



Baroque and Desperate

Tamar Myers

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In a Treasure-Laden Mansion

Unflappable and resourceful, Abigail Timberlake, antique dealer and owner of Charlotte, North Carolina's Den of Antiquity, relies on her knowledge and savvy to authenticate the facts from the fakes when it comes to either curios or people. Her expertise makes Abby invaluable to exceptionally handsome Tradd Maxwell Burton, wealthy scion of the renowned Latham family. He needs her to determine the most priceless item in the Latham mansion and then split the proceeds of it with her. A treasure hunt in an antique-filled manor? All Abby can say is "let the games begin."

It's Tough to Keep Help

Accompanied by her best girlfriend, C.J., Abby arrives at the estate and is met with cool reserve, if no downright rudeness, from the members of the Latham clan. Trying to carry out Tradd's request, Abby finds that she could cut the household tension with a knife. But someone has beaten her to it by stabbing a maid to death with an ancient kris. Suddenly all eyes are on C.J., whose fingerprints happen to be all over the murder weapon. It's up to Abby to use her knack for detecting forgeries to expose the fake alibi of the genuine killer.

Baroque and Desperate Details

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Author : Tamar Myers

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From Reader Review Baroque and Desperate for online ebook

Lisa says

Ugh, I've been reading the Den of Antiquity cozy mystery series by Tamar Myers for several years now in random order of publication.... Baroque & Desperate is one of two novels I have left to read in the series and I had a difficult getting through it. It was pretty bad with the cheesy one liners and bad characters and plot.... I've either enjoyed or disliked the novels in the series and this one I didn't like at all.

Elise says

OK, the fault here is most likely with me. The "Den of Antiquity" is just not my cozy mystery series. I was told that it gets better as the series goes along -- so I skipped ahead a bit ... & I still don't like it.

I find the mystery part exceptionally transparent, the setting unappealing to me (not a fan of the deep south) and that the characters range from annoying to 2 dimensional. Someone with different tastes might find the characters charming or funny, and the setting romantic -- I guess.

However, do be warned that if you like to play drinking games with this sort of book, for your own safety do NOT pick the word "wailed."

Ryl says

Don't judge a book by its cover because if you do you'll think this is a cat-based mystery. There is a cat in the story, but it doesn't do anything except hiss at the main character and sit on an old lady's lap. What you can judge the book by is the description on the back cover, but even that can lead you astray. Based on the description on this back cover, I thought this was a mystery set in Charlotte, NC. The beginning is set in Charlotte, but most of the action takes place near Charleston, SC.

For all that disappointment, this was a cozy little potboiler mystery. Maybe more so for me because reading a book starring Charlotteans was like coming home for me. Even though I grew up forty-five minutes north of Charlotte and wouldn't go back to that city if you paid me, these are still my people and this is still where I'm from. There were a few in-jokes that I don't think anyone who didn't live in the area would get, like all the digs at CJ for being from Shelby.

At the same time the story is rather thin. Abigail meets a man on the plane who vanishes when she falls asleep during the flight and runs up a bar tab for her. Then her day gets worse: her mother is waiting at the airport to tell Abby that her antique store was robbed. But there's good news! An angel has appeared on the back wall of the shop and the faithful are lining up to see it! Abby does not consider this to be good news so when the man from the plane, Tradd Burton, reappears to ask her to accompany him to his insanely-rich grandmother's house for an antique scavenger hunt, Abby accepts. It's a puzzle whether it's Tradd's good looks or the \$100,000 prize for finding the correct antique that's more attractive.

Sounds promising, right? Not really. The story gets caught up in all the wacky characters and multiple

variations on “one brick short of a load” jokes directed at Abby's friend CJ. There weren't enough clues given in the discovery-of-the-body scene to help the reader figure out how the victim was killed or by whom. There aren't enough clues given about any of the mysteries, including what and where the antique that wins the hunt was hidden. Everything is discovered by chance or sudden revelation with no real sleuthing. Most of the book is Abby running around trying to find a lawyer for CJ who was accused of the murder for no other reason than to add unnecessary conflict. The solution to the mystery is rushed and Abby's happy ending is entirely too forced.

If you're looking for a mystery novel, look elsewhere. But if you're looking for a wacky character study, this is the book for you.

Cross-posted from The Eclectic Reviewer

Mary (Biblophile) says

I've found since I started this series that once you've read one of these, you've basically read them all. By the time I got to this one, I wasn't as enamored with the series as when I started. I'd have to say that this is an average mystery and the author uses quite a bit of recycled script from one book to the other. Wears thins after a while.

Robert Beveridge says

Tamar Myers, *Baroque and Desperate* (Avon, 1999)

I've been an ambivalent fan of Tamar Myers for a while now. I'm never quite sure what I'm going to get with one of her books. I've finished *Baroque and Desperate*, the fourth Den of Antiquity mystery, and it's done nothing to change my perceptions either way.

The book opens with fearless detective and antique shop owner Abigail Timberlake getting back into town after a vacation to find that the Den of Antiquity has been robbed. Well, robbed may not be the word for it; the shop is as clean as a whistle. Everything, including the cash register, the wastebaskets, and even the shelving is gone. Just as she's starting to wonder what's going to happen in her life, a guy sitting next to her on the plane home shows up at the store with a proposition. His grandmother, a very rich, very eccentric woman, has hidden an antique worth at least a hundred thousand dollars somewhere on her estate. He needs a professional eye to help him. Desperate for a quick buck to save the business, she agrees. (Don't worry, folks, the intrepid sidekick, not to mention Dmitri the cat, come along for the ride.)

If you've read a Tamar Myers mystery before, you know what to expect. The wit is fresh, the puns are awful, the mystery is fun (albeit capped, always, with the annoying "ah, and here's how I did it!" section). She does go a bit overboard here with her descriptions of C.J.'s insanity (there must be at least four dozen variations on "one king short of a full deck" here, and it gets annoying after a while), but everything else seems to be clicking on all cylinders.

So *Baroque and Desperate* ends up getting the same lukewarm recommend as most of Tamar Myers' catalogue. I keep waiting for the book that will push me one way or the other; looks like I'm going to

continue waiting. ***

MB says

I love a good cozy mystery, but I'm rather finicky about how much disbelief I'm willing to suspend. If you like a light, fun, cozy, chances are you'll like this. But the relationships form much too fast, and the "suspects" are too willing to spill what they know. The final save of the main character, plus all that happens with her cat, are elements that took it out of the field of believable for me .

VJ says

More continuity. If this author weren't so darned funny, I'd write her off. How can you go on a ten day cruise in July and several days later (if that), it's after Labor Day? Last I checked, on the American calendar, Labor Day was the first Monday in September. We jumped from her getting home from a July cruise to the week after Labor Day in just a few pages. Yikes!!!

Then, she keeps asking for the convertible top to be put down when she really means to put it up. Silly Abby.

Leaf pipe, lead pipe. Methinks the author and her editor do not pay attention to finger placement while typing.

Finished the book. It's crazy how these books end. Usually quite abruptly without much in the way of explanations. I'm still intrigued enough by the characters and the humor to continue to read these books. I have the next two on hold from the library.

Babs says

This series is great I hate I had to start with book 5 instead of one, but it is a great read. I like this series just as much as the amish one. Abigail is both funny and serious all at the same time and as sarcastic as most southerners are. I look forward to reading more books by this author.

Ed says

#5 in the Den of Antiquity series.

Den of Antiquity series - Abigail Timberlake, owner of the Den of Antiquity, has her store robbed of all of its contents. A timely offer from Tradd, the handsome son of a wealthy family, includes a request for her presence at his grandmother's house to help advise him about her antiques during the course of a family game. She becomes acquainted with Tradd's siblings, none of whom appear to approve of her appearance in their game. Before long there is a murder, and Abby is in the middle of finding out which member of this avaricious family is responsible.

Tammy says

Abigail Timberlake, antique dealer and owner of Charlotte, North Carolina's Den of Antiquity, is called upon to use her expertise to assist wealthy member of the Latham family, Tradd Maxwell Burton. His Grandmother is setting up a family treasure hunt and this year it's inside your antique filled-mansion. Each guest only gets one guess at what the valuable item is and they are allowed to bring another person to help them. Accompanied by her friend C.J., they arrive at the estate to an icy reception from the rest of the family. Then the maid is stabbed with an antique kris and everyone is accusing C.J. Can Abby find the real killer before C.J. is charged with murder?

Tracy Smith says

I am starting to enjoy cozy mysteries more and more and this one didn't let me down. Tamar Myers writes a good tale with characters that I can relate to and throws in a bit of humor here and there to make it even more fun. Abigail comes home from vacation to find her antiques shop completely empty. What happened to all of her antiques and what is this story of her mom seeing visions of angels on her wall? Getting caught up in a treasure hunt to try to recoup some of her losses, Abby gets involved in a murder along the way. This quick read will keep you turning pages to find out the answers. I hope you might enjoy!

ChrisGA says

Drawing room murder mystery in the style of Agatha Christie--with lots of humor and lunacy mixed in. Abby and CJ spend the weekend at a mansion filled with bickering, greedy relatives of the 89-year-old matriarch. Murder ruins the weekend which was off to a bad start already because dinner was ruined. However, CJ confesses and Abby must find the real villain. Really enjoyed this one.

Ellie says

Baroque and Desperate is the fifth entry in Tamar Myers Den of Antiquity cozy mystery series. I jumped into the middle of the series (it's what my library had to offer *apologetically*) but it was a seductive read. Most of the first half I spent in irritation and unwilling laughter at the relentless punning and the endless variations of "one egg short of a dozen." But by the end, somehow I'd been beaten (with humor, of course) into submission and I remembered I was also reading a mystery. Which, because of my combination fuming and chortling I didn't pay too much attention to, so I was pleasingly surprised by the solution.

In Baroque and Desperate (and yes, the title is *every* indication of what the reader is in store for), Abigail returns from a trip to discover her store has been robbed. Down to every last fixture. So, in an effort to recuperate, she takes her cat and goes off with a handsome man to his grandmother's estate to participate in a mystery weekend. Of course, the mystery is supposedly about find an antique but, to no surprise, turns into a murder mystery.

I enjoyed the characters although as a Yankee I could have stood less Yankee jokes and I especially liked that our hero (or heroine) is a short woman (apparently even shorter than myself) woman of not-tender-years (getting even better) who is sarcastic and cannot stop herself from character assassination and a vicious pun-addiction. So, outside the pun-habit, and the southern locale (ok, two big considerations) this work is practically an autobiography. If I couldn't stop a Southern version of Henny Youngman one-liners of the "Take this book-please" variety.

And if you don't know Henny Youngman, go find out. :)

Shari Scott says

Fun story, but a bit too much emphasis on her size...that got real old. And she seemed to be in a competition to see how many ways to say her friend was a little weak in the wits. That also got old.

Krisnow18 says

Abigail Timberlake, owner of Den of Antiquity, returns from a cruise to find her shop has been wiped out - everything gone. But someone has left the image of an angel on the wall - or so says "mama". Abigail is having trouble seeing it. Abigail is invited to the Latham Mansion to be a partner with someone she met on the plane coming home, Tradd Maxwell. His extremely rich grandmother is holding a treasure hunt. Something from the mansion has been removed from its normal place and all of the grandchildren must find it. The item is worth at least \$100K. Rules must be followed. Flora, the maid, takes an instant disliking to Abigail and the feeling is mutual. When Flora is killed and CJ, Abigail's friend, takes the rap, Abigail goes into action.
