



## The Murder of a Queen Bee

*Meera Lester*

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## **The Murder of a Queen Bee** Meera Lester

### **All abuzz about murder . . .**

Former police officer Abigail Mackenzie has made a fresh start as a beekeeper and farmer in picturesque Las Flores, California—but she never suspected her new hometown would prove to be a hive of criminal activity.

When Abby invites her free-spirited friend, Fiona Mary Ryan, owner of Ancient Wisdom Botanicals, to her farmette for lunch, she never imagines that Fiona's no-show will lead to a murder investigation.

Only hours after their lunch date, Fiona's body is found in a burning car in what at first appears to be a tragic accident. But after the coroner's report is issued, it's clear she was dead before being placed in the vehicle. Someone has gone to great lengths to cover up a murder. But who—and why?

Driven by her loyalty to her friend, and her deeply ingrained skills as a trained investigator, Abby sorts through suspects—who seem to be sprouting up everywhere. Speculating that Fiona's herbal business might hold the key to motive, Abby isn't afraid to get her hands dirty to smoke out a killer . . .

Includes farming tips and delicious recipes!

## **The Murder of a Queen Bee Details**

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Author : Meera Lester

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## From Reader Review The Murder of a Queen Bee for online ebook

### Juli says

\*\*I received a copy of this book from Kensington Press via NetGalley in exchange for a fair, honest review\*\*

When Abigail Mackenzie left her job as a police officer in Las Flores, CA, she bought a farmette and settled into a life of farming and beekeeping. She pads her income with private investigation services on the side. When her friend and local businessowner, Fiona Mary Ryan is murdered, Abby steps up to help investigate. Cult tie-ins, an ex-boyfriend and possible drug connections soon have local law enforcement and Abby scrambling to discover who is the murderer in their midst.

I enjoyed this book! Every chapter starts with a note from The Henny Penny Farmette Almanac and ends with a recipe or tips about farming. Some of the tips are quite informative, like the proper way to clean freshly collected farm eggs (I never knew there was a proper way to wash them off -- I've been doing it wrong!) and how to make tea from fresh herbs.

When I first started reading the book, I did a bit of reading on Farmettes. Basically, a Farmette is a small, residential farm where the owner makes their main income off-farm. In my mind, I see it as somewhere between a hobby farm and a regular farm. Abby makes some money off honey and herbs, but her side-jobs doing investigations help pay the bills. Living in the South, I know a lot of women who do the same thing.....legal secretary, teacher or some-such by day and evening/weekend farmer, crafter, herbalist. This made Abby seem like a very believable and likable character for me.

The mystery portion of the plot was well-written with plenty of possible suspects, red-herrings, twists and turns. The side plots did not over-power the mystery, although one character was extremely annoying. I will not provide any spoilers ... but readers will know immediately which one I wanted to punch in the face. :) The character was written to incite that very emotion in readers, I believe....and it was extremely successful in my case. :) The engaging mystery...plus wanting to know what happened with the detestable character....kept my attention right up to the very end of this book!

I will definitely be reading more in this series! A fun, mysterious time down on the Farmette!

This is the 2nd book in Meera Lester's Henny Penny Farmette Mystery series. Murder of a Queen Bee has a release date of September 27th, 2016 from Kensington Press. Lester has also written several non-fiction books including 365 Ways to Live Happy, and Why Does Santa Wear Red and 100 Other Christmas Curiosities Unwrapped. Check out her website at: [www.meeralester.com](http://www.meeralester.com)

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### Jessica Robbins says

For complete review check out my blog at <https://booksaplentybookreviews.blogs...>

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## Carrie says

When Abigail Mackenzie left her former job as a police officer she made a fresh start for herself as a beekeeper and farmer in Las Flores, California. What Abby didn't expect was to find herself drawn into a murder investigation after her friend Fiona doesn't arrive for a lunch date one afternoon.

Hours after Fiona was a no show to the scheduled lunch her body is found in a burned out car in what looks to have been a horrific accident. But what the medical examiner finds is a bit shocking, it was obvious that Fiona had already been dead before the fire, Abby is immediately drawn into the investigation out of loyalty to her friend.

The Murder of a Queen Bee sounds like the exact kind of cozy mystery that I should have absolutely loved to read. The idea that the main character was once a police officer was very appealing since sometimes I just can't get behind a character getting involved in solving a murder who had no previous experience.

Unfortunately though it didn't take long to find that this book just really wasn't my cup of tea. The story often gets a bit overly descriptive to the point it became a tedious read that feels more like I'm being taught about every little detail than enjoying a fictional whodunnit. But also another thing I found a bit frustrating was between each chapter it jumps into recipes and tips that just completely broke up any flow of the story for me. As much as that seems like a great addition I would personally prefer it be held off until the end.

Overall, just not my cup a tea I'm afraid. A bit too detailed narrative and wasn't a fan of the formatting with some added extras.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.wordpress....>

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## Brenda says

The Murder of a Queen Bee is the second in the Henny Penny Farmette Mystery series featuring Abigail "Abby" MacKenzie. Abby has retired from the Las Flores Police Department in California, and has purchased an old farmhouse and turned the house and surrounding field into an idyllic farmette, located on Farm Hill Road.

Abby has planned a luncheon with her best friend and former partner Katerina "Kat" Petrovsky and Fiona Mary Ryan, the owner of Ancient Wisdom Botanicals. Fiona is a former commune member who left the commune because she doesn't agree with the way the new guru Hayden Marks, his partner Premalatha Baxter and their hired security man Dak Harmon are leading the members. Fiona has asked Abby for advice in dealing with a personal issue, but when the woman doesn't arrive for the lunch, Abby becomes worried. While waiting for Fiona's arrival Kat receives a call that Fiona's car has been found burning at Kilbride Lake with Fiona behind the wheel.

Determined to help her former police department locate Fiona's killer, she soon joins forces with Fiona's brother Jack Sullivan who has arrived in town to tend to his sister's funeral. Plenty of suspects arise including the commune members, Fiona's estranged husband Tom Davidson Dodge and her on again off again boyfriend Laurent Duplessis.

Abby's personal life has also hit a snag with the return of her ex boyfriend Clay Calhoun. Clay has breezed back into town expecting to pick up where they'd left off prior to his abrupt departure. Abby has her hands full with Clay's bad attitude, his demands on her time and she still has a niggling attraction to her neighboring dairy farmer Lucas Crawford. Further complicating matters is the flood of new feelings for Fiona's brother Jack.

While not absolutely necessary I do recommend reading the first in the series, A Beeline to Murder to get a better understanding of the characters. A fast paced, fun filled cozy with all the requirements - a cute dog, best friends, a quaint town, and romance. I am not at all a fan of the love triangle so was more than happy to see one of the trio take their leave.

I received an advanced copy of this book from NetGalley via Kensington Publishing. I was not required to write a review but am more than happy to share my honest opinion.

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### **Anne says**

I'm giving Queen Bee 2.5 stars, there's a lot I like, but there are some issues which I forgave in the first book, but are starting to add up. I like the story line, and while there is a lot of detail about Abby's farm life, it doesn't bother me (other than calling it a farmette). The author does have a tendency to bring things up and then drop them. One of the times in this book was a business being closed and we never get the full details. What exactly was causing the problem? Was it accidental or malicious? The author also has Abby attracted to multiple men in both books. I can see someone being attracted to more than one man, but a new man in every book added to a pre-existing potential interest? Then Abby's response to a former lover coming back after a year and his actions while there? The ending was also abrupt and what happens to a potential suspect (there never was any proof provided that the individual was truly involved (though likely)) came out of nowhere and really made no sense.

I received my copy from Netgalley in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Barbara Tobey says**

Interesting cozy mystery. Our former police officer, now beekeeper with a chicken farmette gets involved in a friend's murder. Her interactions with the men in her life, old and new, add charm and intrigue to the story. The publisher provided a copy via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Nice series. I look forward to reading more.

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### **Peggy R says**

This is the second book in this series and I found it to be just as enjoyable as the first. It is well written with a nice fluid pace. There is a lot going on in this book and Abby is once again at the center of it all. I think Abby is a good solid protagonist. Being an ex-cop and a part time investigator, she is smart in her investigations and keeps the police informed. I enjoyed all of the secondary characters, especially her friend Katy. There is also a potential romance brewing for Abby as well.

I thought the mystery was well plotted and unfolded nicely over the course of the book. There are several

suspects, some of them not so nice, and plenty of clues woven throughout the story. I did figure out the identity of the killer (which was a surprise to me because I don't usually) but it did not take away from the enjoyment of the book. I also liked that each chapter started with a recipe (some I think I may even try once the weather turns cooler) and ended with a tip.

I received an ARC from the publisher through Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. This did not influence my opinion and the thought expressed are my own.

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## **Linda says**

Abby MacKenzie is a beekeeper, farmer, and part time investigator. Previously a cop; a thumb injury forced her into early retirement. She's just starting to get the feel of her land, and find some peace in the foothills of Las Flores, CA, when a sudden death calls attention to a religious commune up the mountain with reported suspicious activities. Abby's sleuthing senses start twitching, and along with her best friend Kat--a police officer--she begins searching for answers to their friend's horrible demise.

Author Meera Lester's writing is so vivid it reminds me of watching a movie in high definition. She expertly uses the five senses to embellish details for readers throughout the story. I would give this story more than 5 stars, if I could. It's one of the most suspenseful cozy mysteries I've read lately. Every page I turned, I was on pins and needles waiting to see what happened next. I found the characterization fine-tuned to the point I could feel a myriad of emotions along with the cast--from love to hate to every emotion in between. I began to narrow down the suspects in the last fourth of the book, however; I wasn't totally sure of the who and why until every stone was unturned. The delicious recipes and handy tips included in each chapter are added bonuses. To say I'm ready for the next story in this series is an understatement. Bravo, Ms. Lester!

The publisher sent me a digital ARC provided through NetGalley, in the hopes I would review it.

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## **LORI CASWELL says**

### **Dollycas's Thoughts**

I am excited to travel back to Las Flores, California for my second visit to the Henny Penny Farmette owned by Abigail Mackenzie.

After leaving the police force Abby has become a farmer/beekeeper but she still does private investigations on the side. She is also remodeling her farmhouse as time and money permits. When her friend Fiona fails to show up for lunch at Abby's farm, first she get a little testy but then she gets worried. Kat, her former partner, was at the farm for lunch too, but she is called away for a car fire, their friend Fiona appears to be the victim. Abby can't help but get involved. When the investigation leads to a commune outside of town Abby get caught in a very dangerous situation. As if she doesn't have enough bees in her bonnet her ex boyfriend, Clay has strolled back into town and expects to pick their relationship up right where they off. Bee-leive me she really doesn't need to deal with this guy especially because she may have feelings for a couple of other men around town.

I have become a huge fan of Abigail Mackenzie. She knows everyone on the police force and they really don't seem to mind too much when she helps them clear their cases. She is very observant and insightful but she sometimes forgets she no longer has a gun to protect herself. Nothing seems to hold her back. Back in

the day, she would have been called a “gutsy broad”. Her love life is a bit of a mess but she really is too busy to evaluate that right now. Her growth throughout the story was a pleasure to see. I also am head over heels crazy about her dog.

All the other characters are very fleshed out and bee-lievable. Good or bad I had a good grasp of who they were and how they fit seamlessly into the story.

Meera Lester writes in a way that makes you almost feel as you are watching the mystery play out on television. Visualization was super easy. I was engaged in the story from the beginning to the end. The mystery was well conceived and there were plenty of suspects. Some of the clues were of the red herring variety but I enjoyed following all the clues very much. The pace was perfect for me.

I appreciated the farming tips and recipes that started each chapter as well. In the e-book advance review copy they fell into place a bit clumsily, but I am sure they shine in the print editions.

I found *The Murder of a Queen Bee* to “bee” a first-class mystery, full of interesting characters, tempered with humor and just a little romance.

I am really excited to read the next book in this series. *A Hive of Homicides* hits stores later this month.

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### **Ionia says**

I guess you could say I loved this book for all the wrong reasons...rather than the mystery, I loved it for the growth and strength of the main character. And a lot of other reasons.

First of all, the mystery begins early in the story and that always makes me happy. I really dislike it when the author spends ages making pointless connections that go nowhere during the course of the story, so jumping right in works for me.

I liked the descriptions of the farmette, the chickens and especially the beekeeping. I kept drifting into daydream territory during this book, imagining myself in the main character's place. Her imagery was so wonderful that I felt like I was there beside her.

The mystery was interesting and not exactly what I would have expected, although by the mid point I had wagered a guess on who the killer was.

The main things that impressed me in this book was how the main character was portrayed. She had her moments of weakness, as all of us tend to, had some times of confusion, but in the end, stood up for herself and what she believed in. Also, now I want a new bathtub.

Great book, recommended!

This review is based on a complementary copy from the publisher, provided through Netgalley. All opinions are my own.

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### **Sarah says**

Book 2 in a series. I definitely felt at times that I was missing information that I probably would have gotten if I had read the first book.

This book just wasn't my cup of tea. I had a hard time getting into the story, and in fact kept putting it down to read something else. Lots of little things that just added up to a big, "Nope." for me.

The entire "farmette" thing. It's a freaking farm, even if it's a small farm. For some reason the word "farmette" grates on me.

And I know this is a cozy, and therefore you have to be prepared to suspend your disbelief, but I just couldn't manage it in this one. Yes, Abby is a retired police officer. But retired is the active word, and there's absolutely no way they'd have let her on a crime scene, friends of another cop or not.

The relationship between Jack, Abby and Clay bugged me too, since I am not at all a fan of the love triangle trope and even a hint of one is a huge turnoff to me.

I really struggled to get past my first impressions of this book. I can't say I would recommend it, or rush out and buy the next in the series.

**\*I received an ARC of this book from the publisher, via NetGalley, in exchange for an honest review\***

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### **Betty says**

Abigail MacKenzie's life changed when a friend, Fiona's body was found in burning in her car. Her ex-boyfriend, Clay, returns and moves into her home without notice. He plans on redoing her bathroom for her. Jack Sullivan, Fiona's brother arrives in town to buried her. Together Abby and Jack sort through Fiona's affairs to find out who kill her and why. There are unexplained gunshots occurring around the area. I found it a relaxing read that would hold my attention, but the herbal remedies, recipes at the end of each chapter broke my concatenation. As each chapter has a short comment from the Farmette handbook it was a frustration until I could pick up the thread of the narrative. I felt the book had more romance than mystery. I recommend this book to read on a stormy day.

Disclosure: I received a free copy from Kensington Books through NetGalley for an honest review. I would like to thank them for this opportunity to read and review the book. The opinions expressed are my own.

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### **Lisa Morin says**

I received an ARC of this book from the publisher and NetGalley in exchange for my fair and honest review. All thoughts and opinions are my own.

This is the first time I have read anything by Meera Lester and The Murder of a Queen Bee was very good. Abby Macenzie has gone from police officer to farmer and beekeeper. She may have quit being a police office, but when a good friend of hers, Fiona Mary Ryan, doesn't show up for lunch, Abby knows something isn't right.

Saddened and shocked by the death of her friend, Abby sets out to ask questions, after all, who better than an ex-cop to dig into a mystery.

Unraveling the truth proves pointless at times, but she refuses to give up.

The other twist to the story is Abby's old flame Clay. It seems he left a year ago and suddenly turns back up, leaving Abby a bit dumbfounded. When Abby teams up with Fiona's brother Jack during the investigation, she begins to doubt her relationship with Clay.

I enjoyed this book and the author has really created a cast of great characters. I didn't like Clay, but I do like Jack, maybe something will spark between them. Her friend, Kat, is still a police officer and plays a good role with Abby. Their different personalities make the book entertaining. I look forward to going back and reading the first book in the series.

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## Jody McGrath says

\* I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review \*

Abigail Mackenzie, a former police officer in Las Flores, California, now owns a small farmette, where she raises bees and sells homemade jams and fresh vegetables. Abby and her ex-partner Kat are waiting for their friend, Fiona, to join them for lunch at the farmette, but Fiona never shows. Suddenly Kat is called into work to investigate a car on fire with a body inside. Knowing she can't stop Abby, the two of them race to the scene. Abby's loving and free-spirited friend has been murdered. With the help of Jack, Fiona's brother, Abby swears she will find her friend's killer so she can rest in peace.

This is the second book in the Henny Penny Farmette Mystery series. I did not read the first book, so I have no idea why it is called Henny Penny. Maybe that is the name of her place. They never mentioned it, that I can recall. Anyways, I was entertained by this book, but it was very easy to put down. The mystery wasn't much of a mystery. It was more of finding evidence against the people you know did it type of book. That was how blatantly obvious the killer was. They tried to throw in a couple of red herrings, but it totally did not work. The finding of the evidence was interesting, but it isn't like you could try to guess that. It took a lot of the fun out of playing who done it!

I mostly liked the main character. I didn't feel any connection between her and her best friend and ex-partner, Kat. It was more like Kat was set up to give her inside information. I also can't figure out what the entire police force was doing while Abby investigated. They wouldn't even link Fiona's murder case and her husband's attempted murder case together. What? Abby is also really weird with her relationship with men. There are three in the picture, but none that she is really seeing. But even thoughts about all three of them gets her hot under the collar. I do have to say that I liked her spunk and her brains. She was a trained police officer, so it also made sense when she would run towards trouble, instead of away from it.

One thing that could have been totally cut out were the strange recipe/farming tips/herbal lore/etc. that is between each chapter. Somewhere they would have to squeeze in a vague reference to a cake or fixing the chicken coop, so at the end of the chapter they could give you the recipe or tell you how to fix it. I am not kidding about the randomness either. One time Abby woke up with a craving for chocolate mint mousse. She never made it or ate any of it or even talked about it after mentioning her craving. But at the end of the chapter, there was the recipe! Huh?

Altogether, the book was written well and entertaining. It by no means has me waiting on my seat edge for the next installment, but I might read it, if I remember it when it comes out.

## Fred says

The Murder Of A Queen Bee is the second book in the Henny Penny Farmette Mystery series.

I love this new series by Meera Lester. I enjoy reading books that provide the reader with a very interesting mystery and gives me a chance to learn something new about gardening and other aspects of farming. This series fills the bill, each chapter has a quote from the Henny Penny Farmette dealing with either some aspect of gardening or beekeeping.

Abigail Mackenzie, having been injured in the line-of-duty with the Las Flores PD, has left the police department and has gotten a little farm where she raises vegetables and bees. She has settled in well to her farming activities and is enjoying her new life.

When her friend, Fiona Ryan is found dead in her car, the police consider it a case of suicide, but Abby and her former partner on the police force, Katerina, don't share that view. As Abby begins to look into Fiona's death she is drawn to commune outside of town, where there is a possibility of drug dealing being done there. Also helping Abby is Jack Sullivan, Fiona's brother.

In addition to having to deal with her farmette and the investigation, Abby also has to deal with the reappearance of Clay Calhoun, her former boyfriend who see,s to think that they can just pick up where they were.

A wonderful new series with an entertaining cast of characters.

Recipes are also included in the book.

Will be watching for the next book in this series.

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