the boys. After she gets cut on her tools when her niece screams, she is in the ER having sutures and Stanley Denton, a friend and PI, comes and asks that she take a trip to a nearby town and help him get in with a woman who is related to the woman that was Meg's grandmother, that has died. When she comes to town she gains admittance to the house and she and Stanley agree that they will try to figure a way to help find out what happened to her grandmother on the cold December night that she was murdered. On the way back to Caerphilly, Denton sees a very large bird that looks either like an emu or an ostrich. When they get back to her parent's place, the information inspires her grandfather, Dr. Blake, to get the group together and go rescue the birds and take them to Carolyn's sanctuary. While they are there, a man is poisoned by scotch he put in his coffee, that had been a gift to her grandfather and someone left candies at her cousin's home. The sheriff is trying to find out who murdered Cordelia, who attempted to poison Dr. Blake and who tried to poison Meg's cousin. At the same time, they go out and try to find the birds. It is a very fun story and there was a moment in the book where she talks about her friend keeping paperwork handy for the "frequent fliers" to the emergency room. I remember those times and not nearly as fondly as I could. Although we can now laugh about some of the things that landed us there.

The books were read out of order, but that is the beauty of these stories, they are great in order or out of order.

Mark Baker says

The action moves to a town about an hour away as Meg and her family head there to help her grandfather track down feral emus. Meg is also hoping to learn more about the mysterious death of her recently discovered grandmother.

The antics of the emus and those chasing them overwhelmed the mystery at times, but fans of the series will certainly still enjoy the latest. I especially enjoyed getting to meet a new group of great characters. Overall, I had fun, and that's really all that matters.

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

Dawn Michelle says

I love this series; it never fails to crack me up, teach me something and keeps me guessing up to the end. This edition of the Meg Langslow saga was no different. Even though I had some of the mystery figured out

6 chapters sooner than the characters, it didn't really take away from the book for me. Highly enjoyable and the end was just lovely. A perfect read and just what I needed.

Susan says

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Donna Andrews adds a seventeenth novel to her Meg Langslow mystery series. All of the books (Duck the Halls, The Hen of the Baskervilles, We'll Always Have Parrots, etc.) involve birds, Meg's slightly wacky extended family, a truly wacky crowd of extras, and Meg's discovery of a murder victim.

Emus? Yes, according to Andrews' acknowledgements, she heard about feral emus near Blacksburg, Virginia in 2012. In this novel, the birds were released from a failing emu farm; now Meg's grandfather - environmentalist, wildlife expert, and documentarian - wants to move them to a preserve.

Enter: Truly wacky crowd of extras, all camping in tents and trailers on the property of Meg's newly discovered relative. Prepare for emu chases on horseback and motorbikes, for people hiding in bushes, and for a power failure that conveniently prevents effective communication.

Andrews is not aiming for realism in these mysteries; instead, she adds a layer of whimsy and humor to a serious crime.

Andrea says

This is my Meg Langslow story so far! Not only is there a murder mystery, there are other mysteries that make up the layers of this humorous, warm, and wonderful tale that has at its center the story of Meg's father's family. If you have been reading this series you will know what I mean, if not you will want to go back and read the first 16 books. I can tell you that it will be well worth your time. It's no surprise that Donna Andrews was honored with a library award in her home state of Virginia for this particular book. The Good, the Bad, and the Emus is a book worthy of all the accolades it gets. I always look forward to more stories about Meg, Michael, their twin boys, and all the other colorful members of their respective families, friends and other characters that inhabit their world both human and otherwise.

?Emily says

By complete coincidence, I started reading two books at the same time and both featured recluses. Isn't that weird? I began this book and To Kill a Mockingbird at the same time.

In this case, the recluse was an elderly woman who was related to Meg's paternal grandmother, who was recently killed. Of course, Meg and her family need to find out more. Luckily for them, the deceased grandmother was involved in saving feral emus, so Meg's grandfather was able to figure out a way to capture

the emus and have Meg investigate the murder at the same time. Sound far-fetched? That is only the beginning.

As usual, the plot borders on the absurd, but the down-to-earth Meg manages to make the story plausible. I was glad that Meg's mother only appeared briefly, since she is one member of the family I can barely tolerate. Even though Meg is a mother to two small children, they never interfere with her investigations. That does not seem realistic to me at all. In fact, there were a few incidents that were so unsettling and improbable that I got distracted from the story. Those items include (view spoiler) For these reasons, I only gave the book 4 stars.

I recently met Donna Andrews at Malice Domestic and she signed my book. However, that exciting event did not affect my review in any way!

Kathy Davie says

Seventeenth in the too-funny Meg Langslow Mystery series. This one finds the family getting bigger and takes place outside of Caerphilly at Riverton.

My Take

Andrews continues with the fun, and I'm having a hankering for an emu egg for breakfast. Hmmm... Meg's manipulations of everyone to keep the peace, send them down the path she prefers, or to get what she wants are hilarious. Thank god she manipulates for good. I do love how well Meg knows her kids and how much time and attention she gives them.

Then there's Meg's so-practical side. She's an organizer, she understands people and their foibles, and she's okay with them. My favorite example is when she sees her grandfather having a late-night "coffee" and suggests a good alternative that won't bring unwanted advice, lol.

You can't help loving the wide range of characters in this story. Not all the core characters appear in this one, but you'll still love those who do. Dad doesn't have as big a role as he usually does; he adores diving into mysteries and always sets up a portable MASH unit wherever he goes, and he doesn't slack off in this one. We just don't see that much of him. Lordy, Andrews cracked me up with descriptions of Natalie's wardrobe! I especially loved Natalie's decking out her tent and pith helmet to match her preferences!

Yeah, it's lots of fun, and it is a sad one. The chance of finding a lost relative, the anger that it couldn't have been the other one to die, and then the resolution, the realization, that the living still have so much to give. I kind of wish that Andrews had pulled at our heartstrings more with Dad's reactions, but then I suppose that would cut into the humorous side of it. Meg and Annabel learn quite a bit about each other in this: Meg's investigative experience and Annabel's judicial knowledge. Both have an interest in mysteries. Seems to run in the family. Common sense seems to run in the family too, lol.

"A hunch is a deduction your subconscious has made from evidence you don't yet know you have ... all you need to do is bring the evidence up into your conscious mind."

It's a good example of why you should give people a chance to talk And the value of an open mind! It would have relieved some of the frustration!

You can't help laughing (and being impressed!) by the turnout of Blake's Brigade. A mention at dinner and too early the next morning finds dozens of people milling around in Annabel Lee's back field. Sometimes I think it's worth reading just for Blake's "pronouncements" alone. He's too funny in his ego. It's even funnier when you have intelligent characters who enjoy laughing behind a raised hand and yet accept his egocentricities.

For a minute, I thought Meg wasn't going to tell Annabel about that candy! The poisoning certainly makes things more tense — and funnier. Those letter wars sound rather vicious. *I wish Andrews had provided some examples...*

Oh, yes! That imagery Meg comes up with of Annabel as a dragon with her hoard and her castle...too funny!

I am curious about that vicious storm that came through and took down power lines for at least half the state and took down cell towers, and there's never a mention of muddy ground. I want a storm like that. Seems a waste too of Jim Williams' problems. Just a mention that could have been taken into the dramatic arena, but isn't. *And* I think that bank should be investigated. Andrews never does provide the reason why Cordelia and Robert didn't have children. It's hinted that it was Cordelia's fault, but never *what* it was. Why didn't the cousins have a switch installed in the house? It doesn't make sense.

At last! We find out why Annabel is such a recluse and even talks of resorting to a veil!

Lots of rustling in bushes, wrangling through the forest, wending through camera crews, and dodging murderous intent. It's a sweet ending, exactly right, and yet it felt a bit flat. Ah well...

Saved by the emus!

The Story

Inattention puts paid to Meg's initial plans for her summer vacation and works out beautifully for Stanley Denton. He needs to borrow Meg's face for a few days for an investigation he's doing for Dr. Blake.

It's a trip that will have far-reaching consequences to the entire Langslow family, sad ones as Stanley found the target of his search six months too late. She's dead. There is however a cousin who may part with memorabilia or at least let the family see it IF they solve Cordelia's murder.

Rescuing the emus who were flushed out of the former Biscuit Mountain Ostrich and Emu Ranch years ago makes a good cover story.

The Characters

Meg Langslow normally works at a forge creating works of art in iron, but having twin rowdies has slowed that form of expression down. Her husband, **Michael Waterston**, is now a tenured professor of drama at Caerphilly College. The boys, **Josh** and **Jamie**, are four years old now and a hoot all over the place all the time with questions blasting out everywhere. Bodes well for their futures! **Dr. James Langslow** always claims he was found as a baby in the mystery section of the library, where the librarian adopted him. **Rob** is Meg's brother (he mostly just gets a mention), and he's brought his Irish Wolfhound, **Tinkerbelle**, who's friends with **Spike**, the Waterstons' vicious purse dog. **Rose Noire** is Meg's cousin, who's heavily involved in the metaphysical. **Mother** also has a brief cameo. **Natalie** is Meg's seventeen-year-old niece, sister **Pam**'s youngest, who bravely took on the role of summer babysitter.

Camp Emu

Dr. Montgomery Blake is the famous zoologist who keeps showing up on Animal Planet and National Geographic. He's also Dr. Langslow's no-longer-long lost daddy. **SPOOR** is the Society to Preserve Our Owls and Raptors, a local bird conservation and appreciation group that turns out to help Blake's endeavors. **Caroline Willner** is an old friend and runs the **Willner Wildlife Sanctuary**. She's Blake's second-in-command and has shown up in her new toy, a brightly painted gypsy caravan drawn by a placid Percheron.

Blake's Brigade is a blend of the paid and volunteers and has everything: RVs, camera crews, a mess tent with private caterers, a shower tent, port-a-potties, eccentric air support, wranglers from both ends of the movable sector, and more. The blonde Valkyrie, **Sherry S. Smith**, is the photo-release Nazi! **Jim Williams** is a new recruit. **Seth Early** is one of the Waterstons' neighbors, a sheep farmer, who has joined this expedition with his border collie, **Lad**. *Thank god!! Meg reckons he's here to be close to Rose Noire...* The unfortunate **Fred** who likes a bit of Scotch with his coffee is going to miss most of this. **Evan** is a lazy slug but good for sitting around and guarding gates. **Dr. Clarence Rutledge** is Dr. Blake's regular vet — the holistic biker one — *and* the leader of the **Knights of the Iron Horse** who will go up against the **Knights of the Silver Spear** led by **Lady Joni of Langevoort**. **Millicent** is knitting the ugliest sweaters, scarves, and leggings for the emus.

Riverton

Cordelia Mason was Dr. Blake's old college girlfriend whom he lost track of. **Robert Mason** is her late husband. **Annabel Lee** is the cousin who wants that murder solved. **Uncle Moss and Aunt Morgana** were Cordelia's parents. Weaver bought their house. **Dr. Dwight Ffollett**, a dentist, is a good friend of Mrs. Mason and Miss Lee. **Thor Larsen** owes a great debt to the cousins and works at **Larsen's Auto Repair**. He ends up helping quite a bit in this, and Dr. Blake takes quite the shine to the poor lad. **Ann Murphy** is the local librarian with a secret crush on Dr. Blake.

The nosy **Theo Weaver** is the nasty mean neighbor next door. *You'll love that story of the mulberry tree, lol.* Chief Heedles inherited the office from her daddy, who thought the world of Weaver. **Virgil Eaton** owned the **Biscuit Mountain Ostrich and Emu Ranch** until it passed to his son, **Hosmer**. **Smedlock Mining** is one of the bad mining companies who prefer to spend the money on fast cars than on environmental controls. The emus were lured to **Pudding Mountain**.

The emus

Liz is the boss emu. **John Stuart Mill** is being fought over. **Frances Hodgson Burnett**, **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**, **Zora Neale Hurston**, **Hans Christian Anderson**, **Claire Boothe Luce**, **Lucy Maud Montgomery**, **John Quincy Adams**, **John Wilkes Booth**, **Howard Phillips Lovecraft**, **Agnes de Mille**, and **Edwin Way Teale** are excellent escape artists. **Edward Everett Horton** is the smallest and can't wait to go into captivity. It's safer!

Stanley Denton is a private investigator who moved to Caerphilly in, I think, *Some Like It Hawk* , 14.

The ER

Crystal is a friend of Meg's who's put her and the family in her "frequent flyer" group. **Dr. Gridwell** is the ER duty doctor, and Dad's opinion on him is still out. *Bringing up Dad's name is a surefire way to get hurried through...!*

The **Toad Wars** is how Blake's Brigade refers to one of their campaigns against a mining company to preserve a new species of toad. They weren't poisonous, so they were named *Anaxyrys willneri*.

The Cover

The cover is too funny with its yellow background and flying carpet of green grass with three dressy emus pacing out. The first emu is wearing what could be Millicent's pink scarf topped off with pink sunglasses and a hat (*could* be a pith helmet!) bedecked with a pink flower. The next emu in line is less fancy with a big pink bow over its eyes. But it's that last emu that sums it up as he races by with some yellow crime scene tape, lol.

The title is a fun take-off on the Clint Eastwood movie, only justice will be found as Meg winnows through *The Good, the Bad, and the Emus*.

Megan says

A nominee for the 2014 Agatha for Best Contemporary Novel, this book was another fun romp in the Meg Lanslow series. While I haven't yet read all of the books in this series, the ones I've read so far have been intriguing mysteries mixed with humor and immensely likable characters. Meg ends up leaving Caerphilly for this one and heads to the small town of Riverton. Her long-lost grandfather, Dr. Blake, has decided to head to Riverton to tackle a problem involving feral emus. However, the feral emu rescue is a cover for his true mission...to track down the killer and find justice for Dr. Blake's former love (and long-lost grandmother of Meg), Cordelia, who was murdered a year prior. Meg enlists the help of long-lost relative Annabel (Cordelia's cousin) to solve Cordelia's case and a second murder that occurs after she arrives in Riverton. She also works with local police Chief Mo Heedles and the intrepid local librarian, Anne Murphy, to ensure the killer doesn't strike a third time. I enjoyed the inclusion of the local pottery angle, as well as the mining company issue, which both fit in with the locale quite well and enhanced the story. This was another satisfying read and confirmed that this will be one of my go-to series for when I'm craving a funny mystery.

Shelly says

OMG this woman was annoying. She repeated herself constantly. SO many times she referenced her height and the book that told her when to breath. She seemed very self involved and everyone just seemed to do her bidding. I felt like she was describing every single tiny moment as it was happening. Way too much detail and explanation of why she was doing each and every thing.

I could picture myself describing every step as I got out of bed as her type of writing. It would go something like this: The alarm woke me up, it is one of those that starts out quiet and then gradually gets louder. It also starts out with a dim light and the light gets brighter with the music. I got this because it helps me not wake up so abruptly and is supposed to help you feel more rested from your night's sleep. The room was cold, but I forced myself into a sitting position as I stretch. I touched the floor with my feet. The floor was cold, not yet warmed up from the furnace kicking on. I forced myself up and got dressed. I always have trouble picking out what to wear, but I usually go with the first thing I find clean. Since I have five children and laundry is always behind. I took steps to my bathroom which is through the family room, dining room, living room, entry, and up the stairs to the right. I pride myself on the fact that I can get ready in about 15 minutes and still look presentable.

See that...I just wrote a WHOLE paragraph on me getting out of bed and going to the bathroom. If this is good writing, then I should become an author. Maybe I missed my calling.

Stacy says

Meg and Michael's boys are now four years old. Meg's niece Natalie (who is going through a goth phase) has come for the summer to watch the boys. Meg gets roped into helping the PI Stanley with a case. Turns out Meg's grandfather has hired him to find Meg's grandmother. Stanley discovered that Cordelia Lee (her grandmother) had just been killed 6 months ago and needed Meg's help (her actual face) to help get cooperation from the townspeople and Cordelia's reclusive cousin Annabel.

They also learn that emus had been sent into the wild when their refuge went under, so Dr Blake (Meg's grandfather) immediately puts an expedition together to round them up and take them to Caroline's wildlife refuge. Cordelia had been helping keep the emus alive by bringing food to them in a park. Meg gets permission from Annabel to have the expedition set-up shop in the field by Annabel's house.

Annabel believe Cordelia was murdered by her neighbor, Theo Weaver. She doesn't believe the police chief (Mo Heedles) is doing enough to solve the case. Meg is bribed into helping solve the murder by Annabel, who will tell her about Cordelia if she solves her murder.

Meg starts to look into things. She meets a high school kid named Thor who dotes (doted) on the two old-lady-cousins. Dr Ffollett is the dentist who also has been a supporter of Annabel and Cordelia. Crazy organized Sherry who is trying to wrangle and manage Dr Blake's exhibition, Jim Williams a volunteer on the expedition (who used to work for a mining company). Theo is the number one suspect, until he turns up dead and Meg comes across the scene before it is burned.

It's the usual shell game (which kept me guessing) until the end when it is revealed that Sherry is behind it all. She's mad that Dr Blake ruined her family's mining company two years ago because he was protecting toads that prevented them from mining. She was mad at Cordelia because Cordelia was trying to buy the old Emu ranch and was prepared to fight and make a stink if the bank sold it to a mining company.

Big twist at the end was that Annabel was really Cordelia. Cordelia knew that she was the target, not Annabel, so she pretended to be Annabel to keep herself safe, hoping that the Chief would have solved it by now. (I admit, I did figure this out quite early in the story). But it was quite touching at the end when the family reunited.

Barbara says

Meg Lanslow - wife, mother of young twins, blacksmith, and amateur sleuth - gets pulled into a murder inquiry when she sets out to learn about the grandmother she never knew. Many years ago Granny Cordelia, an unwed mom, gave up Meg's dad for adoption. Now Meg's grandfather, Dr. Montgomery Blake (the unwed dad), has hired detective Stanley Denton to find Cordelia.

While assisting Stanley with the search Meg meets Cordelia's agoraphobic sister Annabel, who says Cordelia was killed in a generator explosion. The authorities say this was an accident but Annabel believes that Cordelia was murdered by an ornery neighbor who lives across the fence. Annabel convinces Meg and

Stanley to investigate the crime - promising to tell Meg all about Cordelia if she finds the killer.

It also happens that Annabel and Cordelia were actively involved in trying to rescue a flock of emus released from a failed emu farm. Meg gets her grandfather, Dr. Blake - an avid wildlife enthusiast - interested in the project and he soon arrives with a small army of volunteers and helpers. The emu rescuers and Meg's family all camp out on Annabel's property. The do-gooders plan to round up the emus and deliver them to a sanctuary while Meg plans to look into Cordelia's death. All this creates a kind of humorous madhouse atmosphere.

Soon enough a mysterious flagon of scotch and box of chocolates - both laced with deadly poison - make an appearance, apparently targeting Dr. Blake and Annabel. The need to guard and protect these two elderly people adds to the mayhem.

As the story unfolds the reader is treated to vivid descriptions of the Virginia countryside, the emu hunt, delicious meals in the mess tent, and spy activity on both sides of the fence. Much of the hectic goings on in the book are extraneous to the central mystery - which is eventually solved in a believable enough fashion. A fun light mystery to spend a few hours with.

You can follow my reviews at <https://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot....>

Jonathan says

Very good. It's hard for an author to incorporate marriage and kids into a main character's life after already beginning the series, and where Ms. Andrews succeeded in the marriage part, I can't help but feel like the last few books have seen Meg paying less and less attention to her kids. I feel like she's never around them. However, the rest of the book was excellent, so I only deducted one star for that. Recommend!

Nancy says

Four amused stars for this humorous mystery in the on-going Langslow family chronicles. The emus and dogs really added to the story! :)

Jaret says

This was a fun, cozy mystery. I enjoyed the antics of the characters, and Andrews did a great job of wrapping everything up. The resolution could have gone seriously astray, but was held together with lots of humor. This was definitely a story that did not take itself too seriously. I really needed this brain break.

Jeannie and Louis Rigod says

Meg Langslow's life is never quiet, especially when she finds out that her long-lost Grandfather has decided to find her long lost Grandmother...amidst a herd of Emus.

Something is amiss in Riverton, VA and it is a herd of loose emus. What shocks Meg, is that she arrives en masse with Grandfather Blake's entourage to learn her Grandmother has been murdered and no one excepting her newly found cousin, Annabelle Lee is trying to find the culprit.

While Grandfather is filming his rescue of the poor birds, Meg gets to know Annabelle better and with the aid of the Private Investigator, Stanley, sets out to solve the mystery. Not to mention various attempted poisonings that are occurring at the camp and home of Cordelia and Annabelle.

This is an amusing and quickly read tale of family, mining, and animal rescue. The family of Langslow's never fail to entertain.
