



The Trouble with Tulip

Mindy Starns Clark

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Josephine Tulip is definitely a smart chick, a twenty-first century female MacGyver who writes a helpful hints column and solves mysteries in her spare time. Her best friend, Danny, is a talented photographer who longs to succeed in his career...perhaps a cover photo on "National Geographic"?

When Jo's next-door neighbor is accused of murder, Jo realizes the police have the wrong suspect. As she and Danny analyze clues, follow up on leads, and fall in and out of trouble, she recovers from a broken heart and he discovers that he has feelings for her. Will Danny have the courage to reveal them, or will he continue to hide them behind a façade of friendship?

The Trouble with Tulip Details

Date : Published July 1st 2005 by Harvest House Publishers

ISBN : 9780736914857

Author : Mindy Starns Clark

Format : Paperback 304 pages

Genre : Mystery, Christian Fiction, Christian, Romance, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Trouble with Tulip for online ebook

Melissa Rhoads says

Not bad for Christian fiction. The murder mystery was enjoyable enough, just slightly hokey.

Barb says

Cute Christian detective story.

Kat says

charming with an interesting enough plot to want you to know what happens next!

Shirayuki Zen says

Best murder mystery series I have ever encountered in all my years on this planet. I love it's reminder to let go and give God the steering wheel.

Kelly says

I love, love, love this book! I had previously read the Million Dollar Mysteries Series by this author and I loved them. I love mysteries and it can be hard to find clean ones, but this is a Christian mystery so it didn't have anything that would be objectionable. Well-written and engaging and I love Jo.

Stephanie says

I really wanted to like this book. In fact, I read it first, expecting a wonderfully trashy murder mystery with a love story attached. What I got, however, was a book filled with God-isms, an awful love plot line and too many other plots to count. You would think that this book would be good enough with one or two plots, but between the murder, the love, the wedding, her career, his career, his life, the brothers life and everyone else involved, I was left sort of confused and rather letdown. I am fine if a book wants to bring God into the story, but it felt rather forced, jammed awkwardly when the author did not know what else to write about. The ending was rather old, since it happens in so many books. There was supposed to be a twist at the end, but that too just felt off. This story had a great chance of being really good, but it veered off with a sense of 'too many cooks in the kitchen'.

Ellen White says

Jo has taken over the column which her grandmother had started, the answers to household problems. Danny, taking the photos, suggest she may know the answers..Victim's house had been a tribute to the cleaning ideas of Jo's, but what about the bump to the head.

Lorraine says

SUMMARY:

Josephine Tulip is definitely a smart chick, a twenty-first century female MacGyver who writes a helpful hints column and solves mysteries in her spare time. Her best friend, Danny, is a talented photographer who longs to succeed in his career...perhaps a cover photo on National Geographic?

When Jo's next-door neighbor is accused of murder, Jo realizes the police have the wrong suspect. As she and Danny analyze clues, follow up on leads, and fall in and out of trouble, she recovers from a broken heart and he discovers that he has feelings for her. Will Danny have the courage to reveal them, or will he continue to hide them behind a façade of friendship?

I really liked the characters in this book: Bradford fit his very formal name and was definitely a jerk. Jo was a unique individual who was still lost in the times of her grandparents who had had such a powerful influence on her during her growing up years, but she was trying hard to catch up with the modern times. Danny was a sweetheart who finally understood his feelings for Jo were more than just a lifelong friendship. The plot had enough twists and turns to keep you wondering who was behind the murder. I look forward to hopefully another book involving Jo and Danny.

Denise says

The Trouble with Tulip is the first book I have read by Mindy Starns Clark. I thoroughly enjoyed it! Clark expertly interwove several sub-plots with the main plot setting the stage for future books in this series. The development of the main characters was not deep; however, I trust she will continue to develop them in future books.

Clark also included a Christian aspect to the book with her characters making the mystery good, clean fun. I recommend reading this book for pure enjoyment and an semi-easy read. I look forward to reading the next book in this series.

Erica Warren says

This was a really cute little book. Clark tells a believable story without being too cheesy (though there were some moments) and presents a wonderful mystery that kept me guessing. Every time I thought I knew what had happened or who had done it, she proved me wrong, and it just kept getting more and more intriguing. I was disappointed with the ending, though.

Sheri says

This book filled the same role for me as a Girls' Movie Night. It was very definitely chick lit.

The description of the plot is pretty awful. I mean, for most of the book Jo is the only one who believes that there was actually a murder committed: while everyone else thinks the death of Edna, who lived a couple blocks away from Jo in her small Pennsylvania town, was an accident, Jo can't believe that such a die-hard fan of her Tips from Tulip cleaning column would ever do anything as obviously wrong as mix ammonia and bleach. And there's the fact that Jo heard an argument happening at Edna's house and saw a car driving away a short while later, all while on a midnight, wedding-jitters-inspired job.

At any rate, after Jo is called in to explain the oddities found in this woman's house--on her wedding morning, no less--and her fiance leaves her at the alter, the book takes lots of interesting turns, from her best friend's realization that he might be in love with Jo to a situation with a mystery man who seems to have been around for hundreds of years. The main focus of the book, though, is on Jo's quest to prove that Edna was murdered and figure out why and by whom.

While the book has a few preachy moments, it's generally pretty well-written and definitely an enjoyable read.

Kimia Wood says

Josephine "Jo" Tulip is an independent, take-charge kind of young woman. Her house is organized and spotless, and she's considered an expert of household tricks, partly because of the newspaper column she writes about everything from removing stains from clothes and carpets to getting more use out of your cleaning supplies.

About some things, however, she's woefully clueless. The newspaper column she inherited from her grandmother is just that: an item in a newspaper (sometimes called the "dead-tree media"). Living in the modern world, Jo struggles to adjust to the shifting market: a new world of blogs, websites, and TV shows – a world where little old ladies still worry about the proper method to scrub down their window sills, but young mothers will buy pre-sliced apples from the grocery store because they have more money than time (a trend we can relate to as we watch it unfold in our own culture).

Jo's personal life is also complicated. While she prepares to marry a young man she's only known a few months – but who seems to be her soul mate – she doesn't notice that her best childhood friend is in love with her.

Danny Watkins is, in some ways, very different from Jo. He's an artistic type – a photographer – who nevertheless has a very practical and perceptive view of people. After trying to warn Jo against walking down the aisle with her six-month-aquaintance fiancé, he discovers an ulterior motive in himself when he realizes he loves her. He knows it. His family full of sisters knows it. It seems the one person who doesn't know it is on-top-of-it, got-a-solution-for-everything Jo.

When Jo's neighbor is found dead, she's convinced the old lady was murdered – and she's determined to find out why and by whom. Though Danny isn't as sold on her theory, there's no way he's going to refuse to help her. So begins a tangled, unconventional mystery where things are not what they seem. The villains are not cut-and-dried, and the root of the crime possesses a refreshing twist. Jo puts her household tricks knowledge to use in ways that would make MacGyver proud, and Danny stands by her, waiting patiently (with me, not so patiently) for Jo to realize what she has in him.

There's one more character we get to know closely in this book, but to avoid spoilers I'll just say this: when I think of his storyline, I feel sad.

The Trouble With Tulip gives us a solid mystery that kept me guessing until the end, characters that resonate, and a strong friendship just starting to turn into romance. Jo's willfulness can make her hard to work with, but there's no doubting her passion to find answers, no matter where they lead. Danny's compassion and common sense shine, and his devotion to Jo is something any girl could envy.

Although the novel stands by itself, there are two sequels in the "Smart Chick" series. If you're interested in seeing how Jo and Danny's relationship plays out further, see the other two books: Blind Dates Can Be Murder and Elementary, My Dear Watkins.

Theresa says

Josephine (Jo) Tulip writes a syndicated helpful hints column, *Tips from Tulip*, that she's "inherited" from her beloved Grandmother, who wrote the column with the help of her chemistry-loving husband. In addition to inheriting the column, she has also inherited their home. Her best friend, Danny Watkins, an aspiring photographer, bought the house behind her and lives there.

Because she can't sleep on the eve of her wedding to Bradford, a rising-star executive at the company where her father is the CEO, she goes for a late evening jog and notices some strange activities at a neighbor's home. The next morning, the sheriff calls her to help answer some questions about the death of the neighbor living in that same home. Never mind that she has a wedding to prepare for -- it won't take long.

After explaining the strange things at the neighbor's home -- all "Tips from Tulip" on inexpensive ways to clean the home and body -- she heads to her wedding. Then demonstrates that the "Tips from Tulip" truly are tips from Tulip when her wedding dress is torn and she mends it on the fly with an iron, eggs and oatmeal. But there is one thing her tips can't fix -- and that's the groom running from the altar when asked to say "I do."

While dealing with the humiliation of being an abandoned bride, Jo learns that the sheriff has ruled her neighbor's death an accident. Jo doesn't believe that -- especially after what she'd witnessed the night before. She enlists the help of her friend, Danny, to help her prove that the woman's death was really a murder.

I enjoyed reading this book. It's definitely light reading material. I found myself rooting for Danny to Jo his true feelings and saddened that Jo's parents show so little concern for the feelings of their daughter who was dumped at the altar. In fact, they seem more concerned about the "poor" groom that they'd wanted their daughter to marry.

I didn't know this when I purchased the book (it's the first in a trilogy) but the author is a Christian writer. It's

something that you would probably pick up while reading it as the characters will often say prayers, mostly to themselves. Christianity is not the main focus of the stories but it does play a role in the book.

Alexis Gilmore says

I thought this book sounded like a light, fun read - it was light all right, but nowhere near fun. I could not even finish the book. I found both the plot and characters to be exceedingly annoying. All of the plot threads (and there were too many) were cliched, making the outcomes tiredly predictable. Even the letters to Tulip were disappointing. If done well, they would have made the book more tolerable. Instead, they were scattered haphazardly throughout and were so bad that they were laughable. For example, the letter from the woman whose bank account wasn't balancing by \$50 every month. She throws in that her nephew has been helping her and she just can't understand what's going on. Please!!! He's scamming you, lady! I didn't need Tulip to spell that out for me.

Also, I agree with a previous commenter about the forced placement of God and Christianity into the book. While I am not opposed at all to the mention of God, I was turned off by the way it unnaturally materialized in the characters' thoughts and dialogue. Danny irritated me endlessly; he was too self-righteous and goody-goody. He felt like a caricature instead of a character. These were just a few examples of things that were poorly handled by the author.

Overall, a disappointing book for which I did not have especially high expectations in the first place.

Dana Miller says

funny investigation in murder and love
