



Affairs of Steak

Julie Hyzy

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White House chef Olivia Paras and her arch nemesis, White House Sensitivity Director Peter Everett Sargeant, must work together to solve the double murder of one of the First Lady's assistants and the Chief of Staff-before they become the next victims of a merciless assassin with a secret agenda.

Affairs of Steak Details

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From Reader Review Affairs of Steak for online ebook

Mary Welk says

AFFAIRS OF STEAK is the fifth "White House Chef Mystery" by Anthony and Barry award winner Julie Hyzy. In this episode, executive chef Olivia "Ollie" Paras has to put personal feelings aside when she's paired up with Peter Everett Sargeant, the unlikeable White House sensitivity director, to help choose a location for Secretary of State Gerald Quinones' White House sponsored birthday party. Ollie and Peter are told to meet the First Lady's personal assistant, Patty Woodruff, at Lexington Place, a glittering banquet hall not far from the White House that might prove to be the most suitable place for the party. Ollie and Peter arrive on time for the meeting, but when Patty is nowhere to be found, the two set off to survey the hall by themselves. While doing so, they stumble across not one, but two bodies. The first victim is Patty Woodruff. The second is the President's chief of staff

While the media plays on an imagined love affair involving the two, the Secret Service investigates a much more complicated scenario linking their deaths to threats against Secretary of State Quinones and his family. Who kidnapped the Secretary's father-in-law? Is there a conspiracy to kill Quinones? If so, does Sargeant's much despised nephew Milton know who's behind the plot? Why is someone trying to get Sargeant fired? And who is the man who followed Ollie into the subway?

A temperamental chef, a conceited social aide, and an unresolved romance add to Ollie's problems as she strives to keep her head above water in this highly entertaining culinary whodunnit. Hyzy's knowledge of White House protocol and Secret Service SOPs keeps the plot on track and humming down the line to a surprising but satisfying conclusion. The puff pastry recipes at the end of the book only add to the fun. This one is highly recommended for fans of political intrigue, amateur sleuths, and romantic suspense, not to mention lovers of fine food and wine. (And yes, I fully intend to try the recipe for cranberry pecan brie en croute and chocolate sundae vol-au-vents. My mouth was watering just reading those recipes!)

Terri says

I love this series. This time, Ollie is forced to work with Sargeant (who she does not get along with at all) for a large birthday party for the Secretary of State. When checking out locations, they find two bodies hidden in the kitchen of the potential venue site. And those two are White House employees. Once again, Ollie is involved in mysterious doings that threaten her life.

The story is paced very well and the characters keep me interested. I like that Ollie does not play victim - she fights. AND she passes info along to the authorities as she should. An admirable trait in an amateur sleuth IMHO!

Ranjini says

The book opens with Olivia Paras, aka Ollie, the Executive Chef of the White House rushing to finalise a venue for the First Lady. Mrs Hyden plans to hold a birthday party for Secretary of State, Gerald Quinones. Quinones was known to be a genius and one of a kind. He was a rare combination of brilliant strategist and all-around great guy, though the President and him belonged to two different political parties.

There was only one hitch: she had to work with her greatest adversary of all times - the White House Sensitivity Director, Peter Everett Sargeant. Ever since he joined, he has only created trouble for Ollie and the two never got along.

As Ollie and Peter scour venues, they come across Milton (Peter's nephew), who is looking for an entry into the White House and bump into strangers.

Once they reach their final destination, Lexington Place, and search for their point-of-contact, Patty Woodruff (the First Lady's newest assistant), the duo are traumatised to discover her dead body, along with that of Mark Cawley, the Chief of Staff.

News reports insinuate that Patty and Mark were having an affair, but no one believes the gossip. With their lives in peril, Ollie and Peter must rely on each other to uncover who murdered their associates and why before they endure the same fate.

In the interim, the Chief Usher, Paul Vasquez retires and hands over the reins to Doug Lambert; who is not only inept in dealing with matters of the country; but has lesser tolerance and favourites.

Ollie feels she is getting stalked.

She happens to rescue Mr Bettencourt, from a failed kidnapping, and it is revealed that he is Mrs Quinones father.

The Quinones are indebted to Ollie - however, she cannot shake off the eerie feeling of being watched, at all times.

She is put under the direct supervision of the Secret Service, making her life claustrophobic.

Can Agent Gav help?

When Milton makes efforts to constantly get in touch with her, regarding information of the murders; she's baffled.

Is he making these claims just to get into the White House?

Ollie's fastidious nature leads you to a tale of inventiveness and perception.

Hyzy has woven the twist, keeping in mind what the readers want.

Brilliantly crafted characters in the series, leave you craving for more.

This is the fifth book in the White House Chef Mystery series - and I'm sad that I'm approaching the end.

Jackie says

So, I debated between 3 and 4 stars. Still can't decide. I really do enjoy this series. I wish, though, that the titles were different. Somehow these titles imply pretty mindless, fluff books you can read with only half your brain. And that really isn't the case with these. The silly titles almost do a dis-service to the books.

This series has been fun. The characters are fairly real, the dialogue interesting and the plot complex enough that you really want to keep reading to find out "who-done-it". I enjoy the fact that the books are clean without being sappy and require a bit of mental investment to follow all the threads. And if you pay attention, you can surely see that most everything that happens has a purpose. I've liked these books enough to read all 5 in the series.

Interestingly, I chatted some months ago with a lady from another state who was bemoaning the lack of these - and similar - books at her local library. How fortunate I am to live in an area that places distinct value on

public libraries and acquiring all kinds of books for people to read.

Anyway, I'll be for sure looking for more of Ms. Hyzy's books to read.

Ian says

After discovering a body at a venue being considered for a White House event, the White House's Executive Chef finds herself once again in the firing line and needs to team up with the persistent thorn in her side, Sensitivity Director Peter Everett Sargeant.

Nothing particularly new or original but this series is consistently entertaining and at book #5 is still pretty good fun. Onto #6.

Jeannie and Louis Rigod says

How can the fifth book in a murder series, (A White House Chef Mystery) be equal to the prior four which were exceptional? It's easy if Julie Hyzy is writing it.

"Affairs of Steak" was non-stop, pulse thrumming action, from page one, when we learn Ollie is teamed up with Peter Sargeant, to multiple murders, attempted abductions, attempted burglaries, and yes, attempted murders... I still haven't caught my breath, ending on page 274 that ends with a laugh and a caution.

Added to this action, thankfully as I needed a rest, was the underlining of Ollie's love life. I can tell you that Ollie handles herself much more ladylike than I would have. This 'situation' even has her former boyfriend, Tom still involved in her life. Tom, of course, is just in a professional manner or is he? And, what is going on with Gav? Mrs. Wentworth and Stan want to know and so did I!

The complexities of life behind the White House doors and in the lives of the staff are never more dramatic than in this excellently written thriller. Yes, this novel was a mystery thriller and I would love to give actual details but, do not want to stop you from enjoying every single page. I was shocked and saddened by the outcome. Yet, I was so proud of Ollie and Peter!

Added as a Bonus for us readers and persons fond of eating, was an commanding offering of delicacies made with puff pastry. An entire meal worth! They have me placing puff pastry on my shopping list. I mean what more can a reader want... The next book is what!

Do treat yourself and get a copy quickly. Enjoy!

Alyssa White says

This edition of the Whitehouse Mystery had a lot of characters to follow and it was interesting to see the different aspects that pulled out from it. I am happy that Virgil is being put in his place, I'm shocked no one has punched him in the nose yet. I loved seeing Ollie and Peter hash things out, it was wonderful. Gav...???

Michelle Randall says

Affairs of Steak is the fifth book in the White House Chef Mystery Series by Julie Hyzy. She is another of my very favorite authors and I love reading her books.

This book finds Ollie being teamed with Peter Sargeant, you remember the guy who hates her, in helping the First Lady plan a birthday party for the Secretary of State of the President. They are looking at locations for the event, off-site, not at the White House and they have visited four places. As they are walking to the last location they run into Peter's nephew, although Peter is none to happy about it, and once they make the final location, they find that the assistant that was suppose to met them is nowhere to be found. As they are looking through the venue and the kitchen, Peter notices something that looks like blood, and Ollie opens a hugh tilt-skillet only to find the missing assistant, dead. They call the police and as they are showing the police the body, they hear talking which turns out to be a cell phone, upon opening the second tilt-skillet they find the President's Chief of Staff, also dead.

As we follow along the story, we learn more about Ollie and her relationship with Gav is explored and the reality of weather they are going to be able to have a relationship or not, or are they only going to be good friends because of their respective jobs. Also, the tension between Ollie and the first-family's personal chef, Virgil that started in the last book when a new first-family was installed in the White House, continues. Even so far that Virgil leaks information to a newspaper that puts Ollie and Peter's lives in danger!

So many things occur in this book, and this series, we learn about the workings of the White House and the Secret Service, I am sure not the true workings, but so many things that are wonderfully written and explained, like the changing pins that each Secret Service Agent wears on his lapel, that can be changed each day, or if on Presidential detail as often as each hour, to keep outsiders out, even comes into play in this story.

I love the story. I love Ollie and Gav. originally, in the first book Ollie was dating a Secret Service Agent, Tom, but he just could not understand or back her knack for being in the wrong place at the wrong time and her ability to figure out what was going on long before the secret service or other police agencies did. I could never understand why Tom was so put off by this, or why he couldn't understand her, but I am glad that she was introduced to Special Agent in Charge Leonard Gavin, or Gav as she comes to call him. He is able to understand her, and to even appreciate her abilities, so much so that he teaches her and encourages her, which I find attractive.

I am looking so forward to more books in this series and to the relationship with Gavin. I love the series. Another awesome author. I actually have two books in another series by this author in my to-read pile.

Cheryl Turoczy hart says

As always, I enjoy this series of books. The characters are becoming so familiar and the anecdotes about their lives make them believable and real. The recipes at the end of each book are interesting and fun.

Lollylets go says

It was a fun read. I liked Ollie being forced to work with Peter Sargent-- the fussbudget! And yes, Gav is growing on me... ;]

Jane says

Where I got the book: freebie at networking event.

This is the first book I've read of Julie Hyzy's White House Chef series, so once again I began in the middle of a series with no knowledge of any of the characters. This wasn't a problem, though, except as stated a bit later.

White House head chef Olivia Paras and a co-worker make a grisly discovery in a restaurant kitchen, and once again (for, like all mystery series heroines, she has a knack for getting involved where she shouldn't), Ollie is in trouble. Add into the mix an unexpected task, unpleasantness and rivalry among co-workers, and a couple of fragile relationships (ex- and current), bake for 277 pages in the high heat of the Presidential residence, and the result is a crisp, enjoyable mystery read.

The book started out pacy, slowed down a little bit in the middle, but then kept up the action pretty well right to the end. Hyzy is not one of those writers who strains credulity by piling up increasingly impossible situations, and she keeps all the action within plausible bounds, so there was less life-and-death drama than I am accustomed to as a regular reader of historicals. I learned quite a few things about White House protocols, which was pretty interesting, although I'm distressed to think that relationships between staff members could possibly be quite as conflict-ridden as Ollie's are. She may die of work-related stress before one of the bad guys gets her.

As I found when I read *Grace Interrupted*, I had a bit of trouble getting to know Ollie. This, as with *Grace*, could simply be because the first books of the series are more loaded with character development, leaving room for more action in the others.

Also, I wish I'd seen more food in the novel. After all, Ollie's a top chef. At least I'd have liked to have glimpsed one truly spectacular dish. There are a handful of intriguing pastry-related recipes at the end of the novel, though.

Final verdict is that I'd wholeheartedly recommend this series to mystery fans. Hyzy's a good writer, and delivers her story with clarity and directness.

Glen U says

#5 in Hyzy's White House Chef series, "Affairs of Steak" is a non partisan cozy mystery that is well written, well paced and very enjoyable for the mystery aficionado. Perhaps not a too credible look at the White House kitchen (after all, who would keep a chef that keeps finding dead bodies in the White House), Hyzy gives us a mystery in a unique and interesting setting. Perhaps more than in her previous four books, the author continues a romantic element that I thought detracted from her storytelling. Still a very credible mystery and I look forward to the next episode in the series. A good read.

Jonathan says

Overall an enjoyable read. I'm excited to see what happens next with Gav and Ollie and I loved Sergeant in this one, let's hope he stays that way. The setting was good, there were some tasty recipes in the back, too. However, I didn't think this book built suspense like the other books, and I didn't feel the mystery was the best I've read. There were next to no clues, in my opinion, leading me to believe that the person behind all of the murders was really behind all of the murders. Overall, however, a good book.

Linda says

Love this series! This one was interesting with Ollie teaming up with her usual adversary Peter Sargent. The mystery kept me guessing and as always there was an exciting finish.

Joni says

I like Chef Olivia Paras, 'star' of the White House Chef series by Julie Hyzy. Would like to think we would be friends. Her inquisitiveness, pluckiness, and penchant for being in the 'wrong place at the wrong time' is something with which I can relate...not to the extreme that Olivia takes it, but...

Ollie, as she is called by her colleagues and friends, must once again deal with Peter Sargeant, Sensitivity Director for the White House, but this time they have been placed one-on-one in a situation. The White House Usher, Paul, is no longer serving the President and his replacement Doug does not know that Ollie and Peter tolerate each other at best. When the duo happen upon a double murder they are thrown together in ways they never expected.

The usual characters are present and accounted for in AFFAIRS OF STEAK. Ollie, and the reader, learn a little more about each character in each volume and this time it is Peter Sargeant. The prickly director has secrets in his past that come to haunt him. As if double murders were not enough, Ollie also continues to deal with Virgil, the First Lady's chef. Pompous and out for himself and NOT what Ollie needs...

Looking forward to the next entry in the series. AFFAIRS OF STEAK was very well-done!
