



Quickstep to Murder

Ella Barrick

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What if your dance partner, business partner, and fiancé was stepping out with another woman? That's exactly what happens to Stacy Graysin, who shares ownership of a ballroom dance studio with the man who broke her heart, Rafe Acosta.

But when Stacy discovers Rafe's dead body in the studio one dark night, the police suspect her of killing him. To clear her name and save her studio, Stacey teams up with Rafe's estranged cousin from Argentina, Tav, to find the real killer. And if Stacy doesn't watch her step, the killer may make this dance her last.

Quickstep to Murder Details

Date : Published September 6th 2011 by NAL

ISBN : 9780451234544

Author : Ella Barrick

Format : Mass Market Paperback 293 pages

Genre : Mystery, Cozy Mystery, Fiction

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From Reader Review Quickstep to Murder for online ebook

Mary says

At the beginning of this book, I could not get into it. I do not watch "Dancing With This The Stars" so I was at a loss with all the names of the many dances that Stacey does and teaches at her studio, Graysin Motion. She was running the studio with her finance', who she had just found with one of the other student/teachers.

Everything was going fine until she found Rafe dead in the upstairs ballroom. Of course, she becomes the prime suspect!

She decides to find the killer herself. Which turns out to be the wrong thing for her to do. Her studio becomes the place everyone wants to get a hold of. Since she and Rafe owned the studio together, his will leaves his half, Stacey thinks to her. His last girlfriend thinks she gets the studio.

But surprise surprise, Rafe's half brother shows up from Argentina to claim his body and his half of the studio!

After a few more things happen to Stacey, the book actually got my attention, so I could give it a four star rating.

I really think it was worth the time to read, even though it did take me a while.

Chaitra says

There's a rare moment of honesty in this book. After everything is done, another character congratulates our heroine, Stacy, on solving the mystery. Stacy replies, "there's not much solving involved when someone points a gun at you and confesses". I can't agree more. I just wish more cozies would admit that. Despite this, it's not a good book. It's only different in that it's set in a ballroom rather than a kitchen.

Stacy is not the main character I wanted to read about. So she's a ballroom dancer, but she needn't have been so condescending about so many professions, so many times. There was a part where she's fretting about the financial difficulties her studio is facing to a rival dancer. When the rival who sells cosmetics on the side, tells her to get a day job, and that it's not that bad, Stacy seems outraged - "I'm a ballroom dancer! Not a store clerk!" she exclaims, like Solange suggested that she prostitute herself. Solange gets her say - she not only sells an overpriced cosmetic item to this chit, but she also makes her look like a class a clown. Never have I rooted so much for the vamp, and never has it been so satisfying when she gets the last word. Stacy also has a stick up her bottom about how the studio needs to be run. It's a serious studio, so let us run it to the ground rather than run hip-hop or kiddie recitals! Never mind that she cannot wrap her mind around $2+2 = 4$. Blech.

Stacy's a loathsome character, without her ever having committed a crime. The others are no better, they all lack personalities. I usually read cozies not for the mystery but for the recurring side characters, so this was extremely disappointing. There were only three characters I was even remotely interested in - two sixteen year olds, Taryn and Sawyer, and a dog called Hoover. Taryn and Sawyer also exhibited the most maturity among this book's characters, all of whom are older than them. I found the romance tacky. Stacy has the hots for her ex's half brother, one whom she almost confuses for the ex himself. And this happens when the ex

isn't even cold in the ground. I wonder if the whole of Washington DC couldn't come up with another man for her to fall for. I also found the way she turned away a student who was interested in joining her as partners really tacky too. She just seems so entitled, so sure of herself that she's hard to care for. So it didn't matter who the killer was - I didn't really figure it out, because the killer is someone I forgot existed - I just wanted it to end.

2 stars, for a lame reason - I need this for a challenge. My library doesn't carry book 2, and it's just as well.

Pary says

Very hard to connect with the main character initially, things got better as the book went on. Wasted opportunity on the mystery side. Definitely had the thrill, and was easy to relate to as a ballroom dancer. Not the most enjoyable read of my life, but definitely not bad either.

Debbie says

I enjoyed this cozy, although I it did not hold my interest for the first couple of chapters. I enjoy Dancing with the Stars, so I thought this was a fun story and I'm sad to see that there are just 3 books in the series.

Jan says

I would like to take ballroom dancing lessons, but I just haven't been able to fit it into my schedule. Ballroom dancing joined well with this mystery. Ella Barrick's *QUICKSTEP TO MURDER* is a good choice for anyone who likes either of the two or both, dancing and mysteries. I am thankful that I read book #1 in the series.

Stacy Graysin and her now ex-fiance, Rafe, are the owners of a dance studio called Graysin Motion in Old Town, Alexandria, VA. They are both professional ballroom dancers, dance teachers and also dance partners in competitions. The studio is part of Stacy's home, and upon hearing a suspicious noise in the studio, Stacy goes to find out what it is and she finds Rafe shot to death on the studio floor. As is par for the course, those nearest and dearest to the deceased are the ones the police look at first, and Stacy becomes the number one suspect.

As the story progresses and Stacy digs for answers, there are several people who have reason to kill Rafe and one leads straight to Capitol Hill. Rafe's half-brother arrives from Argentina and it is possible that a romance is starting between Octavio and Stacy, but he has to take Rafe's body back to Argentina. I found this line a distraction from the story. I did not enjoy it and it felt forced. The ending, as to who gets Rafe's share of the business was a distraction and I did not like the conclusion. In some ways, I am not interested in continuing to read the series.

The book makes no bones about the fact that there is not a lot of money in teaching dance and that awards for competitive dancing are not excessive.

Melodie says

Another excellent first outing in a new cozy mystery series. This author is actually Laura DiSilverio (she has a couple of series under that name), who also writes the Southern Beauty Shop series as Lila Dare. Stacey Graysin is under suspicion for the murder of her business partner, and ex-fiance', Rafe Acosta. She's out to find the real killer in D.C., and finds out that Rafe was involved in all kinds of stuff she knew nothing about!

Erin L says

This is a pretty good first book in a cozy series.

I think I should start with a disclaimer - I've probably been reading too many cozies lately.

The good: the heroine is not too stupid to live. In a genre where this is becoming rarer and rarer, I'm very happy when I read books where the main characters show intelligence. That said, she had moments where she did extremely stupid things. The mystery and characters are well developed. The plot progresses quickly and well with several red herrings.

I did actually figure out part of it, but not all of it.

The bad: the main character is often rude about other professions. She clearly is quite happy doing what she's doing, but the repeated comparisons to regular careers got old. While I've never been to a dental convention and I'm not an accountant, there are people well suited to those roles (thank goodness) but I suspect I'd rather hang out with them than a professional dancer who at times came across arrogant.

And at other times (as indicated above) stupid, which she really wasn't. However, she did run out into traffic and then STOOD in that traffic to bang on the window of a parked limo. Most people would run around to the other side of the vehicle and stand off the street. This was chalked up to her impulsiveness - a trait she really doesn't display enough to make it believable to me.

It would've been less creepy if she didn't end up with a love interest who could be her dead ex-fiance's twin. In fact, even the whole half brother thing is a little strange and probably should've been avoided. I get that people do that, but it really would've been better written without them looking identical. Especially since she never ever slips up and calls Octavio by Rafe's name.

Finally, the character names. A little over the top on the quirkiness. Or is it bad form to try to be a dancer if your name is Steven or Ellen?

LORI CASWELL says

I rarely give a first book in the series 5 stars but this book embraced me from the first page. The setting was something I knew I would like as soon as I heard the title and the characters and the mystery plot did not disappoint. They were perfectly choreographed with all the right moves and set the perfect tempo, fast. Once

you start this book you will not be able to put it down.

The starring character Stacy was very multifaceted dealing with the grief of her ex being murdered in the middle of her studio and strong when she had to be to keep the business going, dealing with wide range of problems with students and instructors. But the true treasure was when her softer side just started to break through in the end when she could let her guard down a bit.

I can't wait until June for the next installment of this series, *Dead Man Waltzing*. It will be a true delight to take another twirl on the dance floor and have Ella lead us into her next mystery.

Received this book from publisher for honest review.

Suspense Magazine says

There's a whole lot to like in "Quickstep to Murder," the first in the Ballroom Dance mysteries by Ella Barrick, the pen name of Seattle mystery writer Laura DiSilverio. Building on the popular television reality show *Dancing With the Stars*, the book is a sneak peek at the backstage world of competitive dance.

When dance instructor Stacy Graysin discovers her fiancée and dance partner, Rafe, is cheating on her, she immediately breaks off their engagement. But it's not so easy to sever ties with Rafe permanently, as they are equal partners in a professional dance studio. Stacy still has to see Rafe at the studio every day, and his idea of adding hip-hop and tap classes to the school's offerings is a no-go with her. But she doesn't have enough money to buy out his share.

Unfortunately for Rafe, his dance career—and his life—are cut tragically short, and poor Stacy is the one who finds his body. Because she's now the only heir to the studio—or is she?—guess who becomes the police's number one suspect? As if that problem isn't enough, Stacy also has to find new dance partners for several upcoming competitions, both for herself and for several of the studio's students. And that's not as easy as it appears.

"Quickstep to Murder" has a great cast of characters, a plot with as much drama as the Argentine tango, and sparkles like the bling on a ballroom dancer's gown. I don't know how Len, Carrie Ann, and Bruno would vote on the television show, but I give it a 10!

Reviewed by Susan Santangelo, author of "Moving Can Be Murder" for Suspense Magazine

Christine says

Stacy Graysin breaks up with her fiancé Rafe Acosta after catching him cheating. However, since neither can afford to buy out the other partner, they must continue to run their dance studio together even after the break-up. It's no surprise that this does not work well for either of them. Rafe wants to increase their profits by adding tap and hip hop classes, but Stacy insists that the studio remain "simply ballroom." Adding to the tension, Rafe has started to act strangely and is slacking on studio paperwork and skipping out on classes he is supposed to be teaching. Then, Stacy literally stumbles onto Rafe's dead body in the studio one evening, and Stacy has to fight to save the studio and stay out of jail!

There are so many different themes for cozy mysteries, but the topic of ballroom dance is unique and timely with the popularity of shows like "Dancing with the Stars." The glimpse into the life of a professional dancer, from teaching classes to participating in dance competitions, is interesting and entertaining. The book shows a wide range of dancers, from up and coming teen students, elderly women in beginning classes who enjoy dancing with a charming dance instructor, to demanding divas in the world of professional dance. I learned things that I never knew about the world of dance, including the fact that dance pros get paid by top-rated amateurs to dance with them in Pro-Am dance competitions. Besides being an interesting tidbit, this situation plays a large role in the plot of the book.

I would expect the book to introduce readers to dance terms and names of dances, and when the author does so, they are explained well. What is strange to me is some of the unusual expressions the author uses that are not related to dancing. For example, "My hands scrabbled over the waxed surface, looking for purchase" is used to describe a dangerous situation Stacy is in. One such phrase wouldn't stand out, but then another one is used soon afterwards: "Rafe was the one with the business brain; now that he was playing least-in-sight, I had to spend a lot more time with the bookkeeping." I've never heard the expression "playing least-in-sight", yet it was used two different times in the book. Yes, I could figure out what each meant, but the strange wording took me out of the story to puzzle over what was being said.

With these few exceptions, the author demonstrates a clever and amusing way with words. Most of the book is light and amusing and free from awkward wording. The mystery itself is interesting, which added to the unique setting, makes it a pleasure to read. There is a variety of colorful characters that add realism to the ballroom dancing setting as well as a long list of possible suspects in Rafe's murder. The book has a fun ending that establishes much potential for dance as well as romance for Stacy.

This review was originally written for the "Season for Romance" E-Zine. The book was provided to me in exchange for an honest review.

S H E L L E Y says

2 STARS ~ A strictly wanna be cozy mystery

What if your dance partner, business partner, and fiancé was stepping out with another woman? That's exactly what happens to Stacy Graysin, who shares ownership of a ballroom dance studio with the man who broke her heart, Rafe Acosta.

Courtesy of Ella Barrick Website - <http://lauradisilverio.com/productsca...>

I desperately wanted to love this book! I mean look at the cover?! Isn't it pretty? *Yes I know I made a purchase based on the book cover.* Stacy's quote below sets the tone for the book....

"The solving gets easier when someone points a gun at you and confesses."

– Stacy Graysin, *Quickstep to Murder*

Disliked:

- **Stacy's attitude**; personally she wasn't very sleuth-y. Her detective skills below par *{its like she's never seen an episode of Law & Order}*. Yes I know she's a dancer not a detective but adding logic to the situation seems to be beyond her.
- **Detective Lissy** - he came across as incompetent and unable to well "*detect*" He used what little evidence they had to try and pin the murder on Stacy (*or that's how it came across to me*)

Liked:

- **Stacy's uncle** – Mr Papadakis. He sounds like a character from the Godfather. Here's a quote to describe him....

“When Mr. Papadakis wants something fixed, it gets fixed.”

- **#sisterlove** - I loved the sister's relationship; that one sister would drop everything for the other.

Overall:

In one word - **disappointing**, its has the mettle to be a great read with beautiful illustrations to promote the story but with lack lusted characters and the plot allowing it to easily determine who dunno it!

Personally I found it to be not my cuppa tea but other's on Goodreads have really enjoyed it. Its probably a bit like *marmite* - you either love it or hate it.

Soundtrack: All the way through this read I had *Murder on the Dance Floor* by Sophie Ellis Bextor

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Jennifer Oberth says

Loved it. Amazing. So much fun, the characters are a hoot, the story is solid. A thoroughly enjoyable read.

Heather Felder says

Stacy Graysin owner of Graysin Motion dance studio is in a pickle. She's caught her fiance cheating, and proceeded to break up with him. That wouldn't be such a big deal, and she could probably get him out of her head, IF he wasn't half owner of Graysin Motion which forces her to have to work with him every day.....and deal with his ridiculous scheme of wanting to add hip hop and "kiddie" classes! Graysin Motion is a SERIOUS dance studio...not a place for kiddie recitals. Stacy will not even entertain the idea!

Rafe is acting extremely odd, and Stacy really wants to know why. She chases down a limo that she has seen Rafe get into before, but gets nothing for her trouble except almost being run over. Planning on meeting with Rafe to ask him what's going on, and to discuss the future of Graysin Motion, Stacy hears something upstairs....of course she has to check it out, expecting to see one of her instructors that had forgotten something. Wrong. She finds Rafe, dead. Not only is this horrible because, hey, he's dead, but Stacy finds out that Rafe changed his will and did NOT leave his half of Graysin Motion to her like he was supposed to! Now, Stacy has to figure out who the murderer is because the local PD has her as the #1 suspect, but she also has to try and figure out a way to get control of Rafe's half of the studio!

[FULL REVIEW here!](#)

Kate says

I was happily surprised to learn that this book is written by the same author who writes the Southern Beauty Shop series (as Lila Dare). I love that series and I loved this book too. I have only a limited interest in dancing (I don't even watch dancing with the stars!) so I was worried that this book wouldn't hold my interest, but it did. The dancing is there, but the book isn't bogged down with technical dancing terms or long explanations, etc. I am really looking forward to the next in this series!

Carol says

The blurb about the author, Ella Barrick reassured me that I did not have to be a ballroom dancing fanatic to enjoy Quickstep to Murder. I tend to lead when I do ballroom dancing which is OK when you are learning in a group of all young girls but not OK when dancing for real!

I really enjoyed this book, I have never read anything by Ella Barrick before, now I want to read anything that she writes. The main character, Stacy Graysin is a ballroom dancer competitor and teaches different types of dancing in the Grayson Motion studio. She owns half of the studio and the other half was owned by her ex-fiance. They broke up when she walked in on him in bed with rumba dancer, Solana. Not long after that she finds Rafe, her ex-fiance lying on the carpet dead.

Stacy is a little bit too trusting and gets into situations which later cause her to wonder if they could be the killer. Detective Lissy is a bit irritating in his manner as he doesn't seem to get farther in the investigation than Stacy does by accident. There are several characters that I predict will reappear in the future books in this series. The author is clever and writes great dialogues, keeps a fast pace and your interest will not wane. I love that she mixed in some politics and fashion.

I highly recommend Quickstep to Murder for your cozy reading pleasure.
