



A Case of Imagination

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"On this nice July morning in Parkland, North Carolina, the office of Madeline Maclin Investigations might as well have been an Egyptian tomb: hot, dusty, and dead." It doesn't help that her landlord Reid Kent, does a brisk business...and briskly hits on Mac to rejoin his agency. He maintains no one will hire a former Miss Parkland as a serious PI.

Mac has been friends forever with Jerry Fairweather. Jerry claims to be psychic and is, unlike his two brothers, somewhat screwy. And he refuses to claim a share in the Fairweather fortune. But he shares some good news with Mac--his Uncle Val has died and left him a house. The two friends drive out to Celosia, a half hour away, where they discover a local beauty pageant in trouble and a house just perfect for setting up shop. A Psychic Shop. The arrival of lawyer Olivia, Jerry's shark-like girlfriend, rouses both Mac's interest in the mystery at the pageant and the one in her own heart. And then comes the first murder....

A Case of Imagination Details

Date : Published January 9th 2007 by Poisoned Pen Press (first published 2006)

ISBN : 9781590583609

Author : Jane Tesh

Format : Paperback 229 pages

Genre : Mystery, Cozy Mystery

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April says

Pretty good start to the Madeline Maclin series. Ex beauty pageant Madeline moves to a small town in North Carolina with her old college buddy Jerry, a small time con artist who has inherited a house from his uncle. Going as far from pageantry as she can get, she wants to become a private detective, but Madeline finds it hard going. I enjoyed the characters of Madeline, a no-nonsense private eye trying more or less successfully to live down her past and Jerry, her best friend who is being dated by a goldigger after the fortune he has renounced. Sometimes the flow of the sentences seems a bit sparse for the type of book it is, but I look forward to seeing the characters grow.

Kae Cheatham says

When Madeline Maclin has a slump in her newly-established PI business, she takes a trip with her friend, Jerry, to a nearby town to see a house he has inherited. Jerry is pleased the house looks haunted (he dabbles in the supernatural). Within hours, Madeline has two new jobs--one to investigate the sabotage of a beauty pageant, the other two determine if a bookstore employees house is haunted. It all fits together. And then there's the murder. Great characters, and Madeline is a good PI.

Jim says

Most books should receive three stars, by definition most books are average. A few deserve four starts if they're really good. Five few books deserve. This was more than four but less then five, but given a five point scale, it lies on the five side, not four.

I usually put the "bad" evaluation first then the "good" evaluation, but I would be nitpicking to find "bad." It moved quickly, it did not let the "romance" part, or other less related, to clutter up the speed at which this story moved. I don't remember anything that would embarrass me while sharing with my teenage kids. She has a handful of books for me to look forward to reading.

Christine L says

Being an avid cozy mystery fan I'm always happy to find new to me authors and series. While I found these characters quaint and quirky, I found this first in the series simply okay. I probably won't, however, continue with this series.

Tami says

great read

moxieBK says

This was a very nice, fairly quick read. Interesting cozy featuring an ex-beauty queen and her boyfriend, who's a little bit of a wild card. I think it was this wonderfully delightful and refreshing mix of characters that really made the book stand out.

There was the landlord of her building, a private "dick," (dick being a very appropriate word here,) who only really saw the face value of Madeline, and yet Madeline was a very smart, savvy character. A real PI who knew what she was doing, and not the same old run of the mill cozy character who just happens to stumble into a case. (Well, OK, so Madeline did just stumble into this one—but the point is that she IS a detective...not a armchair one.)

I liked it. I'm going to get the next one that comes out and continue the series. I liked cozy mysteries; it's hard to find ones that are the typical garden variety kind. This one wasn't.

Three stars.

Adrienne Testa says

This book is listed under Mysteries and Thrillers.. it was neither. Ms. Tess couldn't decide whether this story was going to be a romance between the two main characters or a mystery. More than you ever wanted to know about beauty pageants.. and it leaves you unsatisfied when you finally crawl to the last page. A sigh of relief that this story is finally over... you don't care if the two main characters hook up, nor do you care who the killer is in the end. Some may try it when its offered as a free book, but don't waste your good money buying it.

Jane says

Well set up for continuing series, good character development & plot. I hope Olivia stays gone.

Shirley Worley says

Madeline Maclin (Mac), former beauty queen turned PI, follows her best friend Jerry to the small town of Celosia, where he has inherited a house from a reclusive uncle. Jerry, not wanting to stake a claim to his family's fortune, decides to reinvent the old house as either a psychic shop or a B&B, or a combination of both, much to the chagrin of his girlfriend. Struggling in her business, Mac is asked to discover who is trying to sabotage the pageant when the most promising contestant is murdered. While she constantly battles her feelings for Jerry, Mac is also distracted by a local charm. Between Jerry's psychic dabbling and Mac's search for clues, their loyalty and friendship never waver, although friendship is not exactly what Mac is wanting.

Marcia says

The story revolves around a beauty contest, which is not the most serious situation, but the fluff side is not emphasized. Madeline Maclin, the major character & detective, has escaped the pageant world only to find herself trying to discover who is sabotaging the set of the small town contest. The conversations and Maclin's insights into the characters are well done. At the end, Madeline solves the case but doesn't quite get the guy.

JoAnne McMaster (Any Good Book) says

I'd like to know how this book got so many stars. The heroine is an ex-little girl beauty pageant winner, and soooo gorgeous that she cut her hair and wears no makeup so people will take her seriously as a private investigator. Really? Is being unattractive a requirement for an investigator? I hadn't heard that one. And how did she get to be an investigator? I would think that a background in beauty pageants wasn't a qualification to just go and get your license and decide this is what you want to do. I certainly wouldn't hire someone who didn't have SOME sort of background in criminal law. It doesn't take, anyway. Everyone tells her she's gorgeous all the time. And when she was older she entered another beauty pageant (she won) because she "needed the money". So after not competing for many years, she just decides to enter and win. Wow. She must have some great talent (not that I ever find out, at least as far I read), or the judges were just blown away by her 'gorgeous' looks. (FYI, I've seen gorgeous women without makeup and no one would call them gorgeous like they do this girl). How much money do local pageants pay, anyway? Not only that, almost everyone in the book is beautiful. I slogged through a third of this book before I gave up and just turned to the end to find out "whodunit". I gave it two stars because maybe it would have improved if I had read the entire thing - but I just couldn't.

Carl Brookins says

It's an interesting idea, but in the development, author Jane Tesh could have used more of her imagination. Madeline Maclin, an ex-beauty queen, opens an investigations agency. She does it in an office building practically next door to her landlord—who also runs an investigations agency. He constantly hits on her. He has plenty of business, she has none.

Madeline has a friend, a sort of free spirit, who claims to be a psychic. His name is Jerry Fairweather! Jerry has a girl friend, a lawyer named Olivia. She's referred to as a shark, but it's hard to see why. Mostly she seems to be ill-tempered and she pouts. Jerry and Madeline drive to a nearby town where the annual beauty pageant is about to go onstage, regardless of some local protests.

There are several other characters, of course, a murder and various acts of chicanery. Some of it is extremely inventive. A lot of the dialogue is predictable and pedestrian. The author clearly has some talent and the principal characters are likeable. There are some laughs and overall this is a pleasant enough novel, but I'd opt for checking it out of the library.

Nikki says

For a mystery novel, this one was an easy to figure out plot. I liked the novel, but was a little aggitated with the writing style. The way the romance was placed within the story line didnt flow well and the story took a few off the wall, wild turns. I will say it was an alright read as a time passer. For me, I wont throughly search for the next book in the series, but I will read it if I come across it. Mostly out of curiosity to see how the author has grown in their style of writing. All in all, I have to say the characters are likeable enough, but overall the book was pieced together with no real pattern or flow. If you happen to like beauty queen mysterys or unconventional detective series, you'll probably like this one.

Sara Z says

I thought this to be a lighthearted mystery. Not a lot of depth, but a cute easy read with a little bit of comedy

I would say to young readers or those that are looking for for a little bit of mystery , comedy and romance

John Hutt says

Formula lady PI tale. Former pageant winner turned detective and weird friend (male) arrive in small town and get mixed up in sinister happenings at the local pageant, culminating in murder. Pleasant tale, no great depth but whiles away the time.
