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What if a reality TV show like Jersey Shore set up production in the fictional seaside resort Sea Haven? What if hitting the gym, tanning, and doing a little laundry aren't the only things the contestants get into?

By-the-book officer John Ceepak and his wisecracking young partner, Danny Boyle, have to babysit the buff and boozy kids partying it up in a Jersey shore rental house for TV's summertime hit Fun House while simultaneously trying to stop the rowdy kids from breaking the law up and down the beach.

But even Ceepak and Danny can't stop one young cast member from being murdered—and others from being threatened with the same fate.

Fun House Details

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From Reader Review Fun House for online ebook

Michelle says

When a Jersey Shore-type reality show starts filming on the shore of Sea Haven, New Jersey, Officers Danny Boyle and John Ceepak find themselves inadvertent guest stars. And when one of the drunken idiot cast members ends up dead, it's up to Danny and Ceepak to find the killer.

I hate reality TV, and this plot really highlights all the reasons why, so I didn't really care if the killer took out the whole cast. Overall, not my favorite in the series.

Elizabeth says

I got home from work at 4:30 and began reading at 4:31 and started to have fun in minutes. What do politicians and reality TV show actors have in common? They live in fantasy land! And this is certainly the case for the typical denizens of a house in a New Jersey beach resort who are being manipulated in every way possible by a TV crew for a reality show called Fun House. This is done to bring out the worst characteristics of these young people and to engage the emotions of the viewing audience. It helps to keep these actors on edge and out of control by one means or another, mainly beer.

So John Ceepak and sidekick Danny Boyle whose mental wisecracks keep me laughing in my own personal funhouse, have to give these (there is no nice word for them) fools a reality check. These lead to TV time for both of them which is unwelcome but tolerated and increasing involvement in the world of entertainment and unfortunately murder. Of course for some in the business of fame and fortune death is a small price to pay. Too bad Ceepak and Boyle don't see it that way.

Don't miss this book.

Linda says

Chris Grabenstein has created a remarkably fun series with John Ceepak patrolling the Jersey shore. This is the seventh book in the series and while each of them stand alone quite well, I recommend reading them from book one (Tilt-A-Whirl) all the way through for more enjoyment and the pleasure of watching the characters develop. In the current installment a reality television show is being filmed in the little beach town of Sea Haven and pandemonium (and murder) ensues. Highly recommended.

Dorie says

John Ceepak and his partner Danny Boyle take on the stars of a reality show set in their town of Sea Haven. This book was a fun read and as expected the stars of the reality show were self-centered and egotistical, making me want to give them a good smack most of the time. It was funny watching "by-the-book" Ceepak trying to communicate with the reality stars and their producer. Danny has come a long way since the first

book in this series.

Melissa says

I really like this series...wise-cracking local boy Danny and his by the book serious partner John Ceepak are a perfect combination. But his book was just too much of a rip-off of Jersey Shore for me to enjoy.

"What if a reality TV show like Jersey Shore set up production in the fictional seaside resort Sea Haven? What if hitting the gym, tanning, and doing a little laundry aren't the only things the contestants get into? By-the-book officer John Ceepak and his wisecracking young partner, Danny Boyle, have to babysit the buff and boozy kids partying it up in a Jersey shore rental house for TV's summertime hit Fun House while simultaneously trying to stop the rowdy kids from breaking the law up and down the beach. But even Ceepak and Danny can't stop one young cast member from being murdered and others from being threatened with the same fate."

Jodi says

4.25 Stars I really love these stories! Officer Danny Boyle and his partner and mentor Officer John Ceepak are funny and serious, and I love the adventures they have on the Jersey shore. I especially love that Ceepak quotes Springsteen. And he has a code. :) In this one, reality television finds its way to Sea Haven, and one of the stars of the show is killed. The show is called the Fun House, and of course the final scene takes place at the Fun House amusement on the boardwalk. Grabenstein beautifully meshes the humor and the seriousness of good crime fiction.

Marsha says

This was fun. It was one of the John Ceepak mysteries loosely based on carnival rides and features. I've read (listened to) the other 6, and I get a true kick out of them. I don't know how to indicate a book that I've message to (unabridged, of course :)) versus 1 that I am actually reading (The Good Lawyer). It being that I can only actually read about one book a month (I read slowly, and after about an hour, my eyes don't focus anymore). Anyway, I recommend the John Ceepak books by Chris Grabenstein. They aren't gory or violent, but they're more than fluff. My kids enjoyed listening with me on those.

Patty says

I love all of the various series that Chris Grabenstein writes but have to admit that my favorite is the Ceepak and Boyle series.

In this episode a "Reality Show" has invaded the Jersey Shore. Ceepak and Danny are assigned to manage local security for the crazies who star on this wacky show. The cast consists of a bunch of 20-somethings who drink lots of beer, throw up said beer, and run around having sex with each other or anyone else they

can get their hooks into. When one of the stars is found dead our heroes are up to their necks in dirty deals, insane tv morals and mystery.

There are plenty of twists and turns to the plot and also lots of description from Danny about Sea Haven and where things are and how things work. That is one of my favorite part of these books, the real feel of the place, you expect to be able to go there if you ever visit Jersey.

I sort of figured out the killer but not all the details.

So, are we back on a once-a-year schedule for Ceepak? This waiting two years is much too long!

Susan says

I love this book. I am very happy to say I have never seen "Jersey Shore", so I don't have the same criticisms as many of the other reviewers. I just know this book was very funny, I actually laughed out-loud quite a few times. Danny is just the right combination of youthful exuberance and snarky commentator. His views and editorial comments about the "reality show" contestants are not only right-on, but funny and illuminating too. This was a fun read, and I'm very glad I took the time to read it.

I read the first Ceepak book, "Tilt A Whirl" a few years ago, and it was great to revisit John Ceepak and his world. I heartily recommend Fun House to anyone who wants to spend a few enjoyable hours with a great book.

Kevintipple says

The last thing police officers Danny Boyle and his partner wanted to be were some kind of celebrity jokes. However, thanks to the alcoholic fueled antics of contestants in a The Jersey Shore type reality show that is what they have become. Thanks to a recent widely publicized incident Ceepak and Boyle have not only been on television, but now also have the T-shirts to prove it.

It has also brought them to the attention of the show's producer Marty Mandrake. Seeking to make his version of good TV while keeping his stars out of trouble, he wants Ceepak and Boyle to head up the security detail. Not only are the contestants clearly a danger to themselves and others as the court charges that will be filed after the show is over make clear, they are also in danger from an outside threat. At least one of the contestants apparently is taking anabolic steroids and is getting them from a very bad guy nicknamed "Skeletor."

For roughly the last two years Ceepak and the Sea Haven Police Department, as well as a joint federal and state task force have been trying to capture Skeletor. So far he has proved elusive as well almost killing Ceepak and Boyle last summer. Skeletor is a much bigger deal than some punks on a stupid television show so Ceepak and Boyle agree to do what the TV producer Mandrake wants. That also keeps the Mayor and others happy. Ratings will soar, tourism will increase, and dollars will flow into city coffers.

Nobody expected that a couple of murders would happen too.

This is the seventh novel in a good series that is stylistically a bit different from the earlier books. Officer Danny Boyle is older now and the books, told from his point of view, reflect that older adult viewpoint. Boyle has lost loved ones, seen others die, and isn't the happy part time summer cop that he was when the series started. As a result, there is far less humor in this book though there are some very funny parts regarding the reality TV show industry and those involved.

Unlike earlier books in the series, foul and very graphic language is highly prevalent here. Not just among the reality show contestants but also with numerous other characters. Just like some folks in real life, many characters in FUN HOUSE seem to have no ability to say anything without graphic and coarse language. The use of the language really stands out in this novel as it hasn't reached anywhere close to this level before.

Despite the issue with the language FUN HOUSE: A JOHN CEEPAK MYSTERY is another solidly good read. It deals with some strong themes in both the main storyline and the secondary one and deals with them well. While the young fun loving Danny Boyle of the series is long gone, this Danny Boyle is still pretty good though not quite nearly as laugh out loud fun. You can't undo the march of time as Danny Boyle knows very well.

FUN HOUSE: A JOHN CEEPAK MYSTERY

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Chris says

Here's what some critics wrote...

"Sunny, funderful' Sea Haven, New Jersey, is having a great season, thanks in large part to Fun House, a reality TV show that borrows the worst parts of Jersey Shore and Survivor. Police officers John Ceepak and Danny Boyle have become accidental TV stars by arresting a drunken Paulie "The Thing" Braciola, a self-identified "Guido" from Staten Island whose signature move is twitching his massive, steroid- enhanced pecs. But then Paulie is murdered. Ceepak and Boyle quickly target Paulie's steroid supplier for the crime,

but soon the chaos produced by a drug-dealing motorcycle gang, traditional organized crime types, the producers of *Fun House*, and an Ohio police force recruiting Ceepak roil the already choppy law-enforcement waters. Grabenstein's newest *Sea Haven* novel enriches the formula of summer, Springsteen lyrics, deep-fried junk food, and alcohol-fueled antics with a knowing, cynical, insider's take on reality TV. He also continues to make his tales harder-edged and his heroes more world-weary. *Fun House* is still a beach read, but it's an even better beach read than previous installments."

—Booklist

"The cast and crew of a reality TV show, *Fun House*, invade *Sea Haven*, N.J., in Anthony Award-winner Grabenstein's amusing seventh mystery featuring straight-arrow cop and Iraqi War vet John Ceepak (after 2010's *Rolling Thunder*). The reality show soon spills into another kind of realism: murder. First, someone shoots TV star and cultural icon Paulie Braciore (aka "The Thing") through the head, then Thomas Hess (aka Skeletor), while away from his drug-dealing, Nazi-type motorcycle gang "brothers," likewise becomes a single-gunshot victim. As a third target is announced, *Fun House* ratings soar. The show must go on, and it's up to banged-up-Toyota-driving Ceepak and his wiseacre sidekick, Danny Boyle, who provides a hipper, Springsteen-quoting alternative to his senior partner's Charlie Chan-like persona, to put everything together..."

—Publishers Weekly

"How low can reality TV go? Think murder.

After beat cops are unable to keep a lid on a perpetually volatile situation, macho New Jersey police detective John Ceepak and his partner, cheeky narrator Danny Boyle, draw the short straw and are assigned to monitor the personnel involved in the hit reality television show *Fun House* (think *Big Brother* crossed with *Jersey Shore*, with a dash of *American Chopper*), currently filming at the resort town of *Sea Haven*. The carnival of dysfunction is overseen by slick, sleazy producer Marty Mandrake. Unfortunately, both clueless Mayor Sinclair and Chief Baines think the detectives' involvement is a great way to minimize danger while bringing helpful publicity to *Sea Haven*. Set at the "Coin Castle," *Fun House* features a predictably twisted collection of hard-partying troublemakers like Paulie "The Thing," Soozy K and Paulie's nemesis, steroid-addicted Vinnie, known as Skeletor because of his muscle-and-bone physique. As it happens, Skeletor is a wanted fugitive, part of a biker gang sought by New Jersey police for two years. Ceepak's plans to arrest him cause all kinds of trouble with higher-ups. The issue gets a new dimension when Paulie turns up brutally murdered and Skeletor is tagged as the prime suspect. Predictably, Mandrake wants the production to keep rolling. He has the mayor's ear, which means a tumultuous investigation and more killings before the case is solved.

Ceepak and Boyle's seventh caper (*Rolling Thunder*, 2010, etc.) moves like lightning as it puts its cartoonish cast through their paces." -- Kirkus

Susan says

Although this may not be as suspenseful--or as violent--as some of the earlier novels about John Ceepak, it's still an enjoyable trip back to *Sea Haven*, a summer resort which is currently hosting a reality television show (sound familiar?) with obnoxious young people being filmed virtually 24/7 in a rented house. When Ceepak

arrests one of the men for a few minor offenses, the producer decides there's ratings gold in adding a police element to the show. But death intervenes.

Katie says

Kind of a let down in the department of the normally fantastic, winding, original stories of Ceepak and Boyle by Grabenstein. I've always liked all of the Ceepak books, but this one is.. different.

I've gotta say- though the allusion to the real life, hyped up media of Jersey Shore was entertaining, I didn't like the loss of character originality that Grabenstein can normally so well craft. I'm sure it was all too tempting to tie in a famous show called "Jersey Shore" to the set in the books of the.. well, Jersey shore, but I think it seemed like just an easy way to pump out a new book.

With the loss of this original character scheme, I think the writing suffered too. Not a lot- it was still good, but definitely not up to the normally excellent par of the Ceepak novels. I also think that there wasn't as much mystery to this one- no "drop-the-book-in-your-lap-and-open-your-mouth-with-a-surprised-face-like-there's-an-audience-there" reactions. Maybe there was one, and even then it wasn't that exciting, moment.

Again, that may just be because of the loss of a connection with relatable, original characters.

Bottom line: I still, and always will, recommend the Ceepak to series to anyone and everyone, and I think it's one of the book world's best kept secrets, but this one is a semi-miss for me. Looking forward to the next one, though, Grabenstein! (Maybe sans more druggies in muscle T's)

Alicia Rasley says

I listened to the audiobook, and the narrator was good-- young, Jersey-accented but very subtly.

I enjoyed this because I love to see reality TV as a plotting device. The contrast between the fake and the real is explored here, where murder is appreciated as leading to higher ratings.

I especially liked how the final scene (in a Fun House, of course) was set up throughout the book, so that when it happens, it's clearly just the right place, and the motif of "fake/reality" is enhanced by the fun house mirrors.

The mystery itself wasn't very involving, and I don't find John Ceepak (the detective) very interesting. But I haven't read the other books in the series, so maybe he'll grow on me. I did like his "Dr. Watson," the younger detective.

Jackie says

I am a huge fan of Chris Grabenstein's "John Ceepak" mystery series. Since the very beginning in *TIILT A WHIRL*, I have been following Danny Boyle, your average 20-Something working a summer gig as an auxiliary cop, and his honest, dignified and unshakeable military trained mentor/partner, John Ceepak.

With each book in the series, we return to Sea Haven, New Jersey: the place to be when summer rolls around. Sea Haven has it all: the beach, the restaurants, the amusement park and of course, murder. As

always, Danny and Ceepak are on the case, but are continually thwarted by others around them: whether it be the mayor, who will do and say anything to protect Sea Haven's reputation, an undignified/beastly investigator who contaminates crime scenes with his sandwich, homeless beachside drug dealers or a lousy production company whose only concern is ratings. Enter FUN HOUSE: a reality show scheduled to spend the summer in Sea Haven with characters very much like the insane fighting, drinking, partying, cursing "Jersey Shore" cast we have come to know, and you have Chris Grabenstein's premise for his new novel.

Grabenstein has created another perfect beach read. A quickly moving plot and witty wisecracks keep the pages turning. The combination of mystery and humor will appeal to a wide audience of readers, but don't expect a "cozy mystery" because you won't find it here! Ceepak's cases get as gritty and intense as the rest of them ... but Ceepak always gets his man!
