



Dying for Strawberries

Sharon Farrow

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Much has changed for Marlee Jacob since she returned to Oriole Point, Michigan, three years ago. Between running the Berry Basket, dodging local gossip, and whipping up strawberry muffins, smoothies, and margaritas to celebrate the town's first annual Strawberry Moon Bash, the twenty-nine-year-old hardly has time for her fiancé, let alone grim memories of her old life in New York . . .

But unfortunately for Marlee, Oriole Point is muddled with secrets of its own. First her friend Natasha disappears after an ominous dream. Next the seediest man in town threatens to crush her business. Then an unknown person nearly kills her on the night of the Bash. When she discovers a dead body while searching for Natasha, Marlee realizes she'll have to foil a killer's plot herself—before the past permanently stains her future.

Dying for Strawberries Details

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Author : Sharon Farrow

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From Reader Review Dying for Strawberries for online ebook

Asteropê says

3.75

Pretty enjoyable. A good start to a series. Got to know the town and the people, politics and relationships within it.

I wish the mystery action occurred a bit sooner, though. There seemed to be a slower start. Which, if it continued would have started to bore me. Luckily, after the incident on the pier, things started to pick up and the last part of the book kept my attention.

Mary Brown says

Dying For Strawberries

A Berry Basket Mystery, Book #1

Sharon Farrow

5 Stars

Synopsis:

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Much has changed for Marlee Jacob since she returned to Oriole Point, Michigan, three years ago. Between running the Berry Basket, dodging local gossip, and whipping up strawberry muffins, smoothies, and margaritas to celebrate the town's first annual Strawberry Moon Bash, the twenty-nine-year-old hardly has time for her fiancé, let alone grim memories of her old life in New York . .

But unfortunately for Marlee, Oriole Point is muddled with secrets of its own. First her friend Irina disappears after an ominous dream. Next the seediest man in town threatens to crush her business. Then an unknown person nearly kills her on the night of the Bash. When she discovers a dead body while searching for Irina, Marlee realizes she'll have to foil a killer's plot herself—before the past permanently stains her future. (Goodreads)

Review:

Marlee loves the berry shop that she has opened and wants to see it continue to grow. When that growth is threatened, and her lease is likely to be ended, she is beside herself with worry. Add to that her friend, Natasha, is missing after being seen fighting with her abusive husband, and her worry increases. And after she is attacked, and she finds a dead body, she knows she has to do something to find the killer, before more dead bodies turn up, possibly even hers.

The characters are well developed, well rounded and three dimensional. I enjoyed getting to know Marlee, her friend Tess and her friend Max. I am not quite sure how I feel about Marlee's fiance, Ryan. They seem to fight quite a bit and he did not seem like he supported her very much. He seemed a little too distant to me and I did not feel like he was completely in love with her. In my opinion, I think there is a better match for her.

The writing style flows smoothly and the book is an easy fast read. I liked the fact that the murder did not take place until about forty percent into the book. This is not the norm when it comes to mysteries, but there was so much other suspense going on that it seemed like the perfect time to introduce the body. There were so many suspects to consider that it was like a Who's Who in killers. And there were enough twists and turns and clues to pick up along the way that I never did figure out who the murderer was until it was revealed at the end.

I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a well crafted cozy mystery. I am happy that this is the first book in what I hope is a long series.

I received a free copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange for a honest review. I would like to thank NetGalley and Kensington Books for the opportunity to read and review this book.

RO G'ma says

Dying for Strawberries is the first book in Sharon Farrow's Berry Basket Mystery series. Ms. Farrow has written a well thought out and interesting mystery, with a good story line and character development, and enough twists and turns to keep the reader engaged.

Marlee Jacob, known as the berry expert, returned to her hometown three years ago and is the owner of the Berry Basket in the charming lakeside village of Oriole Point, Michigan. Oriole Point business owners are preparing for their first annual Strawberry Moon Bash. Marlee is worried about her friend, Natasha Bowman, who is in an abusive marriage. Shortly after astrologer, Drake Woodhill, scares Natasha with her horoscope, she has a strange dream about strawberries, and disappears after an argument with her husband, Cole. Marlee thinks Cole is responsible for her friend's disappearance and an attempt on her life at the Strawberry Moon Bash, but because the local authorities are doubtful, she sets out to find her friend. While searching the Bowman's house for clues, Cole returns home, and she hides upstairs. When she thinks the coast is clear, she slowly descends the staircase and finds Cole on the floor, with his head bashed in.

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review from NetGalley.

Leslie aka StoreyBook Reviews says

New cozy series that has a berry theme (yum!) and set in Michigan what could possibly be wrong with that? Nothing!

I think this series has some great potential! The small town with close knit neighbors, possible love triangle,

berries (if there is food I already like it) and intrigue.

Fair warning, the murder doesn't happen until about 1/3 of the way into the book. I kept waiting for someone to end up dead but was surprised it took that long. But once it did you understand why because the scene needed to be set. Thankfully it was a character I didn't like so I was glad to see him gone.

Marlee does a lot of pushing and prodding to get to the bottom of the murder because she believes she was the first target and was just lucky that she was fished out of the lake in time. She is on the right path and it is very surprising (to me) who is revealed as the killer because the author does a great job of playing down all of the suspects.

There is a lot of information presented at the beginning of the book and some of it takes time before it is truly explained. This did leave me a little confused until the whole story was revealed.

Then there is the fiance, Ryan. While he sounds nice, things are revealed about him that makes me wonder how long he is going to be the fiance. His attitude and thought process would not have worked with me and he would have been in the dust. Plus if he so allergic to bees, why does he not carry an epi-pen? Seems kinda odd especially considering his career field!

I still enjoyed this book and can't wait to read the next book

Mark Baker says

Marlee Jacob has settled nicely back into her home town of Oriole Point, and she is quite happy running her business, The Berry Basket. However, she quickly finds herself in trouble when her good friend goes missing, a surprise announcement rattles all the local business owners, someone tries to kill her, and then she finds a dead body. What is going on?

I enjoyed this book with how it played with some cozy mystery tropes early on while still providing us with a compelling cozy mystery. There's plenty happening to keep us entertained all the way through, and the twists of the plot come together for a logical climax. Some of the supporting characters are still a bit thin, but we can get to know them better in later books. Marlee herself is wonderful, and the rest of the suspects are also viable characters.

NOTE: I received an ARC of this book.

Read my full review at Carstairs Considers.

Ian says

I voluntarily reviewed an Advance Reader Copy of this book. Published by Kensington Books via NetGalley.

First in a New Series.

Marlee Jacob returned to her childhood home of Oriole Point, Michigan three years ago, after she was involved with a murder case of one of the chefs on the show she produced. Now she owns and runs the Berry

Basket, a berry emporium to suit everyone's tastes.

The only problem is that every June the murder case is dragged up on tv...only this time the murdered man's mistress has written a book and is hell bent on seeking revenge on Marlee!

On top of that is the fight her friend Irina has with her husband, smacking him on the nose with an instrument from their shop, and then her disappearance. Plus at the Oriole Point Business forum that evening it comes to light that someone has brought up the Strawberry Fields and zoning has been passed for commercial businesses, and it's the same people that own her shop. And it's Irina's disreputable husband Cole and he's going to make sure Marlee is going out of business!

On the night of the Strawberry Moon Bash, someone bashes Marlee on the head and pushes her into the water to drown. After being resued, no one believes that she was attacked, thinking that she was drunk and fell and hit her head before entering the water.

When the man causing all the planning upheaval is murdered. When a couple of Marlee friends are accused, she must sift through the secrets people are hiding to expose a murderer and her attacker...before they try to get rid of her again, permanently!

I really enjoyed this first outing of the Berry Basket mysteries, with it's crazy cast of characters, and well plotted and written story. Hope to see more of these books.

If you like the review and would like to read reviews on other books I have made, visit my blog at www.finalchapterreadersgroup.wordpress... like, comment and follow.

Betty says

This is fast moving thriller the first in the series. There is a different wrinkle to the tale as the back story is important. The characters caught my attention and I keep reading to find out what happens to them. There is gossip, greed, revenge, secrets, guilt and abuse to occupy your mind.

Marlee Jacobs has returned to Oriole Point, Michigan to open her dream store. She brings baggage with her from her time in the production of hit TV shows. Her family has lived in the area for years and been in the business of growing different berries. There is an uproar in the business meeting of the shop owners when a disliked person announces he now owns their stores and acreage has been re-zone for commercial franchise stores. Marlee finds him dead and the town's mayor is arrested for his murder. Marlee works to understand how the re-zone occurred and angry party from her TV days is causing her problems. I recommend this book.

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.

Janet Robel says

I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

The first in a new series with Marlee Jacob as the heroine and shop owner of the Berry Basket with all things berry related. Plenty of red herrings abound to make this a fun, sweet read. Oriole Point is a lovely small-

town setting for murder and Marlee is determined to get involved and do some serious snooping around. Enjoyable for those looking for a light mystery with an amateur sleuth.

Brenda says

Dying for Strawberries is the first in the A Berry Basket Mystery series featuring Marlee Jacobs, owner of the Berry Basket in Oriole Point, Michigan. Marlee has recently returned to her hometown after leaving her job in New York City as the producer of a hit cooking show on the Gourmet Living Network. Marlee had found herself embroiled in the murder of one of the shows stars John Chaplin by his wife Evangeline, after she'd discovered he had been cheating on her with another woman, April Byrne.

Oriole Point is preparing for the annual Strawberry Moon Bash, organized by founding family member Piper Pierce. Busy with preparations for the Festival, Marlee also finds herself dealing with her friend Natasha Bowman's marital woes. Natasha and her husband Cole own the Kitchen Cellar, and he has a reputation as a domestic abuser. After a nasty fight public, Natasha goes missing and Marlee is concerned that Cole has finally murdered his wife.

In her efforts to solve the disappearance of her friend, Marlee soon discovers that Cole has purchased a large tract of land and convinced the Zoning members to switch the land to commercial which will allow fast food chains and box stores to build in the idyllic town. Marlee suspects that Cole is blackmailing the committee members to vote his way, and not long after she publicly accuses him, an attack is made on her life. Determined to unmask her attacker, Marlee sets out with help from best friend, Tess Nakamura to start investigating and stumbles upon the bludgeoned body of Cole.

Dying for Strawberries is darker and edgier than a traditional cozy but still has the basics including a small community with tight knit members harboring secrets, the possibility of the dreaded love triangle, best friends, family and a talking African Grey. A fast paced storyline with plenty of suspects to keep you turning the pages and salivating over the tasty strawberry recipes. Unanswered questions leave the door open for further adventures at the Berry Basket.

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

Sarah says

Good start to a new cozy series, I love the main character and her relationships with her friends and the town folk in general.

One character I hated! when you read it you will know exactly who I mean and I really, really wanted to see them hit very hard in the groin area multiple times with heavy objects but that might just be me.

I have the 2nd book in this series on my kindle and I think I'm gonna have to pick it up to get back into this world. Hopefully I'll be able to post a review quicker than I have been doing!

*Huge thanks to Sharon Farrow, Kensington Books and NetGalley for this copy which I chose to read and all

opinions are my own*

JoAnne McMaster (Any Good Book) says

Marlee Jacob owns The Berry Basket, a business in the touristy town of Oriole Point, Michigan, selling berry-related items. After a run-in with the town's bully, Cole Bowman, who has promised he won't renew Marlee's lease, effectively closing her business, she's stunned; as are the rest of the townspeople, but for a different reason: it seems Cole has come into ownership of Strawberry Fields, a parcel adjoining the town, and plans to turn it commercial, allowing chains into their little village that will probably put local businesses out of business. What Marlee doesn't understand is how the four members of the council could approve such a move, since they are also local business owners; and blurts out at the meeting that they were either bribed or blackmailed into agreeing to it.

When Marlee is attacked on the night of the Strawberry Moon Bash, and no one will believe her, she's determined to find out who wants her dead. And when Cole's wife Natasha goes missing, she's convinced he's killed her, and decides to investigate on her own. She doesn't find Natasha, but she does find Cole...dead at his home.

Now she's convinced that he was killed by one of the members of the council, and learns that Piper and Lionel have hired detectives to dig up secrets. So Marlee decides to question each of them on her own, hoping to find out first if one of those secrets were terrible enough to cause one of them to kill Cole, and attempt murdering her. But it just might get her killed instead...

I don't like giving mediocre reviews, but I will tell you right off that I'm not compromising myself by giving a great one just to make everyone happy. Sometimes a book isn't always a stinker, but it still makes it hard to slog through. This, unfortunately, was one of those books.

It almost lost me at the beginning when Marlee apparently carries around an EpiPen because her boyfriend Ryan is allergic to bees. He works at his family's orchards, but allergic to bees - right. I carry one, but my husband doesn't because I'm not always with him. After all, he's not the one having an attack, so why would he need it? It's one thing to carry one for your minor child, but for another adult? It's also illegal. How stupid is Ryan that he would "forget" to carry it? I've never forgotten - not once. It just didn't make sense. And therein, folks, lies the problem. Beginning a book with something that just doesn't make any sense can skew the rest of the book for the reader.

Just because she was attacked she thinks it's perfectly fine to go around investigating peoples' pasts? Pasts that have nothing to do with her and she has no business knowing at all? At least it will be interesting in future books with the enemies she's made by doing that (surely these people can't be so forgiving that they ignore the fact she's forced them to tell her things they never wanted anyone to know). If I had even one of these secrets, I'd keep her out of my life forever. A person like this has no boundaries.

Not to mention that Ryan is a royal jerk. I was hoping he was the murderer (sorry, he's not). Why on earth she's interested in him is beyond me. Just because a guy's 'hot' doesn't make him a keeper. I have news for Marlee: if a man is hiding his past from you when you're going to be his wife, run as fast as you can in the other direction...because he'll do things in the future that he wants to hide from you, too. (One can only hope he "forgets" his EpiPen in a future book and actually does bite the dust). He treats her like a child, acts like her business isn't as important as his, and isn't around when she needs him. It also kind of seemed like she just capitulated when he wanted her; there was no sizzle between them, no connection, no real reason they're together at all.

And at the last, why would a reputable news source keep revisiting a TV chef's murder every single year? It wouldn't happen. It's not that riveting. There were also little things, like comparing every character to another person/book character (Ryan Gosling, Jasmine from Aladdin, Alice in Wonderland, etc.), and calling Drake a witch (a male witch is a warlock) - Drake should have corrected her - better yet, the author should have known this little fact before adding it to the story.

When the murderer was revealed, the killer wasn't really a revelation, and I had figured it out long before, but I will say that the reason for the murder was unexpected. Since this is the first in a new series, I have given leeway that the author is still honing her craft, and I will probably read the second one.

K.A. Davis says

I'm always excited to find that a new series has just started especially one that's centered around strawberries...my most favorite fruit! DYING FOR STRAWBERRIES, the first book in the Berry Basket Mystery series by Sharon Farrow, starts off with a bang and will keep you turning pages! From the moment I saw the cover art on this new book and then heard that subsequent books would be centered around a variety of berries (book two will be centered on blackberries!) I knew Sharon Farrow had found a winning combination! I like how the protagonist, Marlee, is already established in town with her business, The Berry Basket, instead of starting brand new. This gives a wider variety of supporting characters to interact with and gives greater insight into who Marlee is. The author includes a bit of humor such as Marlee Jacob's name, which is a riff on the character from A Christmas Carol. The mystery and subplots are nicely woven together which adds to the appeal of this book. Marlee is the only one who shows concern for the disappearance of her friend, Natasha, who was being abused by her husband. The author brings the issue of domestic abuse to the forefront and I admire how social issues are being addressed in books to bring awareness which will hopefully facilitate change for the better. I was delighted to find out that not only was there a story centered around strawberries but the author includes several yummy strawberry recipes! I tried her recipe for Strawberry Smash Muffins...absolutely delicious and a new favorite in my household!

Zonell says

Oriole Point, Michigan

Tari says

I really enjoyed my visit to the small lakeside town of Oriole Point, MI and could just picture the little shops and lakefront Victorian homes like Marlee lived in. It was very well-written and plotted and at times, kept me on the edge of my seat wanting to find out what would happen next.

Marlee Jacob (her family was a Dickens fan--I loved the play on Jacob Marley's name) ran the Berry Basket shop in town along and like a lot of her neighboring shops, depending on tourist trade. When a local man, who wasn't very well liked to begin with, announced at a town council meeting that he now owned 30 acres that the zoning commission had voted to zone as commercial--and that he was going to allow big box stores to come and build, someone in town took matters into their own hands. He was found dead in his home by Marlee and her friend Tess. Since the mayor's wife had gone ballistic and punched him at the meeting, she was arrested for the murder.

Marlee was curious as to how the entire zoning commission, all of which were longtime residents of Oriole Point and supposedly shared the same belief that tourist trade was their sole income, could have possibly decided to allow a zoning change for something that would no doubt bankrupt many of the merchants. Could blackmail or bribery have been going on? After a brush with death herself, Marlee was still determined to find out the truth, and to complicate matters, someone from her past was in town trying to make Marlee's life a living nightmare.

I wasn't sure at all who the killer was in this and I loved the showdown because it was exciting with a great twist to it. The killer got hauled to prison and Marlee was somewhat of a hero to a very unlikely person, who, because of who they were, turned the tables to look like they were the big hero. Marlee didn't care, she was alive and she'd helped prevent someone else's death. The mayor's wife was cleared of all charges and announced that her helper for the next event in town would be Marlee! I'm guessing this will be the story of the next book, which I definitely plan to read.

I really enjoyed the characters for the most part. Marlee and her fiance' have an odd relationship. She'd found out something about him that he hadn't seemed to think was important to tell her, he's awfully jealous of a local guy who was Marlee's boyfriend in high school and was really just a nice and goofy friend to her now. It'll be interesting if they pick back up where they were or if he realizes he should have come clean with her about his past. I'm not a fan of birds as pets at all, but I have to admit I really enjoyed Minnie the parrot that Marlee adopted at her Aunt Vicki's insistence. There were a lot of different characters, so I hope in the next book we can get to know the main characters just a little bit better. I do like the main characters, but I don't feel like I know them quite as well as I thought I should by the end of the book. I did still enjoy it and want to read the next one!

Jody McGrath says

Marlee Jacobs lives in Oriole Point, Michigan and runs a little shop called The Berry Basket. She was raised here but has just returned two years ago after being embroiled in a media shocking murder investigation in New York. Marlee loves her life here, is engaged to a gorgeous man, and has an amazing house on the lake. When a fellow shop owner is murdered and Marlee just happens to be on his house at the time, things start to haywire. Marlee is positive that the murder is tied into a real estate deal and blackmail, and she is going to prove it, even if it means alienating herself from the rest of the town.

This is the first book in the Berry Basket Mystery series. It amazed me that this was the first book. I felt like I had missed so much backstory. She keeps referring back to stuff, like the reader is suppose to know what she is talking about, so I was positive this was at least book 2 or 3 in the series. With it being the first, it is confusing why Ms. Farrow would write it this way. Maybe I am missing something...

As for the characters, some were good and some were cardboard cutouts. The main character, Marlee, was likable, but I didn't really understand her. The murder had nothing to do with her really, yet she went all out to solve it. And why would these other shop owners tell her stuff. I don't get it. I mean she was all for justice telling everyone that finding the murderer trumped their heartfelt secrets, but who was she to pick and choose what the police got to know and what they didn't. I didn't understand any of the motivations of most of the characters, except the murderer.

The mystery was good. I liked how it really could have been multiple people. It was a pretty straightforward cozy, except it really felt like you were reading the third book in the series. It was an okay read. I wouldn't preorder the next in the series, but I might read it. A give it a solid C.

* I voluntarily read an Advance Reader Copy of this book and gave an honest review *
