



## **A Most Curious Murder**

*Elizabeth Kane Buzzelli*

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Jenny Weston moves home to Bear Falls, Michigan to nurse her bruised ego back to health after a bitter divorce. But the idyllic vision of her charming hometown crumbles when her mother's little library is destroyed.

The next door neighbor, Zoe Zola, a little person and Lewis Carroll enthusiast, suspects local curmudgeon Adam Cane, but when he's suddenly found dead in Zoe's fairy garden, all roads lead back to her. Jenny, however, believes Zoe innocent, so the two women team up to find the true culprit, investigating the richest family in Bear Falls, interrogating a few odd townspeople and delving into old, hidden transgressions--until another body turns up.

Inspired by *Alice in Wonderland*, Elizabeth Kane Buzzelli's quaint and compelling series debut *A Most Curious Murder* will delight cozy mystery readers new and old.

## **A Most Curious Murder Details**

Date : Published July 12th 2016 by Crooked Lane Books

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Author : Elizabeth Kane Buzzelli

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# From Reader Review A Most Curious Murder for online ebook

## Lisa Ks Book Reviews says

NOTE: I'll put it out there...I am not a fan of Alice in Wonderland, and there are most obviously many references to it in this book. However, I am a fan a Little Libraries, so I had to check this book out. With that being said, my review is based on the author's writing ability, her plot, the mystery, and not my personal dislike of Alice.

Author Elizabeth Kane Buzzelli grabbed my attention when I heard A MOST CRUIOUS MURDER was the start of a series based on Little Libraries. I am fascinated by them.

To be honest, at first I didn't care for protagonist, Jenny Weston. I found her to be abrasive. Though, in all fairness, the character was going through a bit of an ordeal right from the very beginning of the book. However, I kept reading because I enjoyed the author Buzzelli's writing style. She has an easy flow to her words. Plus, I had to find out what was going to happen. I did warm up to Jenny, so I'm happy I stuck with in.

A MOST CURIUOS MURDER was a well thought out mystery that kept adding more bad situations as it went along, keeping the characters and me on our toes, and with a real need to get to the bottom of it all.

This first in a series will have readers wanting more. And for those Alice in Wonderland fans out there, you will find it a double delight.

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## Paul Waibel says

I tried several times to read A MOST CURIOUS MURDER, but found it impossible to develop sufficient interest to finish it. I was confused from the start. Was it a mystery, or a fantasy. Was it a novel for an adult reader or a young adult reader? I began to see it as a novel similar to the fantasy novels by Madeleine L'engle. A quick look at its Amazon page confirmed my suspicions. Those who ordered it are said to have shown interest in similar titles like A DARK AND STORMY MURDER by Julia Buckley, the first in a series under the general title, A WRITER'S APPRENTICE MYSTERY. Other titles chosen are from similar series designed for a particular group of readers.

A fair evaluation of A MOST CURIOUS MURDER would require having read other titles in the series, or similar series, which I have not. The questions is really whether or not it is a good contribution to the series of which it is a part, and/or if it is a good example of its genre. To say that I was unable to muster enough interest to finish the novel is perhaps a reflection of having chosen to read a novel that was simply not the kind of book I like to read.

A MOST CURIOUS MURDER is well written. The chapters are short. I suspect that one who enjoys this sort of mystery novel could read through it rather quickly. It is not great literature, but then it does not claim to be. I choose to award it four stars.

(This is my review for Amazon Vine Voice)

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## **Carla Johnson-Hicks says**

I picked up this book because the series is called Little Library Mysteries. There is references to Little Libraries, but there is more to the story than that. Jenny Weston has returned home to Bear Falls, Michigan for the first time in five years. She has come home to lick her wounds after a bitter divorce and the loss of her job. When she arrives home, she sees her mother's little library, the one her father made for her before his death, broken to pieces and all the books destroyed. Jenny tries to clean up the mess before her mother sees it. Her mother's neighbour, "little person" Zoe Zola, interrupts her job. Jenny is not impressed by this strange person who quotes Lewis Carroll and is rather rude to her. Zoe still helps to clean up the mess and offers to break the news to Jenny's mom, Dora. Trying to figure out what happened, due to the police thinking it was probably just an accident, Zoe and Jenny end up finding dead bodies instead. Zoe is the main suspect in the first murder, as the body was found in her fairy garden. When Zoe's dog is found with the second body that turns up, it seems that no one else is being considered. There are a lot of questions that Jenny and Zoe have to sort out such as: Why the two murdered brothers were living in poverty while their sister lives in a luxurious mansion? Who would want the two lonely men dead and why did they try to frame Zoe? What does the antique key taped to Fida's collar open?

To be honest, I almost didn't finish this book as I didn't like protagonist, Jenny Weston at the beginning. She was abrasive, rude, short tempered and whiny. I kept reading because I really liked the quirky Zoe and wanted to find out more about her. I also enjoyed the writing and the plot. I had to find out what was going to happen. I am glad I stuck with it because I did like Jenny by the end. This was a well thought-out mystery that kept adding more bad situations along the way. I couldn't believe so much bad luck could strike one family. As the story came together at the end, I couldn't stop listening. It was tied together nicely and the culprit, although he had a good motive, was a surprise to me. That makes for a good mystery in my books. I listened to the audio book and must say that the narrator did a wonderful job with the voices. I loved listening to this story and as soon as it ended, I borrowed the next one. If you are an Alice in Wonderland fan, you will find an added dimension to enjoy.

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## **Eurocrime says**

Rounded up to 3 stars. A bit disappointing.

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## **James says**

Last year, I won a copy of the second book in the 'Little Library Mystery' series by Elizabeth Kane Buzzelli. I ordered the first book, A Most Curious Murder, from the library last week and attempted to read it. I like reading books from a series and getting caught up before the latest one is launched. In this series, Jenny moves back home after a bad divorce only to discover things in her hometown are a little strange. A little person has moved next door to her mother and someone's destroyed the small library Jenny's father built since there wasn't a regular public one in town.

Jenny meets the neighbor, Zoe, and they try to decide if they like one another. When Zoe's dog goes missing, they begin to bond. Another neighbor is murdered, and his family, a well-to-do and well-known one in town,

acts quite strange. Someone had it out for them. What was really going? Jenny has to protect Zoe from the cops when it looks like she might have gotten revenge with a garden hoe after the other neighbor took her dog. Did she kill him? From here, the stories unfold like a typical cozy and introduce readers to the world of Bear Falls.

Unfortunately, I struggled to connect with both books in this series. I went back to read the first just in case it was a timing issue, but I had the same concerns. I don't like the characters as much as I normally do in a cozy series. The author's intent to make Zoe a bit strange works in some cases, but the conversations she has are almost always over my head or too cryptic. It works on a couple of levels but it's not a good match for my reading style and preferences. That said, the author is a strong writer and creates a fun town. It's a good mystery, so there's bound to be the proper group of readers for it. I wish it much success!

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## **Kristina says**

*A Most Curious Murder* by Elizabeth Kane Buzzelli is the first book in *A Little Library Mystery* series. Jenny Weston has just moved back to Bear Falls, Michigan following her acrimonious divorce. One thing she has always loved is the Little Library her father built for her mother in front of their home. Her mother was a librarian before she married, but the town had no library. This was a way for her to be a librarian and help people pick books (it works a little differently from your traditional little library). But then they find the little library smashed to pieces. Who would do this? Everyone (well, almost everyone) loved the little library. Their neighbor, grumpy Adam Cane did not like it. He felt it caused extra traffic on their street. But when Adam Cane is found dead in Zoe Zola's (another neighbor) backyard, it does not look good for Zoe. Zoe is a little odd, but she is no murderer. Zoe is a Little Person who loves fairies and has little fairy houses (with fairies inside) scattered around her yard (Adam Cane's body really stood out). Zoe also quotes from the works of Lewis Carroll (and other stories) frequently (it is annoying) and is a writer (and a dreamer). Jenny needs to find the culprit for Zoe and her mother, Dora (who is upset over all this hoopla). Can Jenny solve the crimes and clear Zoe's name? Will the unexpected appearance of her ex-husband hinder her investigation? Then there is Jenny's infatuation with her old high school boyfriend!

*A Most Curious Murder* was inspired by *Alice in Wonderland*, but the author did not pull it off. The novel came across more odd than fantastical, magical, and intriguing. I had just started the book and all these characters are thrown at you. I found Zoe Zola to be overdone. The author tried to put all too many zany character traits in one person and it did not work (if I met this person I would run the other way). The constant quotes from Zoe Zola was not an endearing quality. They made absolutely no sense (despite my reading the same pages several times) and were a hindrance to my enjoyment of the novel. I found the writing to slightly awkward or stilted which severely lessened my enjoyment (I never got into this book) and the dialogue was stale (flat). The mystery was simple and easily solved (you need less than 50 pages to figure it out). I give *A Most Curious Murder* 2.5 out of 5 stars. Jenny's fascination with her old high school boyfriend who cheated on her and got another girl pregnant was just absurd (the writer could have found another way to include the character). The idea or premise has possibilities. With work this could be an interesting and enjoyable series. *A Most Curious Murder* was just not for me (and I really wanted to like it).

I received a complimentary copy of *A Most Curious Murder* from NetGalley in exchange for an honest evaluation of the novel. The opinions and comments expressed above are strictly my own.

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## **Kristen says**

I tried to like this, but unfortunately I didn't.

I found pretty much all the characters either TSTL, weak and wimpy, or simply unpleasant and unlikable.

The mystery and what the murder was all about was depressing verging on disturbing and I did not find anything to enjoy about it.

This was a miss for me on all counts where cozies are concerned. I expect murder, I expect SOME unpleasant people, and I expect small-town busybodies. But I don't expect to be depressed and sad when I get to the end of a cozy, but that is how I felt at the end of this one. It may work for other readers, but as I said, a miss for me.

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## **Randee says**

I found this to be a charming mystery because of the characters. My favorite childhood story is 'Alice in Wonderland' and I thought there would be more 'Alice' type things going on besides quoting lines from Lewis Carroll's masterpieces, but that's fine. It does start out a bit slow and convoluted, but by the third of fourth chapter, I got interested. I wasn't expecting anything more than a few hours of entertainment and it fulfilled my expectations nicely. Mimsy were the borogoves, indeed.

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## **K.A. Davis says**

I enjoy reading cozy mysteries for a variety of reasons: good character development, happy endings, and of course they are a source of wonderful entertainment. A MOST CURIOUS MURDER: A Little Library Mystery, by Elizabeth Kane Buzzelli, fits my criteria for what makes a book good, but then the author went a step further and made it great! A MOST CURIOUS MURDER has a strong plot with plenty of twists, turns, and falls into the rabbit hole which kept me up late at night turning pages. But what made this book stand out in my mind is the intertwining of emotions in the subplots that pulled me in, made me relate, and made me think about the story and the characters long after I had finished the book. Ms. Buzzelli has a lyrical cadence to her writing which fit the theme of Lewis Carroll's Alice In Wonderland and enhanced the settings so I felt like I was experiencing the book instead of just reading a story.

Jenny Westson has returned home to Bear Falls, Michigan after driving all night from Chicago. She hasn't been home in five years but with a bitter divorce and the loss of her job and friends, she needs somewhere to lick her wounds and decide what to do with her life. When she pulls up to her mother's house in the early morning hour, she finds her mother's Little Library broken into smithereens with the books destroyed. Sick at heart, her deceased father had built the Little Library as an anniversary gift just months before he was killed in a hit and run accident, Jenny tries to clean up the mess before her mother sees it.

She's interrupted by her mom's "little person" neighbor, Zoe Zola, who loves to quote Lewis Carroll. With her exhaustion and emotional heartache, Jenny doesn't care for Zoe all that much, but despite her attitude, Zoe pitches in to clean up and help break the news to Jenny's mom, Dora. When the police tell them it's probably just a hit and run, Zoe points out all the evidence which indicated it was something much more

malicious. She thinks it could be one of their neighbors, Adam Cane, who destroyed the Little Library since he hated it and her dog, Fida. When Fida disappears Zoe points the police in the direction of Adam again, but when he turns up dead in Zoe's fairy garden, she's suddenly suspected of murder.

Evidence is even more incriminating when Adam's brother, Aaron, is found murdered with Zoe's dog locked in his impoverished cabin. Jenny knows Zoe is innocent, despite her quirks, and decides she has to find some answers before the small-town police railroad Zoe right into prison. With the madness of murders going on around her, Jenny is also faced with issues from her late teen years that have never been resolved and could be holding her back from finding happiness. Can she find the answers to why the two murdered brothers were living in poverty while their sister lives in a luxurious mansion? Who would want the two lonely men dead and why did they try to frame Zoe? When Jenny and Zoe find an antique key taped to the abducted Fida's collar, Jenny knows it could hold the answers that they and the killer are looking for but time may be running out for another innocent victim.

One of the quotes Zoe shares with Jenny that I thought was quite appropriate for my review is "....words and words and words - until the words sort themselves out and everything is clear, or it becomes completely unclear and it doesn't matter anymore." Elizabeth Kane Buzzelli's words are perfectly clear and come together to make a delightful, thought provoking read. Well done!

I was provided an ARC of A MOST CURIOUS MURDER in exchange for my honest review. All thoughts and opinions are my own.

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### **Lauren says**

I couldn't finish this. I tried to plow through because I really did like Zoe and wanted to see how things turned out for her, but the rest of the characters were either dull or unpleasant. The lone exception to that is Jenny. She was awful and the reason why I hated this book. I get it. Part of the cozy formula is for the protagonist to have some sort of "trauma" from their past, but gee whiz, not only was hers weak, but it was something that she should have gotten over a loooooooong time ago and there was so much evidence that she dodged a bullet by her high school sweetheart cheating on and then dumping her. Seriously, why the ever loving fuck would any woman with any brains and/or self-respect be soooooo upset that she couldn't have a cheating, alcoholic, and verbally abusive asshole? And she was so judgmental and nasty to everyone else for no good reason. I had to give up. I either read to enjoy or to learn and I wasn't enjoying it and all I was learning was that Jenny was a sniveling little wimp. I gladly dnfd this one.

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### **Jen says**

One of the most boring and annoying books I have read in a long time.

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### **Cherie Bush says**

I wanted to like it more than I did.

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## **Patty says**

I am glad this was a book I checked out from the library, and not one that I purchased. I got about 35% of the book read, and I just decided to stop reading it. It was hard for me to follow the characters and the fairy tale aspects of the story really did not add anything, except confusion.

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## **LORI CASWELL says**

### **Dollycas's Thoughts**

This story was an absolute treasure.

Jenny Weston reeling from an awful divorce arrived back home in Bear Falls to find her mother's Little Library has been chopped to bits and books have been ripped apart. The Little Library was built by Jenny's dad for his librarian wife because little Bear Falls doesn't have a public library and she wanted to share her joy of reading. He built it to look like just like their home and put it up shortly before he was killed in a car accident.

The first person Jenny meets is Zoe Zola who she finds lamenting about the Little Library's destruction. Zoe just happens to be an author herself, a Lewis Carroll enthusiast, and a little person, who takes a bit of getting used to. She thinks she knows who did the dastardly deed but when the man is found dead and Zoe becomes the prime suspect, all thoughts turn to proving her innocence. Things continue to roll out of control as another man is found murdered and so many more questions arise.

I started reading this book and could not put it down. I loved the uniqueness of Zoe. She may be of small stature but she has a huge heart and a very uplifting point of view and special way of thinking. Jenny's mom has a good friend in Zoe and as the book continued Jenny and she were quickly becoming "almost friends".

I enjoyed the small town setting and the way the residents pulled together to help Jenny's mother, Dora, replace her loss. It was interesting the Jenny reconnecting with high school friends she really didn't want to and found her life was better having left town when she did. She also meets someone new in town that just may help her start to heal her aching heart.

The drama was multifaceted as well. The main plot and subplots blended perfectly. They are complex, curious, and at times comical.

The best part of the whole thing was the author's writing style. At times I felt like we were going down the rabbit hole ourselves and it was such a fun adventure. Words, words, words, suitcase words, words that need to be unpacked and understood and that would lead you to the answers you seek or they could lead you nowhere, but totally entertaining.

Loved, Loved, Loved, this story!! It is fresh and different! Alice in Wonderland fans, this is a book for you!

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## Cutty says

Well I can't believe that I am giving Elizabeth Kane Buzzelli's book a 1 star. I loved her previous series (Emily Kincaid Mysteries), so was anxiously awaiting receiving copy of A Most Curious Murder so that I could devour it. Unfortunately, I had to force myself to finish it.

If you like Alice in Wonderland quotes, you will like this book. I do not. The plot line was predictable, the story line threads were a bit random, and the idea that a woman could still be pining for her high school sweetheart to the degree that the main character was, was highly unbelievable (at least based on what was shared about their high school romance). She had moved away, had a lengthy marriage, and her old beau had impregnated another girl back in High School and was now an alcoholic philanderer. I couldn't muster up sympathy for her supposed feelings toward this man.

And can someone please explain to me what a "brown funeral" is? I totally got lost with that reference (p 174).

I RARELY give 1 star. Perhaps it's because I had such high expectations. Sigh.....

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