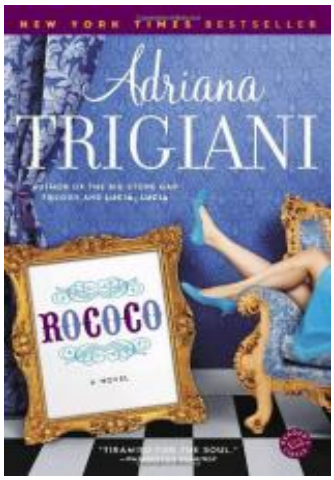
Rococo

by Adriana Trigiani



About the Book

New York Times bestselling author Adriana Trigiani, beloved by millions of readers around the world for her humor, warmth, and captivating storytelling in the **Big Stone Gap** trilogy and **Lucia, Lucia**, takes on love, lust, tricky family dynamics, and home decorating in **Rococo**, the uproarious tale of a small Italian American town poised for a makeover it never expected.

Bartolomeo di Crespi is the acclaimed interior decorator of Our Lady of Fatima, New Jersey. To date, Bartolomeo has hand-selected every chandelier, sconce, and ottoman in OLOF, so when the renovation of the local church is scheduled, he assumes there is only one man for the job.

From the dazzling shores of New Jersey to the legendary fabric houses of New York City, from the prickly purveyors of fine art in London to luscious Santa Margherita on the Mediterranean coast of Italy, Bartolomeo is on a mission to bring talent, sophistication, and his aesthetic vision to his hometown.

Trigiani's glittering mosaic of small-town characters sparkles: Bartolomeo's hilarious sister, Toot, is in desperate need of a postdivorce transformation?thirteen years after the fact; "The Benefactor," Aurelia Mandelbaum, the richest woman in New Jersey, has a lust for French interiors and a long-held hope that Bartolomeo will marry her myopic daughter, Capri; Father Porporino, the pastor with a secret, does his best to keep a lid on a simmering scandal; and Eydie Von Gunne, the chic international designer, steps in and changes the course of Bartolomeo's creative life, while his confidante, cousin Christina Menecola, awaits rescue from an inconsolable grief.

Plaster of Paris, polished marble, and unbridled testosterone arrive in buckets when Bartolomeo recruits Rufus McSherry, a strapping, handsome artist, and Pedro Allercon, a stained-glass artisan, to work with him on the church's interior. Together, the three of them will do more than blow the dust off the old Fatima frescoes?they will turn the town upside down, challenge the faithful, and restore hope where there once was none.

Brilliantly funny and as fanciful as flocked wallpaper, filled with glamorous locales from New Jersey to Europe, from Sunday Mass to the American Society of Interior Designers soirée at the Plaza Hotel, **Rococo** is Trigiani's masterpiece, a classic comedy with a heart of gold leaf.

Discussion Guide

1. The author, Adriana Trigiani, begins **Rococo** with a discussion of Bartolomeo's house and its décor. Through this introduction, what do you immediately learn about the book's protagonist? What aspects of B's home best represent his personality and character?

2. B identifies strongly with his home and the way it is decorated. Do you feel that the surroundings of your home give similar clues to your personality? How?

3. What details in **Rococo** evoke the setting of 1970s New Jersey? What do you think the novel would have been like had it been set in another time period or locale?

4. What about B is so alluring to the women around him? How is he alternately transfixed by and indifferent to the women in his life? In particular, how do Capri and Eydie have an impact in the way that B views and relates to the opposite sex?

5. Why do you think that Bartolomeo uses a nickname in lieu of his given name? How does the moniker "B" give a different impression from "Bartolomeo"?

6. How would this book have been different had it been told from someone else's point of view?for instance, that of Eydie, Rufus, or Toot? In another vein, what effect would shifting the point of view to an impartial, third-person point of view have?

7. How are B and Toot similar? In which ways do they challenge each other? Do they enable each other in any way? Is any aspect of their relationship reminiscent of one you've had with a sibling?

8. "My temperament is better suited to making art than saving souls," says B (page 39). How does this statement give you a glimpse into B's personality? Describe his struggle with the Roman Catholic Church.

9. How does spirituality play a part in B's everyday life? How does not being selected as the designer for the church renovation thrust him into a spiritual crisis? What about Father Porp frustrates him? How do the two ultimately become allies?

10. How does Christina deal with grief and loss? How does she blossom within the novel? What do you think her daughter will grow up to be like, based on your glimpse of her in the book?

11. What similarities does B share with his namesake, Two? Were you surprised when Two disclosed his homosexuality? What is B's attitude toward sexuality?

12. How is Eydie Von Gunne a larger-than-life personality? What does she represent to B? How are the two of them kindred spirits?

13. Why are Pedro and Capri an unlikely couple? What about each might attract the other? Why do you think Aurelia is so disapproving of the match, and what ultimately compels her to accept the marriage?

14. How does B's family disrupt his life? How are they a loving and supportive presence? In which ways is B a loner, and how is he fully integrated into the family fold?

15. How does B's family disrupt his life? How are they a loving and supportive presence? In which ways is B a loner, and how is he fully integrated into the family fold?

16. Why do you think B has "decorator's block" when faced with revamping the church? What are his weaknesses as a designer? How does collaborating with Rufus allow B to be more creative and less of a "people pleaser"?

17. In which ways is B's discovery of the statue of Little Mary a miracle? Why does B donate the ensuing windfall to the church renovation? If you were in a similar situation, what do you think you might have done?

18. What does the inclusion of recipes add to the novel? Are there any that you have tried or plan to try? Do you have any signature dishes, like those of B and his family and friends, that you would include in a book?

19. Would you like to see a sequel to **Rococo**, following either B or another character? If not B, who?

Author Bio

Adriana Trigiani is the *New York Times* bestselling author of 21 books of fiction and nonfiction. Her work has been published in 38 languages around the world. An award-winning playwright, television writer/producer, and filmmaker, Trigiani wrote and directed the major motion picture of her debut novel, BIG STONE GAP; adapted her novel, VERY VALENTINE, for television; and directed the documentary, *Queens of the Big Time*, among others.

In 2023, President Sergio Matterella of Italy awarded Trigiani the *Cavaliere dell?Ordine della Stella d?Italia*. The Library of Virginia bestowed their highest honor, the *Patron of Letters* degree, to Trigiani in 2024. She received the 2025 Ellis Island Medal of Honor for her significant contributions to literature, culture, and communicty.

Trigiani grew up in Appalachia, in the mountains of Virginia, where she co-founded The Origin Project, a year-round, in-school writing program that has served over 25,000 students since its inception in 2014. Trigiani is proud to serve on the

New York State Council on the Arts. She lives in Greenwich Village with her family.

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