



Thursday Morning Breakfast (and Murder) Club

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When Clare Ballard sports a new bruise on her right cheek the day after a contentious town meeting, the ladies of the Thursday Morning Breakfast Club suspect her husband Roger of abusing her. That same day Hester Franklin, another breakfast club lady, is called to rescue her grandson Patrick after he is arrested for transporting drugs. Proclaiming his innocence, Patrick threatens that those who set him up will pay. Roger Ballard is high on his list. But it's when Lillie Mae Harris, the club's leader, discovers the body of the local drug dealer on the nearby hiking trail, that the community is upended. Roger Ballard, the primary suspect, goes missing, and when his body turns up in his own back yard, Clare Ballard confesses to his murder. No one believes she did it, but Clare insists she's guilty and mysteriously refuses to talk to her lawyer, the police, or her family and friends. The Thursday Morning Breakfast Club ladies believe she's protecting someone, and they vow to find out who it is. Charlie Warren, the town's homegrown policeman, using unconventional means, collaborates with the breakfast club ladies to draw out the real criminal. But danger lurks. Alice Portman, the matriarch of the breakfast club, is struck down in her own yard and is sent to the hospital. Then others in the small community start to disappear—one after the other. As the ladies get closer to the truth, they get closer to the danger. With no time to cry over spilled coffee, they form a plan to capture the true culprits before someone else is murdered.

Thursday Morning Breakfast (and Murder) Club Details

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From Reader Review Thursday Morning Breakfast (and Murder) Club for online ebook

Yvonne says

The women of the Thursday Morning Breakfast Club are shocked to discover one of their own with bruises caused by her husband. The women are ready to rally around Claire, but when her husband turns up dead and Claire confesses, they don't know what to think. The leader of the club, Lillie Mae Harris, doesn't believe for one moment that Claire killed her husband and she intends to prove it. They just have to figure out who she is protecting.

With the help of the other women of the club, as well as local police officer, Charlie Warren, Lillie Mae conducts her own investigation. Things take a really nasty turn when another dead body shows up and one of their own members is attacked.

The race is on to find a killer before more people are hurt or murdered.

This is a fast-paced read with a wide variety of characters. I must admit that I figured out who did it way before the end of the story. I still enjoyed reading the book and seeing how Lillie Mae cracked this case. My one problem is that the police encouraged Lillie Mae and her group to be involved in the investigation. Although it's a very small town, it just seemed odd to me that the police would risk the well-being of civilians.

It's well-written and a good, solid start to a new cozy series. I'm looking forward to seeing what happens in the next book.

FTC Disclosure: The author provided me with a copy of this book to review. This did not influence my thoughts and opinions in any way. All opinions expressed are my own.

Vanessa says

It's been quite a long time since I've read a mystery novel but I'm glad that I got to start again by reading this particular one. Although the title, Thursday Morning Breakfast (And Murder) Club, is long, the novel is actually a quick read. It's interesting, suspenseful and full of drama. It really is a great murder mystery.

In the small village of Mount Penn, not much violence or drama goes on. So when murders and disappearances start becoming a recurring thing, the citizens are definitely worried. Lillie Mae is the main character and very invested in the lives of the people of Mount Penn. Throughout the book she helps those in need and eventually figuring out the murder mystery. The characters in this novel were interesting and unique in their own ways. I could picture them just from the way Stauffer described them and had them act out. And I enjoyed the way they all got together to help out their friends and the police.

One of the aspects of this novel that I enjoyed the most was probably the detail. Sometimes too much detail takes away from the book but sometimes it really sets the mood for you. Now, yes, at times I felt like the

characters had unnecessary conversations or too much detail was involved, but all in all the book was written well. I could picture the early morning breakfasts and the neighbors running around learning gossip or helping out. So I did enjoy that. I also loved how, as the reader, I didn't know who the murderer was. There were small twists that would prove me to be wrong and lead me in other directions.

All in all, this novel was a great murder mystery and really kept me intrigued. It's a quick read because you want to know the outcome and great for any fans of mystery. And if you haven't read a mystery book in awhile then this is definitely a good starting point. So if playing Clue just isn't doing it for you, make sure to check out this perfectly good mystery!

*You can also read this review over at my blog.

Crossmyheartandhopetoread.blogspot.com

Deb says

Review also available on my blog: The Cat Lady's Bookshelf - <http://bit.ly/H7hfub>

In a small southern town named Mount Penn, things are normally nice and quiet. Lillie Mae seems to be the center of the universe as far as the locals are concerned. When speaking with neighbors about the latest goings on, she is barely missed by a speeding truck. They later find out that in the truck were the grandson of one of the local old ladies and a friend of his, after they are arrested for drug possession with intent to distribute. They make bail after insisting on their innocence and that they were framed.

A few days later, Lillie Mae discovers the body of the person who 'everyone knows is bad news and is involved in drugs' - despite his having never been caught with any.

Another of the ladies in town, one whose husband is known to knock her around, is also suspected to be involved in some way but no one can find him to talk to him, is dealing with the pianist at the local church. He is in love with her, and she is determined to stay with her husband. Soon, there is another murder. Despite a confession of guilt from one person, no one believes her - including the local cop.

The Thursday Morning Breakfast Club is determined to prove her innocence by finding the real murderer. So, the Breakfast Club goes around and interviews each other and others around to see talk about what they've seen. They just know that someone knows more than they realize they know. Turns out, someone did see something she shouldn't have! And almost pays for it with her life.

This one actually took me a while to read. The story wasn't bad, but I felt it was a bit of an anachronism. Had this story been told with a setting of the 1960's or 70's, I would have a better time letting go of what I know of police procedures and enjoyed the story more. During the investigation, the local police man, Charlie, actually brings Lillie Mae along when canvassing the area and interviewing neighbors. He asks her to do things which involve her in the case. I realize that this is a back-woods area of the country, but even country bumpkin law enforcement officers have procedures to follow or risk the suspect being set free on a technicality. Besides, Lillie Mae writes for the local paper! This SCREAMED 'conflict of interest' to me. If it was not for everyone having a cell phone, this could have easily been set 35-40 years ago, making this more believable in my mind.

I'm not sure what it was that tipped me off, but I actually had suspicions of who the guilty party was fairly

early in the book. Most of the characters I felt were likable enough, and I evidently liked the ones I was supposed to and didn't like the ones I was supposed to dislike in the way the author intended. However, a couple of them I did find rather annoying. I do have to say, the book made me think of my late grandmother a great deal! She was the biggest gossip in the small town she lived in, and had to know what was going on. All the time. Many of the characters were like this. I'm pretty sure the average age of the population in Mount Penn was around 65-70. There were a few younger (high school) age kids mentioned, one in college, and the parents of the two boys arrested, but everyone else is evidently retired and has nothing better to do than 'twitch the curtains' and call neighbors to see what is going on. When they hear sirens, every one of the gets in the car and follows the police for fire trucks to see what is going on. Even better, they call each other and say "we're on our way and are picking you up on the way. Be ready so we can be one of the first ones there". I think they all need better hobbies.

For someone who likes a fast-paced suspense thriller, I would probably point you in the direction of another book. For someone in a small, remote community - I think you will see some of your neighbors, or maybe yourself, in this book.

Nikki Bywater says

When Murder and a series of crimes start happening in the small sleepy village of Mount Penn. The Thursday Morning Breakfast club leader Lillie May is asked to investigate. Soon Lillie May and her chums become amateur sleuths. Can they catch the killer before they strike again? And restore the village back into the quiet, peaceful village that it was.

The story opens with a fantastic first line that you think wow! This is going to be something amazing. But sadly for me after that it becomes a bit of a let-down. There is far too much small talk that simply does not seem to go anywhere, or could hold my interest. The part in the story where the detective investigating the murder asks the group to investigate the murder is just so unrealistic. In real life this would be seen as interfering with a police investigation, but the part that really made me not warm to this story at all, was when the group are told that they are to help investigate the murder the woman seem to show delight, and cheer like they have won a competition, now considering this is a small community where everyone knows each other's business, and each other than surely it would make more sense for a more serious and caring response? I also found there were too many characters in the book, and hard to keep up with everything.

Usually for a murder mystery book I can't wait to find out who done it, and to see if I had guessed the right suspect, but this was so dull that I was not bothered. It was like there was something missing. I think the idea for the story could have been a really good one, with some sequel stories, but the story just was not strong enough to maintain a good murder mystery for me.

Renee says

This is a real small town feel mystery. The characters were at times laughable. I know! For a book that has murder in the title it is hard to believe. I remember a series The Scarecrow and Mrs King with Kate Jackson and I pictured her as Lillie Mae. So Clare Ballard has a bruise and the entire town takes it and runs. The things they imagine. The ladies of the Thursday Morning Breakfast Club start gossiping that her husband

Roger is abusing her.

All of this is going down and then another member Hester Franklin has to bail her grandson Patrick out of jail. He was arrested for drugs! Now she thinks her grandson is innocent, what else can she think in this case.

So the body of a dealer is discovered and this causes an eruption. The gossip, rumors and accusations fly. When one of the original leaders Alice has an incident, it makes all of them re-think their positions. I was wondering who put the drugs into Patrick's truck and it had me going!

I will say I found it to be a cutesy type of book. I know some of the subjects, like a drug deals and spousal abuse are not funny, but these ladies made me think differently. I adored the names and the descriptions. So if you adore cozy mysteries this is your cup of coffee or tea. This should be a series and I know I would read them all. Great job keeping me entertained!

LORI CASWELL says

The Thursday Morning Breakfast Club ladies meet each week to catch up on each other's lives and the local happenings. This week is definitely a little different than most. They worry that Clare's husband is abusing her, Hester's grandson just got arrested and the leader of the group, Lillie Mae Harris, has discovered a dead body while on her daily hike. The primary suspect is Clare's husband but then his body is found dead in his backyard. The whole group is in shock when his wife confesses to killing him. They know she could not have killed him and wonder if she is protecting someone. With the blessing of local police the ladies do a little investigating on their own to catch the real culprit.

Dollycas's Thoughts

This is a fun little mystery that takes place in a little town of Mount Penn. Murder turns the normally quiet place on its ear.

I was really taken with the way the characters all live within walking distance of each other and hike the local trails. They were always visiting each other and were a very close knit group. It was just unfathomable that there could be a killer in their midst.

The author plotted a fine mystery and created and introduced some really interesting characters. Charlie Warren, the town's homegrown policeman, was the one that really intrigued me as he sought out help from Lillie Mae and even took her along to question suspects to add her observations as a backup to his own. Usually in stories like this local law enforcement wants the civilians to butt out and stay out of the way. A unique twist that I really enjoyed.

At less than 250 pages this is a very quick read. It is very well written and full of the tiny details cozy lovers will appreciate.

Bea Charmed says

A small town murder, ordinary citizens trying to solve a murder, a Southern setting, I was curious to see how this story played out.

There are a mess full of characters but we don't really get to know Lillie Mae, the lead, or any of the others but my goodness is Lillie Mae a Nosy Nelly. Actually, she alternated between sticking her nose in everyone's business and wishing people would go away and let her do her work (she apparently works for the local paper as a columnist). It also amazed me how many people were involved in trying to catch the killer and how much civilian assistance the police solicited. The latter is most unusual and didn't feel realistic at all to me.

The plot is twisty and turny with lots of little offshoots. I guessed early on who the villain was, though not the motivation, because Stauffer singled out the responsible party early, or maybe I've watched too much "Murder, She Wrote". :D At times I needed a cheat sheet to keep track of everything going on and all of the people involved. Despite, or maybe because of, the complexity, it was a fairly quick read.

I really enjoyed the small town feel and the mildly Southern setting, the different threads, and the realistic touch of big town troubles existing in a small town. Often times, people have a delusion that small towns are free of the troubles that larger towns and cities have but that's just not true. I'd have liked to learn more about the town, its industry, the other inhabitants (it sometimes felt as if the people in the story were the town's sole inhabitants), and more about the characters in general. Lillie Mae and the others are sketched in and the titular breakfast club is vague at best; is it an actual club, can any female come to breakfast, is it a church group, what? All we know is that the female leads in this book also meet once a week for breakfast and they are, seemingly, friends.

One thing that irritated me was all of the typos in the book and especially in the last chapter where there are so many errors I wondered if the copy editor and proofreader took the day off.

"Thursday Morning Breakfast (and Murder) Club" is a pleasant way to pass several hours and a good debut.

Patricia Gligor says

In "Thursday Morning Breakfast (and Murder) Club," Liz Stauffer has created an intricate, neatly woven plot filled with a cast of colorful characters.

The story takes place in Mount Penn, a small Appalachian village, where everyone knows everyone and it's very difficult for anyone to have a secret. But a few people have managed to do exactly that. When a series of crimes, including a murder, takes place, Lillie Mae Harris and the other women of the Thursday Morning Breakfast Club decide to work with the police to catch the killer and to put an end to the violence and fear that is running rampant in their normally safe, peaceful town.

I highly recommend the book.

Dianne says

Move over Women's Murder Club, The **Thursday Morning Breakfast (and Murder) Club** is on the case! Another hidden gem in the world of "all things readable," the **Thursday Morning Breakfast (and Murder) Club** by Liz Stauffer is a delightful murder mystery/who-dun-it, perfect for light reading with its charming

setting, quirky characters and a heroine who tries to keep everyone in check!

Drugs and murder have found their way into the small, quaint town of Mount Penn, where everyone knows everyone's business, friends rally in well-intentioned support and anything can be solved over a good cup of coffee. Attempting to rein everyone in, give the often over-zealous amateur sleuths direction while keeping them under control falls to The Thursday Morning Breakfast Club's leader, Lillie Mae Harris. As the dead bodies start piling up and the club digs deeper into their "investigation," danger lurks closer around every corner. But seriously, have you ever tried to stop a determined bunch of women?

Author Liz Stauffer can spin a yarn and created a world that filled my head with white picket fences, fresh baked smells, and "neighbors" who run the gamut on my "uniquely quirky-reminds-me-of -my mother's-friends" scale! If murder investigating can be fun, than Ms. Stauffer has nailed it here! Her gang of sleuths had me laughing out loud at times, NOT to say that murder and drugs aren't serious business, but the zeal her characters showed in being part of something big was priceless! Realistic, no, but this is great fiction, an escape, a chance to be part of the story without the dark danger so many books have! I couldn't help but get drawn into life in Mount Penn!

So grab your floppy hat, your investigator's notepad and settle in with **Thursday Morning Breakfast (and Murder) Club** for a fast-paced read in a small town where you can be a nosy neighbor with a purpose!

My thanks to Liz Stauffer for allowing me the opportunity to read this entertaining novel!

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My Rating: 5 Stars

Available at: Amazon / Barnes & Noble

For more reviews check out Tome Tender's Book Blog or find us on Facebook.

Britt, Book Habitue says

Maybe 2.5 stars. I love cozy mysteries but this one just didn't quite work for me. First novel problems for one. It might have made a decent episode of Murder She Wrote though.

Lewis Weinstein says

I met Liz at a Key West author event and we, in effect, exchanged books. I'm about half through "Thursday Morning" and I'm thoroughly enjoying a very charming story. So far the only people who got murdered seem to have deserved it.

UPDATE ...

The story is complicated, sometimes it was hard to remember the many characters, and the police work was unorthodox and not wholly believable, but the bottom line is I enjoyed my visit with the ladies of Mount Penn and the gradually emerging story line kept me turning pages. It was a pleasant change-of-pace trip into a very different kind of book for me.

A very worthy first novel in what I imagine will be an entertaining series.

LEW ... <http://lewweinsteinauthorblog.com/>

Laurel-Rain says

In the small mountain community of Mount Penn, the residents are friendly, their homes are open to one another, and they meet regularly for coffee and baked goods. And they get together once a week for their Thursday morning breakfast club.

But on one particular spring morning, Lillie Mae Harris, our main character, is in a state of panic. Her friend Clare seems to be missing. And everyone worries about Clare because of her husband Roger, who has been known to be abusive. Although Clare will deny it.

As we follow Lillie Mae as she searches for Clare, interacting with other neighbors along the way—Alice, Hester, Janet, Joyce, etc., we glimpse them all, a little at a time. And begin to discover how much they all depend upon one another. And help each other.

The town is one of those dream-like places with a good feeling amongst the residents, and with no crime to speak of. There is that Carl Lewis, of course, the blight on the neighborhood: he lives and does a drug business out of his junky trailer. But nothing serious. Or so they believe.

Soon there will be a turbulence ruffling their peaceful community, when Mabel's son Patrick, along with his friend Jerry, are arrested. They were transporting goods for Roger, and somehow, the police found drugs in their truck. Are they guilty? Or did someone set them up? And why?

From bad to worse it goes....and within days, two men have been murdered. Is there a connection? And how could everything change in their little town? Soon the women, at the request of the Police Chief Charlie, are helping him investigate, unofficially, by snooping around, asking questions, and doing what they do best. Definitely an unusual community.

"Thursday Morning Breakfast (and Murder) Club" is like a stroll down country lanes. The mysteries, the murders, the games they play in order to find the answers...all of it has a warm, cozy feeling. The shenanigans were probably the best part. The twists and turns were a little predictable, and I figured out who was behind it all halfway through, but the stroll was fun. Four stars.

Lara Frater says

I had many issues with the story with here are the three main ones.

1. I figured who did it before there was even a murder.
2. The main character Lillie Mae is seriously one dimensional. I know nothing about her other than she writes an occasional article for a newspaper and has red hair. Is she married, divorce, life long bachelor? What are her hobbies? How can she afford a house on a freelance salary? Does she have any children? Living parents? Siblings?
3. I find incredibly unrealistic that a police officer would turn over two drug related murders to a group of amateur detectives.

As far as the writing, the editor needed to do their job. The story needed at least 50 pages cut from it. There are tons of redundancy and unneeded subplots.

Rebecca says

2 star

Too much POV instability and other sloppiness. Needs a thorough edit to have chance at being decent. So just blah

Tuesday says

Sometimes you just need to read a cozy mystery. The multitude of characters, each unique in their own way spinning you around like a top that never seems to topple keeps me coming back for these wonderful little books. I love the plots and the development and the whodunit style of writing. I love wondering if every character was the culprit and can hardly wait until that final moment when the story is wrapped up in a pretty bow just waiting for me to turn the page to open the gift of resolution. I love the quaint settings and can just picture those cute little neighborhoods where everyone is friends, but always suspicious of one another. I love the endless pots of coffee the characters drink and have always wondered how many coffee cakes are consumed during one of these books.

Thursday Morning Breakfast (and Murder) Club had all the qualities of a cozy mystery that I enjoy and love. I was intrigued by the cast of characters, the picket fences, the dead bodies and the coffee (and cake)! I was impressed that the author added fine subtleties that made me second and third guess that who I thought the murderer was, really wasn't or was it. I think by climax of the book I had everyone listed as a suspect, some twice, and when that present Ms. Stauffer wrapped up in a bow for me was finally revealed I was giddy with happiness!

Thursday Morning Breakfast (and Murder) Club was a fun, quick little book that made a fine companion for a few days. The ending brought me back to a childhood Saturday morning memory of television long, long ago!

I did find the excessive use of the word "dear" to be a bit annoying (52 times annoying by my handy Kindle search feature). I spend a lot of time with senior citizens and retired folks and am never called dear by any of them. I like to believe the author was trying to convey quaint and respect and "old school" with her use of it, but the book honestly did not need that to get that point across to me as a reader.

I really enjoyed Thursday Morning Breakfast (and Murder) Club. I will definitely watch for future cozy mysteries from Ms. Stauffer as the weather cools off and I need that comfortable soothing feel of a mini tornado of plot and character in my mind to make me warm and fuzzy.
