



# The Honey Farm on the Hill

*Jo Thomas*

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## **The Honey Farm on the Hill** Jo Thomas

Escape to Crete in the fabulous new novel from the author of THE OYSTER CATCHER, THE OLIVE BRANCH, and LATE SUMMER IN THE VINEYARD.

## **The Honey Farm on the Hill Details**

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Author : Jo Thomas

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# From Reader Review The Honey Farm on the Hill for online ebook

## Gem ~ Bee says

Superb escapism! Having been to Crete many years ago I loved the location of this book before I had started it but the way the views, smells, sounds of the island are captured are spectacular. Greek food is an instant hit for me and this book has many delights in that regard, kleftico, dolmades, etc, not to mention lashings of herbs and of course, honey! The plot is gripping and detailed in a way that means you never quite put it down. I have a weakness for goats, love them, so the cheeky supporting characters in this book were an added bonus!

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## Hannah Symonds says

I am a big fan of Jo Thomas and her books. I couldn't wait to delve in to one of her wonderful stories again. As with it being so hot in the UK at the moment, I kind of felt as though I was in Crete experiencing some of the temperatures that Nell was experiencing in the book. There are some wonderful characters in the story especially the family that Nell goes to stay with. I enjoyed reading about the bees and how a factory to make honey is put together, I am not a big fan of honey but still enjoyed the book nether the less.

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## Bookread2day says

What I liked about reading The Honey Farm On The Hill is how Jo Thomas has the ability in her writing to take you right there in Crete, the largest of the Greek islands . Welcome to author Jo Thomas you will love reading her books. She writes about food, families and of course love that we all like to escape to read. The story is with a good splash of sun and fun thrown in. There is also a disaster too when a Christmas decoration factory is burnt down.

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## Liz says

An enjoyable summer read. I liked the Greek setting and thought the characters were well depicted. A good mix of heartache and happiness.

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## Oriana Blyth (\_head\_in\_a\_book) says

Last night I finished this wonderful book by Jo Thomas and I thoroughly enjoyed it, it was a real page turner and I couldn't put it down. It was so beautifully written, and it was so descriptive that I actually felt as though I was in Crete with the main character, Nell. I could almost smell and taste all the wonderful foods that were described in the book, and the ending was glorious ? a definite ?????????? read, as it only took me three nights to complete ???

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## **Stephanie Wood says**

Reading this book in the depths of winter was just the tonic I needed. Jo has a wonderful way of describing the scenery so that I could easily picture the mountain and the characters who live there. What a lovely treat on a dull day!

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## **Nicola Clough says**

I love Jo's books and she always has the way of transporting you to the country she is writing about. This book is full of secrets, families, food and love and has many twists and turns and has you hooked and wanting to know does happen. She has an amazing way of writing her books and you think you are there and wanting to see what the end result will be for them all.

Nell fell in love with Crete years ago and 18 years later she is ready for a new beginning. The factory she works is in burnt down in England and while they rebuild it she will not be paid so decides to go back out to Crete for a new beginning. She sees that in the town she went to years ago in Crete is wanting to open a honey farm has the they have lost the bees she sees her change for going out there. When she arrives she realises it's a very different town from years ago and wonders if the people will be different. She does have memories at every turn when she arrives and loves the warm weather. She throws herself in to the honey farm but while doing so she starts to unlock the truth of what happened years ago and can she find true love or is she left upset.

This is a really easy read and highly recommend reading it.

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## **Rachel Gilbey says**

Transport yourself to Crete this summer, to a rather special Honey Farm (that is missing its bees), a huge mystery as to what is happening to rare herb, masses of great Greek food, and the search for a lost love, in this wonderful new novel from Jo Thomas.

Incredibly enjoyable to read and a relatively quick read at that, it is full of one main great story plus a few other threads interlinking in. This is a book where I learnt a whole new acronym that I had never come across before, for Nell decides to spend summer in Crete as a WWOOFer (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farm), on a Honey Farm near a village she spent time in many years ago. She is also hoping to track down the love of her life, and father of her now grown up child, but isn't sure if he even still lives there or what the reactions to her will be.

I loved how Nell slotted into life in Crete with Kostas, Maria and Mitera who own the honey farm on the hill. Learning about the properties of various herbs and spices and the general way life in rural Crete was eye opening and made me really long to be a part of life in Vounaplaga. Nell having been a mother for 18 years, is slowly trying to rediscover who she is, while her daughter has an adventure in London.

This is a rather apt book to read in summer, as often the discussion of how to keep bees safe emerges, as they play such a critical role in the world, and this is a story that encompasses that as a theme. Admittedly I could have done without descriptions of angry swarms of bees as I tend to run a mile if I see a single bee, but other

than that, there is definitely a useful message to be taken from that element of the book.

The writing is evocative and I could practically smell the herbs in the air in Crete, taste the various foods and when there was the sense of danger, my heart was beating extra fast for the characters. This is easily my favourite book so far from Jo Thomas, an author who seems to improve with each book and they are all fabulous!

Thank you to Netgalley and Headline for this copy which I have reviewed honestly and voluntarily.

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### **Sally Coles says**

When Nell's daughter leaves home for a life in London and her job literally goes up in smoke Nell decides that it is time to make some changes and go back to work in Crete, where she met and left the love of her life 18 years ago.....there is definitely some unfinished business there!

Arriving in Crete she is met by Georgios the neighbour of the couple that she is going to work for - he is not very friendly but why does she have a feeling that she has met him before? She soon settles in on the farm and helps to renovate the old bee factory so that they can start making honey again, but why are the bees all up the mountain and why is no-one allowed up there.

A lovely story with a few twists but definitely made by the descriptions of Crete and the locals and how they live - perfect light beach read by an author that I is becoming one of my favourites

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### **Agi says**

Ah, I'm a real winner this year when it comes to great books set in Greece! Jo Thomas's "The Honey Farm on the Hill" is another novel this summer that happens on a beautiful, sunny Corfu, and even though it's not as full of Greek traditions for example, it is still full to brims with the gorgeous Greek spirit, myths, delicious food and beautiful descriptions - Jo Thomas has really written a beautiful, atmospheric novel, not forgetting to add some mystery, budding romance and bees. Yes, bees. And honey.

It was incredibly easy to read. I have felt a part of this story right from the beginning and I didn't want to put it away. I loved how easily Nell slotted into life with Maria, Kostas and Mitera, how quickly she settled in, and even though her being there has also had a hidden agenda, she truly put her heart into work on the farm. Together with her I've learnt about various herbs, their significance and characteristics and it was a great lesson. We already know about the importance of bees but the way Jo Thomas has written about it was again an eye - opener. However, I know bees are not angry but do they know it as well? Whatever, it is a great message to be taken from this story.

I only had some small problems with the drama that sometimes felt a little too exaggerated, too dramatic. Don't get me wrong, pretty please, it was still a great read however there were moments that made me shake my head in disbelief. The story was also very repetitive at times, so I won't forget for a long time that Nell missed her daughter so much (I know. I understand. I am a mother and miss my daughter when she's away but there is so much I can take. I knew Nell is missing Demi, I didn't have to be reminded every second page.

Or that Nell's boyfriend has cheated. Or that the dittany is a VERY rare herb.) But other than that I loved and enjoyed this story, truly.

The writing is so vivid, guys, SO vivid! It's colourful and evocative and so rich, and I could almost smell all the herbs in the air. The descriptions of the food made my mouth water, and I could easily recognise the danger when it was around. The dialogues were one of the best, the author has so well captured what the characters wanted to tell and perfectly put it into words. The story was also full of surprises. What also singles this book out is the fact that it is not only your usual rom - com, it is full of much more deeper issues, it is thoughtful and introduces us to some dilemmas. So altogether, it is Jo Thomas at her best, and "The Honey Farm on the Hill" is a great read, so richly imagined and so wonderfully written - highly recommended!

Copy provided by the publisher in return for an honest review.

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### **Lauren Tess'x says**

The honey farm on the hill was my first book by Jo Thomas and will not be the last. It was also my first chick-lit book after a long break from the genre.

This is a book about first loves and moving on.

What I really loved about this book was just how quickly I was drawn in and how I really felt included. I really loved the setting of Crete and the characters. There were parts of the books where I felt saddened and angry but these feelings were quickly taken over by joy and happiness.

The honey farm on the hill is a beautiful book that everyone needs to read and is one I can really recommend.

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### **Lynne says**

Nell returns to the mountain village in Crete where she met and fell in love with Stelios 18 years earlier. She hopes to rekindle their romance and introduce him to the daughter he never knew. She takes a job working on a honey farm in Vounoplugia but soon discovers life doesn't always have a happy ending.

The Honey Farm on the Hill is a wonderfully enjoyable and charming read. Over the years I've only occasionally dipped my toes into the Romantic Fiction genre and most of those have been uninspiring. However this one is simply delightful. It's fabulously well-written with characters so realistic they leap off the pages. I was transported to Crete - the sights, the sounds, the smells, the people; in fact everything felt completely authentic.

I started this book with some trepidation thinking I may be opening myself up to some cheesy chick lit but on the contrary, this book has substance. Add to that a beautiful setting in Crete and you have the perfect summer holiday read.

## Emma Crowley says

With *The Honey Farm on the Hill* Jo Thomas has certainly cemented herself as one of my top authors whose books I will buy without even reading the blurb. I have loved everything she has written and feel she just gets better and better with each book. Every story she writes is highly readable, with stunning settings, characters you are instantly rooting for, plenty of romance and some life lessons and life changing experiences to enjoy along the way. Once you pick up a book from this author it is very very difficult to put it down as Jo has a way of drawing you into the story right from the very first chapter. You are soon quickly immersed in the lives of the characters and by the end your only regret would be that you read the book way too fast and that another year has to pass before you can indulge in such brilliant writing once again. Jo Thomas's books aren't your normal run of the mill romance books, instead she sets each book in a different country and the main female character will have a new profession/adventure to embark on. So we've been to Ireland in *The Oyster Catcher*, the vineyards of France in *Late Summer in the Vineyard* and Italy in *The Olive Branch*. Now is the turn of Crete and a rare and special herb called dittany will play a major role over the course of the book and unite the characters in ways they never imagined.

As we first meet Nell she is standing outside the Christmas decoration factory where she works (what a brilliant job to have) watching the entire place go up in flames. This incident only confirms the way Nell is feeling as her 18 year old daughter Demi has fled the nest and left to work as a nanny in London. With no job until the factory is restored, no money coming in and no daughter to look after Nell is feeling lost and adrift. She needs a focus, something to keep her going over the next few months. Urged on by her friends Angelica and Gracie she stumbles across a website which offers wwoofing. Before you go thinking this is something not meant to be in a book of this nature, wwoofing stands for World Wide Opportunities on Organic farm. Nell sees this as an opportunity to grab and even more so when a farm needs help on the island of Crete in a mountain top village called Vounoplagia. This is definitely a sign that Nell is meant to go to this village. Crete holds a special place in her heart for more than one reason and it's 18 years since she has been there. It's time to put old ghosts to rest before she can look forward to and embrace the future. My initial feelings were fair play to Nell, she knew she would go crazy sitting around moping and doing nothing and at the back of her mind there was unfinished business in Crete from that fateful summer 18 years ago and she wanted to put it to bed. She was brave to go away on her own and was to be admired.

Again as with every book I have had the pleasure to read by Jo Thomas she absolutely nailed the setting. Most of the books I have read I have never visited where they are set and it's a mark of a skilled and talented author that by the conclusion of the book I feel as if I have been there and lived the journey with the main character. This book was no different, the island of Crete came alive on the pages right from the minute Nell stepped off the plane onto the tarmac. The journey she takes from the airport with Georgios, a neighbour of her hosts Maria and Kostas, was so vividly described. I could feel the heat, the hairpin bends on the road and the wonder and beauty of the Cretan countryside as they journey up to the mountain to where she will be staying. I felt as if I was in the car next to Nell and with her every step of the remainder of her time spent on the island. The little house where Maria and Kostas live with their animals and the surrounding farmland and the mountain were all so clear in my head thanks to the author's descriptive writing. I think this is what made me enjoy the book so much. As well as having a very good storyline that didn't seem over the top, it was filled with mystery, some romance and a sense of community but the fact I was visualising everything made me really understand and connect with everything going on. In the past, Nell had fallen in love with the small town for a reason and she hopes as she searches for her new identity by escaping the emptiness at home that

the answers and admitting the truth will bring her the resolution she needs. By confronting memories hopefully things would become clearer for her.

It may sound like this is just your typical storyline that has been done before of a middle aged woman setting off to find 'herself' once she has raised her child but it's not that at all. Jo Thomas brings so much more to this book as it's evident how much she enjoyed writing the story. Her research was impeccable from the glorious descriptions of the island to the mouth watering Cretan food made to the history of the dittany plant which in itself provides a major storyline in which all the other plot lines feed off from. Nell has arrived at a time when Maria and Kostas are struggling. They wish to reopen their small honey factory but the fact of the matter is no honey can be made if there is no bees. There are no bees because the plant dittany is no longer growing. Dittany is believed to have magical healing properties, it brings good luck and with it the bees make the most amazing honey. Nell sees the community she remembers has changed and with the shadow of losing everything hanging over them as no tourists come to the village anymore, Nell decides she needs to help. It's like the town is sleeping and if dittany can be discovered again it will once more awaken and become rejuvenated and be the place Nell holds so dear to her heart.

Nell totally changed once she knew she had a quest. OK there was an element where she missed her daughter and worried for her and it did become slightly repetitive but I suppose that's only natural for a mother. I felt she took on this challenge and viewed it as something personal. She wasn't going to let the strange noises coming from the top of the mountain put her off. Even if handsome yet abrupt Georgios didn't appear all that embracing of her quest she would do the best she could for the people she had come to hold so dear. Apart from attempting to discover dittany for the sake of the community, Nell had her own personal mission regarding the events of 18 years ago.

I loved how much mystery and suspense surrounded this and I had my suspicions as to what had actually happened but it was very clever of the author that she let it stretch out the way she did and how Nell remained so clueless as to why people were so secretive. Regarding the overall reveal I thought it was done to be perfection and it took on another worldly quality and allowed for a great and deep exploration of the romance side of things. In any other book this would have felt clichéd and contrived but here it felt so natural and real and I was hoping against hope that a happy and positive outcome could be achieved.

Nell was an amazing woman who grew in independence. She became brave and fiery and no way would she stop until she righted what she believed were wrongs partly incurred by her. I loved every minute of her journey and the time I spent with all the characters in Crete. Jo Thomas has written another stunner of a book that many weeks later I still can't get out of my head. I haven't read anything as good in this genre since I put *The Honey Farm on the Hill* down. It's not just a summer read as judging by the colourful cover but can be read any time of year and by the time you read the last word you will certainly want to visit Crete. Come the end of the year undoubtedly this book will feature in my most memorable books of the year as it captured my imagination and had me hooked from beginning to end. My only disappointment is I have to wait so long for another book from Jo.

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## **Julie says**

I absolutely loved this book. From the start Jo Thomas takes the reader on a wonderful journey through the Greece that I remember as it comes under attack from mass tourism. There is a magical quality to this book in the form of a healing herb that only grows in one remote spot. Coupled with Nell's memories of her visit to Greece many years before, this book is one for everybody who enjoys romance, Greece and a darned good



story.

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### **Alison Winter says**

I didn't enjoy this as much as other jo thomas books but it was a nice story, beautiful setting and likeable characters but something missing in this one for me.

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