



Agony of the Leaves

Laura Childs

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In the latest novel from the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Scones and Bones*, *Indigo Tea Shop* owner Theodosia Browning finds herself in hot water when a body surfaces at the grand opening of Charleston's Neptune Aquarium... The opening of the aquarium is a major Charleston event, and Theodosia has been hired to cater tea, scones, and sandwiches for the private party to honor dignitaries and big buck donors. Things are going swimmingly, until Theodosia escapes the party for a momentary rest, only to discover the body of a man entangled in a net, drowned in one of the aquarium's state-of-the-art tanks.

To make matters worse, the victim is Theodosia's former boyfriend Parker Scully. The EMTs on the scene think Parker's drowning was an accident, but when Theodosia notices what look like defense wounds on his hands, she realizes that someone wanted Parker dead. The local police aren't keen on hearing her theory—especially because of her ties to the victim—so Theodosia knows that if she wants Parker's killer brought to justice, she'll have to jump into the deep end and start her own investigation...

INCLUDES DELICIOUS RECIPES AND TEA TIME TIPS!

Agony of the Leaves Details

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Author : Laura Childs

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From Reader Review Agony of the Leaves for online ebook

Susan Ferguson says

The agony of the leaves refers to the tea leaves twisting and such in hot water, releasing their flavor. Theodosia undergoes a similar agony which she finds the body of an ex-boyfriend and still a dear friend. She sees wounds on his hands and arms that she believes are defensive, although Detective Tidwell is reluctant to take her seriously - until he gets the coroner's report. She has her usual run-ins with Tidwell as he insists she stay out of the case, but she keeps on, determined to uncover who killed her friend - and alienating several suspects along the way. Delaine Dish keeps bugging her about various fund-raising activities and Delaine has caught her next-door neighbor and is having trouble with his past and possible future girlfriends. Theo suggests that she might just have to marry him.

The ending was a bit of a surprise to me - didn't guess the killer until shortly before Theo realized who it was. Detective Tidwell turns out to have a surprisingly humorous sense of justice and fair play. He rather surprised me at the end. But it was a very pleasant surprise! Makes him a little more human.

These are such fun books.

Cindy says

Nice plot and characters, no offensive "stuff," well narrated but recipes are lost (one of the downfalls of not actually reading the book - unless you want to spend the day using FWD & REV). :) Recommended.

Paperback Dolls says

Previously posted at PaperbackDolls.com

I was first introduced to Laura Childs' Tea Shop Mysteries when I was writing tea reviews for my college's newspaper a few years ago. Stumbling upon this series by happenstance, I was a stranger to the world of cozy mysteries. But after reading *Death by Darjeeling*, the first novel in the series, I was hooked.

Over the past three years I have been following the lives of Theodosia Browning and her trusty sidekicks Drayton and Hayley. And who can forget Earl Grey, Theodosia's trusty four-legged friend dubbed with a pedigree of "Dalabrador."

I've enjoyed the mysteries and mayhem that this band of friends has endured over the years, felt the heartache of Theodosia's break ups, and laughed at the wisecracks they've made throughout each novel. The world of the Indigo Tea Shop has become a haven of comfort and relaxation for me and many other readers who have become devoted to the series.

Agony of the Leaves, the thirteenth installment in the Tea Shop Mysteries by Laura Childs, finds the staff of the Indigo Tea Shop at the Neptune Aquarium in Charleston, where they've been hired to cater an opening-day fundraiser. As Theodosia takes in the sights of the beautiful fish and coral, she discovers a new addition to the tank, a dead body. To make matters worse, the deceased happens to be her most recent ex-boyfriend, Parker Scully.

Everyone at the aquarium is convinced that it was simply an accidental drowning, even Detective Tidwell, Theodosia's ally from the police department, is convinced that Parker slipped and fell into the tank before becoming entangled in a net and drowning. However, Theodosia knows better. Someone wanted Parker out of the way, but who and why? It's up to Theodosia and her friends to discover who is behind such a sinister murder and why on earth would anyone want to kill Parker.

As a fan of this series, I have never found a single installment that has disappointed me. Yes, some of the novels are better than others, but all deliver excitement and entertainment. Agony of the Leaves is a tad bit different from its predecessors. It is this reviewer's humble opinion that Agony of the Leaves is by far the best novel in The Tea Shop Mysteries.

Throughout the previous novels Theodosia is faced with solving the murders of people she barely knew or people that were vaguely mentioned as side characters in preceding novels. But for the first time she is faced with the murder of someone she not only knows but someone she also once loved. This simple fact takes both Theodosia and the reader through one heck of an emotional roller-coaster.

The characters are endearing, the plot original, and the setting ideal. This book includes cameos from characters that readers have come to know and love throughout the series (such as Timothy Neville, Delaine Dish, Aunt Libby, Earl Grey, and Miss Dimple) and gives the reader an in-depth look into the world of Charleston, South Carolina.

Agony of the Leaves is an intriguing read that grabs the reader at the very beginning and holds on tightly until the very last page. This book has it all: excitement, sorrow, humor, romance, and of course mystery. This novel is near impossible to put down once you start reading it and takes the reader through an emotional rollercoaster vicariously through the eyes of Theodosia Browning. Once I finished this book I was ready to read the next in the series. Unfortunately, we readers will have to wait until March of 2013 for the next addition to this magnificent series.

Kathy says

I love Laura Child's books! I discovered her with the Scrapbooking Mysteries and then delightfully discovered her other two series the Cackleberry Club Mysteries and the Tea Shop Mysteries. The Agony of the Leaves is the latest in the Tea Shop Mysteries. I love being transported to the magical world of Charleston in this series. Indigo Tea Shop owner Theodosia, Drayton, Haley, Detective Tidwell, Delaine and the rest of our favorites are back with the exception of Theodosia's old flame Parker Scully. Parker is found drowned in the new aquarium on opening night....thus the mystery begins.

This series is very educational for learning about the various types and blends of teas available worldwide. I have learned quite a bit about various blends of teas that I had never heard of before. These books also make you very hungry! Luckily the recipes are included at the end so that you can make them yourself. There are also tea tips and tea resources listed at the end of the book.

There is an adventure with some bees...bees have always terrified me! And I'll have to say that I did not even slightly suspect the murderer. Very clever! I really enjoyed the ending. I like that Ms. Childs' moves her characters along. They have broken relationships, new relationships, they make life changes like moving house.

Do you like cozy mysteries? Laura Childs is one of the best. If you haven't read any of her series yet, don't delay any more. I've read all of her books and I love each new adventure. Agony of the Leaves is a

wonderful cozy mystery. Pick up a copy and enjoy with a cuppa! Looking forward to Postcards From The Dead, a new scrapbooking mystery, in October. There is a short preview of this new book included.

Sue says

I had been debating whether or not to keep reading the Tea Shop series - it seemed to be getting formulaic for me, but then I thought about how quickly these tend to read and how they are a reading palate cleanser - nice, light, shorter than a main course. So, I picked up the latest yesterday and read it (there's that quick to read part). The killer stayed hidden behind a bunch of red herrings until near the end, when certain events gave me pause to think about this person [but then, there weren't many clues or reasons to support this person as the killer - I didn't care for that as much - just one thing almost thrown out near the beginning].

Things I continue to enjoy: Drayton and Haley's back and forth banter, anything with Earl Grey (the dog), the tea party ideas in the story and the back of the book, Delaine's comic relief interruptions.

Things I could do without: more descriptions of Charleston [it's the 13th book, for crying out loud, it's been described pretty well already], clothing descriptions [that's just a personal issue, as I'm not a big clotheshorse], and how Theo is intimidated/threatened in similar ways to many of the other books in the series [yes, one of the ways was novel in this book, but it immediately followed one that has been really overused].

Ellen says

Agony of the Leaves

~Berkley Hardcover

(17)

A+ Cozy Mystery, April 8, 2012

By Ellen Rappaport (Florida)

This review is from: Agony of the Leaves (A Tea Shop Mystery) (Hardcover)

I, too, love this series and have read each book in this Tea shop mystery series. Although I had quite a wait until this book was released...it was worth every minute of it.

In "Agony of the Leaves" Theodosia Browning is plunged into the first murder and we, the reader, are only on chapter one. The murdered victim is discovered to be Theo's former boyfriend, Parker Scully. Theo is the one who finds Parker not only murdered at the opening of the Charleston's Neptune Aquarium, but in it. The devastation and shock may delay Theo's sleuthing abilities for a moment, but not for long. She soon snaps into action and searches Parker's body for any tell tale markings and finds...defensive wounds on his hands. But why should he have these defensive wounds on his hands? and...who was Parker fighting against?

I am happy to say that Drayton, tea brewer extraordinaire, and Haley, Chef at The Indigo Tea Shop, are in it all the way with this case. I so enjoyed another excursion between Theo and Drayton cruising for clues while comparing notes.

This book only became more enchanting as I became more involved with every passing page. The ending especially had me reading non stop with my nerves on edge.

This is the one mystery series that I can truthfully say I am "in" with these characters. The fragranced

atmosphere of the Indigo Tea Shop, Haley's delightfully skilled cooking and Drayton's masterful tea abilities and knowledge of that art are written with such detail...all I can say is "thank-you" to the author. That is one tea shop I want to enter and be shown to a table to put in my order for scones and tea of the day. I highly recommend this book and this marvelous series. You will not be disappointed. I read this in a hard back book.

Ellen

Michelle says

I feel like maybe I missed the last one in this series (or it's just been so long that I forgot what was going on with Theo and her boyfriend). Anyway, the mystery was enjoyable but I kind of felt like the solution came out of left field with no real clues to point us to it. (April 2012)

Re-read for book club and even having read it before, the solution still came out of nowhere. But I love the characters: Theo, Drayton, and Holly and even Delaine. (March 2017)

Mason Canyon says

With March comes the promise of a new book by an author that I have enjoyed following and reading long before I began blogging.

That promise becomes a reality next week when the latest installment in author Laura Childs' Tea Shop Mystery series, AGONY OF THE LEAVES, is released.

I had the pleasure of getting an early look at the book, the 13th installment in the series. The series just keeps getting better and better. All the wonderful and familiar characters I've come to love return, along with a number of new and intriguing ones.

The Indigo Tea Shop has been hired to cater tea, scones, and tea sandwiches for the opening-night private party of the Neptune Aquarium in Charleston, S.C. Tea shop owner Theodoisa Browning takes a few minutes away from the party to view the Ocean Wall exhibit.

What she never expected was to see a dead man in the tank entangled in a net. To make matters worse, the dead man is Theo's former boyfriend, Parker Scully. Parker's restaurant, Solstice, was also helping cater the affair.

At first the authorities believe Parker's death is an accidental drowning. But Theo doesn't think so, especially when she sees defensive-like wounds on his hands. Theo is determined to find Parker's killer no matter what.

As Theo's investigation gets underway, a number of Parker's business associates begin to top the suspect list. When Theo learns Parker's current girlfriend has inherited Solstice and then sold it within days, more names are added to her suspect list. The closer Theo gets to uncovering the killer, the more dangerous it gets for her and those around her.

Author Laura Childs once again takes readers back to beautiful and historical Charleston where she immerses them in the world of tea, scones, murder, mystery, and mayhem. The characters are charming and

lovable. The story is fast-paced, action-filled with bits of humor in all the right places. While it's a story of intrigue and murder, it also captures the loyalty of family and friends, the love of history, and the feeling of small town delight.

Readers don't have to be tea drinkers to enjoy this cozy mystery. But there are nuggets of tea history and information woven throughout the story. In addition, the book includes numerous tea time tips and delicious recipes mentioned in the story such as Parmesan Crisps and Honeybee Scones. An added bonus is a sneak preview of Child's next Scrapbooking Mystery, POSTCARDS FROM THE DEAD, slated for an October 2012 release.

AGONY OF THE LEAVES is a delightful and entertaining read to relax with. It will hold you spellbound from the first page to the last line. Childs keeps you on your toes with twists and turns, a host of plausible suspects, and a surprise at the end.

Author Laura Childs' website is www.laurachilds.com

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FTC Full Disclosure - This book was sent to me by the author and publisher in hopes I would review it. However, receiving the complimentary copy did not influence my review.

Kathy says

The latest book in the Indigo Tea Shop series is by far the best yet. Our favorite tea shop owner and amateur sleuth is embroiled in her most personal mystery yet. While catering the grand opening of the Neptune Aquarium, Theo witnesses the death of her ex-boyfriend, Parker Scully. At first, it seems that the death may be nothing more than an accident, but things simply don't add up for Theo. As evidence is gathered and details of Parker's death begin to unfold, it becomes evident that Parker's death was no accident but a brutal murder, a murder Theo herself witnessed. Theo, wrapped in guilt and grief takes on the responsibility for solving Parker's murder and finding justice for her friend and former boyfriend. A slew of possible suspects and a confusing web of business deals, missing files, and proposed partnerships make the task even more difficult. Still, Theo is bound and determined to bring Parker's killer to justice, but will she be able to do so before she or someone else she loves becomes the next victim?

In this newest book of the series, Ms. Child's has steeped her story and her characters in emotion. With this, the story is much more fulfilling and much less scattered than some of the previous books in the series. At times, the side plot of supporting sustainable seafood seems a bit preachy, but it helps to keep in mind that it is for a great cause that many do not think about enough. The only other criticism I have for this book is that there is almost no evidence presented against the actual killer until the very end of the book. I was still able to pinpoint the killer early on, but most will be left feeling as if they were blindsided by a killer that seems to have appeared from left field. I think this may partially be excused by the idea that Theodosia is so emotionally swept up in Parker's murder that she doesn't even see what is right in front of her, she doesn't see the forest for the trees so to speak. Despite this, I feel that this is still a very good work and the best in the series. Those who love the Indigo Tea Shop crew will definitely love this book.

Shannon says

My guilty pleasure is kind of getting less fun. Perhaps it's the overabundance of adjectives to describe a tea pot or the cheesy way everyone interacts but reading these stories isn't quite as fun. And in this case, Theo's ex-boyfriend is found dead and the hunt for the killer is paper thin (but rife with adjectives!!!) and, while the killer is introduced during the book, there's no firm linkage whatsoever to make you care. Definitely not heavy reading but, if you're looking for something benign to while away some hours, this series would fit that bill.

Jeannie and Louis Rigod says

Theodosia Browning and Drayton Conneley are enjoying catering at the new glorious Aquarium's Grand Opening in Charleston, South Carolina. Theo decides to take a break and just look at the large Ocean Wall tank, when to her shock, a man's body, entangled in a large net, falls into her gaze.

Theo is further shocked that the deceased is her former boyfriend, Parker Scully. Was it a dreadful accident, or even something more sinister?

Detective Tidwell, no stranger to the owner of The Indigo Tea shop and crimes she has solved, answers Theodosia's tormented call.

Amidst the glamor of the world of wealthy charity sponsors, the smells and flavors of fine teas and foods, we are treated to a marvelously crafted murder mystery, where the suspects are many. You will enjoy the surprise twists and glimpse into the future of the series as well.

I thoroughly loved this book as I always do. I will also try some of the delicious recipes and ideas found in the rear of the novel.

Kristin says

Every now and then again I enjoy just turning the brain off and reading some fluff mystery. The Tea Shop books usually fit that requirement perfectly. However, this time I had problems with aspects of the book that in the past I can usually accept with a cuppa tea and a munchie. At first I thought this might be because I've been reading a lot of police procedurals lately...but it wasn't the amateur sleuthing that pushed my buttons. It was the management of the Tea Shop and characters themselves.

For those of you not familiar with this series, the premise of the books are: we have Theodosia as store owner, Drayton as Master Tea blender, Haley as cook extraordinaire. These three people run a full fledged Tea Restaurant and Store. The back kitchen is described as "cozy". We have locals, tourists, and groups dropping in for full tea and meals. There is NO way one person can make the types of meals in the size of the kitchen described and feed the volume of people coming through that store. ON TOP of catered events, retail work, event planning and - in the case of Haley - going to school full time. The menus, while fabulous, were again, implausible given the size of the kitchen and only having one person doing all prep and cooking.

So, three people basically run a full fledged restaurant. If the author had kept the cooking to baked goods, and maybe simple wrap sandwiches or basic tea sandwiches, that I could probably swallow. You start to get

into lobster bisque...you lost me. It has become so unrealistic as to become implausible and thus, I'm bounced out of the story.

Additionally, this book had so many loose ends floating at the end it felt frayed like a pair of knatty jeans. The mystery was lost in all the events the Tea Shop was catering. We had the Aquariums donor recognition benefit, Aunt Libby's fundraiser, the Coffee and Tea Expo, a fully catered impromptu Japanese Tea Ceremony, a photographic scavenger hunt, and I think I'm missing one or two.

The simple southern charm that drew me to these books was lost in a plethora of over the top recipes, unrealistic event planning and unbelievable restaurant management.

Lorilee says

Same ole same ole for these series. I think I just like thinking about all the food Haley makes.

Marge says

There seems to be a trend in long running cozies lately. Turn the likeable main character into a mean spirited, angry, self-centered person. Monica Ferris did it in the last 2 Betsy Devonshire mysteries (Betsy hates everyone, employees, customers etc).

Theodosia was like that in this book. Its all about me and you will do as I say. I am running around investigating (or the current word of the day "sleuthing") and you will do all the work at the shop, at the expo, at catering events etc. I will not really trust you to do it right, and question everything, but you will do it.

Authors please remember if you set a book in a shop, the owner must care about said shop and its success. Huge important expo for new business and Theo can't be bothered to work it more than a few hours. Lets someone not even involved in the tea shop man the booth.

Also we have seen Detective Tidwell stuff his face everyday in every book, how about something new.

Dale Harcombe says

The book opens with the death of Theodosia's friend and former boyfriend Parker Scully. He is found during a private black tie party at the opening of Charleston's Neptune Aquarium. It appears that it was an accident that he drowned in one of the huge tanks. But Theodosia Browning, is not convinced. If the local police don't seem too interested in her theory of murder, she vows to investigate herself. At the same time ,she also needs to maintain her business, the Indigo Tea Shop as well as catering for other charity events she becomes involved in.

This is a cosy mystery and my first venture into the Tea Shop Mysteries, although apparently there are twelve others before this one. It was a pleasant enough read, though I did find out more about the varieties of tea and how it is grown and distributed than I ever wanted to know. The end of the book also included a

number of recipes for sweet treats as well as info about tea resources. These were largely ignored by me.

However others may enjoy those extras.

For me, the story tended at times to get bogged down a bit in all the tea and meal preparations and events.

Although it was enjoyable enough, I thought there were a lot of red herrings and then the murderer seemed to come a bit out of left field in my opinion. I don't think I am ever going to be a tea shop mystery aficionado.

But if you like cosy mysteries you may enjoy it more than I did.
