

REVIEW by Penny Lockwood Ehrenkranz  
Feisty Family Values  
By: B. D. Tharp  
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This review is based on a review copy provided by B. D. Tharp in exchange for review, all reviews being my own opinion without guarantee or assumption of liking or disliking.

Feisty Family Values is a refreshing change of pace for contemporary women's literature. The three main characters have gray, blue and salt-and-pepper hair. They are flawed in numerous ways. All three have issues, which make them realistic and human. One is a snob, another has low self-esteem, while the third fears getting close to the man who loves her.

While the book deals with intense emotional issues of domestic violence, child abuse and breast cancer, it does so with empathy and a light touch of humor. The humor does not detract from the seriousness of these issues, but allows the reader to more easily identify with the characters.

Regina inherited her Grandmere's lovely home and her mother's bias against people beneath her - especially her poor relations. She lives with her dear friend, Matilda. Regina enjoys her quiet life, her fine things, and her personal space.

Enter her cousin, Annabelle. Annabelle's mother married an abusive man and following in her mother's footsteps, Annabelle is forced into a similar marriage. Unfortunately, her daughter inherits her father's temper and control issues. After living with her daughter and grandchildren, Annabelle is forced out and into the unwilling arms of her cousin, Regina.

Matilda (Tillie) is Regina's best friend and roommate. While battling her own demon, cancer, she attempts to bring peace between the cousins. When a handsome man moves in across the street, sparks fly between him and Tillie and romance ensues.

Adding to the mix and tension are Annabelle's three grandchildren who are dumped on Regina's doorstep just as Regina is getting used to the idea of having Annabelle living in her home. Meanwhile, the ghost of Regina's mother constantly harasses Regina in an attempt to turn her away from the problems of her cousins.

This is a story of friendship, of finding strength within oneself, and of three women coming to terms with their feelings for each other and for the men in their lives. I found this to be a quick read with the pacing designed to keep the reader turning the pages. Each of the characters grows as the story comes to a climax and each finds peace as she does so.