



Wicked Witch Murder

Leslie Meier

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With planning the town's annual Halloween Party, the drought wreaking havoc on her garden, and her brood of four children, Lucy Stone's got her hands full this fall. As the air turns crisp and the trees blaze red and gold in the tiny town of Tinker's Cove, Maine, a newcomer arrives who seems to suit the Halloween season. Diana Ravenscroft has just opened Solstice, a charming little shop featuring candles, crystals, jewelry, and psychic readings. But after an unnervingly accurate reading by Diana, Lucy starts to get more than a little spooked.

Then there's the dead body Lucy finds, way up on one of the old logging roads behind her house. The deceased is identified as Malcolm Malebranche, a seemingly harmless magician who worked at children's birthday parties. When it turns out that Diana knew the murder victim, Ike Stoughton, a prominent local businessman, starts a campaign against Diana, blaming 'the witch' for everything from the unseasonal dry spell to his wife's illness and his pumpkins' lack of plumpness. But Lucy's not so sure that Ike himself is innocent. Still, as the town Halloween party approaches, Lucy's more concerned about the costume competition, pin-the-nose-on-the-pumpkin, and baking three dozen orange cupcakes and Beastly Bug cookies. But as the October moon rises, a killer plans a lethal celebration of his own and Lucy's the guest of honor.

Wicked Witch Murder Details

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Bookgirlr says

Cozy mysteries are one of my dirty little secrets. I call them fluff books, and I love them. These cute little novels don't play with my emotions and I don't get so involved that I can't put them down, but I still look forward to picking them back up.

I love how the Lucy Stone Mystery novels are all based on holidays. I picked up Wicked Witch Murder right before Halloween and had planned to read it during the holiday. However life had other plans, and so I am now catching back up on all of this reading I had planned to do.

I love everything about this novel. Diana Ravenscroft is delightfully eccentric and naïve, and Ike Stoughton is a bad guy that I found it easy to dislike. I love the change in the heroine that this novel shows. When Lucy first meets Diana she doesn't believe in witchcraft or witches at all, but by the end of the novel she has changed her mind. Rebecca Wardell reminded me of my mother and my nana and I wish that she was real so I could be her friend. I couldn't figure out the who-done-it until it was revealed at the very end of the novel. I had many theories, but they all ended up being wrong. This novel was amazing, as are Leslie Meier's other Lucy Stone Mysteries.

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Lindsay says

This book wasn't super wonderful or anything, but I couldn't put it down.

Don't be fooled. The description of the book makes it sound like it takes place during October, but it actually starts in June and the happens expand throughout the summer into October. I was a little disappointed in that. Diana the witch comes to town and opens up a shop and no one seems to have a problem with her except over religious guy Ike who blames her for everything bad that is happening in Tinker's Cove. First the lack of water, then some fires that happen, then floods that come, the death of his wife, the illness of his daughter, etc. The book is pretty much just him blaming Diana for everything and Lucy trying to keep her kids from doing witchcraft. Yes, there is a mystery. A guy who turns out to be a witch is found burned to death in the woods behind Lucy's house, so she tries to find out who did it.

It was entertaining and a little creepy.

Tracy says

Ugh. What a disappointing read. Since it claimed to be about Halloween and Wicca, I thought I'd give it a try, even though I really didn't care for another book in this series that I'd tried. I was sort of expecting this to be a mystery and really all I got was Lucy (the main character) driving to and from work, home, neighbors' houses and such, and total hypocrisy when it came to the attitudes of Wicca/witchcraft. On the one hand, Lucy was the first one to preach to all her skeptical, distrusting and overtly Christian neighbors that Wicca is just another religion and has none of the elements that Hollywood usually portrays when it comes to witchcraft (like in "The Craft" or "Charmed" or various others), yet she got all weirded out when her

daughters wanted to try out spells and found Diana, the witch of the book, and her beliefs to be a lot of hooey. And to top this off there was a crazy religious fanatic and his oddball family running around town accusing Diana of putting a hex on everything from bad weather to the death of his wife.

Still, it was a light, breezy, fast read—but I think it was ultimately too light and with too many mixed messages—including the "mystery's" resolution, for me. I didn't even completely finish it; the Halloween part was at the end, and here I was, in the last 50 pages and there was still no resolution—not even close—to the mystery (which was a murder somewhere in the first few chapters of the book). It was just . . . ridiculous, right along the lines of Lucy Stone being a "hardened investigative reporter" for the, wait for it, "Pennysaver". O.o

Nicole says

Diana Ravenscroft has come to Tinker's Cove, and some of the town's citizens are convinced she's a witch - she does claim to be one, but of the good variety. When a body is found murdered in the woods behind Lucy's house, questions are raised, and Lucy is once again on the hunt for a killer, all the while trying to prevent a witch hunt. Wicked Witch Murder is an excellent and very cozy addition to the Lucy Stone books by Leslie Meier, and especially spooky as it deals with witches and magic. I would like to note that even though the Lucy Stone series follows our heroine throughout the years as she raises her children, one of the best things about these books is that they can all be read as standalones. :-)

Me says

A cozy mystery starring a small town reporter who has to contend with the local witches. Halloween recipes follow the mystery. The mystery itself isn't too gory and the "bad guys/gals" aren't immediately obvious. I will definitely read more of this series.

Michael crage says

It was a pretty good book. I was somewhat surprised at the ending of the book. Which is good when you are reading a mystery and have enough information no to be surprised like this book had.

Luffy says

Inconsistency is the name of the game with Leslie Meier. She cannot string two good books together at the time of writing. Although the trademark fluidity of the prose was present, the style emphasized starkly the lack of buildup, pacing, plot, and twists in this Halloween themed book. I do know it's the lowest rated book of the series, and the fact that I dislike it is no coincidence.

Bill Stone was cruelly underused during the entire thing. He appears only to flip the television channels or if he's being horny. I know he's not the main character but he is very important. If the author has no use for him then may I suggest killing him off? That would put him out of his misery. I can't know for sure what

character appeared most here apart from Lucy, but it does look like Ike Stoughton might just be the one. His role is mainly to provide misdirection while the real murderer gallivants about fearlessly. Nobody, not Leslie Meier, not her editor, not anyone who she thanked in her book had the right clue to come up with the type of decent ideas that made this series a roaring success.

The biggest blot was the vindication of supernatural Wicca activities which left, at the last chapter, the door ajar, when trying to explain the miraculous events in the book. I do know there are ghostly cozy mysteries but why here? This is not meant to be a spooky book! I'm sure the low ratings reflect how readers reacted to this premise. The only purpose this book served was to make it clear to me that character development is the major thing that attracts me to this series. Likable characters that are a delight to root for. The author has fallen and came back before. I'm sure she'll bounce back in the remaining books, but I'm running out of them. When I do come to the last published book, let me look back on this series with longing instead of relief.

Donna Jo Atwood says

I have grave reservations about this book (pun intended). The witches in question start off treated fairly sympathetically, but the viewpoint gradually swings the other way. The opposition, portrayed as a religious nut with perhaps shadings of child and wife abuse, is a caricature of all that is wrong with intolerant people. An economic motive for some of the crimes is floated off and away almost as soon it is mentioned. Lucy is one of the scattiest women in the universe--repeatedly going off by herself into the very woods that have just had tragic events happen in.

This is one of those books to be one of the three monkeys. Just put your hands over your eyes and--Read No Evil.

Lorraine says

The attacks are a bit violent for a so-called cosy mystery, but that's not my biggest beef. Lucy has a family and three fast friends. So, why does she glomp on to somebody new in practically each book. Here, a newcomer crosses a line with Lucy's young daughters, yet Lucy continues to invite her into her home and be at her beck and call. Lucy never seems to consider what affect her actions have on her young children. Her husband continues to be virtually non-existence, other than a leering hulk who needs meat and quickies. And, Lucy's continued idiocy is just driving me nuts - she was an English lit major, but she doesn't know that nightshade is poisonous????? She "disguises" herself as a target for attack, then drives off in the night to a sketchy location without checking that she has any gas in the car????? And, her fate on that trip doesn't make any sense - why would they involve an obviously clueless woman in a crime which otherwise might go unsolved.

And, the whole witchcraft theme is bad - it's good, it's bad, in current times one guy's ranting suddenly fills all the churches, and yet his target takes part in their party and hands out bags to all the children???????

Tari says

This was a very well-written and well-constructed mystery plot that had a fairly long timeline, starting in spring and ending at Halloween. The author is a great storyteller and I didn't even come close to guessing the

killer!

Pat says

There is quite a bit of witchcraft and supernatural "happenings" which I am not comfortable with. Otherwise the story was okay.

Philip says

It is always a great trip to Maine with the Lucy Stone books. This book does not disappoint and is timely for reading around Halloween. The residents of Tinkers Cove are people you'd like to be friends with and Lucy is a go-getter, unafraid to pursue her leads. A great trip to New England every time!

Joanne says

I was surprised this cozy detailed as much as it did about Wicca and witches. Despite the burning at the stake of a witch/local magician and some risqué references to the nude and sexual aspects of the rituals, I was surprised that Lucy was as open minded to accepting Dinah into her house with her impressionable teens that apparently had taken some witchcraft classes at her shop. She basically "knew" the woman from a reading at her store and then she is staying with her after her shop is vandalized. I thought it would be more seasonal; most of the story took place over the summer instead of Halloween. This was my second holiday type read from the series and enjoyed seeing familiar characters.

LORI CASWELL says

Dollycas's Thoughts

There's a witch or two or maybe more in Tinker's Cove. Diana Ravenscroft has opened a unique shop, Solstice, and it is not getting rave reviews from many in town. The most vocal is Ike Stoughton. He thinks Diana has cursed his family and his home. When Lucy finds a dead body she finds herself both leery of Diana but willing to accept a little protection from her. Things start to escalate the closer we get to Halloween and Lucy finds herself in a deadly situation.

Leslie Stone mixes murder and magic in a bewitching mystery. The book does span several months so we can learn about Diana and her coven and the way the town reacts to the new element in the midst. Ike Stoughton also moves to town and becomes Lucy's neighbor. Something eerie is going on at that house and with his family and Lucy treads lightly at first but grows more concerned as the story continues.

The new characters in this installment are intriguing, different, and some just plain scary. Partnered with the series regulars an entertaining story emerges. Lucy has more courage than I will ever have. Using her part time job at the Pennysaver she interviews all the people connected to the case. Diana Ravenscroft also tries

to teach her about Wicca, although she is skeptical her daughters are interested so she needs to know as much as she can.

A lot happens within these pages including a huge storm. There are several twists that turn the story in so many directions. At times it's felt just a little disjointed. I think that was because the story took place over so many months.

Be sure to check out the recipes in the back of the book perfect for this Halloween.

Gina says

I picked this book at the library without ever having seen or read any of the other books in this series. I believe this is the 16th book in the series. I was intrigued enough to go back and start reading from the beginning.

Even though some of the characters, including the "heroine", can be pretty annoying it's a different premise from many other light suspense books. Plus we get to track Lucy as she progresses from stay at home mom to a part time job as her kids grow up and start to fly the nest. I find it interesting that Lucy and her husband were hippies in the 70's but he throws such a fit when she goes to work because his dinner isn't on the table at 6:00 and he and the kids have to start doing more around the house.

While I would have tossed a cast iron skillet at her husband, he and Lucy always handle the ups and downs of being an "old married couple". But I think the characters are based on real world people, that's why they irritate me at times. Real people do that occasionally too. ;) I think the stories and characters are based a lot on the author's life and experiences in New England, although I have to say I find them extremely conservative and small-town-ish in their attitudes. I was actually thinking New England might be a lovely place to retire but I may have to reconsider.

Still an entertaining series.
