



Codename: Dancer

Amanda Brice

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Aspiring ballerina Dani Spevak is thrilled when hit TV show Teen Celebrity Dance Off comes to the campus of her performing arts boarding school. She trades the barre for the ballroom and gets set to cha-cha-cha to stardom with Hollywood wonderboy Nick Galliano.

At first their partnership is awkward, because Dani is in awe of her longtime teen idol crush. But soon their chemistry is heating up the dance floor and the attraction moves into real life.

Her excitement is short-lived, because someone wants her off the show. Bombs, poisoning, arson... Will Dani's 15 minutes of fame be over before she reaches age 15? Dani and her friends are suddenly at the center of some serious sabotage. And if she doesn't find out who is behind it, her next pirouette could be her last.

It's like Nancy Drew in toe shoes in this light-hearted tween mystery, a finalist for Romance Writers of America's Golden Heart® Award for Best Young Adult Romance.

Codename: Dancer Details

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Author : Amanda Brice

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From Reader Review Codename: Dancer for online ebook

Megan says

Codename: Dancer is a great teen mystery by Amanda Brice. Dani Spevak is a freshman at Mountain Shadows Performing Arts School, hoping to pursue her career as a ballerina. Dani has a hard time fitting in at first, so she is thrilled when she hears that the hit TV show Teen Celebrity Dance Off is coming to campus. She secures her spot on the cast, and begins working harder than ever with her partner/celebrity-crush Nick Galliano. She is living the dream life; dancing with every teenage girl's celebrity idol, being part of a TV show, making new friends, studying her passion, dance, at a performing arts boarding school. Until strange things begin to happen. The TV set mysteriously falls on one of the girls, and she is replaced on the show due to her concussion. A fake bomb is rigged and placed in Dani's bag. A fire starts in one of the studios. Dani is sure someone is sabotaging the show. As they say, the show must go on. Can Dani figure out what's happening? Or will this show come to a slamming halt?

I loved Amanda Brice's *Codename: Dancer*. It was a very quick read on my Kindle, as I couldn't wait to find out what happens. This book was full of unexpected humor, overflowing with surprises, dashed with hints of light romance, and sprinkled with dance terms that I, as a dancer, truly appreciated. I would recommend this book to girls 13+, and I think this is a must-read for teen dancers who enjoy young-adult fiction and mysteries. This is the first book of 2 (so far) Dani Spevak Mysteries. The second is *Turning Pointe*, and I can't wait to read it!

Sara says

Codename: Dancer (A Dani Spevak Mystery) is a cute middle grade book about Dani who has just arrived at a performing arts boarding school. Dani is lucky enough to be cast as a dancer in a dancing with the stars like reality show but there's a problem. Someone has been sabotaging the show. A set falls down injuring one of the dancers, a bomb is planted in Dani's purse and more. Dani and her friends decide to put their spying skills to the test so they can save the show.

This is an adorable book and the mystery was fun I tore through the book and found it very entertaining. The setting and characters were interesting enough and I liked that the main character was a dancer. However, the characters were super cliched. The art student was dark and dreary, the mean girl was nasty and conniving and the movie star was cute and funny with Dani falling for him in an instant. Dani eats nothing at all and is constantly skipping meals and her friends help her diagnose her eating disorder before the end of the book which she accepts rather easily (because all dancers have eating disorders). The dance sequences seemed like they were written by someone who has read a lot about dance or watched it on TV but not someone who was actually a dancer. The book is very short (150 pages) but it's currently available on Amazon for kindle for 1.99 and for that price it's a fun and quick read.

Appropriateness: This book is free of sex and substance abuse and the romance is limited to kissing. The main character has an eating disorder that's handled in the same way that one would be handled in a program for young teens. She skips a lot of meals and uses costuming as an excuse. Her friends notice and after a few point it out to her and she accepts it (after denying it for a while) eats some pasta and in the end she mentions that she'll be going to a nutritionist to get it in control. I would recommend this book to girls 10-13.

Larimar Benítez says

Continuando leyendo novelas alejadas de la fantasía, se me presentó la oportunidad de leer *Nombre en clave: Bailarina* de la escritora Amanda Brice. Este es el primero título de una serie que tiene como protagonista a Daniela Spevak.

En este libro Daniela, o Dani, acaba de ingresar a la academia de artes Mountain Shadows, donde se llevará a cabo un programa televisivo, Teen Celebrity Dance-off. Dani adicionará y conseguirá ser parte del elenco. Su pareja de baile será el actor juvenil en ascenso Nick Galliano. Todo parece ir viento en popa hasta que extraños sucesos comienzan a tener lugar en la academia, en lo que parece un intento de sabotear el programa. Nuestra protagonista, junto a sus amigas, tendrá que descubrir que ocurra antes de que sea muy tarde.

Nombre en Clave: Bailarina es una historia entretenida. Los que como yo han estado en escuelas de artes, o tomado clases de baile pondrán sentirse identificados. Conocemos el entusiasmo y la presión de ser el/la mejor. No es para nada sorprendente que una joven de primer año, como Dani, logró pasar la audición ya que el talento no se puede medir en grado de aprendizaje.

Hay partes que logran hacerte reír si comprendes las referencias. Sin embargo, a pesar de eso hay momentos en los que sientes que la historia pierde un tanto de credibilidad. Claro, teniendo en cuenta que sigue siendo ficción. Por ejemplo, me sorprende la idea de que una joven de catorce años participe en un programa de televisión sin el conocimiento de sus padres. Tal vez son detalles que la autora se ha pasado por alto.

En todo caso, *Nombre en clave: Bailarina* es una lectura ligera que puedes disfrutar en un fin de semana. Si te gustan las historias juveniles mezcladas con misterio esta es para ti.

I'd So Rather Be Reading {Nat} says

This book was a lot of fun! It was a perfect example of YA done right. It was a fast, light read with a good mystery and an even better message.

Dani is a 14 year-old dancer who is new to a performing arts boarding school. She makes fast friends with some other dancers and they audition for the coveted spots on the Teen Celebrity Dance Off team. After the team members are chosen and rehearsals begin, things start to go wrong. Dani and her friends set out to solve the mystery of who is sabotaging the show. In the middle of their hunt for the guilty party is a blossoming romance and Dani's struggle with her body image.

There were hints as to Dani's body image issues throughout the book before it was expressly discussed. Being a dancer, you can imagine the focus on weight these girls feel and Dani feels pressured to lose weight

to look good on stage and fit into her costumes. I loved how Brice used her book as an opportunity to send a great message to her readers.

Another thing I liked about Codename Dancer was Dani's voice. She's perky and kind of sassy. I liked Brice's references to pop culture. I thought they were very well-done without being heavy-handed (like, say, the House of Night series).

I would recommend Codename Dancer for a younger YA audience. Middle grade fans especially will love it. I liked the book much more than I thought I would and would definitely read more from Amanda Brice in the future.

J.A. Beard says

A Good Book Alert Review: <http://www.goodbookalert.blogspot.com/>

Codename: Dancer
Author: Amanda Brice
Genre: YA Mystery
Rating: 4 Stars

Codename: Dancer is a delightful YA mystery with a touch of romance.

Summary:

Fourteen year-old dancer Dani Spevak's fortunes at her new performing arts schools seem to be turning around when she's selected to dance with a gorgeous teen actor on a reality show. Just as quickly though, her fortunes reverse when a series of suspicious accidents strike the set. Now, this dancer has to turn detective before it's too late.

Review:

Codename: Dancer begins with a fairly standard scenario: a new transfer student having a hard time fitting in at her school. Though the social antagonist is a bit typical, the performing arts school setting and the lively lead give more than enough entertainment prior to the start of the mystery. The protagonist, Dani Spevak, a likable aspiring ballerina is likable and competent without ever seeming unrealistic.

Dani, and the various secondary characters were fairly well-developed. As a 14-year-old with a major crush, her actions aren't always motivated by the most deep and noble of reasons, but they're never inconsistent or inexplicable. Given the setting, the quirky, memorable line-up of secondary characters never seemed unnatural. The same can be said of the romance sub-plot. Those looking for deep, epic romance might be disappointed but it's still a cute sub-plot, and Dani's feelings come through well.

The Arizona performance arts setting was a nice touch. The author gives enough detail about the school to provide a more definite sense of setting beyond the more typical "fancy private school" settings that seem to dominate many YA mysteries these days. Fans of dance will appreciate the author's attention to detail in that area, but it shouldn't be overwhelming for those who are less knowledgeable in the subject.

An aspiring ballerina at a performing arts school doesn't seem a likely detective, but the scenario that unfolded in the book manages to plausibly draw Dani into the mystery without seeming forced. Indeed, the plot is held up by a steadily escalating tension that always draws the reader forward. Despite the tension, the personality of Dani and her friends infuses a sense of fun throughout the whole novel. Though there is a brief aside where the novel explores a few serious issues afflicting teen girls, overall the story experience was mostly about fun entertainment.

Of course, fun characters won't sustain a mystery novel if the central mystery itself is not well done. Codename: Dancer provided enough clues and suspects to please a light mystery fan. The eventual resolution of the mystery ended up satisfying without relying on simple, cheap re-direction.

Any fan of light mystery should enjoy Codename: Dancer. I look forward to the sequel coming out in Fall 2011.

4 Stars

Katie Fitzgerald says

Codename: Dancer is set at a performing arts boarding school, where Daniela "Dani" Spevak has just enrolled in the dance program. Though she is new to the school and somewhat self-conscious, she is thrilled to be cast in the reality TV show, Teen Celebrity Dance Off, which will film on campus during the semester. She is even more excited when she learns her partner will be heartthrob Nick Galliano. Excitement aside, though, the show is plagued from the outset by strange and dangerous mishaps. Bomb threats, arson, attempted poisoning - it seems like someone is maliciously targeting Dani, but she has no idea who, or why. She and her friends are determined to find out, though, before Dani is seriously injured - or worse.

I really like the concept for this book. I am not usually a fan of books about dancing, with the possible exception of Ballet Shoes, but the combination of dance and crime-fighting is really appealing, and brought a new, interesting layer to the mystery genre. The story reminded me a lot of Ally Carter's Gallagher Girls books, both in style and substance. Brice and Carter both have very breezy, easy-to-read writing styles, as well as a strong flair for combining suspense and romance. The reality show thread of the story also made it feel fresh and contemporary, as did the many teen-friendly pop culture references.

There were a few very minor editing issues I picked up on throughout the book, which occasionally caused me to stumble over a sentence or passage, but didn't really take away from my enjoyment of the story. I also wondered if maybe the eating disorder aspect of the story was tied up too neatly. I think it's great that Dani took ownership of it and took steps to help correct the problem, but it seemed way too easy, possibly sending the message that anorexic urges can be turned on and off at will. The Big Reveal of Dani's roommate's secret reason for disliking dancers also felt rushed, and came out of nowhere for me. I liked that it was such a surprise, but I wanted it to be better developed.

The ending of the story is quite satisfying, though, and the saboteur and that person's motive were definitely

unexpected and unique. This is the perfect type of book to recommend to young teens, or even tweens, who want some mystery and romance, but without much violence or sex. It will also appeal to fans of *Dancing With the Stars*, aspiring dancers, budding actors, and aspiring detectives.

Sonny says

Dani is an aspiring dancer who attends an all arts boarding school. And the school is hosting Teen Celebrity Dance Off tv show. Dani makes the cut and is also paired with a gorgeous rising actor. Sparks begin to fly between the two. She feels like she has everything.

But things begin to go wrong. People are getting hurt, things are going missing, huge threats; it seems someone is adamant on stopping the show from going on. Dani and her friends become their own little detective squad to solve the new mystery.

My Thoughts

Codename: Dancer was a quick and adorable read. I did enjoy a light read for one. The small romance between Dani and Nick was cute at first, but I am glad it didn't work. I am hoping that she will eventually get together with Craig. Now that could be a great romance.

The premise of the book was cute. A detective ballet dancer. Just think of the accessories.

I think the characters could have had a little bit more dimension to them. Most of the story revolved around the dancing and detection work. Normally this would not be a problem, but it was such a fast read that there seemed to not be enough time to build up deeper personalities and sense the relationships between the characters. It would have also been fun to see a little more life outside of the dancing and detective business. Just to see high schoolers being teens.

In the end, I was happy that I was able to read this book. It was fun, lighthearted, and has a sweet (yet bad) romance to nip my romance craving. I am interested in seeing how the next Dani Spevak Mystery could pan out.

Read2review says

I had the fortune of reading *Codename: Dancer* by Amanda Brice. I have to say that this was a very entertaining piece. From the very beginning, Dani's young teenage voice was apparent and remained constant throughout the piece. As a lover of mysteries I thought that the culprit was a little easy to figure out. But, keeping in mind that this is a novel for young teens, I thought that the clues and suspenseful moments were placed very well. The story moved quickly and there was always a new development to consider.

Brice may have done a little too well with the voice of the main character Dani at times. Although I was completely engaged in this good read, I felt like I was "losing brain cells" in the mind of Dani's character from time to time. Her complete naivety throughout the piece and her insistence that she was a grown up, was both annoying and enlightening. With that said, I feel that there are many young teens who can relate to

her and some of the very adult issues that she has to face in this piece. As a dancer myself, if not ballet, and even at 25 years of age, I could also relate so I think it would be a great read for young impressionable people.

Because I was able to figure out the culprit before the reveal, I found the ending more funny than anything else. I had never really connected with Dani—Maya was my favorite character actually—so her feelings of betrayal didn't really reach me as much as I would have liked. The end was a little surprising though, if gratifying, because I felt that the criminal was subdued a little too easily. (No one is just going to let you break their bone)

As for the wrap up scene, it was VERY Scooby-Doo-isk. The whole time, I was really felling like I was 10 years old again watching one of my favorite episodes. Honestly, I don't know if that is good or bad. But I'll say it followed the style of the piece nicely and I felt satisfied. I believe Codename: Dancer is the first of a series of novels in the Dani Mysteries.

I give this novel a 4/5 for being a quick and cozy read.

Courtney says

I strongly considered a one star rating, but decided to go with two instead. It was just not good. The characters were a little ridiculous, nothing special or memorable about any of them. Plus, they were idiots, and I don't enjoy reading about a bunch of idiots. The spy/mystery part was just dumb. Then the author throws in the whole eating disorder thing (Dani is a dancer after all, so it must be part of the plot!). It didn't bother me that it was part of her character. I think most dancers have eating issues. But, I didn't like how she threw it in there, Dani got mad at her friends for mentioning it, and then five minutes later the whole thing is over. She decides to make an effort to eat more, goes to an Italian restaurant and gorges herself, and then throws in that nutritional counseling is a requirement for her to perform on the TV show. I don't know why I was surprised. The entire plot was ridiculous. I probably only finished it because it was so short and part of a collection I am reviewing for the publisher. Maybe if I was a teenage girl, or a reality TV fan, I would have enjoyed this more. Since I am neither, I couldn't get past their ridiculous detective work. I actually somewhat enjoyed Maya and Analisa, which is why I gave 2 stars. I would not recommend wasting your time with this one.

Kim says

Codename: Dancer is the debut YA novel by author Amanda Brice, and the first in a series centering around aspiring dancer Dani Spevak, Being a lover of all things dance-related, I was delighted to read a book centered around the dance world. Dani is a high school freshman, and a new student at a performing arts boarding school in Arizona. Initially excited to have been selected as a dancer on a reality show, things change for her quickly as things begin to go wrong, usually with her at it's center. The action and suspense were nonstop from the beginning of the book as Dani and her friends tried to figure out who was behind the sabotage. Although I think the book is geared to younger teens, the story is a good one, and definately keeps your attention with its twists and turns. The author captured the mood and character of the age very well, even touching on some more serious issues that a lot of girls today face. I definately recommend this book, and the series, to high school age or a little younger. The next book in the series, Pointe of No Return, comes

out in November 2011.

Liralen says

I'm still a sucker for boarding-school books and ballet books, and although this turned out to not really be either (the boarding-school element is useful only in that it explains the lack of parents; Dani ignores ballet in favour of ballroom dance in this book, and the ballroom dance isn't actually described at all; it's all about the mystery that some incredibly idiotic fourteen-year-olds are trying to solve), I'd be okay with the direction this went in if the characters were...well...not as dumb as a bunch of boxes of bricks. Dani's fourteen and away from home for the first time, at a performing arts school that just so happens to be hosting a reality show. She auditions, and because at fourteen she's the best dancer the school has ever seen, she's immediately offered a spot...

And then the accidents start. A girl is injured and forced to drop out. Dani has an allergic reaction to peanuts from Thai food. There's a fire. There's a fake bomb. There's a teen star who Dani has a crush on and for whom she sets aside, you know, all of her personality/desires/likes/dislikes, because omg! Cute boy! *Famous* cute boy!

(Gag.)

So Dani's chosen for this show, which she doesn't bother to tell her parents about, because it's not like minors need permission for this sort of thing, right? She and her friends, who aren't distinguishable except that I think one of them is a minority, run around sticking their noses in things and slut-shaming the bitch character (who, similarly, has no distinguishing characteristics except that she's a bitch...oh, and apparently a slut). Dani lands in hospital because of the peanut thing and her mother barely remembers to send her an instant message the next day to see if everything's okay. The police describe arson and multiple people ending up in hospital as 'childish pranks...not truly dangerous' (117). Dani is diagnosed, by her fourteen-year-old friends, with an eating disorder, whereupon she throws a hissy fit...until her roommate, who has pretty much never spoken before, cries about her sister who died of anorexia, and Dani realises that oh gosh, she should eat more! Cause like omg! And then she runs out of the room to go on her date and eat carbs without so much as an *I'm so sorry about your sister*. No, worse. She runs out of the room to primp and then comes back:

I spun around to model for Bev. "How do I look?"

Not surprisingly, she didn't bother to look up, let alone answer, which was kinda sad, given what we'd just shared. But really, what did I care? I had a date with Nick! (245)

The reader beats her head against the wall and prays never to read a girl this oblivious in real life.

Alysa H. says

I won a copy of this book in Elle Casey's 2013 January Anniversary Indie Book Giveaway.

This was a fun little book, but I'm having some trouble reviewing it because although I read a lot of YA books, this one was a bit too "Y" for me. If I had a teenage daughter into current teen pop-culture, I think

she'd enjoy it (though as a parent I would probably wish that it had just a tad more substance).

I liked the relationships between the narrator, Dani, and her small circle of friends. I could have done without such the "mean girls" undercurrent from elsewhere, as that's been done to death. I guess I can handwave this as making sense in a dance program at an Arts boarding school, but I do hope that is just fictional stereotyping. The "teen reality tv show" plot line was also quite amusing as a source of mystery, as there isn't usually any mystery to such things!

I wish it had been just a touch longer. I was surprised when the (Kindle) book ended at 79% read (the remaining 21% had a glossary of dance terms, a preview of Book 2, and excerpts from two other unrelated books by different authors). The ending was good, but abrupt.

Perhaps Dani's friends (Maya, et al.) could have been developed more with the extra space? I would have liked to see them more as people than as sidekicks. This book was good but not great. Altogether, I'm happy that I read it.

Emily says

For a young adult mystery novel it was cute. I found the characters were really cut out and defined but even at moments they had their own flaws. It was something I thought would be good for young girls to read the romance scenes were not over steamy or too graphic leaving it to be rather a good young adult novel. Definitely something I will suggest for my daughter once she gets a little older to read it. I found myself laughing in some parts and angry in others at the right moments you should be feeling the emotion and drive of the characters. However the end was a little predictable and that was my only downfall for the book. But once again as I stated it's a great book for a young adult.

Dani or Daniela must find out who is sabotaging the TV show that has come to film on her school campus after only a few of the girls win in the audition the turmoil around her and her like of two boys seems to ruffle her better judgement on both of them. Leaving one blamed even in his innocence and the other innocent only to be proven guilty. Jealousy from a rival dancer also fuels the fires of mystery as more and more becomes crashing to a dangerous ending and almost finale for them all.

Away from home, surrounded by people she is unsure to trust, Dani eventually finds out who her friends are and who her enemies are in the end you realize that good friends are always hard to find but great once you have them.

Alison Fees says

I'm a fan of dance! Really I watch So You Think You Can Dance every week. LOL. Of course that doesn't make me an expert but anything dance related appeals to me.

I instantly fell in love with Dani. Maybe it's because my daughters name is Dani or just because the character has some spunk to her. I felt that her emotions were real and the way she reacted to situations would be the same as most teenage girls today. Her desire to fit in and be able to solve the crime on her own had me wondering what she would do next.

I love the plot of this story. I'm a huge fan of dance and reality shows. Take 2 of my favorite things and put them into one and I'm all about it. There were several twists and turns and possible who done its. I will admit that I made a guess towards the beginning of who was behind all the sabotage and I turned out to be right. However I didn't know why until the end and was actually surprised. So if you like mystery and some near death experiences than this book is for you. If not for you than at least your teenage daughter :)

I can't wait to read the next book in the series that is due out this fall. Amanda Brice did an excellent job of portraying the life of a teenage girl who is easily star struck. I fell in love with her characters and found myself wanting more. I give this book 4/5 stars.

April says

I really enjoyed this novel, although it was fluffy. But then, I think the fluffiness is what *made* it fun for me - I read it during times when my brain couldn't manage deeper fiction or homework, so the fluffiness was quite enjoyable. It was also very fun, and I look forward to reading more Daniela Spevak mysteries. (I was quite delighted to find out that yes, there are in fact more books by Amanda Brice!!)

However, although it was listed as a YA novel, I think parts of it were more MG. I'm not positive on that, but having a 14-year-old heroine does put the novel kind of in the middle of higher MG and young YA. Daniela did seem quite young at times, and childish in some of her reactions to events - but then, at other times, she seemed quite mature. I had to remind myself that she was only fourteen and that is how I was at 14 and how most 14-year-olds seem to be. XD

My only real problem with the book - and the only reason it didn't get a higher rating - is because the real perp for the mystery was obvious (to me, at least) from the very beginning of the mystery. The only reason that I didn't get too frustrated with that was that the reasoning behind the sabotaging was not clear until the very end.

Overall, though, a book I would recommend if you're looking for a light read.
