



The Figaro Murders

Laura Lebow

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

The Figaro Murders

Laura Lebow

The Figaro Murders Laura Lebow

In 1786 Vienna, Lorenzo Da Ponte is the court librettist for the Italian Theatre during the height of the enlightened reign of Emperor Joseph II. This exalted position doesn't mean he's particularly well paid, or even out of reach of the endless intrigues of the opera world. In fact, far from it.

One morning, Da Ponte stops off at his barber, only to find the man being taken away to debtor's prison. Da Ponte impetuously agrees to carry a message to his barber's fiancée and try to help her set him free, even though he's facing pressures of his own. He's got one week to finish the libretto for *The Marriage of Figaro* for Mozart before the opera is premiered for the Emperor himself.

Da Ponte visits the house where the barber's fiancée works—the home of a nobleman, high in the Vienna's diplomatic circles—and then returns to his own apartments, only to be dragged from his rooms in the middle of the night. It seems the young protégé of the diplomat was killed right about the time Da Ponte was visiting, and he happens to be their main suspect. Now he's given a choice—go undercover into the household and uncover the murderer, or be hanged for the crime himself.

Brilliantly recreating the cultural world of late 18th century Vienna, the epicenter of the Enlightenment, Lebow brings to life some of the most famous figures of music, theatre, and politics.

The Figaro Murders Details

Date : Published March 31st 2015 by Minotaur Books (first published October 21st 2014)

ISBN : 9781250053510

Author : Laura Lebow

Format : Hardcover 336 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Mystery, Historical Mystery, Fiction

 [Download The Figaro Murders ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Figaro Murders ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Figaro Murders Laura Lebow

From Reader Review The Figaro Murders for online ebook

Amber says

I received a copy of this book through Goodreads' First Reads program. Mixing murder mystery and historical Vienna was an intriguing premise. The historical aspects were clearly well-researched and painted a vivid picture of Imperial Vienna during the time of Joseph II. Had the author just focused on the drama of creating a work like Figaro, or the mysterious murder of a young aristocrat, or a commoner's search for the birth mother he believes is noble, I think a more well-rounded book would have resulted. Trying to have the three storylines simultaneously is a daunting task, and reading it made me feel like none of them were fully fleshed out. The ending and solving of the murder and maternity mysteries was very sudden, with the reader being told, not shown. It was almost as though Signor Da Ponte was struck by divine intervention. I would have preferred being able to see clues discovered and pieced together through the eyes of the main character, building up to the solution. High marks for historical accuracy, I am curious to read the next book to see what the author does with Da Ponte's character. He was not a likely (or natural) choice for an amateur sleuth in this story, but it sounds like he might be a better fit in the coming second book.

Denise says

There is one big thing you need to know about Lorenzo Da Ponte before reading this mystery book starring him, which is that he was totally real, and his life was actually more crazy than the book lets on. All of the really crazy stuff he got up to actually happened after the setting of the book, and also Da Ponte wrote awesome memoirs of his crazy hijinks that would make even Casanova raise a glass in respect. Look him up, he's one of the great non-musical figures of opera history.

This is a cozy historical, maybe like moderate cozy because there is a little violence, and the mystery plot isn't particularly staggering, in fact the whole explanation of just how Da Ponte (a librettist, which is a subgenre of poet) has been shoe-horned into the already anachronistic role of "detective" in late 18th century Vienna is pretty specious. This is a book formed around the fun of writing about a historical figure like Da Ponte at the core I think, not around the mystery, so if you're looking for an air-tight unsolvable murder-mystery, look on, this is not that. The narrative is well written and edited though, with great flow, which is especially good for a debut author! The main charm of the book lies not in the mystery, but in exploring and enjoying Vienna and the Viennese operatic scene at the time of Mozart through the eyes of Da Ponte, so it was fun to read for me as an opera buff. A lot of the time I was reading the mystery parts I was wishing it would return to the scenes about opera, especially anything with Michael Kelly, another real character with a lot of personality!

This is a book that will have a lot of broad appeal to different groups of readers, including the corps of mystery fans who are heavy library users, but also opera fans, and casual fiction readers.

I received an advance reader's copy of this book on Netgalley.

Brace1737 says

The good news is that you can enjoy the Figaro Murders without any special love of opera. The setting is Vienna in the weeks before the opera has its opening. Lorenzo DaPonte is an "accidental detective" in the

truest sense. He is working with Wolfgang Mozart on the opera Figaro when he is asked to solve two puzzles. Not easy tasks at all he thinks and he is right. But before long these puzzles turn into murder cases.

Go ahead and spend some time in Vienna in 1783. Just watch both ways for horses.

Lindsey says

An ok mystery from the perspective of Lorenzo Da Ponte, a poet in the Viennese court, but I felt the author was trying to show off the historical research too much at times. There were some sentences that just seemed to exist to flatly give information. It was interesting to see the creation of Mozart's famous opera from the poet/librettist's view (Da Ponte was a real historical figure).

Italo Italophiles says

The Figaro Murders is a traditional cozy murder mystery novel set in the past, Vienna in 1786, featuring fictionalized versions of historical people: Lorenzo Da Ponte, Mozart, Saleri, Emperor Joseph II... The author tries to stay as close to the truth about these people and the events they were involved in at that time.

In the case of Lorenzo Da Ponte, the Italian-Venetian protagonist of this book, of which this is the first in a new series, there are his many writings to mine for facts, personality traits, trivia, etc. The author makes good use of these things to bring her main character to life.

The Italian poet is rich with quirks, an interesting past (seen in remembrances by the character), and a fascinating present. And like any decent Italian, he misses his Italian food, resorting to frequenting a secret Italian trattoria run by a Neapolitan.

Like all good amateur detective novels, the protagonist is drawn into an investigation. The first investigation is for a friend, but that is quickly overtaken by a more serious investigation Da Ponte must conduct by order of the authorities.

The book begins the story in 1786 in Vienna, and we spend the whole time in and around Vienna until 1787 with Da Ponte. Da Ponte had been living in Vienna for five years when we join him. Vienna at the time of The Figaro Murders is the busy, hectic capital of an Empire. The author works hard to bring a strong sense of place to the story.

Because Da Ponte was a poet and librettist for operas, we are immersed in the opera community, given a ring-side-seat as Mozart and others create and stage an opera. The opera featured in the book is Mozart and Da Ponte's Marriage of Figaro.

The book is well-written, well-edited and nicely presented. I received it as a review-copy. For readers who love historical novels, there is much about the time and place to enjoy and edify. There is great appeal for lovers of opera, too. And for lovers of mysteries, there is a well-plotted murder-mystery for the amateur detective to unravel.

There is some violence that happens before the reader about 1/4 of a way in, and a bit later, too, mainly perpetrated against the amateur detective, which I found distasteful reading, and out of place in a traditional cozy mystery, in which the violence normally takes place off-scene.

But on the whole, I thought the book was very entertaining, and I wouldn't mind reading the next in the series, which features Mozart's and Da Ponte's work on the opera Don Giovanni.

Please visit my full and illustrated review at Italophile Book Reviews.

<http://italophilebookreviews.blogspot...>

Sara Beary says

This review was originally on Sara's books and Things

Murder, betrayal, intrigue, unrequited love The Murder of Figaro has it all. This book originally caught my eye because a couple of my friends performed a duet from The Marriage of Figaro for solo and ensemble when we were in high school. I fell in love with that duet then, and with rose tinted glasses picked up the book. I enjoyed the book just as much.

Choosing to focus on the librettist (libretto writer, libretto being the singers copy) rather than the more famous composer (wrote the musical score) Mozart was, in my opinion, a great choice. He's lesser known so it gives you more wiggle room when writing a fictional story. Also the author so kindly provided some details from his real life, and about his operas in the author's note.

The characters that the author created for seamlessly into De Ponte's life. While the characters with real life counterparts stayed true.

I enjoy how all of the plot lines got resolved, from the premiere of Figaro, to the murder, and even finding the barber's parents. It's all interwoven and plays out beautifully, while subtly hinting that there maybe a sequel on the horizon.

I received this book from NetGalley in exchange for my free and honest review.

Therese says

Intriguingly situated in the Vienna of 1786 during the reign of Emperor Joseph II. Mozart is at his peak, furiously turning out the music for his opera, "Figaro," while his librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, is desperate to finish the lines in time for the following week's premiere. Da Ponte impetuously decides to assist his barber before the police drag him off to debtors' prison. This help involves going to the home of the barber's former employer, Count Gabler. The visit sets alarm bells ringing in certain quarters, as Da Ponte is dragged from his bed that night, taken to the Minister of Police, suspected of murdering the young protege of the Count whose death was deemed to have taken place around the time of Da Ponte's visit. When we mix in the plight of the barber, the murder of a youth who could pass for a girl, a love affair, jealousy over Count Gabler's expected diplomatic appointment to the German court, suspected spying, an illegitimate baby lost these many years, and nuns with secrets, we have the plot-lines for more than one opera. All that was missing in this delightful book was Mozart's transcendent music

Susan Swansburg says

Perhaps not really my thing - a historical, cozy mystery. Nothing wrong with it, but I found it a bit too easy to put down and a take a while to wander back.

Faith says

The protagonist of this book, Lorenzo Da Ponte, was a librettist working with Mozart in Vienna to complete their opera Figaro. What I was expecting was a mystery set in this opera world. Unfortunately, I was very disappointed by this book because it was really two, unrelated books and I didn't think either of them was really satisfying. I thought the writing style was overly descriptive and felt stilted.

The opera setting, with its creativity, intrigue and professional jealousies would have made an interesting book and it appears that the author did enough research to have written that book. However, the author wanted to make this a mystery, or rather three mysteries, rather than straight historical fiction. I might have liked the book more if the mysteries had at least had some connection to opera or Mozart, but they did not.

Da Ponte was tasked with solving three mysteries: discovering a murderer and ferreting out a spy in the household of an aristocrat and finding the birth parents of one of Da Ponte's friends. The primary, unsolved mystery of this book is why the police would pick a librettist to go undercover in the home of the aristocrat to solve the first two mysteries. I had a hard time buying into that scenario.

Ultimately, I didn't think the opera part of the book added any illumination about the creative process, or enough juicy gossip to make it interesting. The mystery part of the book relied on unbelievable coincidences. The resolution of the missing parents plot was particularly ridiculous. It appears that there is going to be a second book in this series, but I doubt that I will read it unless it sticks to the opera scene. This book wasn't awful and I did manage to finish it, but it could have been so much better.

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher.

Melissa Embry says

It's the year 1786 in Vienna, and opera librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte is on his way to work on a new opera he's writing with up and coming young composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. It took a lot of adaptation from the subversive French original to make "The Marriage of Figaro" acceptable to Austrian Emperor Joseph II, but the result looks like a crowd pleaser. Maybe this will shut up those angling for Da Ponte's job at the Court Theater. Maybe he'll even make enough money to buy a much-needed new suit.

But when he stops for a shave on his way to the theater, he finds his barber being dragged off to debtor's prison, fearful of losing the woman he's engaged to marry, and with no way to pay his creditor unless. . . Da Ponte can trace the lost, and he hopes, wealthy mother who put him up for adoption 30 years ago.

If it sounds like the plot of an opera, that's the point of history and opera buff Laura Lebow's debut mystery novel, "The Figaro Murders." Unfortunately for Da Ponte, trying to trace his friend's lost mother lands him squarely in the middle of a murder -- and he's the chief suspect. The murder victim's father is a fabulously

wealthy and powerful prince thirsting for vengeance. And if Da Ponte can't find a more likely culprit, the Viennese police will be happy to hang him for the crime instead.

Despite the deadly consequences, "The Figaro Murders" is never weighty, swirling through its setting in a thoroughly enjoyable froth of music, gossip and intrigue. Lebow adds a brief author's note promising more operatic mysteries for the likable Da Ponte and his friend Mozart.

Carrie Slager says

[Full disclosure: I requested and received a free ebook in exchange for an honest review.]

First off, if you've watched the actual opera *The Marriage of Figaro* you will appreciate this book much, much more. It's not necessary for understanding it or even appreciating it but you will appreciate it on a much deeper level if you have seen the opera.

Why? That's because we have a murder mystery set in Vienna with what are essentially the characters of the opera. We have ourselves a lecherous count, a desperate love-seeking countess, her grumpy former guardian, a girl-obsessed young nobleman working as a page, a maid and a barber. That, my friends, reads very much like the list of characters in the actual opera. But if you have seen the opera, don't worry. The murderer is definitely not who you think it is and not for the reasons you think. Knowing something about the characters and general plot doesn't reveal the culprit too early, believe me. Really, Laura Lebow basing her characters off of actual characters in the opera was brilliant in that respect because if you've seen the opera you think you'll know who did it but it's really a sort of red herring. It just adds a whole other layer to the book and I did enjoy it.

Lorenzo Da Ponte himself is nothing like I pictured but I never actually knew much about the historical figure so that's not really saying much. He's a largely toothless lady-killer, a relatively impoverished man working as the court poet and sort of official librettist at the court of one of the more enlightened European monarchs, Joseph II. He was good friends with Mozart and is of course a bitter rival of Salieri and his librettist. Essentially, in the beginning he's not all that remarkable but things change quickly when he's accused of murdering young Florian. Then the secret service equivalent of the day swoops in and forces him to go undercover in the household as a poetry teacher to discover who really murdered the young prince. Why would they send a poet in to do a spy's work? Well, things aren't all that simple in Vienna of the day and some main players keep their cards very close to the chest. Despite his indignation at the whole situation, Lorenzo does rise to the occasion quite well and discovers that not everything is as it seems in that household.

Laura Lebow's writing was excellent. She brings to life 18th century Vienna so well that you really do feel like you're there along with Lorenzo. Her characters are well fleshed-out anyway but it's her brilliant writing that really makes them come alive. While you may or may not be able to predict who killed Florian near the end, I personally was quite surprised (not that that's really saying much as I don't read many mystery novels.) Even if you are able to predict the outcome, I think you'll enjoy the book because Lebow writes suspense quite well. Throughout the book there's this aura of tension that gets slowly ratcheted up as the novel progresses. Sometimes it's almost unbearable and you just have to keep reading to find out what happens next. Really, you can't ask for more in a historical murder mystery: actual history brought to life and plenty of mystery and suspense.

The book ended quite realistically and I was actually surprised to learn that The Marriage of Figaro was not what Da Ponte was most known for in his day because it's a staple of opera houses everywhere. No, he was known for some obscure little opera that is practically never performed today. But after he solved the mystery and the opera premiered fairly successfully, he and Mozart are going on a little road trip to write one of the darker, more terrifying operas I've ever seen: Don Giovanni. It was definitely a satisfying ending with that little promise of an awesome sequel coming up because I do love Don Giovanni as well. The Figaro Murders doesn't come out until March 31, but I already can't wait for the next book.

I give this book 5/5 stars.

Nicole Overmoyer says

I finished Laura Lebow's THE FIGARO MURDERS. So there is that. The book is more or less interesting, interesting enough to see the story through anyway. The murders, and there are three, have very little to do with Figaro, Figaro being the lead character in the famous Mozart opera. Mozart plays a role too, though not a large one. The story focuses instead on Lorenzo Da Ponte who really was the librettist for Mozart when he wrote Figaro.

Da Ponte, Lebow explains in her notes after the story, was chosen as the focus of the story because too much is known about Mozart for him to have been a viable storyteller in a murder mystery. That little is known about Lorenzo Da Ponte made him more compelling, in her eyes.

The trouble is... the story was a good story from the start. It didn't need an actual character to be interesting. Da Ponte tells the story well enough, because the emperor's poet would have traveled in all the worlds necessary to tell the story but it almost seems as though Lebow tries too hard to keep him in character, when little is known about his character. He's not the most interesting person in the story.

The supporting characters, the entirely fictitious characters are. I want to read them tell me the story.

But it's a good enough read to pass the time and be happy about it.

(I received a copy of THE FIGARO MURDERS through NetGalley and ___ in exchange for an honest and original review. All thoughts are my own.)

Dan says

In preparation for Classic Lines new gig with the Pittsburgh Opera I've been reading fiction that ties in with the upcoming productions. This murder mystery, set in Vienna, features Lorenzo Da Ponte (librettist for Marriage of Figaro) as the main character working to solve the murder while trying to finish the libretto. It's a great depiction of Vienna during the late 1700s and the early years of Joseph II's reign of the empire. You'll want to have a street map of Vienna to follow Da Ponte's travels all over the city. Reading this really made me want to visit Vienna again and to see the Marriage of Figaro again too. Fortunately the opera is doing it this season in November.

Lynn Demsky says

An absolute perfect mystery – with a complicated plot, well written --- and a lot of history included although a few of the characters are fictional – life with Mozart in Vienna during the 1786's! Was so very good I read it in less than 24 hours and was a fun read! There's just not enough stars to rate it as it should be!

Emma says

VERDICT: If you enjoy both the world of operas and historical mysteries, The Figaro Murders is a must for you. Built on very serious background work and using the characters of the opera itself, it offers a very suspenseful, entertaining, and insightful view of late 18th century Vienna in which lived famous librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte.

My full review is here:

<http://wordsandpeace.com/2015/03/21/b...>

Andrea Guy says

Lovers of historical mysteries will devour Laura Lebow's The Figaro Murders. You get wonderful glimpses of Mozart as well as two mysteries that are intertwined.

Lorenzo finds himself in trouble after he does a favor for a barber friend, who is looking for his birth mother and through that mystery he gets caught up in the murder of a young prince who was working for the baron.

Lebow brings the historical figures to life while weaving a story full of intrigue, affairs and betrayal. Da Ponte is the librettist for Mozart and a court poet. For those not well versed in classical music, he really is the librettist for The Marriage of Figaro.

Da Ponte is instantly likable because things aren't all rosy for him. He's working hard to make Figaro a success and he has a lot of enemies that would like to see him fail. But it is his loyalty to his barber that will endear him to readers. His crush on the baroness is really sweet too.

He has only a small box of items that may or may not help him find his barber's family. This hunt leads him from pawn shops to schools for the deaf. I felt that this search was more important than his search for the killer.

There are many twists and turns along the way and it is virtually impossible to figure how whodunit as well as who the barber's mother was. When you finally get the big reveal, I guarantee that you'll be surprised.

A wonderful read. Highly recommended.

Patty says

A murder mystery set in Vienna in the late 1700s. The main character is Lorenzo Da Ponte, a real historical

figure who worked as a librettist for Mozart's operas (and, you know, also for other people's operas, but most of them have no name recognition today). Which is a pretty cool idea, but sadly the actual book did not live up to the premise. The writing is extremely choppy and does that thing where it avoids contractions in the hope of sounding formal and ~historical~. Lebow clearly has done a lot of historical research, but it's all communicated in awkward infodumps that disappears again as soon as the moment's over. There's no deep sense of world-building. Da Ponte as a character is whiny, misogynist (the book is incredibly, weirdly full of male gaze, with every female character defined as either "hot and useful" or "old and/or ugly and annoying"), and self-pitying, but in Lebow's defense, I think that might be historically accurate. It doesn't make him a sympathetic character though.

The strangest part of the book is that it's basically a retelling of the *The Marriage of Figaro* (well, if Cherubino had gotten murdered at the beginning) with the names changed, but none of the characters remark on the similarity. It's not just a retelling, because the opera also exists in the world of the book, but it's not supposed to be the characters' inspiration to write the opera either, because it's already written before the book starts. It's just... a weird reenactment, down to most of the major mysteries of the book (guess who the barber's long-long mother is? the same one as in the opera! Guess who the murderer is? the only character who didn't really have a plot in the opera!). I'd say the intended audience is people who don't know *The Marriage of Figaro*, but surely anyone who would buy a book advertized as about Mozart's librettist would be at least vaguely familiar with one of the most famous operas.

I read this as an ARC via NetGalley.

Nerissa says

Good mystery set in an interesting time period with great historical characters

nikkia neil says

Thanks St. Martins press and netgalley for arc.

I couldn't help but love this book. The main character is so likeable and you just want to kick some of the other's ass for him. Very twisty turny mystery set in 'vienna, and the atmosphere was just right.

Susanna Natti says

Lots of good descriptions of Vienna, but thin character development.
