



The Folly At Falconbridge Hall

Maggi Andersen

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What lies beneath the ordered world of Falconbridge Hall?

Vanessa Ashley felt herself qualified for a position as governess, until offered the position at Falconbridge Hall. Left penniless after the deaths of her artist father and suffragette mother, Vanessa Ashley draws on her knowledge of art, politics and history to gain employment as a governess. She discovers that Julian, Lord Falconbridge, requires a governess for his ten-year-old daughter Blyth at Falconbridge Hall, a huge rambling mansion in the countryside outside London. Lord Falconbridge is a scientist and dedicated lepidopterist who is about to embark on an extended expedition to the Amazon in search of exotic butterflies. An enigmatic man, he takes a keen interest in his daughter's education, but Vanessa feels that he may disapprove of her modern methods. As she prepares her young charge to enter into the modern world, Vanessa finds the girl detached and aloof. As Vanessa learns more about Falconbridge Hall, more questions arise. Why doesn't Blythe feel safe in her own home? Why is the death of her mother, once famed society beauty Clara, never spoken of? And why did the former governess leave so suddenly without giving notice?

The Folly At Falconbridge Hall Details

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From Reader Review The Folly At Falconbridge Hall for online ebook

Francine "Tsukime" says

Funny and sweet, this vividly descriptive and engaging read, draws the readers to the heart of the story. The twisting plot makes this a book that is hard to put down; so difficult that I read until dawn before I realized how late it was.

Julian, Lord Falconbridge, reminds me of the glasses-wearing Bishounen (pretty boy) in anime. Adorably responsible and serious, his studious nature is exemplified by his extensive sexual knowledge. Vanessa's intelligence and slightly clueless personality contrasts and compliments with his qualities; creating an endearing couple that readers are sure to fall in love with.

Stars: 5

Flames: 3

I was provided a copy of the book by BTS eMag for the purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review—all conclusions are my own responsibility

Ruth Hill says

From the moment I began reading this book, I knew this was my kind of book. I was not far into the book before making the connection between this book and "Jane Eyre." That was always a favorite book of mine, and there were some definitely comparisons including romance, a little girl, and a lot of mystery in a big English manor. It was fairly easy to decipher what would ultimately happen, but the writing of the book kept me so engaged that I practically lost track of the time.

As to any issues that require warning: very little profanity (nothing too bad, in my opinion) and intimate bedroom scenes only following marriage. I did not find myself repulsed during the bedroom scenes, and I am glad that the couple did not live in the bedroom (I get tired of books that do that). Vanessa, Julian, and Blythe were well-developed characters, and I found their interactions period-appropriate and rather humorous at times. I often forgot that this was a book written in this century rather than during the 1800's.

This is the first book I have ever read by Maggi Anderson, but she is definitely my kind of author. No cheesiness, semi-realistic situations, sweet and hot romance/love, and a bit of mystery. And, of course, it takes place in England--where else? If you love historical fiction and romances, this just may be for you.

I was sent a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review. I was not financially compensated, and all opinions are 100 percent mine.

Vicki says

This was an enjoyable book with lots of tips of the hat to modern times in a changing world. Women's

suffrage, telephones, bicycles and amazon Rainforest adventure all rolled into one.

Excellent mystery unfolding in a household that had secrets galore. I enjoyed this first book of Maggie Anderen that I have read. I liked her writing style and I want to read more from her. Her heroine is a nice blend of new and respectable and Julian was a lovely scientific mind that had no idea he was making Vanessa Ashley the new governess fall for him.

My full review will be on The Page Turner in February during Mystery Thriller Week. The week that brings together authors, bloggers and fans of mysteries and thrillers.

Literary Chanteuse says

For a complete review and star rating, visit Ind'tale Magazine online Feb 2013 issue.
<http://www.indtale.com/reviews/folly-...>

Mary - Buried Under Romance says

Posted on Buried Under Romance

This is an interesting Victorian romance mixed with healthy dose of mystery and intrigue. The heroine, Vanessa Ashley, is the impoverished niece of an earl who becomes the new governess to Blythe, the young daughter of Julian Grieve, Viscount Falconbridge. Upon her arrival, Vanessa becomes fascinated with Falconbridge Hall, and rumors of a woman who was hung in its woods. The disappearance of Blythe's previous governess was also a mystery to Vanessa, which, along with the mysterious disappearance of a painting, made up the mystery aspect of the book.

The romance of the book is naturally between Vanessa and Julian, whose previous wife had left to pursue her own fun. Julian is a botanist and serious researcher of terrestrial invertebrates, in particular butterflies, which serves as an interesting motif of his previous wife's flighty nature and his own inclination to "keep things under glass." The change in his character from a highly withdrawn devotee of science to a father who learned to put his family ahead of science in his heart is slow, but believable and well done. Prior to his leaving for another botany expedition in the Amazon, he proposed a marriage-of-convenience to Vanessa, who agreed out of concern for Blythe's well being. What follows that is the familiar trope of a marriage-of-convenience turning into a love match, but the focus of the story was never on passionate love, but on the eternal love found among couples whose compassion and kindness surpassed all other qualities of person. In a sense, I believe this book could be put into the category of a love-inspired historical.

That is not to say, however, that there are no love scenes in this book. There is, but it's fitting and not induced by pure lust. Rather, the developing affection (which turns into love) and appreciation of each other's characteristics make the love scenes both intense and sensual.

Lastly, the mysterious of this book was interesting, though readers are given enough hints through Vanessa's

own musings to piece the past together long before the characters themselves find out. Their process of finding out had omitted some details and appeared somewhat abrupt near the end, though it did not much disturb the book's pacing, nor the author's writing.

The author's use of interspersing simple sentences and detailed description of scenery perfectly crafted the wild and mysterious setting of Falconbridge Hall and conveyed without confusion Vanessa and Julian's thoughts when they were together, and when they were apart. This indirect characterization had done much to reveal the characters' personalities and mind, which added a layer of realism and amiability to the story. I highly applaud Maggi Andersen's writing in this book, and would say that overall, this is quite a soothing, wonderful read.

Margaret Watkins says

This is a well written, multidimensional novel set in the Victorian era on the cusp of a new century. There was more than one mystery to be solved at Falconbridge Hall. When Vanessa finds herself destitute after the death of her parents, she takes on the post of governess to Blythe, Lord Falconbridge's daughter. Julian is a man living under the cloud of his wife's death, leaving him with his emotions safely locked up and no intention of ever allowing himself to become emotionally involved again. From the very first meeting Vanessa intrigues him and he eventually realises that she is the answer to more than one of his problems. There is an undercurrent of darkness at Falconbridge Hall and although Julian knows that he has done everything he can to secure his daughter's future before leaving on an expedition to the Amazon, his intuition tells him that all is not well. I enjoyed the developing romance between Vanessa and Julian, as well as the part played by Blythe. The secondary plots added to the intrigue and had me guessing most of the way through the book. I found references to the implementation of technology interesting and went diving into Wikipedia to get more background and history to the references. Julian's trip to the Amazon piqued my curiosity and I wondered whether exploration of the area is any easier today, despite improved modes of transport. Fortunately, there are now laws governing the capture of rare species of butterflies, however the early descriptions and research did go a long way towards building the wealth of knowledge we have today. I received this book for free from eBook Discovery. I voluntarily post this review. This is my honest review.

Susan says

Maggi pens her novel, a Victorian romance mystery, in a plot that is well written and has enough twists and turns to keep you turning the pages until your done. There are some minor sex scenes, but nothing that will turn you away, they are beautifully written in. Her characters are strong, very interesting and they just captivated my interest. This was a fantastically delightful book that I totally recommended to all romance fans.

This review is based on a complimentary copy from the author which was provided for an honest review.

poppie says

This was a little disappointing and not too much of a mystery really but just an average read

☞???? [Punya Reviews...] says

My review contains spoilers and they're mostly my thoughts... for more, visit [Punya Reviews...](#)

The Folly At Falconbridge Hall was yet another intriguing Maggi Andersen read that I had on my TBR for a long time. I'm so glad I finally read it because I really enjoyed the story.

Previously I read *The Baron's Wife*, which is a standalone novel set in the very late 19th or early 20th century. The Folly At Falconbridge Hall is also a standalone (at least I think so), set around the same time, if a bit early in 1894. The storyline follows the same pattern, yet it's not exactly the same. Whereas in the previous book, the h Laura arrives at the H's mysterious castle that has been in the family for centuries after marrying him, here the h, Vanessa arrives at Falconbridge Hall as a governess.

The daughter of a good family, Vanessa had fallen on hard times when her parents passed away leaving her nearly destitute. Her father, the second son of a peer, had lost all contact with his own family after his marriage to Vanessa's mother he fell out of favor with them. Vanessa's mother was an active suffragist and influenced her daughter's education and free thinking. Vanessa would've loved to be a part of it too, had her parents not passed away pretty close to one another, forcing her to seek an employment. To her surprise, Vanessa's uncle, her father's elder brother, came to visit her after her parents' passing. Though that didn't do much to make them any closer than before, he did help her getting this new job. Vanessa didn't want to become a governess but with her credentials, that's as close an honorable job she could've gotten. After all, she needs the financial stability. Her employer has a 10yrs. girl who needs a governess ASAP and Vanessa couldn't wait to find out what's in store for her in her new workplace.

The introduction to her attractive, widower employer did struck Vanessa in a way she'd never experienced before. Lord Falconbridge is tall and handsome, and a scientist to boots! Even though his expertise lay equally around the flora and fauna, he seems to be rather obsessed with the collection and study of butterflies (yep I looked up and found it's called *Lepidopterology*). Vanessa is quite impressed by his obvious brilliance, though she didn't like how the dead butterflies were pinned there for his perusal for all eternity. She found Lord Falconbridge's intense scrutiny of her rather disconcerting as well, and hoped that she doesn't have to pack up soon. Vanessa had no training or experience as a governess so she'd only be relying on her own knowledge of things. Would she be able to make him happy with what she has to offer to his daughter?

Her introduction to her charge, Blythe, was rather...lackluster. Vanessa has already heard that the previous governesses didn't last long so she may have thought she'd find quite the challenge in her hands. However, Blythe seemed quite subdued for a girl of 10. In a few days though, Vanessa realized that the poor girl felt extremely insecure, when security and stability were things a child her age should never have to question. Not that Lord Falconbridge was a bad father, but exact opposite. For all his aloofness, he loved his daughter more than anything in the world. But he was often away for months on end to one long voyage or the other, traveling to various parts of the world in constant search for things to study. Blythe was old enough when her flighty, socialite mother Clara left them cause this life wasn't exciting enough for her. Blythe was a burden she didn't want and couldn't have bothered with, as her marriage to Falconbridge AKA Julian was due to pure physical attraction. When it was all over, she simply left...then died in Paris in an accident, rumor has it she was traveling to meet her lover. Vanessa later comes to learn of it all from Julian.

Blythe remembered that day and felt her mother's rejection to her core. The little girl in her still craved for mother's love; a mother who never really loved her in the first place. Vanessa was sad and angry on behalf of her. She becomes determined to make Blythe realize that she's not unwanted; that she's loved by everyone around her. She wanted to see Blythe as happy as any other girl of her age. But first, Vanessa needs to make sure her position is confirmed. Lord Falconbridge seems to be amused by her discomfort when he's intensely scrutinizing her, as if he's trying to read her mind. Vanessa didn't know what to make of it, or how to react to her employer. She felt she was already attracted to him, which can't be any good for someone in her position.

From Julian's POV we find that he felt the same. But he knew that he can't possibly flirt with the governess of his child, especially one that Blythe adores already. And why wouldn't she? Julian could see that Miss Ashley was the one they've been missing so far. Moreover, he's not the type to dally with the member of his staff. As far as I could garner, Julian wasn't a womanizer by any stretch of the word. He simply had too much to do than skirt-chasing. But, after being burned by Clara, he was also very careful. Even though Miss Ashley intrigued him more than he cared to acknowledge, Julian knew he can't let her too close to him. Even if he wanted to pursue anything, he'd have to be aloof, so this time at least his heart is safe from the same fate.

The mystery surrounding the sudden disappearance of the previous governess Miss Lillicrop had been swirling around Falconbridge for a while now. It seemed to Vanessa that Blythe, and maybe even Lord Falconbridge, liked the petite blonde a lot. But one day, she simply vanished, with her a valuable portrait that was in the Falconbridge family for years. The police couldn't find any trace of her so everyone had come to the conclusion that she ran away with her trophy, and maybe a lover in toe as well. It was quite unbelievable seeing no one could picture Miss Lillicrop of stealing anything, but it was what it was. And even though the others kind of accepted for what it was, Vanessa couldn't shake off the feeling that there was something wrong here. More so because there had been a suicide in the forest surrounding Falconbridge after Miss Lillicrop's disappearance. Despite how good Vanessa's days were going, she couldn't shake off the feeling of dread. Soon, Julian will also leave for another voyage to Amazon; another reason why everyone was on the edge. Everyone loved and respected Julian, so they didn't want him gone, least of all Blythe who despised it and missed her father dearly. Because everytime he was gone, there was a fair chance he won't return.

Vanessa had been aware of Julian's voyage since the day she joined her new employment, and thought she could weather it out with Blythe. So, when one day Julian suddenly proposes marriage, she couldn't believe her ears! Even though at first it seemed too hasty and, for Vanessa, something out of her most secret of desires, when Julian put forth Blythe's well-being, it didn't seem all that implausible. Julian had already decided that Vanessa was the right person for his daughter. He can trust her with Blythe's care. That she won't leave Blythe if anything happens to him. Blythe loved Vanessa, and even though he won't voice it now, Julian was quite attracted to her as well. Time was short before he sets sail towards Amazon, and to the proverbial unknown, so a marriage was the best thing that he could think of at the moment. From this arrangement, Vanessa, who was quite lonely in life, will also have a family and financial security she was currently lacking.

Though it dampened Vanessa's excitement a little that the whole business was a MOC for Julian, she had come deeply to care for Blythe, so she felt she could make this sacrifice. After all, she didn't want to leave this place or the members of Falconbridge family either. Julian's first proposal was a marriage in name only, which he changes promptly after her positive response. Well, I couldn't blame him. I believe it's been a long time for him, and with Vanessa around, how could he not enjoy that intimate togetherness before he's gone, not knowing if he'd ever return? Vanessa was a bit disconcerted at first, but she wanted Julian too. And it all

turned out to be great, especially when their short time together proved to be something she'd treasure in the coming months while Julian was away.

But that intense happiness was followed by a deep-seated apprehension. Vanessa was scared. She now understood how Blythe felt, because letting Julian go wasn't going to be as easy as she'd initially thought. Back then, he was only her employer. Now he's so much more to her than that. Vanessa tried her best to not think of anything negative, her only thought of taking care of Blythe and Falconbridge until her husband returned. She's determined to make Julian as happy and proud as possible for she knew he needed it. But she also knew there was a chance he would never feel the same way about her. Could Vanessa live with such a knowledge? Only time would tell. But time was what they didn't have at the moment.

The next chapters were full of interesting twists and turns that includes Julian's travel to Amazon, that follows a sub-plot that I wasn't expecting. These chapters revealed answers to questions that have plagued Julian and the people of Falconbridge for long. I did love how Julian and Vanessa's relationship progressed despite all that had kept them apart for long, but I also wished they had more time together. The only thing bugged me was that the "villain" turned out to be the same person I had *sort of* guessed from the beginning. Put that way, I found the final revelation a bit predictable. I also wished there were more backstory to Miss Lillicrop's sad fate, especially after reading the haunting prologue that only confuses you until you find your answers. Regardless, I really liked *The Folly At Falconbridge Hall* and was glued to the story until the end. 4 stars.

Sandee says

This is my second book by Maggi Andersen and she keeps impressing me. Excellent story, wonderful characters and relationships that are realistic and surprising. This is a marvelous historical romance that has mysteries and adventure making it much more interesting than your typical romance. I will be reading more by this author!

Sabrina says

Vanessa Ashley has lost her parents, her home and is at the mercy of her estranged Uncle. Feeling unwanted in his home she seeks a governess job and luckily finds a position quickly. Her charge is a 10 year old little girl name Blythe. It is here the story opens and we are welcomed to Falconbridge Hall, Clapham, England.

read the rest of my review at [http://romantichistoricallovers.wordpress...](http://romantichistoricallovers.wordpress.com)

Yvonne says

We meet Vanessa Ashley at the beginning of the book. She was born with status but due to the death of her parents she ended up becoming a governess. She gets to Falconbridge hall and discovers that her student acts a lot like a grown up and less like a child. You can see Blythe slowly warm up to Ashley. Lord Falconbridge is about to go on a trip to the Amazon so we see him getting prepared to go and actually get to see things from his point of view while on his trip. Right off the bat Ashley is told not to go into the woods at all ever. That is only one of the mysteries in this book.

The book did touch on things that were new in the time era (Like bicycles) as well as some old. I was also happy to see some of Vanessa's family in the end and he did not turn out to be as stuffy as I thought he would be.

It was a good quick read; I did not want to put it down. A couple of the bad guys were easy to spot but I did suspect one other person but thankfully he did not turn out to be a villain.

I received this book for free from eBook Discovery. I voluntarily review this book. This is my honest review. The opinions in this review are 100% my own.

Anita says

Ms Andersen's story contains all the elements for a perfect Victorian romance with an intriguing sensual element which is very well written and not at all cheesy. [I'm a bit jaded by sex scenes but Ms Andersen writes lovely ones] The handsome, but distant widower who carries a secret pain about his first marriage but who would do anything for his beloved child; the mysterious country house with a secret; a disappearing woman, and an antagonist who lurks in the shadows.

A satisfying and heartwarming story to take on holiday and read in a lounge with a margarita, or one to cuddle up with in a wing chair by the fire with a mug of hot chocolate.

Nash Norden says

I received a copy of *The Folly At Falconbridge Hall* by Maggi Andersen from ABG Reads Book Tours as part of the blog tour.

Vanessa Ashley lost everything after her father's death. Instead of moving in with her uncle, she decided to work and find herself a job. Vanessa then found herself a position as a governess at Falconbridge hall for Lord Falconbridge's ten year old daughter, Blythe. Some questions arose as Vanessa began to learn more about Blythe and Lord Falconbridge. Why is it that no one spoke of Blythe's mother, death? And why is it that the former governess left without any prior notice?

I must say that I absolutely adore Vanessa. I love how she refused to stay comfortably with her titled uncle, and instead, finds herself a position as a governess. Vanessa is a compassionate woman. I adore how she treated Blythe and win her heart. I enjoyed reading the interaction between Vanessa, Blythe and the Lord Falconbridge.

The Folly At Falconbridge Hall was a historical romance with a bit of mystery (although not too much). The romance part was a bit predictable, although I was surprised with Vanessa and Julian, Lord Falconbridge's progress halfway through the story. I certainly wasn't expecting that. But I love how the story was focusing more on Vanessa and Blythe at the beginning instead of Vanessa's romance relationship. I think the author did a great job in building the story line. I also like how the author added in a little bit of mystery of the former governess's sudden disappearance in the book. It certainly makes the story much more interesting. I couldn't stop myself to know what had happen in the past, and what will happen next.

Patrizia says

Anche senza leggere la nota dell'autrice, è subito chiaro che il romanzo è fortemente ispirato a quelli di Victoria Holt (penso soprattutto a *Mistress of Mellyn*), e ciò garantisce che Maggi Andersen non vada 'per campi e valli', come pure ogni tanto le capita. Un altro grande vantaggio sta nel fatto che il periodo prescelto, un volta tanto, non sia la misteriosa epoca Regency, nella quale è facile prendere cantonate, ma un indistinto 'tardo vittoriano', nel quale le carrozze possono convivere con le biciclette (ma non con le auto), e il telegrafo con il telefono. Il risultato è una lettura gradevole, qua e là avvincente, e quasi mai irritante.
