



Tempest in the Tea Room

Libi Astaire

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There's trouble afoot in Regency London's Jewish community, and no one to stop the crimes—until wealthy-widower-turned-sleuth Mr. Ezra Melamed teams up with an unlikely pair: General Well'ngone and the Earl of Gravel Lane, the leaders of a gang of young Jewish pickpockets.

Combine poison, missing jewels, and an irascible noblewoman and what do you get? The first volume of the Jewish Regency Mystery Series, which readers are calling "fun," "fresh," and "captures the flavor of the time." When Lady Marblehead accuses a young Jewish physician of trying to poison and rob her, he turns to Mr. Melamed for help. But when the few clues are as indecipherable as soggy tea leaves at the bottom of a cup, will Mr. Melamed find the real culprit before the poisoner strikes again?

Tempest in the Tea Room Details

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Author : Libi Astaire

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From Reader Review Tempest in the Tea Room for online ebook

Patricia says

Quite good

I received this book free from one of the book sites. I do not remember which one! This is my honest review. An enjoyable book, Tempest in the Tearoom takes the reader to the community of Jews living in Regency London. There is mystery in the Jewish community, as children, families, and peerage are getting horribly ill. What is happening and can Mr. Melamed figure out what is going on behind these illnesses.

Recommended

Susan Barton says

I downloaded this book at the beginning of the year and then forgot all about it. Since I'm making my way through my TBR, I decided it was time to read it. This mystery novel had an old-timey feel that made me think it had been written a long time ago. I rechecked the book summary and was surprised to find it was written by a contemporary author in 2014.

I do love mysteries and the idea of inserting Jewish culture into London's Regency Era appealed to me. This ended up being an interesting element.

The story was a little slow and it took me a couple or so chapters to really get into the book. From there I became easily immersed in the story. I did figure the mystery out very early on, but that didn't matter too much. The book is short and entertaining enough to be worth reading through to the end.

SR says

Just FUN, as well as a refreshing counterpart to Regency novels about financially comfortable Christians who only go to London for social seasons. This is London as it might have been for a permanent resident of the merchant class (Caroline Bingley spins in her literary grave), or for business-holders and their families. The network of doctors, petty criminals, orphanages, charities, lawyers, and landlords is richly drawn without being overwhelming, and Melamed is written very well.

In addition, the fourth-wall wallpaper of a pre-debut young lady with a passion for Gothic romance as the author - oh, I love Rebecca.

Finally, actual attention to the Napoleonic Wars, most delightfully by General Well'ngone of Gravel Street.

Off to find the rest of Astaire's books. I got this one free, but it would have been worth paying for!

Virginia Tican says

As I am reading this book, I found some elements of minor inconsistencies in it which I prefer to forgive

since I keep on chuckling after almost every chapter of this delightful and fun read. I also prefer this style of writing for this genre since it is not much of a departure from Georgette Heyer's. Recommended for those who love Georgette Heyer and her sense of the ridiculous found similarly in the hilarious descriptive narrative and dialogues in this work. This is written from the point of view of a young miss (who is fond of Ann Radcliffe's literature with the imagination to match) just out of the schoolroom but not yet out into society (as she should have been if she was a member of the ton). So this may be the reason for the aforementioned inconsistency that I have previously noted ~ that of the dialogues of the master pickpocket, self-styled as the Earl of Gravel Lane and his righthand 'man' General Well'nGone and even the other younger orphans are maybe not in keeping with their station in life and the lack of literacy that goes hand and hand with means and opportunity. At least the orphanage, aside from feeding and housing its orphans, takes care of their education as well, in preparation for the earning of a useful and productive trade.

Claudia says

Lightest of light reading. A nice break from "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich."

Amy Shannon says

wonderfully mysterious and enjoyable

I really enjoyed this story, and it was fun to read. It was a mystery that had an edge of humor and hint of culture within it. It's a first story and I hope there will be many more in his series. Ezra is a great character, and has a great chemistry. I like his backstory and how he goes about solving the crime. His mismatched pair of partners is a wonderful aspect of the story. I also like the sense of community within the story.

Ariela Housman says

Solid 'meh.'

The concept is lovely, but the execution left something to be desired. The multiple plots don't quite hang together and the culprit in the main mystery was painfully obvious. Most of the characters are fairly flat, and the Judaism of the characters and the community was heavy-handed without adding much texture. For example, five mentions of a particular coffeehouse as a "kosher establishment" in such a short space are too much, doing nothing to impart new information to the reader, just serving as a reminder of "See, it's JEWISH!"

Most disappointing to me was the complete absence of the London Sephardic community, which was thriving at the time, but doesn't seem to exist in this narrative, even for a passing mention. As a Western Sephardic reader, the predominance of Ashkenazi Jews can feel quite like erasure; it was all the more disappointing from the author of *Terra Incognita*, whom I would expect to be aware of the presence of the Sephardic community.

I am not inclined to pick up the next book in the series.

CAROL VANATTA says

A WONDERFUL STORY...A TRUE BUBBY MIENTZA

A story rich as my Bubbe's chicken soup. Full of the richness of the times. Humor abounds as does suspense, a tear or two and much joy in meeting these wonderful people. MAZEL TOV .

Jeri L says

An Intriguing Tale

I loved all of the characters in this story and look forward to revisiting them in additional stories. Spoiler alert - I knew it was the tea, but I wasn't sure why anyone would do such a dastardly deed.

Kam says

A pleasant enough read, but it was easy to guess the source of the mystery illness right from the early stages of the book.

E'Lanna says

Ok so mysteries aren't my usual cup of tea, well written, well rounded, interesting and altogether loveable Jewish characters are, so I gave this a shot. I'm so glad I did, it's a delightful little read just dripping with Jewishness and good that's hard to find. The mystery part could have done with some work, I knew who and how not far into the book, however, the motives of all the characters and watching Ezra figure it out was delightful and unexpected.

mary jo peterson says

Very interesting story. Good character development. I knew something about Jewish community but this story added to my understanding. A good read

Charles Ray says

Ezra Melamed is a Jewish detective in London of the 1800s. In Libi Astaire's *Tempest in the Tea Room*, Melamed must discover why otherwise healthy orphans are becoming deathly ill. In this tale, set against the backdrop of London's Jewish community, complete with jealousy, revenge, unrequited love, and snobbish pretensions, we meet a character who is understated, and at the same time, larger than life. Astaire does a deft job of describing the social milieu in which a cast of interesting characters act out their

roles in ways that sometimes surprise us. She brings the historian's in depth understanding of the period skillfully together with the hand of a master storyteller to weave a tale that is as intricate as the stitches sewn by the Jewish matriarchs who hold court in their sitting rooms.

I received a free copy of Tempest for review, and while I found the prologue a bit long, once Astaire got revved up, it was worth the wait. Agatha Christie fans will identify with Astaire's tone and style, but make no mistake – she's no Christie clone – she's in a class all her own.

Rebecca says

The Tempest in the Tea Room is a light, entertaining mystery of the cozy sub-genre. Despite the period setting and details, this book is more like an Agatha Christie than like an Austen classic or a Georgette Heyer novel. Each character--including our eventual suspects--is introduced slowly, one-by-one, at the beginning of the novel. Two mysteries are introduced (poisoning and a missing bracelet) and then Mr. Melamed must discover the perpetrator.

Ms. Astaire writes her characters to be both humorous and sympathetic, and leaves just enough clues along the way to hint at the ending...but not so many as to entirely give the solution away. Unlike most books of this type, there are no actual murders, all relationships between the genders are entirely modest, and the secrets revealed during the investigation are nothing that would scandalize a reader. The details about Jewish life are handled so they are a part of the text and don't overwhelm the characters or plot. A slower pace with more suspense in the last third of the book--perhaps with a false solution that turns out to be wrong, or maybe a greater threat of arrest to the innocent doctor--would have improved the book, but I do recommend it for readers (especially but not exclusively ladies) 12 years old through adult.

Lynn Demsky says

“Jane Austen meets Sherlock Holmes when a crime wave sweeps through 19th-century London's Jewish community and the adventures of wealthy-widower-turned-sleuth Ezra Melamed are recorded for posterity by Miss Rebecca Lyon, a young lady not quite at the marriageable age.

In this third volume of the series, tragedy strikes when the Jewish orphanage's children are stricken with a mysterious and nearly fatal stomach ailment. When the ailment travels to the Mayfair home of Lady Marblehead, a young Jewish physician is accused of poisoning his patients - a suspicion that is further fueled when a priceless pearl bracelet is discovered missing from Lady Marblehead's jewellery box.

As more outbreaks occur, an increasingly hysterical community turns to Mr Ezra Melamed to investigate the case. But once again there are too few clues and too little time, especially since the littlest victim, a frail orphan boy, is already almost at death's door.”

A great pleasurable mixture of British and Jewish existence in London that just sparkled! The author's prologue just made me chuckle and made me hope that everyone reading the book would not miss it. An assembly of tea party guests that just sets the story off and running. The characters were so unique in each of their own ways that I enjoyed them all. I felt so sorry for all the children that lived in orphans at that time and worse for all the little street urchins just trying to keep alive. I even made room in my heart for the poor elderly people of the street, such a horrible way to live and yet so very common at the time. Story has a great mixture of history, culture at the time! This is a short unique story that I truly believe will make everyone think, chuckle and enjoy! I have never read a book like this and thoroughly enjoyed it, enough that I went and bought the other three in the series!

