Clarion Review

General

The Secrets of GlenMary Farm
E.S. Burton
iUniverse
978-1-4502-9763-9
Five Stars (out of Five)

Even life in a retirement home can involve intrigue as Janice Harmon discovers when she moves to a beautiful estate near Louisville, Kentucky. Although she is looking forward to a little peace and quiet, she soon finds herself involved in solving an old murder mystery in E. S. Burton's *The Secrets of GlenMary Farm*.

The old GlenMary mansion and thoroughbred barn have been turned into a residence for seniors and a treatment facility for emotionally disturbed children.

When Janice arrives, she meets a girl, Emily Carpenter, who unknowingly leads her into a web of intrigue and lies. As she begins to unravel the past, Janice discovers that helping her young friend puts her in the middle of an unsolved mystery. Emily's father is John Carpenter, the psychologist in charge of the treatment center.

Janice discovers a diary and begins to piece together the tangled strands of the past. She reads that John Carpenter came to the farm as a "poor relation" during his college years. As Janice delves deeper into the mystery, she realizes that nothing is as it seems and that Emily is the real victim.

The natural beauty of Kentucky hides the ugliness of humanity—in the past and now. Because Janice develops relationships with new friends, she is caught in the middle and must learn who is trustworthy and who is not. The age, intelligence, and curiosity of the protagonist brings *Murder She Wrote*'s Jessica Fletcher to mind. The two share a natural flair for focusing on details, understanding the motivations of fellow characters, and fitting all the clues together.

E. S. Burton weaves a tale of dark secrets, lies, and their consequences within the world of Kentucky's thoroughbred horse culture. Janice is a likable heroine and Emily will tug at heartstrings but there are also despicable and unsavory characters. As she peels off the many layers of their personalities, Burton forces readers to question their initial opinions of these

characters. She proves herself adept at weaving subplots into the main theme. Although the purpose of certain characters may not be apparent in the opening chapters, their roles are clarified by the end of the book.

Burton's plot moves smoothly as present characters are tied to past events and current acts of deceit and violence. *The Secrets of GlenMary Farm* will keep readers guessing until the end.

Pat McGrath Avery