



Death Loves a Messy Desk

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Nothing makes Charlotte Adams happier than freeing people from clutter—and she boasts a waiting list of sloppy clients. Her free time has been taken up solving fatally untidy cases. Her latest task: a woman has hired her to organize a coworker's hopelessly cluttered desk. But when the miss behind the mess goes missing, workplace tempers rise. Now, Charlotte must open a brand-new folder—one she hopes won't be filed under M for murder.

Death Loves a Messy Desk Details

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From Reader Review Death Loves a Messy Desk for online ebook

Char says

I thought I was really lucky when I snagged the first 4 books in this series at a library book sale. The first one didn't leave me feeling too fortunate and I had to force myself to finish the second one. Halfway through this third book however I was done and abandoned it altogether. I was rolling my eyes so much I was giving myself a headache. I find the way the main character, Charlotte, just inserts herself into these cases and acts like no one else is even trying to figure out who the killer is just really bothers me. She has no reason to be involved and comes off as a huge busy body. I also find it laughable that she's so quick to insult Nick, a police officer and husband to her friend Pepper, for being stupid and always bumbling things up, yet she is far from bright herself and when it comes to bumbling, she's just as bad, if not worse, than he is! The rest of the characters are just there and don't really offer much to this story as they did in the previous books. I won't be reading anymore from this series.

Thebookmistress says

I think I am on a cozy mystery streak, which gives me a chance to see what works and what doesn't.

What doesn't work here is how much disbelief we are asked to suspend. Nick, the worlds least competent cop, just cannot keep arresting the same innocent small business owner for every murder on his patch, not without a serious lawsuit against the police department. Even someone who's obsessed by murders cannot go around interrogating strangers -- and strangers cannot keep sharing their secrets with a random organizer.

I know that these are the tropes of the genre, but some authors make them work. In this book, they just annoy, as do the majority of the losers who populate the book.

rabbitprincess says

* * 1/2

The plot of this book was okay, but the characters really threw me off. The organizing case is located in an office, and three of the main office personnel are rather two-dimensional. Office mom Fredelle (what a name!) is too nice, Dyan is a female canine, and the supposedly meek and unassuming Robbie spent the first third of the book in a perpetual Bruce-Banner-like rage. But I warily kept reading for the plot, fluffy as it was. I did like the office setting, and there were certainly some exciting moments (although the chase scene was kind of stretching the limits of credibility), but the characters didn't feel quite right this time around. Charlotte herself at one point finds herself experiencing that feeling.

I wouldn't recommend that newcomers to Maffini start with this one -- The Cluttered Corpse might be a better bet if your first Maffini book is going to be a Charlotte Adams. But if you like the plot and are very forgiving of characterization, you may find it a pleasant diversion. And it was certainly easy to get through, don't get me wrong. It just wasn't quite what I thought it would be.

Harvee says

I gave this a four since I love funny cozy mysteries and feng shui/ interior decorating mysteries. They are in a class all by themselves. I also read Maffini's "The Cluttered Corpse," but think this one is much funnier.

In this book, the main character Charlotte is trying to relax after recovering from solving a murder, *The Cluttered Corpse*. She signs up to train her two miniature "weiner" dogs to become certified therapy dogs in a volunteer program and meets another volunteer, Fredelle, who hires her on the spot to organize her work office and especially the untidy, unsightly desk of a new coworker, Barbara.

Charlotte runs her own business as an organizer in a small town and is well known. She has to deal with crazy office politics in the company, Quovadicon, to do this new job. Trying to help tidy Barbara's desk becomes a task when coworkers clash and Barbara disappears.

Charlotte, however, is too organized to let this job go and just drop it, even when she is fired by Fredelle, who had hired her in the first place. She snoops as any serious amateur detective would, and gets herself into trouble. Attempts on her life and on Quovadicon employees, including the self-effacing son of the owner, doesn't get Charlotte much sympathy from her closest friends until she is over her head in trouble and the bodies start to pile up, about three in all.

The plot is good, though I guessed the mystery behind Barbara's disappearance about two-thirds of the way through. The culprits were a big surprise tho.

If you love cute, disobedient dogs who are averse to training, long girlfriend talks (some of which could have been easily cut from the book), plus a lot of humor in a good cozy mystery plot, you'll like *Death Loves a Messy Desk*.

Cathy Cole says

First Line: As the flash went off in my face, I yelped and dove for cover.

Despite professional organizer Charlotte Adams' rather high profile in a couple of recent murders, she's got a waiting list of customers who are in desperate need of her expertise. When there's a cancellation, Charlotte agrees to meet a woman who has a problem with a co-worker's extremely messy desk. In no time flat, the cluttered co-worker goes missing, and Charlotte once again is at the mercy of media cameramen as she tries to solve the mystery.

I have to admit that those cameramen are one of the reasons why I enjoy this series. Charlotte and cameras go together as well as pancakes and jalapeños. If there's any way to get an unflattering photo of her to show to all the viewers, those cameramen will, and it's become a running joke throughout the series.

Another reason why I like this series is that Maffini doesn't bury the organizing under the murder. Each chapter begins with an organizing tip, and Charlotte comes up with a brilliant plan to streamline an office and make everyone more productive.

Charlotte does have her faults. One character describes her (to her face) as "a bit bossy, a bit uptight, kind of vain about your appearance. Maybe shallow." Charlotte is all those things... well, maybe not the shallow part... but she is still a likable character and one worth following through a series. She's so earnest that I just

have to root for her through all her pratfalls and triumphs.

Although the behavior of one of the office workers didn't fool me, I still didn't figure out what was going on. I look forward to the next book in the series where I hope I'll get to see Truffle and Sweet Marie train to be therapy dogs.

Erin L says

This one started out kind of promising. Charlotte seemed to realize that she was being ridiculous in past events and she was determined to stay out of murder. Then everything went sideways and she decided that she was involved, she was the ONLY person capable of solving the mystery, she was the only one TRYING to solve the mystery and finally that contacting Pepper wasn't good enough and she needed to stay in a dangerous situation and call the police to direct them in their actions.

I really want to enjoy these books, but I can't get past the ridiculousness of them. Too many clueless characters.

Linda says

This was a fun book with lots of twists. Totally didn't see the ending coming. Charlotte gets a lot more than she bargained for when hired to organize a messy desk in an office.

Sarah "Kat" says

3.5 I'd read more of the series. The only part that I didn't like was the whiny side that the main character would pull when her friends. Almost gave up on the book but glad I didn't and fortunately the whininess was only a small part Of the overall character.

Kimber says

This book was painful. She totally inserted herself into a situation that she could've avoided without any problem. Very unbelievable. Some of the characters were funny but not completely developed. I do not understand the relationship she has with Jack. Is it more? Is it less? Let him have a girlfriend, what's the big deal? She makes it sound like single women can't live on their own. I know plenty that do. Maybe it's because I jumped in and read this as the first book of hers, but I definitely won't be reading any more of them. I'd be ticked at her too: MYOB! She's a total busybody and very condemning. (Nor did she resolve all the loose ends.)

Chelsea says

I love this series. It is fun and the characters are lovable and so are the dogs.

Nathan Burgoine says

Charlotte Adams is booked solid with her organizing business, filling days with sloppy closets, out of control collections, and packrat clients. She's managed to turn being involved in two local murders into positive press - she's that good - and pretty soon she plans on not jumping when there's a loud noise.

Hired to help with someone with a very serious messy desk issue, Charlotte uneasily steps back into a realm of office politics and is soon hip deep in another mix of mystery and murder. Charlotte can't help wonder if the next bit of office clutter might be her corpse.

With solid organizing advice at the start of each chapter, the Charlotte Adams series is a fun, quirky mystery series, and this third book is no exception. As always, it's Maffini's characters that steal the show even as the mystery tangles around you. Charlotte is a joy to read, a wonderful mix of spry and down-to-earth that charms (I, too, think that until someone finds a way to make "chocolate" the first ingredient in every recipe, that the joy of cooking will continue to elude me), and her friends have a verisimilitude that leaves them living and breathing, with all their foibles, long after you close the book. If you've not read the Charlotte Adams books before, you'll want to pick them all up.

Jo Anne says

I enjoy humorous genre mysteries, so Mary Jane Maffini's organization expert/snooper Charlotte Adams mysteries are fun. Charlotte is a bit whiney and a little shallow, but she has a good heart. After discovering her cheating fiancé, she returns to her hometown and reconnects with all her old school friends, who sometimes help her figure out a problem or bail her out when she gets into one. Light reading, great for a quiet weekend.

Ellen says

Death Loves a Messy Desk

~Berkley

(12)

Charlotte Adams Organizer & sleuth, January 4, 2012

By Ellen Rappaport

This review is from: Death Loves a Messy Desk (Charlotte Adams, Book 3) (Mass Market Paperback)

This is my 3rd book in the Charlotte Adams series. This author already made my fave list with her first 2 books, so I was looking forward to getting reacquainted with Charlotte's team.

The aspects of this book that I enjoy the most are Mona, the busybody emergency operator, Ramona-the librarian with know how, Rose & Lilith (from the first 2 books), Jack-neighbor and friend, and believe it or not-Pepper & Nick.

Pepper, Charlotte's long time friend from school days but not so much at the present, is enduring a difficult pregnancy but seems to be easier going on Charlotte. (compared to the previous books). At first I found it a

bit hard to swallow that such an efficient police woman could put up with a dunce/playboy of a husband...that is until I realized I know a couple just like that. In this book their relationship evolves to another level and they are actually communicating.

That's more than I can say for Charlotte and Jack. I like the two of them and I was happy about how they came together at the end of the book. I did not enjoy Jack being a do nothing guy when it came to ignoring Charlotte and having the wool pulled over his eyes by some new fling. Not so much.

I loved how Charlotte was actually trying to train her Dachshunds, Truffle & Sweet Marie. I have 2 Dachshunds and they know only a very few commands...if they choose to even listen to them. Love those dogs.

I missed not having Rose & Lilith in the story and hope they come back with the next book. (which I already have in my tbr stack)

All in all I found this 3rd addition to the Charlotte Adams series a bit of a slow start compared to the first 2 books...but the last several chapters were terrific. All loose ends were tied nicely in place in Maffini's usual chaotic fashion. I did have my eye on the murderer before hand, but that's ok.

I will continue reading this series and recommend it to cozy readers.
Ellen

Shireen says

Mary Jane Maffini writes a mystery series that's perfect for reading when life is getting a bit much and you need an escape into a story filled with non-stop movement, nice characters, clues buried in details, a story that is essentially fun! My only caveat for this book, the third in the Charlotte Adams series, is that the ending seems to come out of nowhere, one of those where, in the last chapter, one character really really has to explain to the others what happened so the reader will know. Otherwise it provides a moment out of the crap of one's own life, an essential purpose of a book like this.

Marlyn says

In the third Charlotte Adams outing, Charlotte has been hired by the office manager of an importing company called Quovadicon to clean up an employee's particularly messy desk. When Charlotte goes to the office, the employee, Barbara not in. Loathe to do too much without consulting the desk's owner, Charlotte drops by her home. She finds the door wide open, and the landlord worried. Charlotte is convinced that Barb is in trouble, and when the police decline to search for her, Charlotte decides to investigate on her own. Charlotte is nothing if not persistent, and comes close to getting herself killed. But despite being nosy and pushy, she is likeable enough for the reader to care what happens to her, especially since her closest friends are suddenly too busy to spend time with her.
