

### *Feisty Family Values*

B.D. Tharp

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Reviewed by Olivera Baumgartner-Jackson for Reader Views (11/09)

“Can't live with them, can't live without them” seems like something a lot of us would come up with when describing family members, particularly those whose peculiarities are very different from ours. And when it comes to being different, at least on the surface, one would be hard pressed to find two more different people than the determined, abrupt and majestic Regina Morgan-Smith and her cousin, abused, meek and drab Annabelle Hubbard. When those two are thrown together after Annabelle finds herself battered and homeless, it is hard to see how they could share the same roof over their heads without driving each other insane. Luckily for both of them, Regina's best friend and housemate, Tillie Dawson provides some much needed balance and sanity in their daily lives.

That is, until Tillie's cancer returns and threatens not only her life, but also Regina's sanity and Annabelle's shelter. To further complicate matters, a new and very handsome neighbor enters the lives of the three ladies. While all three of them seem to like him quite a bit, he seems to have fallen pretty badly for Tillie, until she tells him about her situation. Once more, the ostensible balance is destroyed. If all of this is not enough to drive the three ladies to utter distraction, Annabelle's three grandchildren end up living in Regina's house as well. If you are thinking, “The more, the merrier...,” think again.

Could those three ladies “of a certain age” find happiness late in life? Could they possibly even find love?

B.D. Tharp's story is a great example of contemporary and relevant writing; perceptive, intelligent and poignant. It deals with believable and distressing situations that many of us have faced or will have to face one day. The characters are colorful, entertaining and easy to relate to. One might even find one's traits in several of the main characters. What I found particularly refreshing were the older characters who are still full of life and who desire to live their life to the fullest. This book, “Feisty Family Values,” will make you laugh out loud, but is also a book that will make you think. It should make you grateful for what you have and hopeful for whatever you are still wishing for, and above all, it should make you grateful for your family and friends and all that they give you on a continuous basis.