



On What Grounds

Cleo Coyle

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Introducing a delightful new series featuring Clare Cosi, manager of the historic Village Blend coffeehouse...

Clare arrives at work to discover the assistant manager dead in the back of the store, coffee grounds strewn everywhere. Two detectives investigate. But when they find no sign of forced entry or foul play, they deem it an accident. Still, Clare is not convinced. And after the police leave, Clare can't help wondering...If this was an act of murder, is she in danger?

On What Grounds Details

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Author : Cleo Coyle

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From Reader Review On What Grounds for online ebook

Heather says

Book 1. Pretty sophomoric writing. Way, way, way too much how to make coffee detail and over explaining of main character's feelings. Hints at romance with detective but nothing ... Want to like this series and will try next in series but . . .

Amazon:

Clare Cosi used to manage the historic Village Blend coffeehouse...until she opted for quieter pastures and a more suburban life. But after ten years and a little friendly cajoling from the owner (a fresh pot of Jamaican Blue Mountain was all it took), she's back to the grind. With a sprawling rent-free apartment directly above the Village Blend, her cat Java by her side, and plenty of coffeehouse redecorating ideas, Clare is thrilled to return to work. Until she discovers the assistant manager unconscious in the back of the store, coffee grounds strewn everywhere. Police arrive on the scene to investigate. But when they find no sign of forced entry or foul play, they deem it an accident. Case closed. But Clare is not convinced. And after the police leave, there are a few things she just can't get out of her mind... Why was the trash bin in the wrong place? If this wasn't an accident, is Clare in danger? And... are all detectives this handsome?

Ian says

For Clare coffee isn't just her profession, it's her life. Lured out of a self imposed exile to manage The Grind, Manhattan's premier café, she arrives one morning to discover the body of her assistant manager. The police are convinced it's an accident but things aren't adding up and Clare (with the help of her ex-husband and an exhausted detective) begins her own investigation.

On What Grounds is so much more than just a cosy fireside mystery, it's an education in coffee from beans to espresso. The book is populated with characters you want to get to know and it even managed one or two surprises.

Skyler Autumn says

2 stars

I preferred all the coffee jargon then everything got all murder-y and I got bored.... But it was simple read which is what I needed at the time.

Review to Come.

Paula says

Another bookswap experience, this is the first in a series of books featuring Clare Cosi, who has just come back to New York to run her former mother-in-law's coffee house. I'm always somewhat suspicious of characters-who-appear-too-much-like-their-creators (along with the same initials, etc...).

Naturally, for this is a crime book, her arrival is coincidental with one of the assistants falling down the stairs and seriously injuring herself - given that the victim is a dancer, and therefore should be quite light on her feet, was it an accident or something more sinister? Clare is determined to find out, with the assistance (or otherwise) of both an NYPD detective and her ex-husband.

Which would all be fine, if a significant chunk of *On What Grounds* wasn't shoehorned exposition of information loosely about coffee - an infodump of enormous proportions. Once ignored, the story runs along much better, though I can't say I'm desperate to read the next in the series, which is *Through the Grinder*.

Miranda Reads says

First off, such a **freaking brilliant title**.

Second off, I loved the concept. Coffee themed murders? Yes. Count me in.

Third off, I think I liked the title more than the actual book.

Clare Cosi, the manager of the historic Village Blend coffeehouse, is in a bit of a **complicated situation**.

There's **all the normal stuff** - she's working under her **ex-mother-in-law** (whom she adores) but is sharing a duplex with her husband (whom she doesn't adore) due to her ex-mother-in-law's meddling.

And then there's **all the not-so-normal-stuff** - like the **attempted murder** on her assistant manager. The cops think it's an accident but she knows differently - and one way or another, she will prove it.

I loved the premise - **coffee, murder and mayhem**.

I adore the way the characters talked about **coffee**.

Coffee makes a sad man cheerful, a languorous man active, a cold man warm, a warm man glowing.

But the actual **murder**-sleuthing left something to be desired.

Clare's sleuthing was just **so-over-the-top** and **painfully awkward**. She abides by the whole whole blurt-out-random-questions-and-conveniently-gets-all-the-right-right-answers.

And the **mayhem** mostly consisted of Clare A) thinking about her "pillowy chest," B) conflicting thoughts about her hawt ex-husband is or C) day dreaming about the equally hot cop. Someone throw this woman in a cold shower.

So, it's not that the book was **terrible** per say...It just felt like it was **trying too hard**.

The Finer Books Club 2018 Reading Challenge - A book with a pun in the title

Audiobook Comments

Read by Rebecca Gibel. Much like the actual text...the audio felt like it was trying too hard. Every character had such exaggerated inflections (a pet peeve of mine). I.e. the New York Coppers were just so very Nue Yahk as they drank their cawffee and tawked about murdahhh. *shudders*

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Jan says

AN UNEVEN BOOK. AT TIMES I LIKED IT AND FELT THE STORY WAS INTERESTING, AND AT TIMES I DISLIKED HOW SHE TALKED AT SUCH LENGTH ABOUT THE INTRICACIES OF COFFEE AND THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF DIFFERENT "TEXTURE/ATMOSPHERE" THINGS IN NEW YORK CITY AND SO ON. A LITTLE WOULD HAVE BEEN NICE, BUT I FELT LIKE A FIFTH OF THE BOOK WAS DEVOTED TO THIS EXCESSIVE DESCRIPTION (LIKE HOW VARIOUS SPECIALTY COFFEES ARE MADE) WHEN SHE SHOULD HAVE BEEN GETTING ON WITH THE STORY. I ALSO REALLY DISLIKED HOW SHE KEEPS TALKING ABOUT HOW ATTRACTIVE HER EX-HUSBAND IS AND HOW ATTRACTED SHE IS TO HIS HUNKY BODY, DESPITE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN DIVORCED FOR 10 YEARS, HE WAS A SERIAL CHEATER, AND PRETTY MUCH LET HER RAISE THEIR DAUGHTER ALONE. GIVE ME A BREAK -- BY THE TIME YOU REACH 40 YOU AREN'T SWAYED BY GOOD PECS WHEN SOMEONE DOES THAT TO YOU. AND I REALLY DISLIKED THAT THE EX-HUSBAND IS SO UPSET WHEN VARIOUS MEN PAY ATTENTION TO HER. A LITTLE JEALOUS, MAYBE, BUT NOT THE EXCESSIVE WAY HE WAS. I ALSO DIDN'T LIKE THE PLOT DEVISE THAT HER EX-MOTHER-IN-LAW (WHO OWNS THE COFFEE SHOP AND HAS ASKED CLARE TO COME BACK TO MANAGE IT AGAIN), SNEAKILY GETS HER SON AND CLARE BACK IN THE SAME CIRCLE BY PROMISING BOTH OF THEM USE OF THE APARTMENT ABOVE THE COFFEE SHOP. YES, IT'S HIGHLY POSSIBLE THAT COULD HAPPEN, BUT I STILL DON'T LIKE THAT STORY LINE. THE MURDER MYSTERY ITSELF WAS INTERESTING AND HAD GOOD TWISTS, BUT OVERALL I WOULDN'T RECOMMEND IT.

Jo Anne B says

Disappointed. I thought from the title that this would be a clever, comedic, fun, fast-paced read. Instead it tried too hard, had all the cliches, unlikeable characters, wasn't well-written, and it was insulting. The main character's initials were the same as the author's (despite that being a pen name). In the book, a dance studio owner said that when one of her dancers was nude dancing, she was debasing herself to a lower crowd of people. Hmmm, I think she could have said authors do that too when they use such self-absorbed tactics in their writing.

Clare, the main character, didn't really seem to fit her character. I attribute this to lack of character development, description, and depth due to poor writing. I feel like I have to defend the character, like it wasn't her fault. It is just hard to bond to a character when you only catch fleeting glimpses of who they really are.

The storyline of Clare's ex- mother-in-law wanting her to take over part ownership of her coffeeshop was not believable. Also, giving her a million dollar duplex in Manhattan to live in as part of the deal was far-

fetches as well.

I also did not believe that what drove Clare to prove that her employee's accident was really a murder was because Clare had a daughter nearly the same age. Clare did not come across as motherly or loving.

It also was not believable that Clare and her ex-husband found out all the secrets a woman under suspicion had by reading all of her documents, emails, and chats in chat rooms on her laptop in a Hotel room within 5 minutes.

Clare divorced her husband of 10 years in a note because he was always away from home buying coffee beans and doing who knows what. But, all of a sudden, she thinks he has changed (no proof offered or attempt to support this with any reasoning) and lapses with him.

The author tried too hard to link everything in life and every lesson to making the perfect cup of joe. The cat's name was Java. Enough said there.

This could have been a better book. It would have been better to have skipped this and had a good cup of fresh brewed coffee.

SheriC (PM) says

After a full hour of listening to this audiobook, and we've gotten almost nowhere with the actual mystery. Almost all of this time has been spent on exposition. It has given me zero reason to continue soldiering on.

Audiobook, borrowed from my public library. Rebecca Gibel gives a good performance. DNF at 14%.

Betsy says

On What Grounds was the first book I read from Cleo Coyle. The book was fine, but I really did not relate to the characters. The coffee house sounds delightful though. I will probably not continue with the series. 3 stars

Erin ? *Proud Book Hoarder* says

"Okay, I'm sorry, but decaf drinkers annoy me."

It's fun in a "cozy mystery" sort of way to read these books dedicated to drinks, foods, or hobbies. I'm a latte girl myself and thought a fun coffee shop series sounded delish enough to try. I can already tell by this first book that I'll be continuing with this long-running series for awhile.

Some mysteries seem focused on themes without teaching the reader much about the subject, but that's certainly not the case here. It almost was too textbookish for the first half, as the author paused from the story as the main character mentally filled in techniques, different equipment, and coffee bean jargon for the discerning learner. It's clear she has passionate opinions about the right coffee techniques and how important it is to pay attention to pretty much everything when it comes to making a stellar cup of java.

I liked the tips - really - but it was a little too much for awhile. Finally that dies down some to let the story shine over the coffee, only keeping quips to show the character's personality and tendency to overdo coffee lore to anyone who dares ask her a question or make a compliment.

Example writing of this -

"(The thing to remember when adding sugar is to use white granulated- it dissolves much faster and smoother than cubes or brown sugar.)

Some of my customers even add a bit of frothed milk, but this version of espresso "stained" with a bit of milk is technically called a *caffè macchiato* (*macchia* being Italian for stain, spot, or speckle.)"

The main lure - besides that fragrant smell of coffee described so well it makes me crave a cup myself - is the small and intimate cozy scene of the well-known coffee shop, staffed by quirky characters who come across as convincingly but enjoyably flawed and eccentric.

It came alive and flourished under the writer's technique. Cleo Coyle may write matter-of-factly when it comes to coffee bean know-how, but she puts humor convincingly in her sentences when she's whipping up comedic scenes, tension, or amateur snooping.

I'm not sure how the character can convincingly keep running into murder victims to where it makes sense and doesn't come across as too outlandish...but for this introduction book, it fit. The murder connection was realistic enough to work (for most of the book they questioned whether it was a murder at all!), and there's plenty of incentive for her to do some investigating.

The beginning is a little dry but the middle sublime with a darker ending wrap-up on the last page. Recommended for cozy fans or coffee slurpers.

The end of the book has a generous amount of recipes, food and coffee-related.

Heather G says

I quit reading this after two chapters - I found it completely boring and unexciting. The language used (very dry) and the way too indepth information about brewing coffee did me in. Yuck!

Jenny says

I'm sorry but these books are mochas for the mind [yes, I DID write that!] and I LOVE them for the total frothy foam brain-fluff that they are. (OK, seriously. I'm done).

Erin L says

Yet another book that I wanted to like, but ultimately couldn't. I love cozy mysteries, but I wouldn't consider this a cozy mystery. Sure, there's a mystery buried in there somewhere. But I couldn't get past the coffee

info-dump to get to the mystery. And it truly is an info-dump. As Clare is being interviewed about the accident, she's off on a tangent in her head about coffee and storing coffee and preparing coffee and waxing poetic about how she'll convert some coffee drinker to really, really good coffee because she's the coffee queen. No really. She makes Greek coffee as good as a Greek mother would, even though she's (gasp!) not Greek!

Also, in the middle of the above she tells us all about her life in suburbia, why she moved back to the coffee shop and back to New York. It seems that the Prologue (completely pointless) would've been better served giving us that information rather than telling us that the assistant manager really was murdered and it wasn't just an accident. You know, keep some of the meagre amount of mystery offered.

She also displays her amazing detecting abilities while being questioned by the homicide detective. Really? No. Really?? You've just sent your employee away in an ambulance. And all you can think about is coffee and the homicide detectives children? Who appear to be spoiled rotten if they grab at Daddy's coat pocket with chocolate covered fingers EVERY night when he gets home. Give me a break.

And finally, (oddly enough) the prologue. Pointless.

Also, the whole love triangle thing? I'm over it. There are other, better ways to create conflict. Especially when dealing with murder and mayhem.

Lisa Kay says

★★★★? I really enjoyed this one by a “new-2-me-author.” It was well written, fast-paced, and held my attention through-out. It conveyed the ambiance of a Greenwich Village coffee house. And I learned a few things about coffee. ? There is the obligatory “love interest” triangle, but it wasn’t over the top and even that had a nice twist. I’ll definitely continue the series.

P.S. It also satisfied several challenges, namely CaroB’s frustrating “double-decker” – since the author’s first and last name starts with “C” – a challenge which has to be read in alphabetical order!

Jennifer Wardrip says

I loved this first book in the fun cozy series. It combines two of my all-time favorite things -- coffee and mystery!

Clare Cosi has just come back to manage The Village Blend coffeehouse at the request of Madame, the wonderful, loving eccentric who just so happens to also be her ex mother-in-law.

When Clare arrives, it's to find the unconscious body of her assistant manager, Annabelle, lying at the bottom of the service stairs. What the police (led by hunky yet aloof Detective Quinn) assume is a tragic accident seems to clearly be foul play to Clare, and she sets out (with the help of her ex-husband, Matteo) to prove it.

I can't wait to read the next book in this series! I loved the information on coffee, and I really enjoyed the characters. This is a great read.

