



## Yuletide Homicide

*Jennifer David Hesse*

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*It's Christmas in Edindale, Illinois, and family law attorney Keli Milanni is preparing to celebrate the Wiccan holiday Yuletide, a celebration of rebirth. But this Yuletide someone else is focused on dying . . .*

After years of practicing in secret, Keli has come out as a Wiccan to her boyfriend, and she feels like this Yuletide she's the one who's being reborn. But the Solstice is the longest night of the year, and Keli is about to stumble on a mystery so dangerous, she'll be lucky to make it to morning.

Paired with her unbearably stuffy colleague Crenshaw Davenport III, Keli goes undercover at a real estate company owned by mayoral candidate Edgar Harrison. An old friend of Keli's boss, Harrison, is being blackmailed, and it's up to her to find the culprit. But the morning after the company holiday party, Harrison is found dead underneath the hotel Christmas tree. The police rule the death an accident, but Keli knows better--and she'll risk her own rebirth to nab a missing killer.

"Enjoyable . . . A wintry, woodsy setting." --*Kirkus Reviews* on *Bell, Book and Candlemas*

## **Yuletide Homicide Details**

Date : Published September 26th 2017 by Kensington Publishing Corporation

ISBN : 9781496704962

Author : Jennifer David Hesse

Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Mystery, Cozy Mystery, Holiday, Christmas

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## **From Reader Review Yuletide Homicide for online ebook**

### **Kelly says**

\*\*I voluntarily read this ARC\*\*

I really enjoyed this book. I love how wonderful Keli's friends are. The mystery was great, and it had some nice twists to it. My only complaint is that Keli made some very amateur mistakes, and since this is book three I feel she should have known better.

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### **Karen says**

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. This is the third in the series, but the first I had read. I will certainly read the previous books now!

The characters were engaging and the whodunit was well written.

I hope this series continues!

I voluntarily reviewed an advance reader copy of this book.

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### **Eve Recinella (Between The Bookends) says**

Cute cover on this one. A little busy but a good representation of the story. Good use of graphics and title work as well.

Keli and her gang are back for another festive Wiccan holiday mystery. This time someone has fallen to their death, and she suspects it isn't an accident. Can Keli find out what really happened or will the mystery go unsolved?

I enjoyed this one. It was well written and paced. There were some good twists and turns that kept me guessing until the end. There were some things that seemed dropped into the story that really didn't add anything and left me scratching my head. And I'm not sure why but I found Keli to be a bit annoying in this installment. She just came across WAY too busybody. But you know what? That is pretty much true for most cozy mysteries. I also didn't find this particularly "festive." But like I said I still enjoyed it overall, so it gets a thumbs up from yours truly.

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## Krystyna says

### A good plot but the Wiccan angle is slight

A good plot and nice twists that make you think to try and guess who the culprit is. Although Wiccan is in the title, don't go expecting magic. It is more feelings and perceptions rather than magic in it's fullest sense. Good characters that show a clear understanding of how lawyers work, think and act.

When she and Crenshaw are asked to look into a client's claims of being blackmailed, they don't expect to be faced with the client's death. Was it an unfortunate accident after imbibing too much or was it murder as she suspects. The more they investigate the more it leads them to a more murky picture of their client. He was known for numerous affairs and quite a few people accused him of shady dealings. With her BFF enamoured with an old colleague of his, she tries to fathom the murky world of the dead man. Now with a break in, an attempt to run her and West of the road whilst clues are left like breadcrumbs for her to follow. Can she get to the truth now that the body count has risen to two?

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## Clare O'Beara says

This sideways look at the busy Christmas period by a Wiccan lady - hence Yuletide - shows that murder can occur in anyone's life. A lawyer with a nice boyfriend and getting brave enough to explain her beliefs, this vegan lady gets enmeshed in a murder case. An old flame arrives back in town for the holidays, and while she tries just to be polite to him, maybe she should have ignored that message asking her to meet. Next thing there's a dead man under a Christmas tree, a vandalised apartment, and allegations of blackmail.

The story becomes quite complex so best not read while cooking or wrapping presents. We expect a lawyer to pay attention to detail and search through files, though she might be pushing the client-lawyer relationship a bit far. She's also not as confident as her outward appearance, and a few times resorts to her security blanket of a feather and candle, which help her meditate to calm herself. I wasn't entirely happy with the lady trying to cast a spell on someone to get the truth out of him. Of course, we see no guarantee that it worked.

Nice to read about an alternative lifestyle juxtaposed with a normal job. If you are not sure about reading a Wiccan Wheel mystery, just treat it as any cosy about a craft and enjoy the crime solving, as there is not too much in the line of white witchcraft. The plotting did seem to follow a predictable line, but maybe I've read too many cosies.

I downloaded an e-ARC from Net Galley. This is an unbiased review.

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## Lipsy says

<https://lipsyy.WordPress.com>

Yuletide Homicide is the third in a series of cozy mysteries with a fun, witchy twist. I hadn't read the previous books in the series but it stood-alone pretty well, so I wouldn't let that put you off.

The story centers around Keli, who is exploring her Wiccan faith, mainly in solitude, but as the novel unfolds she becomes more open about her religion and practices. The Wiccan element is just one small part of Keli's life however - she's a busy lady!

Keli is an attorney who seems to spend her time as more of an amateur sleuth than an actual attorney. Along with her eccentric colleague Crenshaw, Keli is thrust straight into a murder mystery when her boss asks her to find out who is blackmailing him. Not only does she discover who the blackmailer is, but she also finds his body.

I really enjoyed this book. It was a little bit silly in parts, and felt like one of those books that you have to take with a pinch of salt, but it was paced-well, written nicely, and entertaining. I love a good murder mystery, and this reminded me of the likes of Midsomer Murders, which I love.

I enjoyed the dynamic between Keli and Crenshaw, and think it's great to have a regular, down to earth, Wiccan, protagonist. The only thing that annoyed me was that she wasn't more 'out' and proud as a Wiccan, like it's something to be ashamed of. It felt a little old-fashioned in its approach in that respect. Hopefully though, that's all part of the overall series arc.

Yuletide Homicide was a nice alternative to all the festive romances out at the time that I read it. I hope I get to read more in the series in the future.

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### **Wendy says**

Review originally published on my blog, Musings of a Bookish Kitty:  
<https://www.literaryfeline.com/2018/1...>

Yuletide Homicide (Wiccan Wheel Mystery #3)  
by Jennifer David Hesse  
Kensington, 2017  
Crime Fiction; 320 pgs

I love how the titles of all the Wiccan Wheel Mysteries coincide with Wiccan holidays. For Wiccans Yuletide is a time to celebrate rebirth. Yuletide Homicide is the third in the series, this one taking on the subject of politics, blackmail and, murder. Keli is teamed up with fellow attorney Crenshaw Davenport III to look into the blackmailing of a wealthy businessman who is running for mayor of Edindale. Keli can think of a million reasons why someone might want to blackmail someone like Edgar Harrison given his reputation. When Keli discovers his body at the hotel where the company Chirstmas party had been held the night before, the threat level rises. It turns out Mr. Harrison isn't the only one being blackmailed.

With an ex-boyfriend showing up in town unexpectedly—and then disappearing, and her boss, who obviously hasn't told Keli everything, telling her to drop her investigation, Keli must know more. Detective Rineheart deserves some sort of award for his patience and tolerance of Keli. Or maybe he knows she'll solve the crime faster. Although I suspected who was behind everything in this one, I did not know the motive until it was revealed.

I like Keli, but she does not always have the best judgement, and too often finds herself in situations she

could have easily avoided if she had been more cautious. This was another fun book in the series. I like that Keli's best friend and boyfriend are now aware of her religion—it makes things easier for Keli, no doubt, in that she no longer has to keep such an important part of who she is from these two important people in her life. Yuletide Homicide was a great addition to the series.

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### **Kirsti says**

Thank you to Netgalley and the publisher for the chance to read this book! :)

This is the 3rd book in this series, and it is my first foray into this author's work. It didn't take long before I was fully immersed in Keli's world, and wanting to know more. Wiccan is one of those religions that I have always wanted to know more about, especially since I knew a few girls in High School who 'dabbled'. I liked the glimpses we got into what is obviously a much bigger picture, but I can't say anything about the accuracy or anything.

I loved Keli's investigation skills, although she sometimes trusts too much. The entire mystery is nicely summed up by the end, but still lends itself to another book in the series. This fun mystery will appeal to not just cozy lovers, but a broader detective type. Most cozy investigators are average Joes, but Keli can use her job to investigate too.

The host of characters here is delightful, although I liked Crenshaw and Farrah the most. The support network of characters is great, and I can see Keli adding a few team members to the roster next time too.

A really enjoyable Christmas/Yuletime read. Put it on your stocking wishlist!

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### **Anne says**

I gave the preceding book an OK rating and that's about all I can muster up for this one. Again, I felt that the witch craft while mentioned frequently and having a ceremony or two take place on page, didn't add anything really to the story.

Crenshaw is mentioned in the blurb and it seemed like this would be a buddy mystery with Keli to have someone as a foil...not so much. Crenshaw pops up occasionally, but Keli's friend Farrah plays the foil part a bit more, but she's hardly an investigative partner either. The story doesn't really get going until after 19% and later there is a lag (~80% mark) that made me scan more than read. There wasn't enough action to really keep my attention though I thought the mystery had some potential from the initial blackmailing to where it takes us.

Someone from Keli's past pops up and I'm clueless as to why. He doesn't add anything to the story and disappears as quickly as he came. The same with a cat.

I received my copy from Netgalley in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Lisa Elizabeth says**

No surprise, but I loved this book. This is my favourite cozy mystery series because it has a protagonist who shares my values and spiritual beliefs, something that is often attempted in other series, but rarely well executed. We need more diversity within the cozy community and I think this series is helping pave the way.

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### **Lisa Morin says**

I've always been drawn to books about Wiccan religion.

I find Wicca to be very interesting and this particular series is quite good.

Kelli Milanni is a strong, independent character, but she also has a sweet, caring side to her, which makes her very likable.

In Yuletide Homicide, Kelli is preparing for the holidays which includes a trip home to see her family.

Working hard as a lawyer, Kelli still finds time to honor her Wiccan beliefs and is slowly sharing this information with those close to her.

When Kelli and Crenshaw, another lawyer in her firm, are asked to work secretly for one of their major clients, Kelli has no idea what she is in for.

Stumbling over dead bodies seems to Kelli's habit of late and when she does it again, the holidays are soon impacted with the weight of this news.

Hopefully Kelli will soon find the answers she seeks so she can concentrate on her relationship with her boyfriend, Wes.

This book was really good and I was intrigued from the very beginning.

This is my favorite book in the series so far.

I voluntarily read an ARC of this book provided by the publisher and NetGalley.

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### **Karen says**

I love the Wiccan Wheel Mystery series by Jennifer David Hesse. Yuletide Homicide comes out September 26th from Kensington Publishing and is one I can highly recommend. There are so many reasons why I liked this book and series but let's start with a great main character. Keli is a curious, resourceful and confident Lawyer, who hides her Wiccan religion from all but her very close circle. Guided by a strong sense of justice and curiosity, Keli learns more about herself and her intuition as she works to unravel a murder mystery. I love her back story, there is a connection to a long lost aunt who features more prominently in this story and a wonderful sense of holiday magic. I thought this was well written and thought out, researched perfectly and had the right balance of cozy/paranormal suspense. A great read and a great series!

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### **JoAn says**

Yuletide Homicide by Jennifer David Hesse is the third in her Wiccan Wheel Mystery series and the best yet. I love this series and am always eager to read the next book.

Kelli is celebrating Yule when she is assigned by her boss, Beverly, to investigate a blackmailing scheme of

one of her close friends, Edgar Harrison. Beverly has also asked Crenshaw to assist Kelli in the investigation. Just as they begin to investigate, the friend is found dead after his holiday ball. Unfortunately, Kelli found the body and she "knows" this was no accident. The plot is smooth and fast with plenty of suspects to look at as Kelli begins to research Edgar's past. It was great to see more of Farrah, Wes and even Crenshaw again. The characters are developing and growing within each book. I enjoyed being able to learn more about the Wiccan religion as the story progressed. Ms. Hesse has written a cozy mystery with a touch of paranormal that I couldn't put down until the end.

I voluntarily reviewed an Advance Reader Copy of this book from Kensington via NetGalley. All of the above opinions are my own.

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## **The Cozy Review says**

Attorney Keli Milanni is at it again. While preparing to celebrate the Wiccan Holiday Yuletide, a celebration of rebirth she finds another dead body. Only this time, she is the only one who thinks it's homicide.

Keli has come out as a Wiccan to her boyfriend, Wes. Stunningly enough, he doesn't seem to have any issue with her beliefs and practices, and she is feeling relieved and happy. When her boss gives her and her patronizing colleague Crenshaw a last-minute job just before the Christmas break, she is reluctant but digs in and gets started.

Crenshaw and Keli go undercover at a real estate company owned by mayoral candidate Edgar Harrison. Edgar is an old friend of Keli's boss. Apparently, Harrison is being blackmailed. It's up to her to find the culprit. As luck would have it, the morning after the company holiday party, she finds Harrison dead under a hotel Christmas tree. The police rule the death an accident, but Keli doesn't think it was an accident and sets out to prove it.

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Series: A Wiccan Wheel Mystery—Book 3

Author: Jennifer David Hesse

Genre: Paranormal/Witch Cozy

Publisher: Kensington

Yuletide Homicide is the third book in the "A Wiccan Wheel Mystery" series. The new book offers a great story with lots of colorful characters and locations. Jennifer David Hesse has crafted characters that are charming, witty, full of vitality, well-rounded and easily relatable.

Keli is an unusual person, not only is she a practicing attorney, she is also a practicing Wiccan. Her normal routine of solo practicing has its ups and downs, mainly when she needs help solving a crime. That is when she calls on her friends, and fellow Wiccan, Mila. Mila is a perfect example of the type of people Keli needs in her life.

The characters of Farrah and Wes are equally important in Keli's life. Farrah is always willing to jump in and help Keli with an investigation. While Wes is protective and supportive even when he is worried that Keli is getting involved in dangerous situations.

Although this book is an excellent addition to the series, it would have been nice if Mila and the other coven members had played a bigger role in helping Keli with her investigation. Also, Keli's aversion to being involved with a coven, although not uncommon is getting to be a bit much without any real explanation. Her interactions with the coven would enhance the story and series. The returning characters are interesting and evolving, but overall the story could benefit by bringing in new characters that would make the story even more enjoyable for the long term.

The unmasking of the killer and the motive are original. All the readers' questions are answered, and most will not guess who the killer is until the end of the book. Readers may have some trouble picking up the clues as to the murderer's identification but not so difficult as to make the ending unbelievable.

This is a well written and entertaining book. Yuletide Homicide will keep the reader on the edge of their seat with twists and turns while anxiously waiting to turn the page to find out what happens next. This book and series are highly recommended to anyone who enjoys their mystery with a touch of magic.

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### **Lauren says**

Atrocious.

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