



The Trouble with Mary

Millie Criswell

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Award-winning author Millie Criswell has charmed readers with her joy-filled historical romances. Now, in *The Trouble With Mary*, she serves up her first contemporary romantic comedy--a palate-pleasing love story of two people with nothing in common . . . except their undeniable attraction.

THE TROUBLE WITH MARY IS . . .

She's unemployed. Her huge Italian family is driving her crazy. Her love life is nonexistent. In fact, she needs a life! So Mary decides to open a restaurant in Baltimore's Little Italy. And despite her mother's assurances that she will fail, the place is a big success--until the local paper delivers a scathing review of her pizza, pasta, and chocolate cannolis.

Food critic Dan Gallagher hates Italian food--and his column shows it. Now Mary would like nothing more than to serve Dan on a steaming platter. Problem is, Mary is the most delectable woman Dan has ever met. And Dan is the most exasperating man Mary has ever encountered. And the trouble with chemistry is, neither one can resist it. . . .

The Trouble with Mary Details

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Sylvia says

Modern

Donna says

I'm participating in a genre study on "Romance" fiction. It's not something I normally read. In fact, it's probably something I avoid. The next meeting will focus on "Contemporary Romance" and my author was Millie Criswell.

This book confirms all of my hesitations about reading romance. Since the genre requires the male and female leads to be together in the end (happily ever after), there's not much surprise in the outcome, just how the author is going to get them there. I found the writing just awful. The conflict is set up when the guy (a new restaurant critic) reviews badly the gal's new restaurant and she goes to his office and confronts him on it. Guy is divorced with 8 yo son; gal has large, buttinsky Italian family. Normal chaos ensues.

There are somethings I expect an author to "get right" in a novel, basic facts about the situation. This book was contemporary (pub. 2000) and contained references to contemporary baseball players, but still had the priest saying Mass in Latin. While that's not unheard of, it's quite uncommon and would in itself deserve an explanation.

I related to some of the facts of Mary's life (perhaps some hit a bit too close to home), but I just didn't like the way she approached things. The set up for the next book is so awful that I might have to read it just to confirm my suspicion on how awful it's going to be.

Ann Marie says

I love the characters in this book but the story was very ordinary. Mary's Italian family is worth the price of admission, especially Grandma Flora. I liked the way that Dan and Mary's relationship played out. I also would like to read the sequel to this book, What to do about Annie, to find out what happens between Mary's best friend Annie and Mary's brother Joe. Easy going read. Just what I needed during a crazy week.

Debby says

Sports writer Dan Gallagher is temporarily moved to restaurant critic and Mary's Italian restaurant is his first review. It was doing well until he pans it - he hates Italian food. Mary goes to the paper to complain. There's an instant attraction, but he's just acquired his 8 year old son and Mary needs to learn how to stand on her own. Interesting sidebar with her friend Annie & her priest brother Joe for the next book.

Amy says

Beyond formulaic, but cute.

Patty says

I am fairly tolerant about romances. I read them for escape and so as long as the plot isn't totally outlandish and the characters are not total idiots, I am willing to suspend my disbelief.

Unfortunately, I found one aspect of this book that just did not work for me. This novel was written in 2000 and Criswell created male characters who wanted to be married to housewives. I am sure that there are still men who believe this, but they do not belong in contemporary romances.

Most romances have strong independent women and this book is no exception. Mary is opening her own restaurant. Why would she want to date a man who did not believe in women's equality.

Given this situation, I did not find this book to be a good read. If I had had another book on the boat with me, I would have stopped reading.

Eva says

One would like to be in this family.

Jenn says

Read this while I was on vacation a few weeks ago...typical romance book...I did like the relationship development between the main character and her mother. I think most people can relate to the love/hate relationship we sometimes have with our mothers! Just a quick, mindless, romantic read...

Robyn says

Loved this book! It was so good!

Michelle says

Okay book.

Andrea says

I'll tell you what the trouble with Mary is, the trouble with Mary is that she's a completely boring character that I couldn't stand to be in the shoes of, so after so many pages I actually had to slam the book down in disgust.

She doesn't have a romantic life, heck, she doesn't even have a life at all. I find myself not wanting to read about a character who has no life, no sense of humor, nothing going for them, who's fat and can't stay away from her chocolate cannolis, yet whose jealous of her socialite friend, and who has crooked teeth. I'm not sure if that was supposed to be charming or what, but I found it intolerable.

I think the whole "Italian" theme was slammed home a little too much, like she forced it in there at every single opportunity, what with all of the cannoli references and hail marys and Italian cuss words that had no place in there whatsoever. And then there was this completely random paragraph about the mafia, and some comment about her grandma and mom wanting her to be more mafia-like, so she just busts out in a completely random, weird and senseless sentence of cuss words that has nothing to do with anything that anyone had been talking about. No one said anything to prompt that statement; no one said anything after she said it, so I'm a little confused as to why it was in there in the first place.

The author was very obviously trying to go with the typical crazy, loud and high-strung Italian family that everyone expects and can even relate with, but I think she got a little mixed up and went too far, and I wonder if she even knew what the word meant, because she had Mary's grandma say the Italian word for F*** you, and I thought that was a shockingly ridiculous thing for a grandma to say to her grandchild. Oh, and having an a at the end of old nonna's every word is very annoying and tiresome. There again, the Italian theme was really jammed in there at every turn.

I didn't get too much further into the book, I think it was sometime after I found out that Dan had a kid and ex-wife drama, and I absolutely hate it when the man has kids from another woman. That's a zero tolerance area for me. But I did stick around long enough to see their first encounter, which was truly magical by the way. She "storms" into his office, and because she's "Italian" she's really got a "fiery temper" so we're all expecting this showdown when she's "telling him off" about his "horrible" review of her chocolate (here we go again) cannoli. But, oh wait! The buildup the author has us read about good 'ol Dan's opinion of her is completely that, a build-up that goes absolutely nowhere. Her flash of temper was so mild it might as well have been a discussion of the weather or something equally boring and mundane. But Dan, who's obviously easily intimidated, thinks he just got put in his place by a woman not to be messed with. She throws in a comment about how wonderfully terrific her chocolate cannolis, you know, really shutting him up after he gave you a bad review. Wow, if someone "told me off" like that I'd probably laugh in their face and show them the door.

Set says

I was stuck at my granny's house and it was this book or staring at the door idly. So I completed this book although I had to re-imagine and omit much of it to fit my taste and age. I gave it a two because it saved me from boredom but it was just like watching a boring chick flick that has old characters.

Carrie says

This is a re-read from a while back and part of a very funny trilogy (at least) of novels. I gave low points to the Devil Served Tortellini earlier. This is the same concept but taken to a more satisfying conclusion.

Danielle says

I love love love this book and whole series!!!!

Nikel27 says

autographed copy
