



The Sting of Justice

Cora Harrison

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The autumn has come to the Burren, it's a time of harvest. The end of summer for most and the end of life for others. When Mara attends the funeral of a local priest of the Burren, the last thing she expects is another corpse to be found on the church steps - a man stung to death by bees. Mara is convinced this is no accident.

The Sting of Justice Details

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Author : Cora Harrison

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From Reader Review The Sting of Justice for online ebook

Eileen Lynx says

Very interesting story. Unexpected ending.

Pam Bales says

in the Mystery of Medieval Ireland with Mara the Brehon solving secret and unlawful killings with the help of the entire Burren, this is a book for those who love historical fiction and would like a peek into Irish history at the beginning of Henry VIII's reign. The Irish at this time have not accepted Roman/English law and it is quite a refreshing idea. Good characters, interesting time period, great descriptions. Give it a try.

Jennifer (JC-S) says

‘The year of 1509 had brought a golden autumn to the west of Ireland.’

Mara O'Davoren, Brehon (Judge) of the Burren, attends the funeral of a much loved local priest. As the service ends and the party goes to leave the church through a less frequently used door, another body is discovered. The body is of Sorley Skerrett, a wealthy silversmith, and he appears to have been stung to death by bees. But Mara isn't immediately convinced: Sorley Skerrett is the richest man in the kingdom, a greedy man distrusted by many, an outsider, with no shortage of people who disliked him.

So Mara O'Davoren sets out to find out more about Sorley Skerrett. As Brehon, she runs a law school, teaching six young law scholars. These young scholars are able to assist her in her investigation – which is just as well, because Sorley Skerrett's death is complicated by the fact that there are a number of people who might benefit from his death and it is not immediately clear who will be his heir.

Was Sorley Skerrett's death an accident, or was it murder?

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this historical crime fiction, set in sixteenth century Ireland. Mara is an interesting character: a woman in a powerful position, confident and capable as she draws out the information she needs to get to the truth. This is the third novel of a series, which I read purely by chance, and I'm keen now to read the first two. I enjoyed both the story and the setting, as well as the included snippets of the ancient laws of Ireland.

Jennifer Cameron-Smith

Gene Cummins says

So often it seems that murder mysteries end with a revelation of the sinister and evil culprit. Cora Harrison

concludes this tale with the revelation of the murderer, but also with the revelation of his wisdom and goodness, the revelation of the good that would ensue for many because of his actions. She doesn't condone or justify his evil action, but does paint him as a human who, in the final accounting, is a good and decent and honorable human being.

Joan says

This series is fun to read and figure out the mystery, even though I usually know "whodunit" about halfway through. The characters have developed and changed, and I'm anxious to see what happens to them next. I especially like her descriptions of the Burren landscape and life there in the 1500s; also the bits of information about the laws of Ireland at that time, just before the English law took precedence.

LJ says

First Sentence: There is something evocative about the words: the west of Ireland.

Generally, when attending a funeral, there is only one dead body; that of the person being buried. When Mara, the Brehon, or dispenser of justice, for the Burren in Western Ireland, attends the funeral of a local priest, there is a second body. Sorley Skerrett was an outsider, a silversmith and owner of the local silver mine. He was not a popular figure and several people stood to benefit from his early demise.

One of the things I particularly liked about this book, and the whole series, is the historical information. Brehon law dated back before the time when St. Patrick arrived in Ireland and it is a aspect of history about which I didn't know prior to finding these books.

That law, in itself, provides a small element of tension as this there is always the concern of Brehon law being taken over by English law. The comparisons of the two forms of law are very interesting.

Ms. Harrison's other great strength is how evocative are her descriptions. At the very opening, where she is describing the west of Ireland, it is very easy to envision the setting. I enjoy her characters, particularly Mara, her dog Bran, and Brigid. It's fascinating, again, to see the roles possible to women in that time under Brehon law. I also appreciate the logic of her mind balanced by the kindness of her heart.

The plotting is well done. These are not "action" books by any means, or ones of high suspense. They are interesting, well-written, who-dunnit-mysteries, and the next in series is already on my shelves.

THE STING OF JUSTICE (Hist Mys-Mara, Brehon of the Burren, Ireland-1509) – G+
Harrison, Cora – 3rd in series
Macmillan, 2009, UK Hardcover – ISBN: 9781405092272

Sandy Shin says

Ireland split into many small kingdoms, a King (of three kingdoms) and his bride a judge (and daughter of a judge) with a murder to solve.

The description of everyday life, the explanation of applicable law and punishments assessed for breaking those laws is fascinating.

The contrast of English law to Irish law, the place and rights of women in Britain and Ireland (and today), the sophistication of medical knowledge and practice - all are there, but you might need to read the book several times to really appreciate them

Alan says

Brehon Mara digs for the truth after Sorley the silversmith dies as a result of bee stings.

This is the first of this series that I've read and I found it quite enjoyable. I think the ancient laws of Ireland as they are listed at the beginning of each chapter and as they are handled by Mara, and her students, are part of the attraction, but Harrison has also created an interesting character in Mara.

Cris says

Each book in this series adds layers to the characters and the setting. *Sting of Justice* is another wonderful historical mystery set in The Burren. Harrison manages the sometimes delicate balance between history and mystery, and I love how Harrison causes the setting to shape the plot. (People do, or don't do, things because it's The Burren in the 1550s.) No anachronisms have disturbed my immersion in Mara's world, and Harrison paints a vivid picture of The Burren and the subjects' society in a very accessible way.

I also found the mystery to be well-constructed. Harrison falls heavily on the side of a 'fair play' mystery, providing all the clues to the reader. It's only at the very end when Mara figures out the crime(s) that Harrison refrains from sharing Mara's conclusions and the reader must wait for the denouncement.

Leslie says

I think the series is improving, with this third mystery. Liked the deeper characters and found it easier to follow what was going on. Interesting method of murder and a rather unexpected murderer, although I did figure it out before the end. Nice light read!

Melanie Barbarito says

This was a pleasant book. Interesting characters and plot. It didn't seem to matter that I hadn't read the first two. I would certainly be interested in doing that.

Beth says

Another good story of Ireland

This series focused on Brehon law and the lives of the people of the Burren is fascinating. The law is based on restitution to the wronged party and was so specific to the lives it governed, even to the keeping of bees. The mystery was easier to solve in this book but the lives of the people depicted are what matter more than the solution of the mystery. I am looking forward to reading the next in the series

Aimee says

I enjoyed this book, but didn't find the mystery as compelling as others in the series.

Spuddie says

Enjoyable, if somewhat predictable, entry in this series set in the time of Henry VII, but across the sea in Ireland. As the English way of ruling and enforcing law becomes more and more pervasive, Ireland's Brehon laws are fast becoming threatened. The death of a silversmith leads to all sorts of issues with his will and who inherits and thus widens the suspect list since the man was intensely disliked by many.

Sarah says

Up to #3 in this series, and I'm still enjoying the main character, her dilemmas, and learning about Irish law. I noticed that some of the chapter intros are starting to repeat, but it seems like the rule of marriages and murder repeat in murder mysteries! Makes sense.

The Brehon is called to investigate when a rich silversmith is found dead of bee stings. The people closest to him knew that he was dreadfully allergic to them, yet someone poked a hive with a stick to cause him grief. As always, the Brehon and her crew of male students investigate the issue until the murderer is found.
