



The Queene's Christmas

Karen Harper

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The Queene's Christmas draws readers into the magnificent realm of Elizabeth Tudor and the magic of her Court at Yuletide, circa 1564. But in the intoxicating sixth novel of Karen Harper's celebrated Elizabeth I series, the Twelve Days of Christmas are murderously interrupted when the Dresser of the Queen's Privy Kitchen is found hanged and trussed like the peacock he'd been fashioning for the holiday feast. With foul play afoot in her Court, Elizabeth does her royal utmost to track down the poor man's killer while striving to salvage the joy of Christmas. Doomed to suspect even her most trusted courtiers, she is nevertheless determined to vanquish the Christmas culprit-who will not only strike again but has targeted Her Majesty as his ultimate prey.

The Queene's Christmas Details

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Author : Karen Harper

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Tom says

This was my first book in the series and while it's not the first I found the characters easy enough to follow. Set at the time of Elizabeth I's court it was interesting to read about how she celebrated the twelve days of Christmas. One of the reasons I read these types of mysteries. The only problem I have with these (using historical figures as detectives) is you can usually cut out some of the suspects just because they are actual historical people and so unless they did indeed murder someone then you know it's not them. Overall it was a pretty decent mystery, it read well and quickly, and I enjoyed the overall story. Given time I will look up more, perhaps more recent books in the series.

Adrienne says

I love Karen Harper, Christmas, murder mysteries and Tudor-era historical fiction, so I was really excited to read this book. I loved the Christmas scenes that Harper described in other books. She is such a great storyteller and usually an expert at setting the scene. I have read the Matthew Shardlake mysteries by C.J. Sansom and expected something similar with this. However, right away I knew this wouldn't be as "gritty" and terrifying as a Sansom novel. This was more of a fun Fall read to get me in the mood for Christmas, than a gripping murder mystery. It almost veered into "camp" territory.

I was not scared at any point, and I didn't feel anything when some of the characters were attempted-murdered. I almost laughed at some of the hamfisted clues that the killer left. I would think if this really happened to Elizabeth, she would not be pacing, sick to her stomach, desperately trying to find out who the killer is. Overall I did not like this portrayal of Elizabeth. She gave up way too much of her power, allowed others to interrupt her, speak over her, Dudley made a fool of her in a very public way, appeared to be clueless in front of her Council and tricked into not trusting her closest friends. Also, the events with Dudley went nowhere. **Spoiler alert:** why did he fake having a head injury? That was never explained. Why did he not get punished for the mistletoe thing. She was angry with him, but ultimately nothing came of it. And making jokes about his killer that was originally a clue for Elizabeth, turned out to be just his jack@ss personality? Ok

If you want to read a really good Tudor murder mystery, try C.J. Sansom's Shardlake series - set in Henry the Eighth's time. Those books will terrify you. Sansom sets the scene so well that it's very hard to separate reality from fiction. When I laid down to sleep at night I couldn't get the book out of my head and thought a killer lurked behind my window. The Queene's Christmas was lighthearted and fun. A good Court story (which I also love) but not a gritty murder mystery.

Denise says

It's Christmas time in Elizabeth I's kingdom but that doesn't stop murder and mayhem! This is #6 in the Elizabeth I Mysteries by local author, Karen Harper. Bear in mind, the series is MUCH better if you start with #1 and progress reading them in order! This is what I've done and it's really helped "flesh out" the characters. And the idea of Queen Elizabeth turning amateur sleuth is intriguing to me because too many times history (as presented in novels) came be too dry (she was born, reigned, died). In these books the queen has a "Privy Plot Council" comprised of both commoners and nobility that assist her in finding clues

and detecting the "bad guys". I particularly enjoy the way that the author (and avid Elizabethan fanatic) blends historical fact with fictional possibility to create a lively tale!

Jean Boobar says

This book by Karen Harper is one of several mysteries she has written about Queen Elizabeth I. For me, Harper captured the era with her descriptions of traditions, dress and conflicts. The author also added a recipe of the times at the beginning of each chapter, and that recipe was mimicked by the antagonist who was successfully ruining the Queen's best plans for a grand Christmas season. Along with the Queen, the reader follows the many leads toward the perpetrator, as one by one they turn out to be wrong. Throughout the story, we are reminded of the rivalry between Queen Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots. The Queen's bravery and insistence to participate in riding through snow and on ice may have been a bit overdone, but I felt the tension and was rooting for the Queen to survive! I look forward to reading more books in this series.

Stephanie Tracy says

This is the only Tudor Christmas story I have ever seen, and I really loved it! Not only did it offer a good picture of what Christmas at Queen Elizabeth's court was really like, it also showed an exciting, and at times spine-tingling murder mystery taking place at Whitehall Palace. All of our favorite Elizabethan characters are in this book - including Good Queen Bess herself, her Earl of Leicester Robert Dudley, and her confidante and secretary William Cecil. There's danger, excitement, drama, and romance - all taking place during the most festive and exciting time of the year. Tudor Christmas 'recipes' are also given at the start of each chapter, and if you're brave and creative enough, I suppose you can try to make them! Enjoy this book - it's unlike any other Tudor book I've read!

Tara says

I enjoyed this series at first, but am finding that as it progresses, the books become more predictable - a HUGE no-no in a mystery series. Also, the author's few yet glaring historical inaccuracies have really turned me off. Don't quote Hamlet before it was written. Don't cite nursery rhymes written about Mary Queen of Scots being deposed if it hasn't happened yet. And get your historical names right, Karen Harper.

Janet says

This book reads a bit like Karen Harper wrote it whilst reading "The Bumper Book of Metaphors and Similes for Keystage 2"! From such gems as 'his ruddy glow went white as bleached linen' to 'happy as a hawk in a windstorm', together with an enormous helping of the phrase 's blood to show us that the Queen wasn't a total goody-goody!

That aside, it was quite a good yarn, if a little predictable - I got the murderer quite early on in the book, albeit that my feeling was based on a hunch rather than any clues. I think the fact it took me three weeks to

read it speaks volumes and I don't think I'll be rushing to buy any more of the 'Elizabeth I Mysteries'!

Helen Southall says

A very good addition to the author's Elizabethian mystery series. Very interesting plot where Queen Elizabeth I has a small number of close attendants (Privy Council) who help her solve murder mysteries that occur in the court. The book is well-written and gives a lot of information regarding the lives of both the noblemen and the commoners in that era. The depth of detail in the plot shows that a great deal of historical research was done by the author.

Susan Johnson says

The recipes were my favorite thing in the book. I wonder what peacock and swan taste like? I'll never know because it won't be on my menu ever. :)

Ronna says

I'm not usually a fan of the early times in English history, but I read this book at the request of a friend who really loves these books. Surprise, surprise--I really enjoyed this book immensely!! This is a mystery involving Queen Elizabeth and her court in 1564. They are preparing to celebrate Christmas in the traditions of the time, to the definite dislike of the puritanical Protestant church leader. There is also the continuous conflict between sisters, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary of Scots, for throne of England.

At the start of these celebrations, Master Hodge Thatcher, Dresser of the Feast, is found hanging in the kitchen, dressed in the peacock feathers meant for the roasted bird. Queen Elizabeth is convinced that he was murdered and starts the investigation into his death. Then, the next days of the celebrations finds other deaths related to the each days activities. Who can the Queen trust? Clues seem to implicate those closest to her. The clues are truly interesting and red herons kept the story flowing. Queen Elizabeth's characterization is wonderfully done.

What I especially liked about the story was the deft way that the author used, and explained, so many traditions of the times, including an old time food recipe at the beginning of every chapter. This is the sixth book in this series. The excellence of this book is best proven when I say that I actually believe I want to rest of this books!

I listen to this in Audio, and the reader did an excellent dramatic reading. This added so much to the story too!

Barbara says

A lively and colorful mystery. Nice Christmas details. It almost makes me like Queen Elizabeth but I am more a fan of Mary Queen of Scots and Grace O'Malley (Gráinne Ní Mháille), Queen of the pirates, both

enemies of EI.

Elizabeth says

this book was on display in our library with Christmas books and its hard to pass up a book with Elizabeth in the title. It was an interesting look into Christmas-the 12 days and other traditions-and England during the reign of Elizabeth I. It might have been better if I had read the first books and there were lots of characters to keep straight. The mystery was suspenseful but not one that could be figured out ahead of the end.

Katy M says

I had just read a heavy book so I wanted a light read. It was that. however, as a mystery, I didn't really care who the murderer was. Not while I was reading and not at the end when it was revealed. I couldn't have cared less. The side love triangle of Meg/Ned/Jenks was mildly interesting but not explored deeply enough or resolved. I guess that's because this is a series. This was the first book I've read of this author, and I'm not likely to read anymore. It was alright, but when I read a mystery, I want to be following clues, making guesses, and the mystery seemed to be pushed aside.

Christie says

First sentence: "I swear, Your Grace, that man will be the death of you yet!"

Elizabeth decides to throw an old-fashioned, festive Yuletide celebration for her ailing friend, Kat Ashley, despite protests from the leading churchmen. Of course, the Christmas season is full of mysteries to be solved.

I do love reading Christmas books in the middle of summer, gets me all ready for Fall. I found this book to be a fun read and liked all the medieval recipes that were included. I also liked the part the recipes played in the book. I do find myself finding the mysteries very easy to solve at this point and so will be taking a break from the series for awhile. These are fun little books to pick up every so often.

Moonmomie says

I'm biased because I adore this particular genre and time period, and I thoroughly enjoyed this entire series of books by Karen Harper. They are written very similarly to Fiona Buckley's Ursula Blanchard Mysteries... almost confusingly so. This series focuses on Queen Elizabeth I, herself, solving the murders of her subjects. Absolutely fictitious activities frequent the books (Elizabeth leaving the castle in disguise to chase down clues and criminals). But, this is why it is Historical "Fiction". Although not historically accurate, they did hold my interest with their depth of character, plot, and historical abundance.
