



## Shadows on Society Hill: An Addy Mystery

*Evelyn Coleman*

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In the winter of 1866, Addy's poppa gets a new job, and his employer, Mr. Radisson, offers the Walkers a home of their own on the grounds of his fine house in Society Hill. Addy's delight quickly evaporates as she realizes that Mr. Radisson's house holds frightening secrets--one of which leads straight back to the plantation where Addy's family was held in slavery only two years before.

## **Shadows on Society Hill: An Addy Mystery Details**

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Author : Evelyn Coleman

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## From Reader Review Shadows on Society Hill: An Addy Mystery for online ebook

### **Cailey Kiekintveld says**

I loved it it has so much heart it is about Addy and how she moves because she saved some ones life so he has her and her family moves so that Addy's dad can start a job there but then there was one might where there was a mishap and the person Addy saved's mom thinks that black people are thief and then someone has been taking stuff from her house and then addy finds a note and that says something that scares her and the rest you can find in the book. it is a R,

It is a Amazing Mystery Book

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### **Rachel says**

In this book, Coleman takes us through a portion of the first year following the end of the Civil War in a northern city. Addy and her family have the privilege of moving to a new home, but mysterious events cause her to question what she's always believed. While there are some dramatic and frightening parts of this story, the resolution clearly shows that the truth is not in any way frightening. At one point the family is falsely accused and Addy must use her detective skills to prove their innocence. The only moral challenge I found while previewing this book for my kids was that, throughout the book, Addy keeps an important secret from her parents and everyone around her. I do not think it's responsible in this culture to show our middle-school girls that keeping secrets from their authority is a safe choice.

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### **Jessa says**

The only thing really keeping me from giving this 5 stars is that there are some strangely improbable things in an otherwise really good book that explores race relationships and prejudices in the north post Civil War.

Addy saves a man's life, he hires her father, ok. But he gives them a house, rent-free, without any expectation that the family other than the father will work for him? That seems really odd and like the author just needed an excuse to get Addy into this location, but surely a more plausible one could have been reached. Even just to be practical, won't he need that house for actual servants to run his house now that he's getting married? Plus, the suddenness with which they've suddenly up and abandoned everything in the previous books is so strange feeling to me that this wound up feeling like an odd alternate universe book for Addy.

There are also a couple things I'm pretty sure are entirely inaccurate, though I am by no means an expert on the subject. Miss Elizabeth stays in the house with the man she's going to marry --was that allowed? I thought she wouldn't be allowed to move in with him until they were wed. Maybe his mother was intended as a chaperone to make it ok? Why would he even invite his jerk mother?

Also, at the end, no one is sure whether he will still want to marry Miss Elizabeth or not, but no reference is made to the fact that it would be illegal. Perhaps we're supposed to believe that everyone is expecting to keep it a secret so the world just thinks he's marrying a white woman, but it just felt strange that no reference was

made to the fact that it was illegal, not even in the post-book notes.

That all said, you can probably tell from the length of my thoughts here that I actually really enjoyed this. I didn't figure it out until Elizabeth went to visit the woman in the poor district. This is the first American Girl mystery I've read, but I'm looking forward to reading more!

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### **GypsyBookworm says**

This book bears reviewing because this was the only American Girl mystery that truly surprised me. I think it is challenging sometimes to write suspenseful children's mystery books without running the risk of being too scary. This did that very well.

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### **Katelyn says**

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### **Sesana says**

Actually one of the better American Girl mysteries. Addy's books were always pretty good for issues of race in an historical context, and this one is no exception. I liked that the ending was left fairly open.

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### **Jeneca says**

This is truly an amazing book.

I read this almost cover to cover (sat down and read about 1/4 of the book, got up for a few hours and finish the rest of it)

We find Addy on the brink of disaster, as she saves a man from being trampled by a horse...

Very exciting page turner of a book, well written, well plotted and kept me on my toes. Normally most AG mystery books are exciting, but you can guess who's done what a few chapters in. I had no clue who did what until they confessed themselves and explained.

Amazing read. :)

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### **Alisse says**

I thought that this book was really good. I thought that the tunnel went underneath the woodshed and under the table in the kitchen was really neat. I want to see how they wrote with squeezed lemons and you can only see the words you write on the paper if you hold it up to a light.

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## **Fran Ferrell says**

This is one of my favorite American Girl mysteries. There were many plot twists and some parts of it were chilling. A very good start for young readers who want to start reading either historical fiction or mysteries.

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## **Ciara says**

after addy saves a wealthy man named mr. radisson from being trampled by a horse, mr. radisson offers mr. walker a job doing woodwork & carpentry with his crew. mr. radisson has just moved into the fancy society hill home of his recently deceased uncle, & extends the invitation for the walkers to move into the carriage house in the backyard. the walkers are over the moon--it will be their first ever real private family home in freedom.

but it doesn't take long for addy to realize that racism is alive & well on society hill, even though the walkers have been invited to live there. they're stopped by police as they walk to their new home for the first time. the police don't think black people have any business in society hill & say they will be checking up on the walkers' story of living in mr. radisson's carriage house.

addy notices strange lights in & around mr. radisson's house in the dead of night, even though mr. radisson is out of town. he's in virginia collecting his mother so she can attend his upcoming wedding.

mrs. radisson (the mother) ends up being a rather vicious old racist. she wants mr. radisson to put the walkers out & hire european servants, even after mr. radisson explains that mr. walker works for his carpentry crew & is not a servant. there's trouble at work when the white members of the crew refuse to work as equals with mr. walker. they'll only work with him if he serves as a gofer, even though he is a skilled woodworker. while mr. radisson is in connecticut collecting his fiancee, elizabeth, mrs. radisson notices a basket of food on the back porch & accuses the walkers of trying to steal it. they deny it, & addy finds the basket in the trash the next day, the food gone.

she's worried that mr. radisson's house is haunted & that's why there are strange lights & missing food. she stays up late to keep watch & sees someone sneaking into the house. she follows the person--a black woman--& peers at her in the shed. she's writing something & has a lemon. later addy finds what the woman wrote--& it's a note with addy's name on it.

addy rather quickly figures out that the note is written with lemon juice & that she'll be able to read it if she warms the paper. she was totally unfamiliar with this trick & i think it's a damn lucky (read: unlikely) break that she figured it out in like 30 seconds. anyway, the note is a riddle that shows addy how to locate a trap door that will allow her to enter mr. radisson's house & come to the woman who wrote the note. addy does so & the woman explains that she was a spy for the union army during the war. she pretended to be an illiterate slave & sent word of the confederate army's plans north. even though the war is over now, there is a bounty of her head. mr. radisson's uncle was putting her up & helping her escape to a safer place, but when he suddenly died, she had to hide in the hidden room & sneak food. now that mr. radisson is filling the house with his mother & his fiancee, she's worried that she won't be able to sneak around as easily & she asks addy to help her. because somehow it will be easier for addy to sneak around mr. radisson's house, where she doesn't live? kind of weird, but okay.

when mr. radisson returns with his fiancee, elizabeth, things are great--at first. addy has a pretty easy time sneaking food for the spy, & elizabeth really takes to her & the rest of the walker family. she gives addy & her mother tickets to see a famous black opera singer perform, & even gives addy a beautiful dress she has outgrown, with the thought that mrs. walker can fix it up & make it something special for addy to wear to the opera. but things get weird when elizabeth invites addy over to try on the dress. she offers to let addy try on a ruby & pearl choker as well, which necessitates removing the necklace that addy's brother gave her--a protection stone fashioned by uncle solomon, the old man who helped look after esther after addy & mrs. walker escaped the plantation. elizabeth gets an eyeful of the protection stone & practically shoves addy out the door. addy thinks she did something to offend or upset elizabeth.

soon after, elizabeth accuses addy of stealing her choker. addy specifically remembers putting the choker on elizabeth's dresser before she left the room, but elizabeth claims that it's missing. addy denies it, but when the choker is discovered in the shed, where addy often goes to play, pretty much everyone thinks she's guilty. elizabeth begs mr. radisson to put the walkers out & hire europeans instead. addy is confused because elizabeth had talked such a big game about how not-racist she was. addy wonders if elizabeth is being influence by mrs. radisson.

addy asks the spy for insight but it's not much help. she even wonders if maybe the spy stole the choker & left it in the shed to make addy look bad. the spy tells addy that things aren't always as they seem & that she needs to dig deeper.

addy decides to dig deeper by following elizabeth. addy follows elizabeth all the way to a very poor part of town, where elizabeth enters a boarding house & embraces an elderly black woman. she gives the woman some money & after a brief conversation, she leaves. addy asks a man nearby about the boarding house & he explains that everyone in the neighborhood is destitute & recently freed from slavery. most of the folks in the boarding house are from plantations in north carolina, near where addy was enslaved.

addy then sneaks into mr. radisson's house while everyone is out & rifles through elizabeth's bedroom. she finds the choker safe & sound, & opens elizabeth's trunk. inside she finds a quilt that looks a lot like her own family album quilt (a design created by slaves). she also finds a protection stone necklace with uncle solomon's mark on it, & a leather medicine pouch, also made by uncole solomon. before addy can wonder too much about why elizabeth has these things, elizabeth comes home & finds her. addy's family is told in no uncertain terms to get out before the night is through.

but esther falls sick. in fact, she is dying. addy races over to mr. radisson's to ask for help & elizabeth rushes over with solomon's medicine pouch. she makes an herbal poultice that revives esther & addy begins to put two & two together. she retrieves the spy & then has it out with elizabeth, confronting her about the fact that she had to have known uncle solomon somehow. the spy speculates that elizabeth may have owned slaves before the war, & is hiding it because she knows that hardcore abolitionist mr. radisson would never marry a slaveowner, not even one that had seen the error of her ways. but addy knows uncle solomon would never make a protection stone for even the kindest slave owner on earth. which leaves only one alternative...

addy suggests that elizabeth had been a slave herself. elizabeth starts crying & confirms that it's true. her aunt had been uncle solomon's sister & she was enslaved at the next plantation over from where the walkers were in north carolina. she escaped when she was 16 years old & made her way north with the help of quakers. she was very light-skinned & one day a shopkeeper, thinking that she was white, offered her a job. elizabeth began to live as a white woman. eventually she met & fell in love with mr. radisson, & presented herself as a white woman to him as well, thinking, of course, that even the biggest abolitionist on the block isn't going to want to marry a black woman.

she apologizes to the walkers, &...i guess they can stay? it's kind of unclear. also unclear is how elizabeth & mr. radisson are going to work out their interracial romance. but i guess mr. radisson is willing to help the slave, so there's that.

this book was kind of crazy. & far-fetched. i mean, seriously, what are the chances that an escaped slave passing herself off as a white woman would become engaged to a man who is employing & housing a former slave family from the next plantation over? & that they'd piece it all together via one quilt & a necklace? kind of crazy. i don't know what to think of this book.

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### **Sarah Hannah says**

I could see that plot twist coming from a mile away, but that's not to say this isn't a solid middle grade mystery. It's good. You just have to use "mystery" loosely, because it's not so much the detective story type. Also, it was painful to read how much her parents cower to white people, but that's realism, I guess.

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### **Olivia says**

I always liked reading the American girl books as a kid and i like these mysteries from the same series. I couldn't put this one down once I got into the mystery. Definitely keeping it.

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### **Brooke says**

It was so good. I'm 25 and I think it is meant for like 10 year olds. And I couldn't put it down, ha! The conclusion was satisfying and incredibly interesting. Also, the "peek into the past" section at the end gave very interesting historical secrets I had never heard before relating to this topic.

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### **Megan says**

A lovely mystery starring one of my favorite American Girls. It was super good, and I really enjoyed it. My favorite part of the Addy books has always been how the family stays strong and always loves each other no matter what, and this book stayed true to that.

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### **Sadie says**

Growing up I loved the american Girl series especially books about Addy. So when I went to the American Girl Store recently and saw that since my childhood they had written an Addy mystery I had to buy it. What I love the most about the Addy series is an introduction and education to young children about racial issues in our country. I first learned about slavery from the book Meet Addy and I sat crying my eyes out as I read the book. I hope that my children will love these books as much as I did/do .

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### **DannieD says**

The book "Shadows on Society Hill" is one of the better stories from the American girl mystery series. It has a suspense that keeps you wondering what will happen next. The story really has a lot of surprises that make you wonder; "Where did they come from?", "How did that happen?" and "when did that happen?". The surprises are a essential part in a mystery and they handled it very well. The clues are also very surprising and they keep you wondering if it is a red herring or not.

The story is about a young girl named Addy and the mystery she discovers and solves. It starts out with Addy and her family moving into a new home on Society Hill. Then, one night, Addy finds out that society hill has dangerous secrets. One of the secrets lead to her days back on the plantation. I will not spoil it for anyone but the ending is very surprising and just the thing to inspire you to read more.

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### **Alice says**

It's a interesting book. I think that the book "hooks" you in. It's kind of a mystery book. It's about this family and her father had just gotten a job. They moved in there new house, but Addy the daughter thinks she sees something weird. And she is trying to find out what it is.

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### **Kristine Hansen says**

Complex and exciting, I found a lot to enjoy in this book. It's part of an interesting era in history, and while I can praise it all over the place for being well-researched, the real value in this book is in how much Addy has grown as a character. I like her a lot more in this story than I have to date.

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### **Amanda Kay says**

This was definitely a great addition for Addy - we see her be fierce and brave in a way that she hasn't been since the first book of the Central Series. I also love that Coleman extends the Addy story, her parents have moved, she is attending a new school, a welcome change from many of the AG mysteries.

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### **Ashley says**

An Addy Mystery from American Girl

Addy is over joyed when Poppa's new boss invites her family to live on his property in Philadelphia's elegant Society Hill neighborhood.

But Addy soon discovers that their new home holds dangerous secrets - and one of them leads straight back

to the North Carolina plantation she escaped from only two years before.

I couldn't put the book down! I read these American Girl novels in about a day's time. They're short and fun to read.

I love how the writers pull you into the story from the beginning of the book and leave you wanting more mysteries. I don't know how anybody couldn't love American Girl books! They're the perfect good clean fun books for girls of all ages.

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