The Last Treasure
By Janet S. Anderson
Reviewed by John David Kurman

The book I read was called *The Last Treasure*. It is about a family with origins in the 1800s. As time moves on, however, the family (called the Smiths) grows apart and separates. Feuds and rivalries break apart relationships. Five generations later two fifth cousins who have never met try to sew up the holes in their fragmented family by trying to find the last treasure. What is the last treasure you may ask? Well, the first Smith (John Matthew) had three of his sons die in his life time. One, Richard, died during the Civil War and two twins, Ellsworth and Thomas, died in a fire. In memorial of them John Matthew built three houses on the square, known as the sward, where his family lived. In each house he placed a treasure only to be retrieved in a time of need. The first treasure was found in 1910, the second in 1932. Now the family is in a time of need and desperation again and in Richard's house lies the very last treasure.

This book has a very mysterious plot and there are lots of secrets that make the book hard to understand sometimes. As I mentioned earlier there are feuds and problems that break characters apart so it is rare to see Ellsworth (our main character named after one of the kids who died in the 1800s) with more than one character at a time. Some characters we don't even meet until the end of the book. This book is one of those that has many questions at the beginning and they are slowly answered as the book goes on.

Our main character Ellsworth (a.k.a. Zee) and his cousin Jess meet for the first time at the sward where everyone in his family since John Matthew has lived and, for the most part, died with a few exceptions. It is here at the sward that all of Ellsworth's learning about his family and adventure of finding the treasure takes place.

I think that the author did a very good job on this book. It kept you hooked because you needed to pay attention or else you might miss an important piece of information. It really is the constant flow of answers that makes the book interesting because you never know what will jump out when. It also takes you back in time one hundred years or so for a chapter at times and fills in the answers from history.

The book format is well structured with the characters and events well matched. The author also organized the book information very well given the amount of mystery involved, the family tree did wonders when I needed information on the family. The book also follows the beginning, middle and end system. At the beginning Ellsworth knows very little and heads out for the sward, in the middle he learns about his family and the end is very energetic and action filled. But you'll have to read the book to find out why it is so energetic and if John Matthew's last treasure really is a treasure after all.