



The Antiques

Kris D'Agostino

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A family reunites after the death of its patriarch just as a hurricane tears through town in this “sparklingly funny novel about love, power, money, and adult siblings finding the beating heart of what matters most: one another” (*People*).

On the night of a massive hurricane, three estranged siblings learn that their father is dying. For the first time in years, they convene at their childhood home in upstate New York, where the storm has downed power lines, flooded houses, and destroyed the family’s antique store.

The Westfalls are no strangers to dysfunction. But never have their lives felt so out of control. Armie is living in their parents’ basement. In Manhattan, Josef, a sex-addicted techie, is struggling to repair his broken relationship with his daughters. Their sister, Charlie, who works in Hollywood as a publicist for a wayward young actress, just learned that her son has been expelled from preschool. Amid the storm, they come together to plan their father’s memorial service, only to learn his dying wish—they must sell his priceless Magritte painting. As their failures are laid bare, they discover that hope often lurks in the darkest of places. And so, too, can hilarity.

Complete with an irresistible plot and deeply flawed, affectionately rendered characters, Kris D’Agostino’s “sharp, funny [novel] conveys the disorienting and ever-shifting effects of grief” (*The New York Times*) and the unexpected epiphanies that emerge in chaos. This “darkly humorous portrait of the American family under duress...balances scathing and humorous commentary on the foibles of family with keen insight” (*Publishers Weekly*). Perfect for “fans of funny family dysfunction novels like Jonathan Tropper’s *This Is Where I Leave You*...and Cynthia D’Aprix Sweeney’s *The Nest*” (*Booklist*), *The Antiques* is a heartbreakingly nimble, laugh-out-loud funny send-up of modern family life.

The Antiques Details

Date : Published January 10th 2017 by Scribner

ISBN :

Author : Kris D'Agostino

Format : Kindle Edition 305 pages

Genre : Fiction, Contemporary, Adult Fiction

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From Reader Review The Antiques for online ebook

Kimberly says

Light and funny, very similar to "This Is Where I Leave You". Lack of chapters was hard to get used to.

Janet Elsbach says

I can't say I agree with the 'sparklingly funny' analysis. Dark, and mainly populated with characters it is equally hard to feel empathy for or to laugh at, with snappy toggles between their various storylines. Solid descriptive writing, I just intensely disliked being around these people; some were jerks and some were just stuck, in ways that made you want to goose them to get them moving but not hang around with them. Sort of Where'd You Go Bernadette, but minus most of the pell-mell I Love Lucy fruit-cart-toppling. Chapped me arse. Maybe my expectations were just skewed by the big OH HOW YOU WILL LAUGH AND LAUGH build up.

Jaclyn Crupi says

Middling midlist dressed as literary lamb (and I'm a vegetarian). Think This is Where I Leave you only nowhere near as good (and I didn't like that book that much). Dysfunctional family coming together to deal with their dying father while a hurricane looms. One son, Josef, is such a creepy misogynist that I had to completely disengage. So yeah, this one was not for me.

Cheri says

! NOW AVAILABLE !

The Westfall family home, the home of Ana and George is in the city of Hudson, NY. George has been diagnosed with cancer, had surgery, but it's back. It's time to gather the family in. Ana calls their now adult children home, although calling Armie should not be as much effort, since due to a series of unfortunate circumstances, he now resides in their basement. His old room, all their old bedrooms, now being used for other purposes.

Armie, technically Armand, was named after the protagonist of one of Ana's, his mother, favourite novels. Life can be a bit of an uphill battle when you're the youngest, but Armie's had more than his share of "stuff" to deal with. Still, he can create some beautiful furniture, and there's something to be said about that.

Charlie lives in California now, where she's a glorified personal "assistant" to a Hollywood film actress with a child. Both have young boys close to the same age. The actress is a bit of a tyrant, expecting Charlie to be her beck-and-call-girl at a text-message-minute's-notice. Her husband is a tall childlike overbearing bully. Their son's name is Abbott. Abbott has issues. He's preschool, 4-5 age group, but socially immature, and is also prone to temper tantrums.

Josef is the oldest; he's a divorced self-admitted sex addict, with two young girls, preteens. His mind has a one-track porn show going pretty much at all times. His wife, now ex-wife, has a new boyfriend. He's a poet. If it weren't for the fact that his ex has shown interest in another man, he probably would no longer view her as desirable, but he can't seem to come to terms with the fact that she might be happier without him. That his girls might be happier. He obsesses about this except his thoughts are constantly interrupted with thoughts of having sex with someone else, the woman walking by, a text message from his assistant, it doesn't take much to derail his thoughts.

Ana is their mother and wife to George, who isn't looking very well these days. Just as things begin to get frantic, as George's health unravels, the east coast is hit by a hurricane, which adds some drama to the whole union behind this less than happy occasion for this family reunion.

The story does flow nicely; the characters are quirky enough to create some interesting and amusing events. It is amusing at times, although I would not call this hysterically funny. There are some touching moments, as well, as the story progresses, and one or two amusing-funny incidents. This is billed as being for readers of Jonathan Tropper, but I would say it's more for those who loved "The Nest."

Pub Date: 10 Jan 2017

ARC provided by Scribner, NetGalley and author Kris D'Agostino

Marian says

Members of a dysfunctional family gather at their childhood home when the patriarch dies. This book is witty, dark, wonderfully written, and set in the middle of a hurricane.

Trin says

This has got to be at least the third "dysfunctional family gathers after the death of the patriarch" book that I've read -- Jonathan Tropper's *This is Where I Leave You* and Stewart O'Nan's *Wish You Were Here* are what spring immediately to mind -- but it's by far my favorite of the three. D'Agostino doesn't get as lost in minutiae as O'Nan, nor rely as heavily on *~*SHENANIGANS*~* as Tropper. *The Antiques* was still predictable at times, but I liked its quiet optimism. It's not an extraordinary novel, but it *is* a satisfying one.

Lorraine says

2.5

Carmen says

I have about twenty pages to go and I'm confident I can write the review. This is a fast read, so it has that going for it. The characters are flat and predictable. This is a formulaic tale of middle-aged siblings caught in

various stages of arrested adulthood development. Father dies and they are using the memorial weekend as the opportunity to cry about all of their grievances with each other and him. In fact, if you've already read "This Is Where I Leave You" you can skip this book all together bc it is basically the same book. Better yet, skip both books and just watch the movie, save yourself some time. Also, if you are having daddy issues, spend this weekend working it out and save the world another book about it.

Matthew says

3.5 stars. No two families are the same, but many hold the same qualities, whether they be funny, flawed, melodramatic or overwrought. The Westfalls of Kris D'Agostino's *The Antiques* are undoubtedly all of these; fitting given the novel of which they center holds these qualities as well.

Full disclosure: I'm a sucker for the multilayered dysfunctional family tale so often found in modern literature. Many, if not most, books of this sub-genre succeed to a point, and falter in others, and *The Antiques* isn't much different. I fell for it from the get-go, breezing through the "Monday" section with hopes that maybe there was an extra layer unseen in most other novels of a similar ilk. Sadly, there was not. But this doesn't mean it was a complete failure.

The Antiques is an engrossing, entertaining read (I wouldn't be shocked if it were optioned), just one I can't imagine sticking with me long after reading it. There are shades of Jonathan Tropper's *This is Where I Leave You* (also optioned), and like that novel *The Antiques* paints a messy family brought together by tragedy, only to venture off into dramedy and, ultimately, a nice and neat happy ending. For all of their quirks and flaws I was hoping maybe The Westfalls would meet a different, more extraordinary conclusion; suffice to say they're simply ordinary.

Deah says

I didn't really like this book, and I need to start paying more attention to books that are characterized as "fast paced dysfunctional comedy". Having lived in it, I don't really see dysfunctionalism as very comedic, with the possible exceptions of *Arrested Development* and Jonathan Tropper's *This is Where I Leave You* (dark humor and hilarious!). Most of the time, reading about people's insanely stressed out lives just stresses me out and makes me wonder why they don't seem to have the sense God should have given them.

For example:

*If you're working for an actress who has just fired her staff of approximately 14, and you're picking up the slack as her "personal assistant", then I sure hope you're getting paid 14 salaries. Maybe that will make it worth neglecting your child, your home, and your marriage.

*If your autistic son loves ponies and refuses to dress in anything but pony clothes and backpacks, and your husband thinks *My Little Ponies* is too girly, surely you can do an internet search and find other horse or pony related clothes and toys that your son might like just as well.

*There's nothing wrong with living in your parents' basement and working on custom wood furniture, but if your father is dying and your mom is struggling to run the family business, the least you can do is help her out some. Many people choose to live with their parents or with their adult children because they need a little help in life, with a family business, a sick relative, etc.

*Josef? Okay, he was just a waste of space and I hope his ex-wife, his daughters, and even Nora just steer clear of him. Sorry, you don't get to whine about your dwindling bank account while you're paying for a high

priced Craigslist whore.

This one wasn't for me but if you liked The Nest and other books such as The Vacationers or Where'd You Go Bernadette you might like this one.

Wendy says

On the night of a massive hurricane, three estranged siblings learn that their father is dying. Amid the storm, they come together to plan their father's memorial service, only to learn of his one dying wish.

The Westfalls are a dysfunctional family. The characters are well-developed, mostly unlikable (although I did like a few) with each of their own quirks. Reunited they clash in both sad and funny ways.

Well-written, entertaining and interesting!

Thank you to Net Galley and Scribner for an arc of this novel.

Kait McNamee says

I'd give this 3.5 stars if I could. I really enjoyed the time I spent reading it, which is rare for books that Overdrive recommends to me. Then again, Overdrive also keeps recommending Learn English to me, despite my multiple English degrees...so get your shit together, Overdrive! Anyway, this book could've easily strayed into MFA-student-bullshit writing but luckily, it just toed that line and stayed, for the most part, unpretentious in the right ways.

The one main problem I had with the story is that it seemed a bit crowded. There were too many voices and some characters smothered others, or their voices just petered out without warning. Andddd finally, one nitpicky thing—using the word "lithe" more than once to describe someone is too many times. One lithe per book, please and thank you.

Katrina Dessavre says

I'm surprised this book is not more well-known and loved because I thought it was absolutely fantastic. I really appreciate the careful plotting and character development that went into the writing of this book. It paid off - the plot moves along at a pace that made me want to turn the pages and there were plenty of surprises along the way, despite being more of a character-driven story. I ended up caring for each of the characters (with the exception of the mother, perhaps, but that's maybe because she didn't appear as often), despite the fact that they were all very much flawed. Overall, the feel of the book reminded me of "A Visit From the Goon Squad," which I loved. I thought the book struck a great balance between seriousness and humor. I find that a lot of books about family dynamics tend to be too serious, making them rather flat in my opinion, but this included many absurd situations that were funny without being ridiculous. I look forward to reading the author's first book and can't wait for what he writes next.

Cat Jenkins says

The things about this book that don't work for me:

1. Alliterative character names. Abbot, Armie, Audrey, Ana, Andy... When none of the characters is likeable or memorable and their names all blend, then you spend the first half of the book backtracking and trying to keep them straight. If you care that much. Which I didn't.
2. False advertising. The cover is quixotically designed and sports the tribute '...a hurricane of hilarity...' There was nothing even remotely humorous about this book. It would have been better served to have a solid black cover. And maybe the title should have been "Do Not Enter." I wouldn't have felt so cheated then.
3. And here's the thing that really got my steam boiling: the coy, pretentious, writer's ploy of not making it clear who each segment is about. You're supposed to 'get it' by picking up clues from the setting and action. Sometimes you could, but DAMN IT!!! I WANT TO KNOW WHO I'M READING ABOUT. I do NOT want to play a cutesy, little guessing game, because, frankly, this book, this story, and the writing weren't worth it. If you're going to play peek-a-boo with your reader, you damn well better be good at it, and it damn well better be worth the reader's effort. This wasn't. Endlessly irritating to have each bit use pronouns only for far too long, rather than manning up and naming the character.

Now, having expressed my disappointment and contempt for 'cutesy' pretensions, I do hope this writer doesn't give up. I hope he matures and learns and tries again. There might be something grand hiding under all the crap. But this book didn't let it shine through.

Liz says

I picked this book because it was billed as a novel for those who enjoy Jonathan Tropper, whom I find vastly amusing. But this book is not in the same ilk at all. Tropper has a dark humor and often has me chuckling out loud. He knows how to balance humor and pathos. This book was so dark at the beginning I almost gave up on it. You are over halfway through the book before there's the slightest bit of levity. But the darkness just overwhelms the few bits of humor.

The characters have huge issues which left me feeling sorry for them. A father is dying from cancer. His wife, Ana, is his main caregiver and tries to find solace at Mass and the local wine bar. His three children all have major problems in their lives - one has a failing business, another has a failing marriage and a child on the autism spectrum, the third is unemployed and living in his parents' basement. Ana is the only one I felt I even halfway understood. Maybe because we're a similar age. She wonders how her children turned out so different than what she imagined. Josef, the least son, positively gave me the creeps. He believes he's a sex addict, although his psychiatrist doesn't believe such a thing exists. More than anything, he was just a pompous jerk.

I'm trying to decide if I would have liked this book better at a different time of the year. This is definitely not a good book to put you in the holiday spirit. It ends on a positive note but it just takes so long to get there. This book ranks somewhere between a 2.5 and a 3. The writing is decent, so based on that I'm rounding up to a 3.

My thanks to netgalley and Scribner for an advance copy of this book.
