



Poetic Justice

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Student riots have ravaged the distinguished New York City university where Kate Fansler teaches. In the ensuing disarray, the survival of the university's plebeian stepchild, University College, seems doubtful. President Jeremiah Cudlipp is snobbishly determined to ax it; and as sycophantic professors fall in line behind him, the rally of Kate and few rebellious colleagues seems doomed. It is a fight to the death, and only a miracle--or perhaps a murder--can save their beloved institution. . . .

Poetic Justice Details

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From Reader Review Poetic Justice for online ebook

Delmar H. Dolbier says

Boring. Pretentious, bordering on precious. As a mystery, a flop. For whatever bearing it had on the "mystery," the material in the first half of the book could have been presented in a few paragraphs. The author could have written a novel about academic life and politics or she could have written a murder mystery. She tried to do both and failed.

Leslie says

Maybe even 4.5*, just because I do so love an academic setting for a mystery!

An academic mystery which deals with the internal politics & struggles of the faculty of a major (unnamed) New York city university is the kind of mystery I would have loved to write myself. Written in 1970, student unrest provides the background to the situation but as anyone who has been a college or university professor knows, the factions & committees etc. could have been taking place at any time. I had a few laughs (such as at the doctoral dissertation defense meeting & the professor describing a recent play he had attended) as well.

I loved the Auden quotes at the start of each chapter & throughout the text; I will have read his poetry for myself sometime soon!

Jennie Rigg says

Horribly stilted and pretentious dialogue, annoying and unlikable characters, a complete lack of plot to speak of, and the odd smattering of casual racism.

I REALLY did not like this book.

Its one redeeming feature is it is mercifully short.

Meg Lynch says

I'm really enjoying revisiting the Kate Fansler series.

Tex says

There has never been, with me, a great love of poetry nor of repeated quoting of authors and poets. This story had just too much of both. While the story was somewhat interesting, I wasn't thrilled with having to weed my way through names of literary B-list (C-list, I'm just not sure) celebrities to get, finally, to the tale. Kept

from 1 star by the sheer force of her writing.

Heather says

This novel is set during the turbulent student uprisings. Kate is charged with saving the University College, sort of like NYU's New School, primarily for adults returning to finish their education. The powers that be do not want the school to continue, the reasons are not clear. The leader of the movement is Professor Cudlipp, a stereotypical academic snob, and he is murdered. Kate and Reed are bound to find out the truth.

This is one of Amanda Cross's best, wittiest, best conceived mysteries. The characters are well drawn and three dimensional. Some of her descriptions were so true to type that I laughed until I cried. It may be her most literary novel. Each chapter is introduced by a quotation from the great English poet, W.H. Auden and Auden is present --though generally in absentia -- throughout the novel.

The mysterious death of one of the University's most bigoted faculty members (Cudlip) is presented against an accurate picture of University politics, during the Columbia student revolt of the last '60s. (The author, AKA Carolyn G. Heilbrun, is Professor Emeritus from Columbia, where she was awarded an endowed Chair in Humanities after teaching Victorian literature for many years.) Lionel Trilling, the great American literary critic and scholar appears, thinly disguised as "Frederick Cremance." Trilling/Cremance coined and popularized the expression "the life of the mind." Heinlein was one of his students, though he doubted that women were capable of having a "life of the mind." As Kate Fansler she has an opportunity to challenge him at long last. The writing is graceful, literary and tasteful.

Barbara says

Another wordy, witty but not very compelling mystery. I would like to find myself a Reed Amhearst of my own, though.

Jennifer Heise says

The mystery itself is a little weak, or rather the resolution is, but the character of Kate Fansler and the academics around her, plus an excellent selection of *mot justes* makes it worth it.

Pam Walker says

Kate Fansler is an English professor in the Graduate English Department of a university in New York. The school has recently gone through student revolts (this was written in 1970), and the administration and faculty of reviewing all aspects of the university including the controversial University College and its validity to the university. Kate is asked to represent her department in favor of the University College although there are some vocal administrators against it and want it disbanded. The author has all aspects of academia nailed--administration, faculty, and the politics involved. This is not a "mystery" some would like as evidenced by some low reviews, but anyone who has worked in academia will appreciate it. I know I will

continue to read her books.

Jan Norton says

This novel is set during the turbulent student uprisings. Kate is charged with saving the University College, sort of like NYU's New School, primarily for adults returning to finish their education. The powers that be do not want the school to continue, the reasons are not clear. The leader of the movement is Professor Cudlipp, a stereotypical academic snob. Predictably, he is murdered and Kate and Reed are bound to find out the truth.

Lisa Day says

Academic arguments

This book reminds me of two truths: that the more English departments may change, the more they stay the same, and that academic arguments are so fierce because so little is at stake.

Kelly says

I found the language and attitudes of the main characters so pretentious that I couldn't keep reading. Will there ever be a plot? Or will the characters just wander around looking down on everyone all day? I'll never know. :D

Eloise says

When I included a quote from Carolyn Heilbrun in one of my college papers, my professor asked if I knew her other identity: Amanda Cross. I did not. And at the time I did not have time (in my pursuit of a degree) to find her. Years later, I found his note, went to the used bookstore, bought a bunch of her books, and am now finally reading them. This one is set in 1970. I remember that year well: my first son was born in September that year.

Her books have a certain charm for an English major, but she is not someone I would recommend to anyone but my fellow English majors. The format is pretty standard and predictable. The "take" on college campuses, however, tickles my funny bone.

Margaret says

Student riots seem a thing of the past, but the efforts of those of privilege to keep their turf as exclusive as

possible, is not.

A lot of Amanda Cross goes over my head, especially the poetry of Auden of which she is so fond.

Enough remains to enjoy. A well-wrought mystery.

"Esoteric, scholarly," but I hope not too "turgid."

Susanna - Censored by GoodReads says

Very much a period piece. Not that this is a bad thing. Some passages were howlingly funny to someone who grew up in and around English departments of about this period.
