



The Grim Steeper

Amanda Cooper

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The national bestselling author of *Shadow of a Spout* invites readers back to the Finger Lakes town of Gracious Grove for more tea and murder...

Mid-October in the charming Finger Lakes town of Gracious Grove means it's time for the annual Fall Fling Townwide Tea Party. The highlight of the festivities is a roaming tea-tasting, which includes a stop at Auntie Rose's Victorian Tea House. Sophie Taylor would like to share her enjoyment of the event with her sort-of boyfriend, English teacher Jason Murphy, but Jason's dean has accused him of falsifying grades to help an athlete at the local college. Steamed and stressed, Jason shows up the night of the party with bags under his eyes.

But the dean shows up under Sophie's Japanese Maple later that night, murdered, and now Jason is suspected of far worse than fudging grade reports. It's up to Sophie, her Nana, and their friends the Silver Spouts to pore over the clues to find out who really decided to teach the dean a lesson.

The Grim Steeper Details

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Author : Amanda Cooper

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From Reader Review The Grim Steeper for online ebook

Sara says

NOTE: I received a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

To say that Sophie Taylor had a bad day is a huge understatement. After tangling with the chef at the upscale restaurant where she worked as sous chef (thanks to her mother), she gets a call that her beloved grandmother had been taken to the hospital for an apparent heart attack. Of course, her first instinct was to get to Gracious Grove.

While her grandmother was on the mend, Sophie slips back into the rhythm of Auntie Rose's, her Nana's tea shop. Things are going well when her friend (and hopefully more than a friend soon!) Jason is implicated in a grade-fixing scheme at the college where he teaches. The dean hints that he's going to announce the culprit soon, but before that can happen, Sophie finds Dean Asquith dead on the property of Auntie Rose's.

Sure that Jason is going to be a suspect, Sophie once again starts her own investigation. With the help of her friends and the Silver Spouts, she's determined to prove Jason's innocence.

All the GiGi gang is back, and as usual I wish it was a real town because it sounds like a wonderful place to visit...especially with the possibility of tea at Auntie Rose's.

Christine Denicola says

The Grim Steeper is a cozy for all ages ... it features a 20-something heroine and a group called the Silver Spouts, tea lovers of all ages and backgrounds. The story centers on Sophie Taylor, a great chef and baker, who has returned "home" to Gracious Grove and to Auntie Rose's Victorian Tearoom. This is the third book in the series but it serves well as a stand-alone and yet tied up a few loose ends (for me) from the first and second books.

Sophie has detecting instincts that rival Philip Marlowe but is as soft as he was hardboiled. And there is plenty more to like about the Grim Steeper, a masterfully written "cozy." I loved the vocabulary of the author ... who slipped in words like "eschew" in a way that taught the meaning without being preachy.

Sophie's grandmother Rose also finds a way into our hearts with her concern for Sophie. Again, the author's use of language captures that concern so very well: "Rose wished she could impart the wisdom of over eighty years ... that few things were as important as they seemed at the time ... that failure was never final ..."

The teashops are as much a part of the mystery as the dead body, which is good because it's difficult to feel sorry for the victim (but it is a delight to figure out just "whodunit"). The tension mounts as the number of suspects grows. And Sophie races against time to prove that Jason, her childhood sweetheart, is one of the suspects who surely cannot be guilty.

Along with the murder, the blossoming love story, the town and gown friction, and the charming relationship between the granddaughter and grandmother ... the book is an unqualified success. As an aside, I defy

anyone to read Amanda Cooper's books and not long for a cup of tea. I'm on my second cup of tea today ... Irish ... Barry's.

I received this book from the author in exchange for a fair and honest review.

K.A. Davis says

I have been a fan of Victoria Hamilton's Vintage Kitchen Mystery series and was delighted to find out that Victoria writes a Teapot Collector Mystery series under the name of Amanda Cooper. Recently I had the pleasure of reading her brand new release, *THE GRIM STEEPER*, the third book in her series and found I've been missing out!

When her grandmother, Rose Freemont, is hospitalized with a suspected heart attack, Sophie Taylor begs to take time off from her sous chef de cuisine position in the Hamptons. Denied permission, she quits. Not that Sophie is a quitter by nature but her grandmother means the world to her and she feels that she should be back in Gracious Grove, New York, to help out.

Out of a job, Sophie returns to work in her grandmother's tearoom, Auntie Rose's Victorian Tea House. With Rose's health returning they plunge themselves into planning the Fall Fling, the town's Tea Party, which Cruickshank College is sponsoring. In the midst of the preparations, a scandal rocks the college, involving her maybe boyfriend, Jason Murphy. Dean Asquith has accused Jason of accepting bribes to inflate the grades of the school's star basketball player. Jason's reputation and job are on the line and when the Dean is found dead in front of Auntie Rose's Tea House, Sophie knows she's going to have to find the culprit since the police have Jason in their sights.

THE GRIM STEEPER is the epitome of a cozy mystery! I love how the author connects the reader to the small town feel of Gracious Grove, where every body knows every one. Sophie's grandmother is a sweet character and her group of teapot collectors, The Silver Spouts, adds charm and some humor when they decide to help with the investigation. The conflict between Sophie and her mother didn't seem forced and there's a hint of a mystery to what really happened between them. I'm hoping that relationship will be fully explored in the next book. Auntie Rose's Victorian Tea House is some place I'd love to visit, especially to browse their teapot collection! There is also a tea house recipe at the back of the book that sounds heavenly.

Sara Grotz says

This was my first time reading the Teapot Collector Mystery series. I absolutely loved it. I was able to jump right in and felt like the author brought me up to date with what had happened in the first two books and did not miss out on anything. I plan to go back and catch up with the series, because I really enjoyed the characters.

Sophie Taylor is working at a restaurant in the Hamptons when she gets a phone call saying her grandmother, Rose has had a heart attack. She promptly returns to Gracious Grove to her grandmother, friends, and the tea shop she loves like her own. The town is having the Fall Fling Townwide Tea Party, and Auntie Rose's Victorian Tea House is always a popular stop.

Unfortunately the dean of the local college is found dead outside of the tea house in the early morning after the Fall Fling. Even worse, Sophie's friend and love interest Jason is the prime suspect in his murder. Jason is being implicated in a grade changing scandal that will destroy his career if he doesn't go to jail for murder.

Instead it is up to Sophie and their friends to try to clear his good name and find the true culprit. This was a fast paced read for me. I especially liked all the detail included describing some of the tea pots in Rose's collection. Sophie, Rose, Julia, and Jason were my favorite characters and I look forward to reading more about them in the next installment. I did receive this book in exchange for an honest review, but the opinions are completely my own.

NicoleG says

What do you get when you live in a town with not 1, not 2, but 3 (no joke!!) tea houses?? A dash of friendly (sort of) competition, a splash of gossip (why not?) and a dollop of murder! When Sophie Taylor comes back to help her grandmother in the town of Gracious Grove, affectionately referred to as GiGi, she never imagined she'd get involved in solving yet another murder!

Someone near and dear to her is being framed for a grade changing scandal at the prestigious Cruickshank college and Sophie isn't about to sit there and sip tea while the culprit gobbles up the bribe money. Sophie starts asking questions but ends up getting confused and frustrated with an endless supply of slippery suspects. Then, when a high ranking staff member of the college is killed with a mysterious weapon near Aunt Rose's Victorian teahouse, Sophie is determined to investigate! With the help of her Gracious Grove friends, some chatty college employees, and (gasp!) even the ever grumpy Thelma, the murderer's scheme topples down like a high-piled plate of scones!

This 3rd book in Amanda Cooper's Teapot Collector Mystery series was extremely enjoyable! Although I prefer coffee over tea, I was delightfully surprised at how interesting teapot collecting sounds. The author did a good job of creating some likeable and relatable characters and even some persnickety characters whom you wouldn't want to have as neighbors(but that makes it all the more entertaining)! Whatever beverage you prefer, this series is for anyone who loves to sit back and relax with a charming cozy mystery.

I received a copy of this book in exchange for a fair and honest review.

Jeanie says

I just couldn't miss one book in this series, because it is such a good one! The Grim Steeper, I think, is the best so far in the series. The tea shop is the kind of place I'd like to visit, and enjoy Rose, Sophie, and Julia - especially the role Julia has found in the series. Even scheming Thelma and Gilda have their place, sometimes comic relief when others don't get hurt. Sophie's heart throb from their younger days has been spending time with her, but he is now accused of falsifying an athlete's grade so he could stay on the team. The dean, ready to make the announcement of who he thinks for sure did it is found dead the night before. At the tea shop, in the bushes. Sophie's loyalty to her friends is outstanding; this cozy mystery has what it takes - suspense, hardworking women in a tea shop (and I am learning to enjoy tea a bit more!) and humor, plus the hope of romance. If Jason doesn't end up in prison for life. This is a 'must read' if you enjoy tea, tea shops, academia intricacies, and of course, mystery and edge-of-seat suspense. Included, as in prior mysteries in the series, is a write-up about tea so that even we newbies to tea can understand it. Popular tea and cozy mystery review writer blog writer 'Karen mom of three' aka Karen Owen writes about the differences between tea infusers and strainers. Looking forward to the next visit to Gracious Grove!

Stephanie says

A Fantastic Read

Amanda Cooper's Teapot Collector mystery series gets better with every new installment. The Grim Steeper is the third in the series, and the characters continue to grow into people you really care about. Picking up where Shadow of a Spout left off, Sophie Taylor is living and working in the Hamptons, having a really horrible day, when she learns of her grandmother's illness. This news causes Sophie to return to Gracious Grove, and her family, friends, and maybe boyfriend Jason.

This story centers around the annual Fall Fling Townwide Tea Party. The city of Gracious Grove has partnered with the local college for this year's event in an effort to improve town and gown relations. Sophie's friend, Jason, is teaching English at the college. During the weekend event, a murder occurs in front of Auntie Rose's, Sophie's grandmother's teahouse.

Jason has been accused of taking bribes, and falsifying grades for the small college's star athlete. This allows the author to explore college level politics, the role of athletes and fundraising, and relationships between the town and the local college. It is beautifully done within the context of a well-designed murder mystery.

My test of a compelling book is what I call JOMC. Just One More Chapter, the phrase a reader mutters as they continue to read, when they should put the book down and let real life intrude. I started this book one evening, and did not put it down until I finished it in the wee, small hours of the following morning. I was caught up in the storyline, and did not guess "who done it".

Grandma Rose is a feisty, loveable character. Her best friend, Laverne, has an incredible family. The Silver Spouts, an eclectic group of teapot collectors, are back again to help out. "Frenemy" Thelma is up to her old tricks. Sophie's rocky relationship with her mother is further explored, as well. Dana and Cissy, Sophie's friends, continue to be supportive and provide a few laughs. Mac MacAlister is the college's star athlete, and failing student. All combine to bring a wonderfully engaging story to the reader.

I have read the previous books in this series. However, this book could easily stand alone. Amanda Cooper provides appropriate commentary to bring a new reader of the series up to speed quickly and easily. In all transparency, I won the opportunity to read an advance copy of the book in return for a fair review. I was thrilled at the opportunity. My review is based upon my enjoyment, and was not colored by the fact that I was given this book.

Donna Townsend says

Just how far will Sophie Taylor, chef at her Nana's tea room in lovely Gracious Grove, go to clear her maybe-boyfriend's name? And a murder to boot?

Sophie, who finds her way back to the town and people and career she loves, soon becomes embroiled in a college grade-fixing scandal when her guy Jason is accused of giving the star athlete at Cruickshank College an A in his course. She throws herself into the unknown: the quirky, unfathomable dynamics of a college campus. I personally loved the concept of this gutsy gal, who didn't follow the masses to college, but rather pursued her passion to cook, taking on this challenge. It was fun for this retired academic to get back to campus. Well, except for the murder, cheating scandal, multiple extra-marital affairs and general ugliness, that is.

For me, the best parts of this book are the characters and warm setting. After all, this is a cozy, right? I especially liked that Sophie struggles to stay on course in her career and with her choices of love, friends and home. Her relationship with her parents, Mom especially, are strained. And are she and Jason actually a couple, she wonders. But the characters in Gracious Grove are treasures. Nana and her partner Laverne are warm, solid and sassy. Sophie's numerous friends are diverse and loving. I want to move right in!

The story is intricately plotted and designed. The murder occurs well into the narrative, and while expected, it did not disappoint. There were lots of suspects and I guessed wrong. I always taught my students that while

you may be surprised by the ending of a story, it should be because you failed to pick up the clues, not that the author failed to leave them. Nice craftsmanship, Amanda Cooper!

Not having read the first books in the series was not an issue. The author quickly brings the reader up to speed and wanting more. I'm hooked on this series!

I received this book from the author in exchange for a fair and honest review.

Tina at A COZY GIRL READS AND WRITES Blog says

The Grim Steeper is definitely my cup of tea. Amature Sleuth and chef, Sophie Taylor is a strong woman but you don't know how strong until she gets in hot water and willing to fight tooth and nail for the ones she loves. She works helping out her grandmother at Auntie Rose's Victoria Tea house and also with her Godmother, Laverne. The annual Fall Fling Town side Tea Party is the talk of Gracious Grove.

There's a tea-stroll and everyone including the staff, and professors of Cruickshank College, a collage where Sophie's friend and love interest, Jason is employed as a English professor walks along the street where there's tea tasting and one of the stops happens to be at Auntie Rose's Victoria Tea house. When there's a grading scandal at the college and Jason is accused of changing all star basketball champ, Mac's grade to a A from a failing grade all is not good and not even a cup of tea could solve his problems when he is suspected of murdering The Dean of the college in cold blood subjected to a poisoning and a stab wound to the neck right on Auntie Rose's Victoria Tea house's doorstep.

From the Dean's wife to many staff at Cruickshank college, Sophie uncovers many suspects who could have done the Dean in. Also looking for a possible connection between the grade changer and the murderer, maybe they are one in the same. Sophie, enlists the help from her grandmother who she affectionately calls "nana" and the friends known as the Silver Spouts, who includes, Thelma Mae Earnshaw who owns the tea house next door who has a love-hate relationship with Rose and who's lovely disposition is as funny as "salted tea".

Good things happen over tea and a Teapot Collector Mystery and The Grim Steeper made me tea taste just a little bit better. A witty and charming edition to the series. I also would be remiss if I didn't mention Thelma Mae Earnshaw, I love her so much, she makes me laugh with her grumpy attitude and her sunny disposition and there's "nana", Sophie's grandmother with a heart of gold they make this series what it is and always look forward to what scheme Thelma wants to inflict on Rose. Steeped with charm, lovely tea and murder. A well written plot that had me hooked from the first page. I am in anticipation for the next book in this engaging series with a excellent cast of characters.

FTC Disclosure Thank you to the publisher and/or author for providing us with a copy of this book for review. This did not influence our thoughts in any way. All the opinions of the book and review are honest and our own.

Kristina says

The Grim Steeper by Amanda Cooper is the third book in the Teapot Collector Mystery series. Sophie Taylor returns to Gracious Grove, New York when she received word her beloved Nana (Rose Freemont) is ill (possible heart attack). Sophie was not enjoying the job at Bartleby's in the Hampton's (obnoxious

employer) and when they would not give her time off for her grandmother's illness she quit (I do not blame her). Thankfully, Rose is on the mend and just needs to take it easy. Sophie slips back into her routine at Auntie Rose's Victorian Tea House. The town is getting ready for the Fall Fling Townwide Tea Party. People will be able to stroll through the town for tea tastings (and goodies). But there is some trouble brewing for Sophie's boyfriend, Jason Murphy. Jason is a professor at Cruickshank College (and working on his dissertation). He is being accused of taking a bribe to alter the grade of the star basketball player, Mac MacAlister. Jason would never jeopardize his job or the college (he is a straight arrow). On the day Dean Dale Asquith is going to announce the person responsible for the grade change, he turns up dead on the front lawn of Auntie Rose's Victorian Tea House. Whoever killed the Dean is trying to set up Jason. Sophie (with the help of Nana and friends) will have to sift through the clues and find the culprit to prove Jason's innocence.

The Grim Steeper was a fun cozy mystery to read. The book has great characters, lovely setting, and a good mystery (with clues along the way to help solve the mystery). The Grim Steeper is well-written and can be read without having enjoyed the other two books in the series (though you will want to read them). There are a lot of characters and it can be hard to keep them all straight at first. I give The Grim Steeper 5 out of 5 stars. I cannot wait to read the next book in A Teapot Collector Mystery series. There is a recipe at the end of the book and a discussion on tea strainers and infusers. The Grim Steeper does a superb job of combining romance, friendship, tea (and goodies), and mystery into one delightful book.

I received a complimentary copy of The Grim Steeper from the author (care of Cozy Mystery Review Crew) in exchange for an honest review.

Check out my blog for additional information: <http://bibliophileandavidreader.blogs...>

Stacey Toney says

In the third installment of the Teapot Collector Mystery series, Sophie finds out that academia can be deadly!!!

When Sophie returns to Gracious Grove after her grandmother has a health scare, she discovers that her crush Jason Murphy has been accused of changing the grade of one his students, who happens to be the star basketball player at Cruickshank College, by the Dean. Since Sophie knows that Jason would never do falsify one of his students grades, she offers him her support. Unfortunately, the Dean shows up dead in front of Auntie Rose's tea house after a confrontation between him and Jason.

Since the police have Jason pegged as their prime suspect, Sophie and her friends decide they must investigate to prove his innocence. There are plenty of people who seem to be happy that he was killed including his wife, his mistress, the basketball coach, and the professors who reported to him. Sophie must sort through the facts and her own personal insecurities in order to find the killer as well as the person who changed the athlete's grade before Jason loses his freedom and his career.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It seems as though Sophie is finally beginning to figure out the direction that she wishes to take in her life. I can't wait to read the next in this series.....

I received this book from the author in exchange for a fair and honest review.

Katreader says

The Grim Steeper by Amanda Cooper
The Third Teapot Collector Mystery

After a brief, and fairly disastrous, trip back to the Hamptons to work in an upscale restaurant Sophie Taylor returns to Gracious Grove and her grandmother, friends, and Auntie Rose's Victorian Tea House. While cooking again brings her joy, there is trouble in the Finger Lakes. Neighbor and fellow tea shop owner Thelma Mae is up to her old tricks, but worse than that her friend (possibly more than just a friend) Jason is thought to be involved in a grading scandal at the local college. Trying to help, Sophie sticks her foot in her mouth on more than one occasion, possibly exacerbating the situation. When the dean is found dead-right outside Auntie Rose's-Sophie knows she has to make things right and find the killer. Faced with a hotbed of collegiate intrigue and drama, Sophie will have to sort through what's relevant and what's not, especially if she wants Jason to stay in her life.

The Grim Steeper showcases the harsh realities of the academic life. Oftentimes it's a place where politics and publicity trump learning and athletics is valued over academics. Collegiate intrigue, shoddy reporting, a grading scandal, and the search for a scapegoat add to this volatile setting creating the perfect background for murder.

One of the most important things this book, indeed in the whole Teapot Collector Mystery series, tries to impart is the importance of doing what you love where you are loved. Sophie could work in an upscale restaurant making good money, surrounded by influential people. However, the reality is the stress level is astronomical and the majority of the people, influential or not, are egotistical jerks The stress, the pressure, and the negative people aren't worth the lifestyle for Sophie. Being the chef at Auntie Rose's gives her the flexibility to be as creative as she'd like in the kitchen surrounded by family, friends, and positive influences; something we should all keep in mind in our own lives.

Cooper really hits her stride in this third book in the series. The writing is crisp and taut, the action driven by Sophie's need to help Jason, yet there is still room for a dose of humor. The mystery is complex (are there two separate mysteries or two mysteries intertwined into one) with many good suspects. While I can't say that I like all of Sophie's friends, their faults make an interesting dynamic and I would still enjoy a drive to the Finger Lakes to enjoy tea at Auntie Rose's, while being thankful I don't add sugar to mine!

Recipe and Tea Tips included.

FTC Disclosure – The publisher sent me a copy of this book in the hopes I would review it.

Kim Reads (Read Your Writes Book Reviews) says

Things have changed for Sophie Taylor since we last saw her in *Shadow of a Sprout*. She has returned to the restaurant kitchen, working as a sous chef de cuisine at Bartleby's in the Hamptons. That is, until she gets a call informing her of her grandmother's heart attack. Sophie rushes back to Finger Lakes, New York and immerses herself in taking care of her grandmother and her grandmother's tea room, Auntie Rose's Victoria Tea House. Nana's recovery is going good but Sophie receives more shocking news. Her sort of boyfriend, Jason has been accused of changing the grade of the most valuable basketball player on Cruickshank College's team in order to make him eligible to play. As if Jason's situation couldn't get worse, Dale Asquith, the dean of Cruickshank College and the person driving to have Jason fired is found dead.

The Grim Steeper is told in third person. However, Amanda Cooper writes the story so that readers know what Sophie, her grandmother Rose, and Rose's frenemy Thelma Mae Earnshaw are thinking. For me, this series is all about the central and supporting characters. I love them. Well, maybe not Thelma Mae and her granddaughter Cissy. Reading the Teapot Collector Mystery series is like spending time with friends you can't get enough of. While this is the third book in the series, it is easily a standalone read.

Like a great cup of tea steeped to perfection, The Grim Steeper takes readers on a well planned out adventure to discover and capture a killer. In order to clear Jason's name and restore his reputation, Sophie will enlist the help of her friends and members of the Silver Spouts teapot collecting group. Just as they are closing in on the killer, they'll have to act fast. It seems the killer has no problem with leaving bodies in their wake. The story ends with a happy moment and I'm looking forward to returning to Finger Lakes and Auntie Rose's Victorian Tea House.

Received a copy from Penguin Berkley Prime Crime for an honest and unbiased opinion.

Lisa Ks Book Reviews says

THE GRIM STEEPER is a great plot infused with wonderful writing!

Another lovely installment of the Teapot Collector Mystery series, THE GRIM STEEPER is an excellent story steeped in mystery and drama.

Author Amanda Cooper has penned another must read story in this mystery series for tea lovers, and all mystery fans. Spending time in Aunty Rosie's Victorian Tea House is always a great way to spend the day. The setting paints lovely images in my mind as I read. And then a pesky murder happens. Okay, so that where the fun begins!

A very tight plot that kept me guessing with every turn of the page, THE GRIM STEEPER is a fantastic story that really held my attention. I didn't want to put it down.

Truly another must read from Amanda Cooper aka Victoria Hamilton!

A yummy recipe, and descriptions of tea strainers and infusers can be found at the back of the book!

Linda says

Working as sous chef in the illustrious seafood restaurant in the Hamptons turns out NOT to be the dream job for Sophia. Then when her friend, Dana, calls to tell her that her grandmother had a heart attack, Sophia immediately requests time off, only to not only be denied but also abruptly told that her mother bribed the owner to offer her the job. Sophia once again finds herself back in Gracious Grove, her grandmother recovering, and her place back managing the Tea House...and finding that she really does love it here. Then problems strike. First, her friend, Jason, a professor at the local college, is accused of altering a grade for a star athlete. Then, during the annual Fall Fling Townwide Tea Party, the college dean is found murdered outside their tea room. Are the two incidents connected? Sophia is positive that Jason is innocent of the grade altering and certainly had nothing to do with the murder but how can she help prove this. This is the 3rd

book in the Teapot Collector series and has fun characters and interesting plot twists. I love the relationship between Sophia, her Nana, and her godmother, Laverne. I even like the antics of the eccentric and sometimes malicious neighbor, Thelma. The plot is timely, with today's emphasis on sports in college and computer technology. I look forward to the next book in this series, and especially to see how Sophia and Jason's relationship grows. Disclosure: I was given a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.
