



Feathered Quill Book Reviews

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Feisty Family Values

By: B.D. Tharp
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At 65, Annabelle is alone and frightened. Her daughter Liddy kicked her out after Annabelle burned one too many meals and now she has no one to turn to but Regina, her cold-hearted cousin. When Annabelle shows up at Regina's doorstep, the well-to-do Regina reluctantly allows Annabelle to stay, but only until the ragged relative can find other living arrangements.

It is soon apparent that Liddy did more than just force Annabelle out, she physically and emotionally abused the lovable grandmother. When Tillie, Regina's long time housemate discovers the truth, the plucky gourmet chef takes Annabelle under her wing (along with an abandoned, adorable three-legged kitten that Annabelle rescued). Regina unenthusiastically accepts the increased noise in her once quiet house with the hope that it won't last long. Fortunately Regina has her attic studio to escape to where she can paint to her heart's delight.

When a hunky new neighbor, Joe, arrives, all three ladies are smitten but it is Tillie who steals Joe's heart. All is well until Tillie has an old enemy, cancer, resurface. Everybody in the household wants to help Tillie with her battle, but each person reacts differently. While Annabelle does all she can to help Tillie, Regina retreats to her studio, unable to deal with the possible loss of her best friend. Joe too, is terrified of losing Tillie and so, instead of supporting her, makes a quick exit.

Feisty Family Values is a poignant look at three middle-aged women, their fears and hopes, and day-to-day challenges. Even with a somewhat anxiety-provoking theme of a battle with cancer running through much of this book, it is far from a depressing read. Rather, it is a joyful, and sometimes funny, visit with three loving, nurturing, and caring women who are struggling to find happiness. I was drawn into the story on the very first page when Annabelle is unable to pay the taxi driver the full amount owed on her fare. Peering out of the cab at the beautiful home of her cousin, poor Annabelle, tattered and tired, looks to the taxi's back seat for loose change. Beautifully written, I could feel Annabelle's embarrassment and wanted to take her home myself. The author is a talented writer who draws fully developed characters. Tillie, an opinionated, stop-at-nothing, kind of gal, is just as likeable as Annabelle while Regina, with a cold exterior, was truly hard to like until well into the story. She was selfish and more concerned with appearances than what truly

matters – family. But like the other characters in *Feisty Family Values*, Regina hides some secrets that account, in large part, for her cold exterior. Will she figure out the true meaning of family before it is too late? You'll have to read this wonderful story to find out.

Quill says: Every woman should get a copy of *Feisty Family Values*, cuddle up on her favorite chair, and enjoy the ride.