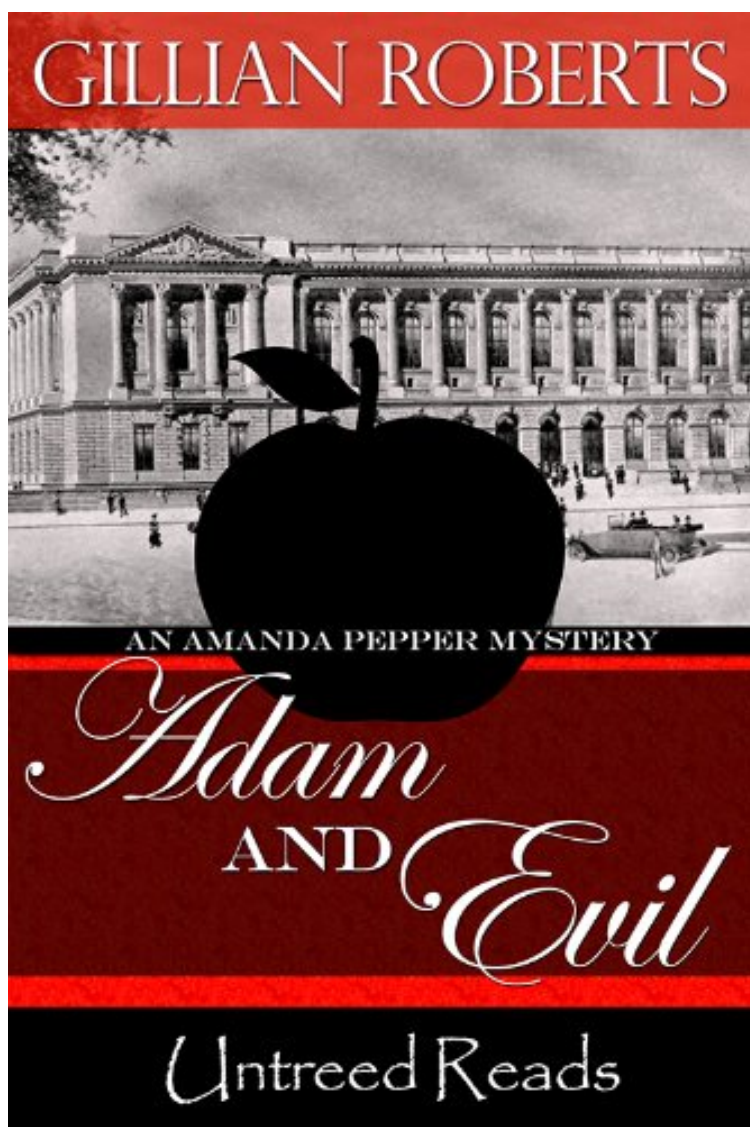


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# Adam and Evil (An Amanda Pepper Mystery Book 9) (English Edition)



*Par Gillian Roberts*  
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**Par Gillian Roberts : Adam and Evil (An Amanda Pepper Mystery Book 9) (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Adam and Evil (An Amanda Pepper Mystery Book 9) (English Edition):

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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAvailable for the first time in ebook format, this special edition includes a new introduction from author Gillian Roberts and an exclusive interview with Amanda Pepper herself!When a high school senior shows signs of mental illness, Amanda attempts to get him help, but she's rebuffed by his parents. When the same boy then becomes the prime suspect in a murder at the Philadelphia Main Library, and runs away, Amanda, who knows he's confused and in need of helpwhether or not he committed the crimehas no choice but to run after him. And to run into the possibility of becoming the next victim herself.ExtraitODD is not a useful definition when referring to adolescents. It's hard differentiating between

a teenager with problems and one whose only problem is being a teenager. It's nearly impossible for an English teacher to know if a sulky withdrawal is a sign of depression that requires attention, or a fit of I-want-to-die grief because the team lost a game. I'm supposed to develop language skills, not psychoanalyze students. Besides, I play a tiny role in their life and consciousness. A pie chart of the teenage brain reveals that 54 percent of that organ is devoted to tracking the state of their hormones, 21 percent does play-by-play analyses of their mercurial moods, and 10 percent is given over to calculations: what music they desperately need, what movies they'd die if they didn't see, and what items of clothing everybody else has but they don't. Another 8 percent debates how to fill time when school is out; 4 percent charts who did or didn't look at or speak to them in the manner they desired; 2 percent critiques the personal lives and wardrobes of their peers and anyone in *People* or *Entertainment Weekly* magazine. The remaining 1 percent of attention is divided among whatever academic subjects they like. These proportions fluctuate under the pressures of momentous life events, such as attending a prom, being admitted to college, or getting a zit. But by and large, this is the adolescent brain, and there is precious little place in it for either me or my course of study. I stand outside, arms waving like semaphores, trying to wedge my message into whatever space is left in there for rent. They hear nothing, and see only a rapidly aging pest with style-challenged hair (too long, too brown), boring clothing, a pathetic (I gather) sense of humor, and a love life that annoys them because they don't understand the status quo. Neither do I, but I can live with that. Working under those conditions gets old, and it doesn't allow much time or scope for meditations on the class population's mental health. That's how it always has been. Until now, when it's gotten worse. Kids today aren't what they used to be, which was predictably, but nonlethally, weird. Just as we'd relaxed, adjusted, listened to experts' explanations, and accepted teenagers' peculiarities, they upped the ante. Headlines erupted with stories about teens who expressed their moodiness by blowing away their classmates, teachers, and whoever else peeved them. Lately I've found myself thinking about their teachers. Sympathizing with them. Wishing I could have talked to them--before their students killed them. Wondering if I'm destined to be one of them. Reflecting on those news stories in a school full of adjustment problems must be like living on an earthquake fault. You know the danger's there, but if you think about it too much, you'll go crazy, which is just as fearful a prospect. All the same, if you're sane, you note seismic activity and stay aware of how extreme classroom tremors become. Adam Evans registered a 10 on my Richter scale. I hoped my machinery--not his--was malfunctioning, but I didn't think so. Because of him, I feared that I'd overdosed on teenagers in general. But whether or not I had, Adam Evans was a puzzle I couldn't solve, and he'd been a worry the entire academic year. I never felt sure of myself when it came to him. Never could even determine to my satisfaction whether our problems were his or mine. Now, eight months after Adam entered my class for his senior year, I was still in the dark. All I knew for certain was that he was a royal pain. Philly Prep runs a high percentage of royal--and commoner--pains. They are, in fact, our specialty, inasmuch as we appeal to those (sufficiently affluent) youngsters who have a difficult time in larger, more standardized schools. Our mandate is to ignite a spark in the insufficiently fueled. This was what I was trying to explain to my near and dear ones on a Sunday afternoon in late April. My sister, Beth, her husband, Sam, and their two children were visiting en route to a party nearby. This was in no way a typical experience. Beth and Sam were the ultimate suburbanites. Sam rode the Paoli Local into the city each day to his law firm, but then he hurried back out to Gladwynne. And Beth behaved as if coming to the city were the equivalent of going on safari without a guide. So this visit was an event. We drank coffee and caught up on our lives. I talked about teaching, my growing ambivalence. I talked about Adam. I wanted sympathy, I wanted compassion. Often, lately, I wanted out. "I'm afraid for him," I said. "He doesn't seem in complete control. The other day, I was sure he was going to hit someone. I had to physically restrain him. And then he freaked. Acted as if touching him was a crime." Beth looked aghast--her suspicions about people who lived inside the city limits were proving true. I shook my head. "I'm making it sound worse than it was. He stopped as soon as I touched his arm. He hates being touched. It's part of what's abnormal about him. Anyway, I didn't have to wrestle him down, he didn't hurt the other kid, but he did overreact to both that other boy and then to me. He's off center. I can't explain it, but I worry about what he might do to somebody else--and I worry about what he might do to himself." From atop a ladder, C.K. Mackenzie grunted, acknowledging that he was listening. Of course, he'd heard this before, so his real attention was on a painting he was hanging. My brother-in-law partnered in this endeavor, standing nearby, reading a J. Crew catalogue, ready to hand up a tool if needed. Male bonding. They didn't look at each other or communicate. They were both very happy. I pulled Adam's paper out of the pile on the oak table. There were always papers needing marking. That, too, grew old. "Tell me this isn't peculiar. Quote: 'I will learn to

harmonize with the song of my follicles.' End quote." "You'll do what?" Mackenzie swiveled and endangered his perch. Sam dropped the J. Crew catalogue and rushed to the rescue, grabbing the sides of the ladder, steadying it. The women made sounds of alarm, the men made sounds indicating they could take care of anything. "Not me. Adam." I repeated the sentence. Mackenzie shook his head, as well he might. "I've asked for a conference with his parents," I said. "There are too many strange things like this about him lately. He should be evaluated, get some help before ... I don't know what. He's off somewhere, can't concentrate, reacts bizarrely with inappropriate laughs or no emotion at all ..." My words dribbled off because I had so little confidence in my own opinion. I had a strong sense that Adam was having mental and emotional problems, but he'd done reasonably well on his SAT exams, and that piece was such a bad fit with the rest of the puzzle, it worried me, made me think perhaps I was being too harsh on the boy. "It must be difficult trying to teach writing," Sam said in his calm, ultrasane manner. "It's impossible." Writing logically requires thinking logically--and how can you teach that? But--speaking of logical thinking--how can you not try to?

"So what's your take? Is that follicle thing as weird a concluding thought as I think it is?" "It's, um, interesting. Really. I don't know about poetry, but I kind of liked it," Beth said. "Imaginative," Sam said. "Vivid," Mackenzie said. "Singing follicles would sound way better than a Walkman." The children, in bright plastic smocks I'd surprised them with, continued playing with modeling clay, also an Aunt Mandy treat. They did not participate in the Adam Evans follicle debate. Another reason to love being an aunt. I can be generous for very little outlay, endearing in short spurts, and incommunicado the rest of the time. And they don't leave me with papers to grade. "Really?" I asked. "Interesting? Imaginative? Vivid? That's what comes to mind?" Maybe Adam was taking a creative leap, in which case, even if I personally felt he fell flat, I should encourage him. My sister glanced at her watch. "Let's clean up," she said. "The party's already begun." "Why don't you go ahead?" Sam suggested. "The kids and I will pick you up in an hour or so. I'll stay and help ..." Neither he nor Beth knows what to call my significant other. I call him C.K., but they're taken aback by his remaining a set of initials. "Call him Chico," I said. "Wrong," Mackenzie said. "I meant Czeslaw. I always mix those two up." Beth meanwhile aimed peevish looks at her husband, who ignored them. She switched her attention to me. Earlier she'd tried to sell me on this party giver, one Emily Buttonwood, a soon-to-be-divorced, newly relocated-to-center-city friend of hers. She'd been adamant about how we just had to meet and become new best friends. I'd redirected the conversation to Adam, hoping it would convey an inkling of why my life was sufficiently congested and chaotic without becoming a city guide to one more bewildered former suburbanite. I'd done it twice so far for Beth, with time-consuming, dismal results. "Reconsider, Mandy, and come with me," Beth said. "You'd just love each other. You have so much in common--she's a book lover, like you. In fact, she's so down on people, books are about all she loves these days--with a few exceptions. She needs people like you. Single, interesting people." Flattering, but no cigar. A depressed, bitter, people-hating new friend. Precisely what I needed to round out my life. "I'd love to, of course," I lied. "But I have these papers to finish, a lesson to prepare, and ..." Beth looked downcast. Then she brightened. "I nearly forgot. Emmy would be perfect for your women's book group. I told her about it, an...Revue de presse" ANOTHER LIVELY ADDITION TO THE SERIES."?Library Journal" LITERATE AND STYLISH."?Pittsburgh Tribune-