



## **Million Dollar Baby**

*Amy Patricia Meade*

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## **Million Dollar Baby** Amy Patricia Meade

Successful young writer Marjorie McClelland leads a solitary, comfortable life in the quiet, post-prohibition town of Ridgebury, CT. Her tranquil life is disrupted when Creighton Ashcroft, a British heir with time and money to burn, purchases a deserted mansion with a mysterious history on the outskirts of town. Instantly smitten with the talented and beautiful Marjorie, Creighton craftily arranges an intimate meeting, but the mood is spoiled when they stumble across a body while touring the ample grounds of Creighton's new estate. With the intention of reaping the story's literary benefits, the two forge an unlikely partnership and research the mansion's sordid past, but they soon find themselves in the middle of an unfolding series of hidden murders and family deceit. On top of this, the handsome detective assigned to the case has caught Marjorie's attention--and Creighton's suspicious eye. The trio must work together to break through a web of deceptively demure townspeople and the discreet upper class to solve the mystery of the mansion's past before becoming victims themselves. Filled with rumor and humor, this historical thriller delights to its captivating close.

## **Million Dollar Baby Details**

Date : Published April 8th 2006 by Midnight Ink (first published April 1st 2006)

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Author : Amy Patricia Meade

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## **From Reader Review Million Dollar Baby for online ebook**

### **Sarah says**

I loved it. Funny characters, twisty plot mystery, nicely used of the english language from that era. Great finish. Every thing wrapped up like a tight yarn.

The author gave the reader an idea of how men and women interacted on the 30's and how the world was after the market crash, how it affected people's situations and their thoughts of other people.

I like that. I can see this story played out on Broadway.

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### **Cece says**

Suspend disbelief and just enjoy this one for what it is...a mental bonbon. Light, but entertaining, and left me looking for the next in the series.

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### **Andree says**

DNF'd this a few weeks ago after admittedly only 30ish pages, because every single thing about it annoyed me. She's a plucky bright young thing! He's a billionaire! With the worst case of insta-love I've ever seen. I just, I couldn't deal.

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### **Ciska says**

\*Disclaimer: I received a free copy of this book from the publisher in return for an honest review\*

As I do not mind the detailed descriptions in thriller or mystery books I do not often read cozy mysteries. I should pick one up more often though as I enjoyed reading this book. The light tone made the whole 'there is a dead body' experience less significant and pays more attention to interaction between the characters. At points the wittiness became a bit annoying but that is probably more because I am not used to it.

The development in the story is done nice. I found it hard to puzzle along with the mystery. I had expected to be able to puzzle more as most of the investigation is seen through the eyes of Marjorie and Creighton. There are some surprising twists and turns that keep the story fresh. The love story impressed less though I had a good laugh about Creighton's actions to try and get Marjorie's attention.

Marjorie is a very witty personality. I am not really sure I like her though. At some points she is naive in a charming way but I could not shake the feeling that it was fake. Specially the way she was treating Creighton disturbed me a lot.

Creighton is having a similar problem only his is with being a son from a wealthy family and growing up in society. Despite the fact he retired in his early thirties and wants to retreat to a mansion in the country he does not like the whole I am rich and know people in the New York society thing. Though he seems to pull it off throughout the book I still had a hard time feeling it.

I liked Detective Jameson and would not have mind to have a peak in his head. He is a real policeman but has his funny side that shows sometimes.

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## Terri says

Liked the story...new sleuth, set in 1939. Background of time is not brought in enough. Most of time could be reading a book set in current time. But, good story. (Jan 2012)

Sep 2015. Re-read. Didn't remember reading the first time at all. Enjoyed the book, quite a few laughs in it.

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## Kate says

I wanted to like *Million Dollar Baby*, but I could not get into this one. The book's description pulled me in, and the Depression-era setting got me. I love a good historical mystery. But the chemistry between Marjorie and Creighton is forced, and the flow of their relationship moves much too quickly. Their interactions are odd as well. When they discover a skull on Creighton's newly purchased property, Marjorie immediately suspects Creighton, who just arrived in town the day before. A skull, which would have been there for quite a while before Creighton arrived. Suddenly, though, Marjorie is on the defensive and accusing him of murder because "nothing *ever* happens in Ridgebury, then you come along and 'poof!' we find part of a skeleton!". Her character is just not as feisty and intelligent as I had wanted her to be. And finally, the dialog...I think it's supposed to be witty banter, but it doesn't come out that way:

Creighton: Excuse me, what was your name again?

Marjorie: It not only was but *is* Marjorie McClellan.

I did not get beyond chapter six, so please keep in mind that this review is based on only the first few chapters. There just wasn't enough substance to keep me reading beyond that point.

\* I received a free copy of this eBook from the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

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## Susan says

entertaining period piece...no deep thinking required...a light fun read

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## Miss Lemon says

Amy tried really hard to write a good book. I feel a little bad that I dumped her after 11 chapters but I just can't waste precious reading time on a so-so read. It takes place in the Depression Era and the author worked hard to make it all sound like a clever TCM movie classic. But it just was too one-dimensional like a very bad B-movie, all bad acting and corny lines. Just could not get into the characters or plot. But I'll put it on the shelf and maybe in the future I'll pull it down and be more patient and get through it.

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## **Lynx says**

Creighton Ashcroft is a wealthy British heir whose come across the pond to settle down in small town life in Connecticut where none of the big city worries and gossip can reach him. After crossing paths with Marjorie McClelland, a local mystery writer, Creighton realizes the smaller the town, the bigger the secrets. After the pair stumble across a skeleton in Creighton's garden, the duo team up to uncover the mystery, a perfect discovery to solve Marjorie's writers block and solve a 5 year old murder along the way. Thoroughly enjoyed this delightful cozy mystery. Light, mindless fun that brought to mind the old screwball classics.

Excited to find that there are more in the series and will definitely be reading those in the future!

\*Thank you Midnight Ink and Netgalley for this review copy.

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## **Anna says**

[ or maybe because the right guy didn't get the girl in the end (hide spoiler)]

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## **Ruth says**

Marjorie McClelland lives a quiet life in Ridgebury, a small town – think Jessica Fletcher’s hometown from *Murder, She Wrote* – where nothing exciting has happened in years. As a fairly successful mystery novelist, Marjorie’s profession and independent streak often put her at odds with some of Ridgebury’s more traditional residents. Under pressure to finish her latest book, Marjorie is thrilled with the arrival of a true novelty – the wealthy and worldly Creighton Ashcroft, a British heir with money and time to burn, both unusual attributes in the middle of the Great Depression. Creighton is immediately smitten with Marjorie, but when the two of them discover a body on the grounds of his newly-purchased home, she won’t give him the time of day once she meets the handsome investigating detective. Determined to win her, Creighton refuses to give up, and his amateur sleuthing partnership with Marjorie forces them to spend a great deal of time together. But their efforts to unmask a killer whose crimes have been buried for five years brings them closer to danger than either would’ve dared dream, and it’s a race to discover the truth before the killer can turn them into the next victims.

*Million Dollar Baby* is proof that Amazon is way too familiar with my reading habits and preferences. Meade’s debut novel showed up recently as a “suggestion,” and when I read a review likening Marjorie and Creighton to Dorothy Sayers’s detectives Peter Wimsey and Harriet Vane, I knew I had to give the book a try. The Depression-era setting and a British sleuth named Creighton (love that!) prove to be an irresistible combination. Meade’s characters and storytelling style have an old-fashioned feel that makes it easy to visualize classic Hollywood actors like Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant, or Myrna Loy and William Powell bringing Marjorie and Creighton to life on the silver screen. The way Marjorie and Creighton constantly needle each other, exchanging quips galore while dancing around the issue of their mutual attraction is the heart and soul of the novel and is very reminiscent of the screwball comedies of the 1930s. I really enjoyed Meade’s gently sarcastic sense of humor, and I absolutely loved watching Marjorie and

Creighton's relationship develop.

The novel is paced fairly well, but it was the characters that kept me turning pages, not the mystery itself. Like Loy and Powell and their Thin Man movies, the Marjorie/Creighton relationship is what makes this book tick. The mystery is serviceable enough, with a few twists and turns that I didn't necessarily see coming. But what kept me turning pages at a rapid-fire pace was the fun in watching Marjorie and Creighton establish their often prickly, always funny relationship. Million Dollar Baby is a trifle overly long, and there are a couple of spots where some judicious editing could've tightened the plot and pacing of the story, but those are relatively minor issues that didn't detract from my overall enjoyment of the novel. If you're a fan of Agatha Christie or Sayers, or the tone and pace of classic Hollywood films like The Thin Man, you're in for a treat with Meade's debut. Like the escapist filmmaking of the 1930s, Meade does a good job evoking classic Hollywood gloss and balancing that with an acknowledgment of the economic realities of the time. I'm hooked, and if Million Dollar Baby is any indication, Meade's subsequent McClelland mysteries should hold great promise.

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### **Julie says**

A wealthy, young British man retires to a rural town in the US where he meets and falls for a young mystery writer. While giving her a tour of his house and grounds, the two stumble across a skeleton.

I made it about half of the way through before surrendering. I didn't care enough about any of the characters or the plot to continue.

The author tried to write clever bantering between the two main characters and it just didn't work. I got the sense she was trying to develop characters with the charm, charisma, and chemistry of Nick and Nora Charles in The Thin Man, but the characters weren't charming or charismatic and the chemistry felt forced.

The story line was nicely paced, but there was no real tension or any points of interest that made me want to keep reading.

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### **QNPoohBear says**

In 1935 rural Connecticut, Miss Marjorie McClelland is tired of the gossip about her personal life or lack thereof. She's content to make a modest amount of money writing mystery novels and doesn't mind the only man in her life right now is her cat Sam. Then Creighton Ashcroft, the son of a wealthy British industrialist purchases Kensington House, the oldest house in town, and Marjorie finds herself in the middle of a mystery worthy of a novel. Creighton is madly in love with Marjorie and can't understand why she keeps flirting with Detective Jameson, the police officer in charge of solving the mystery of the skeleton found at Kensington House. Marjorie and Creighton convince Jameson to open a five-year-old mystery, believing it to be connected to the body found on the property. Creighton sees the opportunity to be with Marjorie and she sees the opportunity for romance with Jameson as well as fuel for a new book. No one is prepared for the web of deceit and treachery found in their small town.

This story is a cross between a crime novel and a cozy mystery. Like a cozy it's set in a small town and features an amateur sleuth or two. Unlike cozy mysteries, the subject matter gets pretty dark and there's a bit

of violence before it's all done. I wasn't prepared for that kind of plot but it did keep me interested and reading until I was done. I didn't guess at anything and think the mystery is well done.

Where this book lost me is the characters. I couldn't stand either of the protagonists. The dialogue is wooden and unrealistic. I kept forgetting Creighton was supposed to be British and when he tossed in words like lift and lorry, it felt jarring. Marjorie seems like a modern kind of heroine but the second she meets a good looking man she starts behaving like a coquette. She is also a bit naive at times and experiences a few small cringe-worthy moments. She's constantly attacking Creighton and arguing with him like a child. Creighton's behavior is even more childish. He is used to getting what he wants and getting it immediately and will go to any lengths to get it. He applies this behavior to Marjorie. He fully expects her to love him back even though they only just met! Throughout the whole novel he behaves immaturely and I couldn't stand him. He only has a few charming, kind moments but not enough for me to like him. Jameson is a chivalrous gentleman and not really strong enough to deal with Marjorie's forceful personality but he never behaved as badly as Creighton. Noonan provides some comic relief. At first I didn't like him at all but then as he kept popping in the story, his dialogue was so funny that I couldn't help but like him.

I don't think I am interested in reading any more of these books. The characters annoyed me too much to want to read more of them.

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## **Rebecca says**

This is the first of (so far, three) mysteries featuring mystery writer Marjorie McClelland.

The setting is Connecticut, 1935, in the midst of the Great Depression, and it's fairly clear Ms. Meade is a fan of those old 1930s movies because the book hearkens back to them beautifully. You fully expect William Powell and Katharine Hepburn to walk through the door at any moment.

Everything starts when Marjorie meets Mr. Creighton Ashcroft, a wealthy Brit who has just purchased the local mansion. He is instantly smitten with Marjorie (and this reader was instantly smitten with him), and about the only flaw in the thing is that Marjorie seems immune to his charms -- she does, however, take a fancy to the handsome Detective Jameson assigned to the case, when she and Creighton discover the remains of a dead body while exploring the grounds of his new estate.

A nice mix of screwball romance and mystery, with the time period convincingly evoked.

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## **Orinoco Womble (tidy bag and all) says**

I don't know if I'll ever finish this book. I keep trying and giving up because the writing is so very poor. The authoress is straining very hard to "do" Nick and Nora Charles, but honey, they've already been done--by a much better writer. His plots may be full of holes, but he can express himself in clear, concise language, which is more than you've managed to do.

I admit, I'm an ESL teacher and translator. Words are my job. But this person couldn't pass her First Certificate in English unless she bribed the examiners--the Use of English section would blow her away. I find it very, very hard to believe that the authoress has a degree in English. I find it hard to believe she is a

native English speaker, at times. Apparently she didn't pay attention to any of the classes on basic mechanics, style etc., let alone the proper use of prepositions and their meanings. I am less than halfway through, and I find myself closing the book in exasperation because the text itself is so hard to read, due to the glaring errors that would have failed her in my eighth-grade Composition class. And WHERE was a proofreader/editor? This made it into a published paperback???

Just a sampling of the horrors:

1. "The search was called short" instead of "cut short."
2. "Those are five words *wide open to suspect*." In the mouth of a wealthy, educated 1930s Englishman? Cringe.
3. Jameson is at one point "in the process of verbalising his doubts."
4. Then we have the authoress' penchant for replacement verbs for "said", many of which are knee-jerkingly misused. For example, in the same dinner-dance scene, *He summoned loudly*. A person with a supposed degree in English doesn't know that "summoned" is a transitive verb!
5. We won't even discuss her obsession with the word "upon."
6. Then you have such nonsense gems as "It had been an idyllic, if somewhat flawed, evening." The parenthetical clause is bad enough, but it makes no freakin' sense!! Something which is flawed cannot be idyllic by definition!! The ideal or perfect cannot be somewhat flawed.

Cum Laude in English and business, says the author's GR blurb. Where did the author get her degree? In the mail?.

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