

Sappho's Bar and Grill

Bonnie J. Morris

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Language is both darkly funny and keenly poignant in this feminist time-travel romp.

Fun, sexy, and charming, *Sappho's Bar and Grill*, by Bonnie J. Morris, is a captivating time-travel romp.

Jaded women's-history professor Hannah Stern finds herself alone for yet another Valentine's Day. Seeking solace at her favorite haunt, Sappho's Bar and Grill, she's quickly intoxicated on owner and longtime friend Isabel's peculiar herbal cocktail.

Jokingly declaring that "women's history will be my date this year," Hannah unwittingly sets into motion a series of encounters with real women from history, beginning with Sappho herself. These time-traveling visits both reinvigorate Hannah's passion for women's history and her desire for romantic love.

Presented with centuries of feminist knowledge and insight firsthand, Hannah is also seduced by many of her visitors. Will she find love with one of these women? Or perhaps with someone already entangled in her life?

Each chapter focuses on a particular time of year and a subsequent visit from a historical figure. Examples include a birthday trip to England that ends with the ghost of Radclyffe Hall attending a party in her own honor, Miriam joining in for a seder dinner, and Katharine Lee Bates crashing a homophobic women's summit.

The inclusion of these women isn't just fodder for good plot and story, either. It's clear that Morris is familiar with, and passionate about, women's history, as she imparts a great deal of knowledge throughout her entertaining prose.

Settings and characters are alive with the community of womanhood, with generations coming together to discuss history, politics, sexuality, and patriarchal notions that still somehow dominate popular opinion. Ideas are presented through meaningful conversation and are meant to spur deeper thinking and, hopefully, demonstrative action.

Well-developed writing is *Sappho's* greatest asset; language is vivid yet quick, both darkly funny and keenly poignant. Imagery is razor-sharp, seamlessly establishing the many time-and-place jumps that occur throughout the novel.

Exciting and entertaining, *Sappho's Bar and Grill* is an invaluable examination of women's issues and prominent figures who furthered feminist studies.

AMANDA ADAMS (July/August 2017)

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