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Tulip Fever



Synopsis

Seventeenth-century Amsterdam is a city in the grip of tulip mania, basking in the wealth it has generated. Sophia's husband Cornelis, an ageing merchant, is among those grown rich from this exotic new flower. To celebrate, he commissions a talented young artist to paint him with his young bride. But as the portrait grows, so does the passion between Sophia and the painter; and as ambitions, desires and dreams breed an intricate deception, their reckless gamble propels their lives towards a thrilling and tragic conclusion.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 7 hours and 24 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Bolinda Publishing Pty Ltd

Audible.com Release Date: July 1, 2014

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00L3H5QH6

Best Sellers Rank: #9 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Romance > Historical #12

in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Urban Life #30 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Historical Fiction

Customer Reviews

This is the first book by Deborah Moggach that I've read and it will likely be the last. Simply put, it is awful. The character development is extremely weak. The two leading characters (Sophia and Jan) are flat -- there is nothing to tell why they are madly attracted to each other (except for the sex) or why we should care about them. The other two characters (Cornelis and Maria) have more depth and are more interesting than the other two -- but is that what you expect for non-leading characters? The plot is contrived and ridiculous. Who could possibly believe that Jan and Sophia could get away with him sneaking into her house for the night with Cornelis sleeping across the hall? As for historical accuracy, yes the author gets the daily life of Amsterdam in 1630's right -- including the tulip craze. However, the book also claims to be about art and artists of that time and this part is minimal. She refers to artists of the time but only minimally and has very little about what work is actually done in painting a portrait or any other work of art. Perhaps the author intended for

the book to be a "bodice-ripper" and my expectations are misplaced. If that is the case, the book also fails miserably.

After I saw "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel", I wanted to read the book which occasioned it. The movie is "Hollywood": entertaining and enjoyable, but Deborah Moggach's original is darker and much more thought provoking. Of course, it was a short step from there to anything else she'd written. I'm of Dutch descent, and I've become interested in the period when "tulipomania" gripped The Netherlands. The Dutch care passionately about both tulips and religion, and I find it hard to believe that the main characters in this story would have ever married--at that time. I found the pace of this book too slow in the third quarter, but the ending is magnificent!

A riveting page turner!

This book is hard. The compounding consequences of one bad choice after another leaves you feeling discouraged. It's an interesting story certainly but I'm left feeling deflated by the grief and self destruction.

I very good story with the history of Tulip financial history as background. Very much like the Dot-Com bust. There are twists in the plot that I didn't expect.

Tulip Fever is a kind of soap opera like historical novel, set in Amsterdam, when the city was the center of art and culture and beauty in Europe. As far as books like this one go it isn't bad, but I can't say I was overly awed by it. This story is of a wife named Sophia with an older husband named Cornelis who falls in love with a painter named Jan van Loos who paints their portrait. Her only friend is her maid, Maria and she is hopelessly lonely. Desperate to somehow escape the comfortable but emotionally dead life she leads Sophie grabs at the chance to use Maria's pregnancy as a means of escape. As I said, this book is very soap opera-ish. There are lots of elaborate plans, fortunes gained and lost, and a whole lot of tragedy. The setting of this novel is quite well done. Amsterdam comes alive as a city of elegant art and beauty everywhere. The tulip mania that gripped the city so badly is portrayed as a flirty business, dangerous to gamble on, but irresistible because of the beauty of the tulip in bloom. What I didn't like about this book was the love story between Sophie and Jan. It felt extremely unconvincing. I hate stories where people talk to each other maybe once, exchange a couple of heated glances and then are all of a sudden deeply

in love with each other. Because the love story doesn't pan out, a lot of the novel doesn't either. Sophie is also an unconvincing character. Not a lot of her actions make sense. Additionally the view point in this novel alternates a lot, from Sophie in first person, to everyone else, including sometimes Sophie, in third person. While I do think multiple view points were necessary for the story to be told perhaps the number of viewpoints could have been cut down on. The really good part about this book was Maria, who had a real personality and a really convincing love and story. Three stars in the end. If you like historical fiction you'll get some enjoyment out of this. For more books on the tulip craze check out "Earthly Joys" by Philippa Gregory, which is about an English gardener and at one point in the book he falls in love with tulips.

Great book! Can't wait for the movie.

I found this book a bit difficult to read with short chapters, constantly shifting point of view characters, lots of thinking and feeling with little dialog or action. Kind of felt like having your head immersed on a dutch masters painting. However, at the end of it all its a good story and I think will be a good movie (out later this year). Learned some interesting things Amsterdam, tulips, and art. Several reviewers said they didn't like Sophia but I felt some sympathy for a young girl trapped in marriage to a man old enough to be her grandfather. Three years of doing "her duty" in bed without even a child to show for it. A recipe for disaster.

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