



## Hotel du Barry

*Lesley Truffle*

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## **Hotel du Barry** Lesley Truffle

Heartbreak, joy and nefarious doings at London's luxurious HOTEL DU BARRY. A book for lovers of fine gin, murderous impulses and writing of the ilk of Jonas Jonasson.

When a laughing baby is found amongst the Hotel du Barry's billowing sheets, tucked up in an expensive pair of ladies' bloomers and neatly pegged to the laundry line, the hotel staff resolve to keep the child. The hotel's owner, Daniel du Barry, still mourning the loss of his lover in an automobile accident, adopts the little girl, names her after his favourite champagne and seeks consolation in fatherhood. Cat du Barry grows up beloved by both hotel staff and guests, equally at home in the ninth-floor premium suite as she is in the labyrinth below stairs.

Years later when Daniel du Barry dies in sinister circumstances, Cat determines to solve the mystery with the assistance of her extended hotel family.

From hotel detective to roguish Irish gigolo, from compassionate housekeeper to foxy chamber maid, each will play their wicked part in this novel that will charm, amuse and delight.

## PRAISE

'This is a wonderful romp of a novel, that brilliantly evokes the attraction and the dangers of the Jazz Age. There is plenty of fabulous fashion and empathetic characters - it cries out to be made into a film starring Helen Mirren' NZ Women's Weekly

'A must read' - Sunshine Coast Daily

## **Hotel du Barry Details**

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Author : Lesley Truffle

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## From Reader Review Hotel du Barry for online ebook

### Karen Brooks says

Urged to read Hotel Du Barry by Lesley Truffle by a dear friend, she began telling me a little about the book in order to persuade me. She had me sold when she described the opening scene (this isn't a spoiler, either, because it's part of the blurb) where a baby is found hanging on the clothesline of a chic hotel in London during the 1930s. What's not to love about such a gloriously unusual beginning?

Just who the chortling baby's mother might be is uncertain - never mind her father. Enchanted by the splendid little girl, the hotel staff determine to keep her. When the owner of the place, Daniel Du Barry, who is grieving the loss of his lover, discovers the child, he too falls under her spell.

Naming her Cat, after his favourite bottle of champagne, Daniel is captivated. Unfortunately his new wife, Eddie, sister of his lover is not, but she's forced to tolerate this child everyone else adores - the clever little girl with violet eyes and the propensity to fall asleep at the most inopportune moments - or is it only in Eddie's presence? Over the years, Cat grows into a charming and talented young woman, as comfortable with the luxury of the penthouse as she is with the maids and various staff below stairs. Raised on a diet of classic and modern art, music, great (and sometimes inappropriate for her age) literature, as well as gossip, the sexual high-jinks, drug-taking and alcoholism of her step-mother and dirty habits of too many hotel guests, Cat isn't at all damaged by what she bears witness to - she has her insatiable curiosity piqued again and again and her zest for life and people grows.

When, however, tragedy strikes her rather charmed existence, Cat decides to get to the bottom of not only the mystery surrounding the death of loved ones, but to also find her mother. Drawing on the help of her all too eager hotel family, together they plumb the depths and scale the heights of the hotel and its associates searching for answers... answers that not only take her beyond English shores, but prove dangerous to find... This is a delicious romp filled with such memorable characters, witty, snippy asides that had me laughing out loud, heartfelt scenes that make your soul ache, and characters you want to sit back and swill gin with. The tone is marvellous - light and yet not at the expense of beautiful writing or deeper meaning. It's so very different to the kind of books I've been reading lately and utterly refreshing. What I also found really stimulating was the fact that not all threads are neatly tied together at the end of the story. Truffle (what a great name) allows the reader to make their own minds up about some of the characters' pasts and, indeed, their futures beyond the pages of the book and I simply loved that.

This is a sizzler of a read that I cannot recommend highly enough for those who love to be immersed in a past they can smell, see, feel and taste, like a good mystery packed to the brim with three-dimensional characters with personalities you love and loathe, or for those who simply enjoy great writing.

Unexpected and simply delightful.

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### livvingitup says

Among the opulence of the Hotel du Barry lies corruption, promiscuity, scandal and madness, and soon it all culminates into the tragic death of its beholder - Daniel du Barry. His adopted daughter, along the hotel's diverse and eccentric staff, attempt to unravel the mysterious that encompass the lives of both the elite and the working class.

This book was **astounding**. The imagery is rich and crafted with the unique flair of miss Truffle. Every. single. page. of this marvellous novel was brimming with life and it was so enriched. Each aspect of the novel was also illustrated with perfection; the setting felt real and tangible; the tone was light yet laced with so much humour and intrigue; and the plot itself never faltered but maintained its vigour ceaselessly. The

novel is set in 1920s Britain and that new wave of sexual spirit, excessive drinking, ostentatious shows of wealth and prestige and lustful romances were captured flawlessly. Words themselves - well at least not mine - can truly render the mastery of Truffe's work. It's just stellar.

The characters were caricatures of the 1920s - you have the lusty hotel maid; the materialistic men; the tortured wife; and the repressed husband. But they were layered and genuinely interesting to read about. The novel switches between what seems like endless POVs so you get to flavour each character and explore a depth from them that you wouldn't expect from their superficial manner.

Hotel du Barry is also the perfect combination of lust and love. There are some *passionate* and raunchy scenes and allusions that will make even the most Vestal Virgin blush. But set apart from the promiscuity is true love, both short-lived and eternal. Truffe isn't shy and she challenges the orthodox, weaving a bit of BDSM and homosexuality into the pages.

This entire book was a literal masterpiece. It was orchestrated brilliantly, refined with vivid detail and vivacious characterisation, fuelling this book with perpetual wonder. It's got the perfect amount of Gatsby-awe with a dash of Macbeth.

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### **John Stanton says**

There was a lot to like about this book. The blurb lived up to the promise of an intriguing story, and captivating it was. The glittering hotel and its cast of characters, ever so slightly exaggerated made for a wonderful cast in the vein of *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (which I loved). So why the two stars? Firstly, this novel is longer than necessary: time and again we are fed scenes which in no way progress the story nor develop the characters.

Secondly, part of the appeal of *The Great Gatsby* and *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (to which this novel is compared in the blurb) have a wonderful sub-surface frisson derived from the unseen but all-too-real sexual chemistry between the characters: we are shown little, but imagine much. We the reader/viewer make the connections. Things are suggested, hinted at, whispered, but filling in the details is left to the imagination of the reader. The sexual chemistry in *The Hotel du Barry* is in your face, and the more it went on, the less witty and alluring it became: it quickly became boring and tawdry. Why? I can only imagine that the author has a point to prove about herself, rather than a point to prove about her characters, or an atmosphere to create. It read like she was saying "Oooh! I can write a titillating sex scene! Look at how gratuitous I can be! I must be a grown-up, serious writer!", or "Look! I can use the c\*\*\* word!" Honestly, it was so obvious that my imagination just disengaged the more it went on.

Thirdly, the opportunity to really make the most of the unseen character of Matthew as a forceful presence behind the narrative was lost. He just ends up being as flat and cut-out as his portrait. He could have been a Rebecca de Winter presence - he starts out that way - yet the steam just boils out of the idea part of the way through. Similarly, the force of Edwina's character runs out of steam. Her character was like Lady Macbeth, but without the chutzpah.

Fourthly, the ending is a complete let-down. That whole chapter set in hell is stupid and unnecessary. And the plot is resolved WELL before the end of the novel. And that resolution was so completely banal. For a story that started with such a bang, it deflated to an unsatisfying whimper in the end.

## Sophie♥? says

This was a book group read and it has taken me over a year to pick it up to read. In the end I chose to listen to the audio book. Now I enjoyed the women reading it, good job but I'm not so certain of the actual story.

Confusing, over the top and for me it felt off. The language did not fit the time period. Frankly I couldn't wait for it to end, it just went on and on. I have always thought that the best way to know if a book is good or not is to read it out loud. So for me, even though the person reading was entertaining the book was not. The conversations and situations were stilted, ridiculous at times. So ok but would not recommend.

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## Cynthia says

The blurb for this book made me think this was the book for me – history with a bit of a mystery and a great cast of characters. I got that and so much more. There was glamour, excesses and lots of sex. The story was way over the top and the mystery to be solved was not that complicated, but the characters were so interesting and full of contradictions; the rich guy who felt much more at home with the poor; the officer who was always referred to as corrupt but who everyone trusted implicitly; the young person who was very adult. This turned out to be something different to what I thought it would be – not all that disappointing, but be warned there is bad language and sex.

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## Emma Care says

El gran Hotel Du Barry es una novela extravagante, divertida y casi, casi se puede decir que alocada. Me han cautivado cada uno de sus personajes, cada cual más extraño y con esa parte oscura que los hace más humanos. Además, hay situaciones que no solo te arrancan sonrisas, sino que también carcajadas. Secretos, misterio, asesinatos y risas aseguradas. Muy buena lectura.

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## Susi says

Recensione presente anche sul blog Bookish Advisor <http://bookishadvisor.blogspot.it>

Di solito quando si pensa agli anni 20/30 la mente corre subito ai locali di musica jazz che invadevano l'America, New Orleans, New York, Chicago sono poche delle città che ben si sono sposate come setting ideale per le ambientazioni per questi anni – sia nella letteratura che nei film – ma Hotel Du Barry ci porta, invece, nella sfavillante Londra, una delle più antiche capitali europee alla scoperta di un Hotel, di una famiglia, di una vita, di una ragazza e la sua personale ricerca verso la verità.

Il libro inizia con la scoperta di una bambina in fasce alle porte dell'Hotel Du Barry, non è dato sapere chi abbia abbandonato la bambina ma dal preciso istante in cui Cat è comparsa tutti sono rimasti stregati da quella speciale bambina dagli occhi violetti e lo stesso proprietario dell'albergo non ha potuto che prendere la bambina sotto la sua protezione ed è così che la piccola neonata cresce a suo agio sia tra i prominenti ospiti

di spicco dell'hotel, nelle stanze più lussuose, e nei corridoi e cucine dove si raduna lo staff.

Come tutti avrete ben capito ci troviamo in un fantastico romanzo storico dall'ambientazione unica ma la capacità dell'autrice è stata quella di inserire in una favolosa cornice un mystery che sarà la nostra protagonista a risolvere. Come spesso capita negli Historical Fiction la bravura dell'autore sta nel organizzare il "giallo" senza stravolgere la realtà storica in cui la storia è immersa e la Truffle ci riesce alla grande!

Il setting, le ambientazioni sono estremamente dettagliate e precise, senza però assillare il lettore, che si troverà al centro della scena e protagonista in prima persona del romanzo: gli sembrerà camminare tra le stanze dell'Hotel, tra lampadari di cristallo, poltrone dai tessuti pregiati, e le porcellane più delicate dove si riflette lo sforzo e la stravaganza di un'epoca che cerca di dimenticare la brutalità della prima guerra mondiale.

Ma la caratteristica che più colpisce è il lettore è la variopinta presenza di personaggi unici che non possano inosservati: la protagonista Cat, che non passa certo inosservata incantando il lettore come ogni persona che incontra tra le pagine del romanzo, il divertentissimo ed ilare staff dell'hotel, David Du Barry, uomo da gran cuore, e l'eccentricità di ognuno degli ospiti dell'hotel.

Come capita spesso nei Mystery il PoV passa da un protagonista all'altro dando la possibilità al lettore di organizzare un viaggi a 360° nella lettura e poter dare uno sguardo completo e cercare a suo modo di venire al capo del giallo che è la protagonista cerca di svelare.

Lo stile che caratterizza la Truffle è uno dei più belli letti recentemente: linguaggio elegante e raffinato che si sposa perfettamente con il tipo di storia narrata, una storia di altri tempi, di un'altra vita che però diventa la tua nei giorni in cui sei impegnata nella lettura.

Questo romanzo si è rivelato una lettura indimenticabile, coinvolgente, appassionante ma, più di ogni altra cosa, estremamente emozionante: Hotel Du Barry si fa ricordare per un umorismo dal gusto sottile che diverte senza pretese ma che allo stesso tempo riesce anche a commuovere per l'incredibile storia di un affetto, una relazione che supera a volte anche i più stretti legami di sangue.

Letture consigliata per chi ama un buon storico dalle ambientazioni suggestive ed uniche, per chi cerca un mystery coinvolgente ed emozionante, ma soprattutto per chi cerca una storia che riesca a regalarci emozioni vere.

4 Stelle

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## **Rosemary says**

This is the second book I've read by Lesley Truffle and just like *The Scandalous Life of Sasha Torte* I adored *Hotel du Barry*. Truffle's books may not be for everyone, they can be a little on the silly side, but they are always a delightful romp in the truest sense of the word. *Hotel du Barry* has everything sex, glamour, death, intrigue. Truffle also has a deliciously witty turn of phrase. I found myself laughing out loud in parts due just to her wording of a certain phrase.

*Hotel du Barry* does an excellent job of being exactly what it set out to be a rollicking good story.

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## **Louinspace says**

Sarebbero state quattro stelle piene, se non fosse stato per la traduzione barbina, a tratti insopportabile.

@editori italiani: vi scongiuro, assumete traduttori capaci di fare il proprio lavoro, perché così ogni volta è un'agonia assurda.

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## **Trevor says**

Avoid this book at all costs.

There is just so much wrong with it, I would have stopped reading, but wanted to know how bad it would get.

A few of the things that are so bad in this book:

- It's verbose
- Appalling dialogue
- Badly written characters
- Unfinished story lines
- No editing

This was one of the worst books I have ever had the misfortune to read, thus the zero star rating.

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## **Tricia says**

There are some days where you just want something funny and a little bit silly. This book hit the spot.

It is not a great piece of literature but it was very enjoyable.

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## **Lalalah says**

Trama leggerina, ma la scrittura è magnifica. Elegante e forbita, rende appieno l'epoca in cui è ambientato, ce la fa respirare, assaporare, vivere.

"Alcuni bambini abbandonati vengono scaricati sulla soglia delle opere pie. Altri vengono ritrovati in tetri grandi magazzini, o sulle banchine di sudicie stazioni ferroviarie. Ma la piccola nota come la bimba del du Barry venne trovata appesa alla corda del bucato. E non una corda del bucato qualsiasi, dal momento che l'oggetto in questione era ubicato nel cortile della lavanderia di quel magnifico edificio conosciuto con il nome di Hotel du Barry. Un albergo tanto maestoso e versato nell'arte di coccolare da comparire con regolarità nelle fantasie segrete dei londinesi più poveri.

Bene assicurata, la piccina dondolava nella brezza del mattino. Le umide lenzuola sbatacchianti la riparavano dal primo sole, ed è probabile che le dessero una sensazione di contenimento e tranquillità. Invero, il contegno allegro lasciava intendere che se la stesse spassando.

Ora, le menti avidi di sapere si staranno ponendo una domanda: di preciso, come si può umanamente stendere un bambino? Semplice. Presti attenzione, signora, in caso un bel giorno le punga vaghezza di mollare il suo strepitante moccioso. Prima di tutto, è necessario acquistare un enorme paio di mutandoni da donna. Deve essere quel genere di brache che una signora di una certa età, e di una certa taglia, potrebbe procurarsi di nascosto nei migliori empori. Preferibilmente di buon cotone, con appena un accenno di pizzo color crema; capaci, comode e morbide al tatto. Il tipo di indumento intimo che tanto amano la nonna e l'attempata zia nubile. Si noti bene: l'insoddisfazione sessuale è spesso all'origine dell'informe corsetteria beige.

Tornando al procedimento. È sufficiente introdurre il pargolo ignudo nelle voluminose culotte e legare il tessuto in eccesso in due nodi, uno per lato. Le gambe del piccolo devono penzolare libere, mentre il nido triangolare di stoffa provvede a tenere diritta la creatura. Un esubero di spille da balia fisserà il tutto. L'ideale sarebbe far passare a modino la coulisse sotto le ascelle del bebè..."

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## Michelle says

This was a book that I chose purely because it seemed very different. I liked it - it was very "Gatsby-ish" in terms of the glamorous characters and their wealth, and then there are the staff of the Hotel - with very different circumstances in life - almost a bit like upstairs downstairs... a good read.

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## Pupottina says

Hotel Du Barry è un romanzo dallo stile prezioso ed elegante e dalla trama rilassante, ma coinvolgente. È facile appassionarsi alla vita di personaggi, tanto ben delineati e raccontati per dettagli salienti.

Viene narrata una storia originale, assolutamente incredibile.

È ambientato nel 1930, in un hotel lussuoso, elegante, dove a coinvolgere il lettore sono anche le stanze, gli arredi, lo sfarzo, la luminosità e lo scintillio delle superfici alla moda, in perfetto stile Belle Époque.

L'ambientazione è tanto suggestiva da voler entrare a far parte di quel mondo e scoprirne i segreti.

LESLEY TRUFFLE ha esordito con questo interessantissimo e insolito mystery. Tra i protagonisti al centro di questo romanzo, c'è anche una neonata "la bambina dell'Hotel du Barry". L'hanno trovata avvolta in un paio di mutandoni da donna e appesa al filo del bucato nel cortile della lavanderia del lussuoso albergo londinese, miracolosamente scampato ai bombardamenti della prima guerra mondiale.

Nessuno può resistere a quella neonata che conquista tutti con la potenza del suo sorriso. I membri del personale decidono, all'unanimità, di tenerla con loro e con mezzi non del tutto ortodossi convincono il proprietario, Daniel, ad adottarla.

Alla neonata viene dato il nome di Cat e cresce amata e coccolata sia dallo staff che dagli ospiti dell'hotel, ugualmente a proprio agio nella sontuosa suite del nono piano e nel labirinto di corridoi dello scantinato.

Molti anni dopo, quando Daniel du Barry muore in circostanze a dir poco sospette, Cat decide di risolvere il mistero e chiede aiuto ai membri della sua insolita famiglia affinché l'aiutino a inchiodare l'assassino dell'uomo che le ha fatto da padre e le ha donato tanto amore, dandole la possibilità di vivere un'esistenza unica.

HOTEL DU BARRY è una lettura, adatta a tutti, per chiunque. È un mystery, insolito e brillante, sullo sfondo dei ruggenti anni Trenta, capace al tempo stesso di commuovere e divertire. È una lettura avvincente, con una bella trama.

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## **MichelleG says**

Heartbreak, love, joy, secrets and intrigue is a normal day for the infamously fabulous Hotel du Barry.

A highly entertaining read, I would highly recommend this book- 5+ stars!

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