



Pleating for Mercy

Melissa Bourbon

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When her great-grandmother passes away, Harlow Jane Cassidy leaves her job as a Manhattan fashion designer and moves back to Bliss, Texas. But when she opens a dressmaking boutique in the turn-of-the-century farmhouse she inherited, Harlow senses an inexplicable "presence." Her old friend Josie orders a gown for her upcoming wedding, but when Josie's boss turns up dead, Harlow has to find the killer-with a little help from beyond.

Pleating for Mercy Details

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From Reader Review Pleating for Mercy for online ebook

✳ Jennifer says

Really really enjoyed this book. Great story line, never saw the bad guy coming at the end and the characters and setting are fantastic. I really can't wait for the follow up to this one. Now if only Misa Ramirez would write another Lola Cruz mystery....

Jeanie Jackson says

This one really caught me and I am not even sure what the magic was. Her logic was kind of narrow since she assumed that the murderer had to have been in her shop that day but other than that point, I loved everything about the book. These are people that I look forward to spending more time with which is my bases of evaluating any series book. The plot was involved but made sense, another absolute requirement!

Marye says

Book due out in early August - you can pre order at Amazon. I got my copy early to review. This book is a real page turner. It's a modern murder mystery incorporating a love of sewing, some magic, ghostly occurances, and romance too. First in a three part series, and I really look forward to the next. Even if you don't sew, you'll find it a very enjoyable read, and well balanced. There is not a lot of boring detail about sewing at all, but it's a theme in the book that the main character is passionate about designing and sewing. However, there is much more than just sewing up some dresses in this book.

Caroline says

I really, really liked this first book in another new series! Can't wait for more. I love the family relationship between the protag, her mom and grandmom. I'm not really a fashionista so I can't really understand some of the clothing descriptions but I love the fact that this woman can envision a style, fabric and fashion, for a dress that will make the wearer feel good as well as look good. Eagerly anticipating the next in the series.

Susan Webb says

This book was entertaining. The Cassidy women are funny and it was nice to read about all of them and the history. Meemaw's ghost was an added enjoyment. I am looking forward to more in this series. Harlow's character will be one I will enjoy learning more about

Frances Wentworth says

I found it enjoyable to read, but it was a bit too southern themed for my taste. I liked the extensive sewing knowledge and the main character's knowledge of fashion. While I found the story entertaining, it just seemed to lack that certain something that makes me really want to get to know the main character, even though the other characters seemed very well developed. I'm going to give the next few a try to see if it draws me in a bit more.

Char says

My rating leans closer to 3 1/2 stars.

Harlow Cassidy leaves her job in Manhattan to open a dressmaking boutique in Bliss, Texas after her great grandmother passes away and leaves her the property. It doesn't take her long to figure out that her great grandmother may have passed away, but that doesn't mean she is gone. When Harlow's friend Josie wants a gown made for her upcoming wedding, she is excited to get started but then one of the wedding party ends up dead on Harlow's lawn. She sets out to find the killer and gets a little help from the great beyond.

This first in series was cute and charming with likable characters. I admit I don't know much of anything when it comes to designing clothes so some of the references to that were a bit lost on me, but it still held my interest and even surprised me at the end. I really thought I had figured out the killer and I wasn't completely wrong, but I wasn't completely right either. I really enjoyed the writing style and the fact that even though there is an obvious love interest in the story, it didn't overtake the plot. It also has some paranormal/supernatural elements added in but not so much that it comes off as unrealistic or goofy. So if you like a little bit of magic in your cozies along with a cute little town and some fun characters, this one fits the bill.

Mary says

Exciting and different!

Harlow Jean Cassidy has been living in New York for about ten years when her Great Grandmother Loretta Mae dies and leaves Harlow her home in Bliss, Texas. Harlow grew up in Bliss and left as soon as she could.

Now she is back and she is running a dress shop out of her new house! An old school friend stops by and asks her to make the wedding gown and bridesmaids dresses for her upcoming wedding in two weeks!

Everything was going great until the Maid of Honor was found dead in Harlow's backyard!

The story kept me guessing who did it until the very last Chapter. It was a very good book and I will be recommending it to family and friends.

The mystery is very well written and keeps you interested right up to the final chapter! When the murderer is finally told!

I enjoyed the book and would recommend it to all my friends and family!

Angela Holland says

What I liked: I liked the "gifts" that Harlow and the females each had and the fact that they were each a different gift. I liked that they "gifts" were not witchcraft to me. I also like Gracie who Harlow is going to teach how to sew and is the daughter of Will - who I think in future books will become the love interest.

What I didn't Like: I can't think of anything that I did not like about this book

Overall Impression: I enjoyed that this was a fun fast book to read. Harlow was not real sure about coming home to Bliss but then the longer she is home she more she is glad she did. Her Meemaw has passed away and left her the family home which Harlow turns into her dressmaking shop. From the beginning Meemaw communicates to Harlow from beyond and it is fun the way Harlow is learning about that. Harlow gets a big job making four dresses for a wedding for a well known family. The night after the whole wedding party plus a few extras show up at the shop one of the bridesmaids ends up dead in Harlow's yard. Before you know it Harlow finds herself involved in trying to solve who killed Nell in her yard. Follow Harlow along her journey to solve the crime and to get to know the townspeople all over again. Oh and don't forget the handsome Will who Meemaw made arrangements with to do handywork around the shop before she passed. I am anxious to see how Will and Harlow's relationship continues to grow which is just what Meemaw would have wanted. I look forward to continuing on with this series. 5 stars.

Brooke says

Great start to new series

I really enjoyed this book. It was charming without being cutesy. The characters were likeable. The mystery wasn't an obvious one, the culprit was a surprise. It had a slight supernatural bent, but it didn't overwhelm the story. I can't wait to read the next installment.

W.s. Gager says

For years I read romance as a form of escape from life. When stress got in the way, my nose went in a book. I've now found that a good cozy mystery can provide the same escapism. Pleating for Mercy by Melissa Bourbon is one of the books that I've been able to totally immerse myself into. It is the first book in the Magical Dressmaking Mystery and I will look for others.

Main character Harlow Jane Cassidy returns to her small town in Bliss, Texas after her grandmother dies leaving behind a high-powered job in the Manhattan fashion world to design dresses. Not only did Harlow inherit her grandmother's house but a special flair as well for stitching up the perfect dress. She'd better be fast too when a quicky wedding requires a bridal dress and two bridesmaid ones as well. Problems start when a bridesmaid is killed and to keep the income she needs Harlow must keep the wedding on track and the bride out of jail.

What I loved about this book was the use of language that made me laugh and smile. I had a grandmother

who was a great seamstress and made a custom blazer for me when I graduated from college. This book made me remember all those times for fittings and advice from my grandmother.

A shiver stole through me. The windows in here were definitely closed. I had the sudden feeling that Josie and I weren't alone in the house, that the check had been picked up and placed on my lap by some ghostly presence.

Meemaw.

Josie put her hand on mine. "Please, Harlow. I want to marry Nate."

I took her hand and nodded, hoping it was sincerity I felt emanating from her and not desperation. The dress I made for her would have to be beyond perfect. Every seam I stitched would hold together her dreams.

Every bead I sewed would bring sparkle back into her life. And every pleat I added would help her fold her grief into manageable pieces.

From page 53

I recommend this book for its hints of paranormal that add to the story but doesn't overwhelm the mystery and murder and the great characters that we can all root for. Melissa Bourbon will be added to my list of must have authors.

Disclosure: I received this book as part of a Goodreads giveaway.

Bookgeek says

Pleating For Mercy:

Pleating For mercy puts the cozy in cozy mystery, the plot is simple, as most cozy mysteries are, where this one stands out among it's brothers and sisters, are in the characters.

Harlow is warm, strong, confident, without being overly shallow, or cold to those around her or whiny. She comes across as a real person, you wouldn't mind having a drink with, someone you can and do root for.

Her Mama and Nana, are drawn in ways, that remind you of your own grandparents and parents with their little quirks.

Will Flores and his daughter Gracie, while not completely known, are engaging and seem to mesh into Harlow's life with ease, the attraction between Will and Harlow, seemed natural, not forced or stressful.

Overall it's a 3 to 4 story book, that offers both an easy read and a real escape.

Jae says

After Harlow's great-grandmother passes away, Harlow leaves New York and returns to Bliss, TX, to live in the house her Meemaw left her. There, she hopes to launch her own dressmaking business. Harlow's first customer is her childhood friend, Josie, who asks Harlow to make the gowns for her wedding party on short notice. Harlow is up for the task, but when the maid of honor is murdered, Josie begs Harlow to help prove that it wasn't her fiance who killed Nell. Harlow knows she's no detective, but the Cassidy women all have special gifts, and she isn't above tapping into some of that magic to help her friend.

In the meantime, Harlow begins to sense a presence in the house, and she is convinced it is the spirit of her Meemaw. Her suspicions seem to be confirmed, especially when a handsome handyman shows up, claiming that he bartered with Harlow's great-grandmother to do odd jobs around the house in exchange for Harlow teaching his daughter how to sew. Seems that Meemaw may be matchmaking from beyond the grave, and

her special talent was that she always got what she wanted.

I'm on the fence about this one. Harlow was likable enough, but she didn't investigate so much as eavesdrop, snoop, and stumble into clues. Frankly, I found Meemaw's interference to be aggravating, and my annoyance levels spiked when Harlow got all the tingly feels around Will. Guh, really?

What really aggravated me was that the reader had no way of figuring out the murderer. Hell, even Harlow didn't figure it out until she literally stumbled into the person and got a confession, which, of course, led to mortal peril for her. Also, the victim was strangled. Let's face it, strangulation is a crime that men commit. Women do not typically have the strength to strangle someone, and certainly not a woman who is portrayed as waifish and wispy. Furthermore, if the Cassidy women are all descended from the legendary Butch Cassidy, why are their last names still "Cassidy"? Did all of them bear children out of wedlock?! Just...huh? Another thing that bugged me is that it's supposed to be a big secret that the Cassidy women are all talented, yet everyone seemed to know about it. Wha...?

Characters weren't fleshed out, plot meandered, and my attention often wandered. I may try one more book in this series, and if it doesn't improve, I won't be reading any more.

Cheryl says

Delightful! A great cozy mystery with some endearing characters and a touch of magical whimsy. This is one where I will go looking for others in the series. I wish FURBALL were still with us, because she would have enjoyed it. I will be sending this to my sister-in-law, because the women in this book are rumored to be the descendants of Butch Cassidy and she is actually a descendant of the Parkers (Cassidy's real name) and is a seamstress to boot.

LORI CASWELL says

A decedent of the infamous Butch Cassidy, Harlow Jane Cassidy and all the other Cassidy women through time possess special "gifts". Harlow is still unsure what her gift actually is when she returns home to Texas from Manhattan. Her great grandmother has passed away and left her farmhouse to Harlow. Harlow worked as a fashioner designer in New York so she decides to open a custom dressmaking boutique on the main level of her new home.

One of her first customers is her childhood friend Josie, who is getting married in just two weeks. The store where she had ordered her bridal gown and bridesmaids dresses has gone out of business and she needs Harlow to save the day and create all the dresses as fast as she can.

Calamity strikes when the maid of honor is found dead outside of Harlow's shoppe. The bride looks like the prime suspect and she now needs more than a few dresses. She needs her help to find out who killed her friend. It turns out Harlow may be able to do this especially with a little bit of unusual help, a little help from the great beyond.

This story really tugged at my heartstrings. I too come from a long line of dressmakers, seamstresses, and people who love to sew. My grandmother was known for her beautiful work, making men's suits and wedding dresses along with every other garment thinkable. My mother made all my clothes until I started making my own and until my accident I created not only clothes for my family but quilts as well. While we may not have possessed any magical powers we found so much joy in what we were able to create.

Harlow's gift with fabric is extraordinary, but it is her late great-grandmother that steals the story and will keep you in stitches as she makes her opinions "heard". The other characters are varied and well written. A little bit of romance, loaded with humor and a wonderful mystery made this book a delightful read. You can also feel the author's love and talent of sewing jump of the pages. She definitely has a passion that shines through.

This was a fun read and would be enjoyed by all but especially those that love to sew. It would also make a fabulous gift for anyone who sews. If future books follow this pattern some wonderfully constructed mysteries are in our future!!

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