



# The House on Honeysuckle Lane

*Mary McDonough*

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**Mary McDonough welcomes readers back to the small town of Oliver's Well, Virginia, in a story of holiday and homecoming, as three siblings gather for a Christmas that brings unexpected gifts.**

Even in a town as picturesque and rich in history as Oliver's Well there's something special about the Reynolds house on Honeysuckle Lane. Sturdy yet graceful, well-proportioned outside and within, it's where Andie, Emma, and Daniel Reynolds grew up—before they began to grow apart.

For Danny, this first reunion since their mother's death is a chance for him and his sisters to relive cherished holiday traditions—attending the church concert, lighting the town tree—before finally settling their parents' estate. But readying the house for sale proves no easy task when every piece of furniture and every moment together stirs up the past.

Andie, the oldest sibling, didn't just leave home years ago, she left her young daughter too. Though she's found fulfillment and fame as a self-help author, coming back shakes her equilibrium. How can she presume to guide others if she can't be honest with those closest to her, much less herself? Middle child Emma struck out on her own instead of accepting her father's offer to share his business. Yet now she finds herself drawn back to her town's quiet rhythms and routines, wondering if it's possible to start over.

The house on Honeysuckle Lane contains a lifetime's worth of joys and dreams, and its share of regrets too. This Christmas, it will be the place where Andie, Emma, and Danny come together to remember, laugh, fight, plan—and find their way forward as a family once more.

## The House on Honeysuckle Lane Details

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## **From Reader Review The House on Honeysuckle Lane for online ebook**

### **Cindy says**

Three siblings settling the estate of their deceased parents leads to various levels of drama. I was expecting a light Christmas novel but found it somewhat convoluted to me. The characters were appropriate for the story which ended on a light note.

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### **Julie Barrett says**

The House on Honeysuckle Lane by Mary McDonough

Have read many other books from the author and have enjoyed them all.

This book starts out with Danny and he's been in charge of his mother prior to her dying and through her death and afterwards. His two sisters, Emma and Andie don't live in the same town but do travel in afterwards to help with the estate.

Things get out of hand and with the pressure some things are said that shouldn't have been and puts them on edge. One sister is thinking of returning and maybe living in the house, others want to sell it and divide the proceeds.

Interesting how they all work together at times getting the job done. Others in town really confuse the reader at times as to who they are and how important to the story line.

Chapters also go back in time and that also confused me. Wish this book was broken up into 3 books-each having their say as to what was going on in their lives at the time.

Love that this occurs during the Christmas holiday season and how they all cherish the traditions. Twists and turns make this a good read.

There are divorces, children and all their problems among the catering business, the publishing business and the financial business.. Never a dull moment and you never know how it will end up.

I received this book from The Kensington Books in exchange for my honest review

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### **Sandy says**

Must say I liked the second Oliver's Well quite a bit. The first, One Year, with its choppy chapters put me off a tad. Though both novels shared the overriding Matriarch, this one had much more depth in its characterization. It's definitely a good read!

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### **Sue Stewart says**

Outstanding book!!!! The siblings unique stories with their own perspective of the past and their relationship with their parent is a captivating and enjoyable journey. Loved every page!

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### **Claudia Cheyne says**

Adult siblings Daniel, Andie and Emma Reynolds are celebrating Christmas together as they have so many times before. But this year they must also make decisions on settling their parents' estate. What to do with the house, Mom's jewelry, photo albums and furniture - all the things that hold memories of their happy childhoods must be divided up or let go. Daniel is having an especially difficult time. He can't even throw away an envelope full of expired coupons. The two sisters are going through challenges of their own. Andie's daughter is rude when she does speak to her. Emma left Ian, her boyfriend for the past ten years because she realized she never loved him. This is a book about new beginnings and making peace with our past. It also touches on how our parents can affect our lives even after they are no longer around.

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### **Judy says**

Typical "Hallmark type" Christmas tale with a good ending. Sappy, certainly. But, if you like corny family stories, you'll enjoy this one. I did!!

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### **Mary says**

When I began reading this book I didn't like the way I was introduced to the characters. I felt negative towards all of them. So, I wasn't really willing to pick up the book. As I progressed in the readings, the characters became more real and more interesting. I also felt that the end of the book could of come sooner than it did. There were several chapters after the resolution of the relationships amongst the 3 adults. As I was reading I felt the book was going to end and then there was more and then an epilogue.

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### **Dona says**

interesting how the sibling worked things out -- after death of parnets

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### **Mary Peaks says**

I was excited to read this book until I started it. Three siblings with issues of course gather for Christmas at the family home a year after their mom passed away. Daniel the baby brother still lives in town with his wife and two children. He has been taking care of the home but it is time to go through the house and divide everything. Emma is in the same business as her father was only she struck out on her own to "prove" herself. Now she thinks she might want to come home. Andie the oldest is a self help guru who has her own set of problems. Basic layout of story and for the next 399 pages we listen to them whine, argue and kiss/makeup. All characters felt flat to me.

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### **Carolyn Farrlley says**

Really bad writing. So cliché. Would normally not have even finished it, but the book was recently made into a Hallmark Christmas movie that was filmed in my town. By the looks of the previews, I think the movie didn't even use much of the book!

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### **Helen says**

Fairly boring about a boring family

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### **Aleta Chosseck says**

**All's well that ends well.**

Entertaining enough but plot and characters needed more dimension. It all ended rather tidily. Didn't really convey any the house was central to the family dynamics.

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### **Betty says**

I loved reading about the Reynolds family... I loved it so much, I wanted to leap into the pages and smack some sense into one of the siblings when Andie, Emma, or Daniel were thinking or behaving foolishly. *That's* how believable and relatable these characters are. They feel like people you've known for years... the kind of connection readers hope to feel with characters as they read.

The siblings are in the midst of an emotional time—grieving for what was, and what might have been—when they come together at Christmastime to settle the final details of their parent's estate after the loss of their mother. Six months have passed since their mother's passing, and this is the first time they've all been together since her funeral, and a difficult task is made even harder by strained relationships within the family.

We've all experienced loss in our lives. Grief can (and often does) change the dynamics of a family following the loss of a loved one. Relationships that were once good become fraught with tension, and some families are torn apart in the aftermath of the loss. This book, while fiction, shows how grief can cause family to behave as strangers with one another, and how important it is to work through it and learn how to move forward together.

I thought this story was written beautifully. *The House on Honeysuckle Lane* handles a delicate subject in a way that is realistic, while honestly portraying the wide range of conflicting emotions felt by those who are left behind. I highly recommend adding this one to your reading list!

**I received an advance review copy of this book courtesy of Netgalley and Kensington Books, in exchange for an honest review.**

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### **Ann says**

Family issues, sibling rivalry and the death of parents with the disposal of the estate plus a theme of expectations of parents and the children who are still looking for approval from parents. It did hold my interest but with too much bickering and clutter.

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## Brigid says

The copy I read was released under the title *Christmas on Honeysuckle Lane* which is not nearly as appropriate a title. While this takes place during the holiday season, the book itself is about the family drama that unfolds after three adult siblings lose their parents. The idea itself is very compelling, and something that many people will have to go through as adults, but I wish the subject had been tackled by a stronger writer, or at least by one who had a tougher editor.

The number of typos and poor typesetting (such as using the wrong quotation mark) made me initially assume this was self-published. The book runs about 400 pages, but could easily lose 50-100 and not lose a step. Interestingly enough, I think the details that are dragging the book down are the type of details would've been perfect in a script. I wonder if the author was pulling from her experience as an actor when developing the scenes. Things like details about the room, or the unfinished breakfast, or the hum of the refrigerator can give an actor the tools needed to get into character and understand their perspective at that moment of a performance. Those details, however, are for the actor to do their work and aren't ever spoken. A stronger editor could've persuaded the author to drop some of these details that only served to bog down the story. Here, those details needed to have more reason for existing. It wasn't painting enough of a picture for the reader to feel immersed in the image, nor was it playing off of any sort of internal dialogue by the characters.

The dialogue, and there is a lot of it, is completely unbelievable, and not in a good way. Sometimes when I read a book and I come across particularly witty but unlikely dialogue I think to myself "People don't speak like this, but they should." In this book, everyone speaks like they are a completely enlightened self-help guru. And being as one character is an enlightened guru, this informs the reader who the "hero" of this story is supposed to be. The oldest sibling, Andie, is a quasi-Buddhist self-help star. It took me a third of the book to realize she's supposed to be for real and not full of shit. And amazingly, everyone in this tiny backwater town that is somehow near Washington, D.C. and Winchester, VA yet nowhere near Richmond is completely up on her "work" and "grateful for all she's done." They all love it. And everyone in the family can solve complicated emotional problems with a single conversation. That's all it takes. One conversation and all your family issues from grief to abandonment are solved. And you'll stop feeling feelings apparently, too.

So I guess the quasi-Buddhist self-help bullshit really does work. Next time I need to hammer out some sort of painful emotional issue, I'll just quote a centuries dead poet and everyone will immediately understand how to live their best life.

Perhaps the most aggravating scene in the book is when guru-Andie loses her mind and impulsively makes a move guaranteed to piss off everyone. Her meltdown is triggered by an online troll emailing her to call her fraud when all she did was "write the best book [she] could in that moment." If that's not an author realizing they are not good at this but finding a way to blame the readers I don't know what is. If I'm not good at my job, despite "doing the best I can in that moment" guess what? I don't get to do that job any more.

Also! All of the dialogue! Features an increasingly! annoying! number of exclamation points! Everyone is so excited when they say banal things!

All that said, I can absolutely see why Hallmark jumped on this for a Christmas movie. If you focus only on the family gathering at the holidays to settle the estate and the side story romance, then this could be a cute

movie. (And admittedly, one I will watch now that I read the book.) Also, if you focus on the side story romance, the only relatable sibling, Emma, becomes the main character.

Overall, the concept for the story is good, but the execution is lacking. On the bright side, I came away grateful that I'm an only child.

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