



Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder

Joanne Fluke

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Discover the delicious mystery that started it all!

No one cooks up a delectable, suspense-filled mystery quite like Hannah Swensen, Joanne Fluke's dessert-baking, red-haired heroine whose gingersnaps are as tart as her comebacks, and whose penchant for solving crimes one delicious clue at a time has made her a bestselling favorite. And it all began on these pages, with a bakery, a murder, and some suddenly scandalous chocolate-chip crunchies. Featuring a bonus short story and brand new, mouthwatering recipes, this limited edition of the very first Hannah Swensen mystery is sure to have readers coming back for seconds.

Hannah Swenson already has her hands full trying to dodge her mother's attempts to marry her off while running The Cookie Jar, Lake Eden, Minnesota's most popular bakery. But once Ron LaSalle, the beloved delivery man from the Cozy Cow Dairy, is found murdered behind her bakery with Hannah's famous Chocolate Chip Crunchies scattered around him, her life just can't get any worse. Determined not to let her cookies get a bad reputation, she sets out to track down a killer.

Who would have the sheer audacity and the motive to kill the most punctual delivery man Hannah ever had? Topping the list is the high school football coach. What exactly was his wife doing, making the rounds with the milkman? Could Max Turner, owner of Cozy Cow Dairy, have had a secret he didn't want to share with his top employee? The more Hannah snoops, the more suspects turn up. Why has Lake Eden's most prominent prodigal son, Benton Woodley, just resurfaced? And what about the mysterious Mr. Harris who seemed interested in buying the property next to the dairy, but then disappeared? This is one murder that's starting to leave a very bad taste in Hannah's mouth. And if she doesn't watch her back, Hannah's sweet life may get burned to a crisp.

Filled with a healthy sprinkling of humor and a delightful assortment of nuts, *CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE MURDER* serves up a great new mystery series and introduces a delicious, down-home sleuth that mystery readers will surely savor for years to come.

Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder Details

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From Reader Review Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder for online ebook

Mandy says

I'm going to give this 4 stars because Hannah figured out who the murderer was and her brother in law was up for a promotion with the sheriff's office if he caught the killer. I am glad it all worked out but I felt like Hannah was doing all the work. She needs to be a cop. I did like the end, too and hope she ends up with the man I like for her. I will definitely read more of these books just because they are a nice, light murder mystery to read. The characters are believable and easy to like. I also love how Joanne added the recipes into the story and how they mix in with the plot. Good, fun book if you're looking for something that isn't all blood and gore. I was stumped until the end! Would recommend!

Laurie says

A few months ago, I went to the walk-in clinic because I was feeling miserably sick. They told me the wait would be at least 3 hours. I wasn't about to sit there and read the same out-dated magazines for 3 hours, so I snuck out and picked up this book at Walmart. I normally don't choose mysteries, but I figured anything with the words "chocolate chip cookie" in it had to be worth reading. I devoured this book just like I would a cookie, because it really was a fun and quick read. (I had already read 2/3 of it by the time I finally saw the doctor.) This is the kind of book you read when you want to relax but not have to think too deeply. I gave the series three stars not because I don't like the books, but because the outcomes are somewhat predictable and they aren't exactly award-winning stories.

This is the first of Joanne Fluke's Hannah Swensen books. Hannah is the owner of the Cookie Jar, and she develops a propensity for finding dead bodies and investigating their murders. It's actually a really fun series, and as I said, good for those times when you just want a light-hearted and relaxing read. I have gone on to read most of the books in the series, and I hope to read the rest soon. Adding to the fun of the series is the fact that Hannah has two men vying for her attention-- one a handsome police officer who never fails to make her heart beat faster, the other a sweet, reliable, though balding dentist. Hannah is torn between the two, and it's fun trying to figure out which one she might choose in the end.

Oh-- I almost forgot-- every one of these books is full of great recipes!

Jilly says

Oh HAIL to the NO!!

Did we really stop being monkeys to evolve into reading, thinking beings to read this shit?

Seriously:

A monkey could have written a better story.

A monkey could have solved this mystery without Idiot #1 and Idiot #2.

A monkey police officer wouldn't have made his untrained family member solve the crime for him.

In other words, when it comes to this book, we might as well go back to armpit-scratching and poo-throwing because it is that brain-cell-stealing dumb.

(Yes, I admit I should have run for the hills when I saw the cover. There was obviously a Lifetime or Hallmark movie made of this crap. That should have been my trigger warning.)

James says

Fantastic new series... and now they have a TV series with Alison Sweeney. Nice! It was one of the first cozies I read with recipes and I had to test one or two out. :) More to come on this series... I'm anxious to finish all 20+ books!

Min says

I had been eyeing this book for a while, mostly because the cover amused me so. I finally picked it up when I was on one of my cosy mystery tears. Knowing it had been written in the 80s made the content a little less annoying. Unfortunately, the first book is the best of this sad lot.

However, having read all but the latest (*Key Lime Pie Murder*, which I am still debating whether or not to read) in the series, I have to say that the series is not that great. The latter books were written more recently and the author did a pretty good job throwing in those little details that let you know that yes, you are in the 21st Century now (for example, one of the characters carries around a laptop and cell phone). But beyond that, there is not much to recommend this series.

The main character is the bakery shop owner. She eats a lot of cookies and worries about how fat she is and just frets about her weight far too often in the books. (At one point she goes on a diet and after a couple of days people are telling her how much weight she's lost and how good she looks. Personally, if she can look so different in just two days of dieting, then she probably didn't need to lose any weight at all.)

There are two men with whom she is supposed to be involved, but why they want to be with her is not clear. There is very little character development and I had a hard time understanding why, in a supposedly small town where everyone knows that she likes to investigate crimes (if you can call it investigating), the "suspects" don't have a clue that she is "interviewing" them.

Bottom line - unless you are bored to tears or stuck in a snowstorm with nothing else to read, this series can be skipped.

Bobbi Jo says

I am a sucker for the quick, easy, light-hearted mystery novels and I really enjoy Joanne Fluke. The characters are fun and the "whodunits" are clever enough. Not surprisingly many of the situations the heroine finds herself in are a bit unlikely. But it's not meant to double your IQ, just entertain and all of her books do well at that.

Dawn Michelle says

Read~August 30, 2010

3 1/2 Stars

In a way, I was hoping to NOT like this book, because I so do **NOT** need to be starting another series. Sigh. There goes another wish ungranted, because....

I really **LIKED** this book. The characters are hilarious, the story/mystery is fun and challenging and the recipes are..pardon the pun..to **DIE** for!!! ;-)

Hannah is a delightful heroine, and the cast of characters that come along with her and equally delightful! AND, I didn't know "who-dun-it"!!! YAY YAY YAY!!!!

Tracey says

The TL;DR version: This was one of the dumbest things I've ever read.

This was a stupid purchase – and a stupid thing to read, for that matter, but I did want something brainless in the middle of my Big Giant Fantasy Series. I got it. It is the first in the Hannah Swenson mystery series, which I didn't know when I started it. I eventually caught on as the main character reacted to discovering her very first corpse. (She said something to the effect of not making a habit out of discovering bodies, and both my eyebrows went up, because as with all cozies that's the backbone of the whole series ...)

And now that I think of it, that, the fact that it took me so long to realize it was the first book, is relevant to this review. There should be more initial exposition in this *as* a first book, better introductions to the characters and the setting, etc. (I know, I know – if there had been floating chunks of infodump I would have complained about *that*. Life is tough. So is writing. Deal.) Late in the story there is a mention of how Hannah's sister asked her to leave school and come home to help their mother cope after their father died ... but that's a kind of massive request to make, and a massive decision, and no real motivation or reaction given. Their mother is depicted as pretty much okay, apart from joining every club in town; in fact, Hannah avoids her as much as humanly possible, so what is Hannah's role here, apart from cookie baker? Did she resent being yanked away from her chosen course? How did the bakery come about? It is mentioned that it was the sister's idea; why?

Don't know.

One thing that *does* pretty clearly indicate a first book is the level of writing. I'm tempted to insert the Opus "It wasn't good" icon I stole from the Popcorn Dialogues. The stupidity level is high among the characters, and in the plot ... and the other draw in a book like this, the cookie recipes scattered throughout, aren't remotely original enough to make the book worth reading or buying as a cookbook. Woohoo, ginger snaps and chocolate crinkles. I've been making extremely similar recipes since I was ten. And I don't understand the logic of renaming what are basically chocolate crinkles from the Betty Crocker Cooky Book [sic]

“Black-and-whites”, when Black-and-whites are usually another kind of cookie entirely.

^ - Chocolate crinkle.

^ - Black and white. Unless you're in this book, God help you.

Joanne Fluke falls prey to one of the things that irks me the most in bad writing: thesaurusitis. Instead of adhering to KISS, certain writers feel the need to keep a thesaurus open at their elbow to “prettify” their prose. Here, for nauseous example, are a couple of bits from the scene where Hannah gives her cat some ice cream: rather than use the words “ice cream” again, it is called “the mound of icy white” and “this intriguing new foodstuff”. (New to the cat, that was. No “frozen confection”? I’m disappointed.) Should it bug me as much as it does when a writer feels impelled to make a lame stab at poetry when feeding a cat ice cream? Maybe not. But it really does. You’re not Lord Byron, love, nor is Lord Byron called for in this instance. Don’t.

The book’s plot runs thusly: Hannah Swenson owns and runs a cookie bakery in a small touristy town, and one morning in winter her milkman doesn’t show up to deliver as he always does – and she finds him shot dead in the alley behind her shop. Her brother-in-law is a cop, up for promotion, and the prevailing logic is that if he – with her help – can solve the murder, he’ll be all set. And *he lets her*.

Right there I already have a couple of issues, namely that this **is** a small town, and how on earth does the author expect me to believe that this woman survives solely on what she makes selling cookies and coffee? There is no cake in this shop, no bread, no sandwiches – just cookies, yet I’m supposed to swallow that the locals all flock in every day to buy dozens and dozens and dozens of cookies, and have her cater several events per month. (Well, as she ponders several times, some of her customers eat cookies for breakfast. I hope there’s a good gym and/or cardiologist or endocrinologist in town too. But maybe the town’s too small.) For one thing, in every other chapter Hannah is handing out a dozen free cookies here and a batch there; I don’t care if some of these people are family (and the local traffic cop), that would put a dent in one’s profits. For another thing, I don’t care if half that catering is prompted by her mother’s membership in all those clubs (and her brother-in-law’s position), why on earth would anyone want even a small event catered by someone who is going to provide only cookies, coffee, and tea? (“She had tea and coffee, both ‘leaded’ and ‘unleaded,’ and her best silver platters heaped high with cookies.”) And only a single type of cookie at that, based on what she talks about here: a book club meeting is provided with “Regency” ginger snaps and caffeinated beverages. (Don’t get me started on the character’s laissez-faire attitude toward historical accuracy and how easy it was to pull one over on these stupid ladies... “She’d researched the period, but there were very few published recipes and none of them had sounded like cookies.” So - eh, go with gingersnaps. Close enough.) And yet she has enough money that she doesn’t have to worry about spending a moronic amount investigating the murder, while meanwhile lavishing expensive gifts on her assistant.

I know. I know. “Willing suspension of disbelief” is the main requirement for reading fiction, and I as a hardcore fantasy reader should be a very willing suspender. But it’s a two-way street. I **am** a very willing suspender, as long as the disbelief isn’t too heavy to **be** suspended without snapping the thread. In other words, if a writer creates a something utterly unreal but maintains a level of logic in her worldbuilding, I’ll buy into it wholeheartedly. When Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is more believable than Hannah’s Cookie Jar, Ms. Fluke has a little problem.

You’ll notice I’m not even bothering to mention the little fact that this civilian is running about playing

Nancy Drew, and her cop brother-in-law is not only aware of it, not only allowing it, but he's happy about it and grateful to her? Yeah. See, that's the lifeblood of the cozy mystery, the utterly ridiculous detection, so there's just no point in dwelling on it.

I know. I **know**. I'm working too hard at applying logic and sense to a fluffy cozy mystery. But I just don't understand why anyone would set out to write a book – or a series of books – which purposely ignores common sense. I find it a bit offensive.

So. Even dumber than the blatant disregard for laws regarding patient confidentiality - "*Call every dentist in town. Did they see Ron yesterday morning?*" HIPAA was enacted in 1996. No. Just no. Oh, and "*All information regarding a patient's visit is confidential.... ... If you come in then, I'll tell you all about it.*" *facepalm* This place needs not only better cops, but better doctors. But wait - too small.

... Even dumber (even dumber than a civilian climbing in dumpsters after evidence, scampering about chasing down suspects):

"*Drive to Twin Pines to check out the bouncer*" (that would be the possible murderer), and trying not to get herself shot instead of bringing every scrap of information she finds to her brother-in-law *the*cop* ...

"*You're scaring me, Bill. Do you really think it could be that dangerous?*"

"*Of course it could. Ron was murdered in cold blood and the killer won't hesitate to take you out if he thinks you're on to something.*"

So why do you keep letting her continue, Bill??

... Even dumber than the idea that Hannah hits a jackpot on a slot machine and doesn't notice, wondering what all the noise is about ("*Hannah stared at the flashing numbers with absolute amazement.*") ...

...*Even dumber* than the description of a very swanky party attended by just about everyone in town – including Hannah's barely-legal bakery assistant ("very swanky party" usually equals "small and exclusive guest list")

... Dumbest of all is:

"*As Hannah opened her dress purse and stuck the card inside, she wished that she'd had cards made*"

Seriously?

Truly?

Why would a writer make her main character this big an idiot?

She's owned a business for at least several months, long enough to be well known locally and to be able to hire a full-time assistant. She has bought a truck and had it painted bright red with the business logo plastered all over it. She has had shopping bags made with the store's logo. And she doesn't ... have ... business cards? Even if every local for a twenty-mile radius knows her and her store well, why would she not want to have her phone number on a readily accessible card so that if one of these locals who already loves her cookies wants to, I don't know, order something they don't have to call directory assistance? And what about all those tourists flooding through town in the summer? How stupid do you have to be not to get business cards?

Has she never seen all those VistaPrint ads that are everywhere? (ETA, based on Sam's comment below (thanks!) - no, she hasn't, because they don't exist yet as of the publication of this book. But that was mostly sarcastic - I mean, getting business cards is just a no-brainer for a new business owner, I would think...)

All right, obviously that's not really the very dumbest thing in the book. There are so very many to choose from.

"...Gave a fleeting thought to the difference between the fronts of the shops and the backs. There were no decorative planters in the alley for shrubbery or flowers, no plate-glass windows for displays and signs."

Captain Obvious is obvious.

"Hannah had done some mental arithmetic as she'd driven home, taking into account the money she'd spent investigating Ron's murder for Bill. Even after she'd subtracted the cost of the makeup from Luanne, the dress from Claire, and the money they'd spent at Twin Pines, she'd still come out over a thousand dollars to the good."

- Basic addition and subtraction, there. But it sounds laborious for her – I pictured her counting on her fingers – which is why her later reminiscences about college struck me funny: *"she read the classics and knew who Wittgenstein and Sartre were"* ... *"In college, the ability to do an algebraic equation in her head wasn't considered a personality defect, and no one thought less of her if she knew the atomic number of einsteinium."*

Really, Hannah? Please - tell me the atomic number of einsteinium. I'll wait.

"Of course, there had been a group of incredibly gorgeous, bubbleheaded girls who'd turned male heads, but most of them had either flunked out or left to get their MRS degrees."

- Well, that's not sexist at all. (A Mrs. degree – get it? Get it???)

"I'm just going to run a currycomb through my hair." Norman chuckled at her reference to the tool that was used to groom horses.

- Mother of God, that's some laborious humor. Typical example.

"It sounds like such a quaint little shop. I'll have to make a point of dropping in soon." [someone said.] Hannah bristled.

- But ... it **is** a quaint little shop. That in fact should be kind of what you're going for. It's not exactly Fortnum and Masons, after all.

As always, Betty was dressed in vertical stripes. Someone must have once told her that they were slenderizing and they might have been, for someone less bulky. Betty's stripes were wide tonight, and they were dark green and burgundy. The colors were pretty, but that didn't stop Betty from resembling the side of a circus tent.

Wow, I think I hate this author. She'd best weigh 98 pounds soaking wet to write crap like that. (And she's a little more than 98 pounds.) In a book in which the main character makes a living off selling cookies - and in which you're including recipes for your readers to bake - you're going to rag on the overweight? *Really?*

Betty was what Hannah and her friends in high school had unkindly called "heavy-duty." She weighed close to three hundred pounds and she wasn't known for her grace on the dance floor.

low growl

“But I just can’t help feeling that something really bad is going to happen. Remember Charlie Manson?”

... What? I ... just ... huh?

... Hannah noticed that the red light was glowing on the coffeemaker. She reached out to shut it off and realized that the pot was dry, just inky sludge that once had been coffee in the bottom. “Max left the coffee on.”

- For over two days? And the place didn’t burn down - the carafe didn't even crack? Huh. I'd like to know what brand of coffemaker that is.

A plate of these should be in every psychiatrist’s office — two Chocolate-Covered Cherry Delights will lift anyone out of a depression.

- Sexism, mocking the obese, **and** trivializing mental health issues – superb.

“I’m surprised she didn’t suggest suttee!”

Delores laughed. “You’re right, dear. But that’s illegal, even in India.”

- **I**m surprised the author didn’t take a half a page to explain what suttee is. Shocked, actually.

Lake Eden’s too small to have more than one murderer. ... How could we have two killers in a town the size of Lake Eden?”

- Oh, that’s too funny. First: it’s also too small for a woman (AND a full-time assistant) to make a living selling only cookies, but I’ve said that already. Second ... see the end of this rant.

“...spooned in instant tea...”

- What the hell is instant tea? You mean like powdered instant iced tea, only hot? Oh, ew. Ew. Ew.

Wait – I was wrong. That business card thing wasn’t the dumbest part of the book; this, by several miles, is. (Spoiler alert, if you care, but I won't tell you too much.) Intrepid Girl Detective Hannah goes to see yet another suspect, and isn't subtle about the reason for her visit. Said suspect leaves the room and comes back with a shawl over her arm – and the point is made that this is a little odd since it’s rather warm in the room. “Well, she’s got a gun then,” I said. A few minutes later Hannah is shocked (shocked, I say!) when the suspect points a gun at her.

Trying to stall, Hannah asks: “When did you get the gun? Or did you have it with you when I walked in the door?”

I would have shot her right then. And with any half-decent lawyer I’d walk – it was justifiable homicide, Yer Honor. The woman was too stupid to live. To recap, the suspect walked out of the room. And came back with her hand hidden in an unexplained shawl. Gosh, I wonder if she had the gun hidden under the couch? Wait - a hidden panel beside the fireplace! Or in her undies! That must be it.

All right, that was stupid, but this - - this is absolutely prize-winning:

“In one of the detective shows she’d watched, the main character had jammed his finger somewhere or other to keep the gun from firing.”

No, miss I-can-do-an-algebraic-equation-in-my-head – you're thinking of that episode of Bugs Bunny. Of several episodes of Bugs Bunny - or maybe Yosemite Sam. A **cartoon** can stick his finger into the barrel of a gun to keep himself from being shot. I seem to remember Mythbusters covered it; I don't recall exactly how that played out, but I'm PRETTY sure it wouldn't work for, you know, an actual non-toon human. (ETA – See below...) (E-again-TA: See also <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php...>)

Wait – I was wrong again. None of that is the dumbest thing. Remember how I mentioned this is the first book in the series? Odds are pretty damned good this was planned as a series from the beginning, definitely a jump-on-the-cozy-mysteries-with-recipes bandwagon effort. So this line, as they say, took the cake:

“Finding two dead bodies was more than enough for one lifetime.”

The series is up to 17 books.

LOL.

Wait. That's not funny, it's sad.

~~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

From the TLC/MythBusters website:

Finding: BUSTED

Explanation: The MythBusters treaded [sic] into cartoon territory to work out whether Bugs Bunny could really make Elmer Fudd's shotgun backfire and explode by plugging his rabbity finger in the barrel.

To ensure no one was harmed in the process, Kari Byron, Tory Belleci and Grant Imahara rigged up a remote-controlled shotgun to test this animated ruse. They also created a ballistic gel mold of Grant's hands and body that had a density comparable to human tissue, to keep his digits intact.

With the plastic finger blocking the bullet's path, the gun fired and blew this myth to smithereens. The fake finger didn't stand a chance against the shotgun shell and exploded — along with the entire dummy arm.

On the second round, the MythBusters used a stiffer wax hand to plug the gun barrel, but it couldn't beckon a backfire either. If Bugs Bunny were real, Elmer Fudd would've slain that wily rabbit a long time ago.

ETA: I was sorely disappointed that there was no mention of this in the recent ... pardon me while I weep quietly for a few minutes at the state of the world ... Hallmark Channel tv movie based on this book. (Oh, the humanity.) I have more of a sense of self-preservation than to have watched the whole thing - but I did see this scene. It was bad - but at least Hannah didn't try to be Bugs Bunny.

Carrie says

I should not have read other reviews of this book, before I did so I was reading along with only a slight nagging annoyance that I couldn't quite put my finger on. I'm not finished yet, but I will only be skimming the last 100 pages in order to find out who done it, I definitely won't be wasting my time with the other books in this series. Don't get me wrong, I love a cozy mystery & read lots of 'em, but why does the main character (if she's younger than 35) always fall into one of two types in this genre? She's either super hot

with a hunky boyfriend or she's the stereotypical "old maid" (frumpy/not caring about her appearance and has one or more cats). Hannah falls into the latter category & it drove me crazy! I was afraid sometimes that she would start making out with Moshie!

Worse yet was how she seemed to be doing all the investigating AND interviewing of suspects! Now I know enough to take any give cozy mystery with a grain of salt, but this one was waaaaaay too unbelievable! What the heck is Bill (the cop) doing while Hannah is out solving this case?

Don't get me started on how the author details Hannah's EVERY move and the horrible dialogue where the characters use the name of the person they are speaking to 50 times per sentence!! No one talks like that!

Lastly. . .I just had a hard time believing she affords to make a living (especially afford a condo) when she owns a shop that only sells cookies & coffee. No small Midwestern town needs THAT many cookies & if they did, they'd all be 300 lbs.

I wanted to like this book, I really did. . .

Britta says

3.5 stars

Barbara says

I've read other books in Joanne Fluke's 'Hannah Swensen' series so it was interesting to backtrack and read 'book one' for the first time.

Hannah Swensen - a tall, attractive redhead - leaves graduate school and returns home to Lake Eden, Minnesota for family reasons. Hannah decides to stay in town and opens 'The Cookie Jar' bakery and café. Hannah's mom and two sisters live in Lake Eden and often become involved in her amateur investigations.

This book features Hannah's mom Dolores - who owns an antique shop and repeatedly tries to set Hannah up with eligible men (much to Hannah's chagrin); and Hannah's sister Andrea - a pretty fashionista, mother, and real estate agent who's married to Deputy Sheriff Bill Todd.

As the story opens Hannah and her assistant Lisa are at the 'The Cookie Jar' early, baking cookies and preparing for the morning rush. Hannah is expecting a delivery from milkman Ron LaSalle, who's late for the first time ever. When Hannah hears that Ron's delivery van entered a nearby alley she thinks he broke down and goes to help. Instead of a broken van Hannah finds a broken body....Ron has been shot dead.

Hannah's cop brother-in-law Bill is about to be promoted to detective and asks Hannah to keep her eyes and ears open - in case clues about Ron's killer come her way. Of course Hannah jumps right in and takes over the entire inquiry, keeping Bill in the loop as needed. This is a pet peeve of mine with this series..that Hannah (and whatever family members she draws in) do almost all the investigating while the cops do who

knows what. I know this premise is common in cozy mysteries but it still irks me.

Between making cookies and pursuing her inquiries Hannah buys a flattering little black dress and attends the annual gala thrown by Del and Judith Woodley - one of the richest families in town. Soon afterward another dead body is discovered and Hannah learns that this second victim was a loan shark who threatened some prominent Lake Eden residents. Could the murders of the milkman and loan shark be connected? Hannah plans to find out.

In this book Hannah becomes acquainted with the two men who form part of her (seemingly eternal) romantic triangle. First Hannah meets Norman Rhodes, described as an older, balding dentist who's taking over his father's dental practice. Later Hannah meets Detective Mike Kingston, portrayed as a handsome, blue-eyed, blonde hunk who's just been hired by the the Sheriff's Department. Both men take a shine to Hannah and by the end of the book she has two dates for the weekend. (Sounds good to me....LOL)

Hannah talks to persons of interest, collects clues, and solves the crimes - putting herself in considerable danger in the process. But Hannah is a clever, resourceful gal and things turn out okay (allowing the series to continue. LOL).

The characters in the story are generally interesting and well-drawn. It would be great to know someone like Hannah, who gives away bags of cookies wherever she goes. I also like Hannah's big orange cat Moishe, a smart fellow who watches TV, tells Hannah when he's hungry, and provides affection and comfort as needed. The book also has cookie recipes sprinkled throughout, which sound delicious.

I enjoyed this cozy mystery and would recommend it to fans of the genre.

You can follow my reviews at <http://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot.com/>

Kate says

Is it difficult reading? No. Are the characters the best characters I've ever read? No. But what this series does have going for it is that all the books are a fun, light read. You could probably start reading any of these books as your first and you would have no trouble understanding the characters or the plots (some would find this a plus while others would see it as a drawback, I'm sure).

Hannah Swensen, the main character, while not as pretty as her sister Andrea, or her mother, for that matter, gets by on her charming personality and her smarts. She owns a cookie shop. I love the fact that while she is not a cookie-cutter (sorry, had to do it) type of beauty, she is still pursued by two different men, and even solves crimes before the local police can pick up on most of the clues! If only real crimes were this simple to solve...but luckily Hannah lives in a small town in Minnesota, which certainly narrows the suspect list down, as everyone knows everyone else in the area.

For all the baked-good connoisseurs out there, you may also appreciate the fact that Joanne Fluke includes the recipes Hannah makes for her customers. I have yet to try them, but they all sound really tasty to me! Try visiting her website at www.murdershebaked.com for some summaries and recipes.

I like to read these books before bed, because each chapter is relatively short, so I can read as little or as much as I want, and it's always a tasty (and happy) ending!

Dagny says

The very likeable Hannah, bakery and pastry shop owner, begins her investigative career because she knew and liked the victim. It's a plus that it helps her policeman brother-in-law's actual career. All the secondary characters are pleasant making this an enjoyable read. Match-making mothers provide some gentle humor. I'll be reading more of this series.

Rebbie says

Ok, so... I'm officially in love with cozy mysteries, and there's nothing anyone can do about it. :P

I heart this genre so much; it walks the tightrope between good old-fashioned, small town, hardboiled noir and straight up cutie patootie-ness.

It's a great break from all the really sad, serious stuff going on around the world and in books, and is a gentle reminder of better days gone by.

Think summertime, a warm breeze passes you by as you're sitting under a beautiful old oak tree reading a comforting book. You're in the yard of a light yellow cottage style home with white trim and pink flowers neatly planted around the outside.

This little slice of perfection is tucked away from the madness of the world; nothing can ruin the simplicity and joy of your experience.

And that's cozy mystery.

Anyhoo, Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder is the first in a long-running series written by Joanne Fluke. It's about a woman named Hannah Swensen who owns a cookie shop called The Cookie Jar, and she lives in a tiny town called Lake Eden with her trusty cat Moishe.

All bets are off when a man she grew up with is found murdered directly behind her shop. Who did it? Why? Will they strike again? She sets off to help her brother-in-law crack the case. He's up for a promotion from deputy to detective if he's successful.

Overall, it was a cute read, thoroughly enjoyable, and provided a much needed respite from the stresses of life.

Zyra says

this book will definitely leave you craving for delicious cookies. mystery was also interesting and engrossing. I do hope the other books in the series keep my attention.

