



# Holiday Grind

*Cleo Coyle*

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## **Holiday Grind** Cleo Coyle

When Village Blend manager Clare Cosi finds a red-suited body in the snow, she adds solving Santa's slaying to her coffeehouse menu, only to discover the jolly old soul had a list that he was checking twice-and the folks on it were not very nice.

## **Holiday Grind Details**

Date : Published November 2nd 2010 by Berkley (first published November 3rd 2009)

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Author : Cleo Coyle

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## From Reader Review Holiday Grind for online ebook

### Rachel says

This was an engaging, fun mystery. I liked the main character, coffeehouse manager Clare Cosi. The mystery itself kept my interest, too. Clare's friend who dresses as Santa and collects money for charity gets murdered, and the police think it's just a mugging. Even Clare's NYPD detective boyfriend thinks so. But Clare is sure there's more going on, and of course she uncovers the truth after many mishaps and missteps.

While I did enjoy this mystery while reading it, it faded from my consciousness awfully quickly. Two days later, and I'm struggling to recall character names and plot details. Like a foamy latte that I barely remember an hour later, it was frothy and tasty while it lasted, but not ultimately a favorite. Still, fun while it lasted!

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### Marion says

I wanted to read this whole series but stopped after the second book. So jumping ahead to this holiday book was nice to catch up with the characters. Thankfully, the sex scenes and language were toned down which is why I don't want to read the entire series anymore, but it was still a bit racier than my comfort level.

In this book, I like how Cleo Coyle keeps pulling back layers of the characters who all seem so real. It's a classic mystery with some red herrings that had me guessing until the end whodunit. Of course, her coffee and food descriptions with recipes in the back make these fun reads too.

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### Nancy says

I have read all of the Coffee House Mysteries to date and this one let me down a bit. Once the story got going it was good, but the slow beginning and the jumpy feel lacked that initial spark for me.

When traveling Santa Alfred Glockner fails to show at the Village Blend for Clare Cosi's fa-la-la-la latte holiday party, Clare takes it upon herself to go out in the freezing snow to find him. Unfortunately, she finds him dead in a nearby alley from what appears to be a random mugging. A couple of things just do not add up and once again, Clare sets out to do her Nancy Drew thing.

As the story falls into place, it is not just Santa that has a couple of secrets this holiday season and with the help of Madam, who just happens to know the right people, plus Clare's usual cast of characters - not to mention a new vigilante cop - the story slowly unfolds until you hit the end and think "that was it, this long meandering book and boom it's over".

As I said, it was not my favorite of the series, the beginning did not seem as well laid out as the previous books and the writing was a bit roundabout. Parts were thrown in, Mike's ex-wife, that were not necessary. There did not seem to be as much humor as the other books - so over all I would say that this is only "so-so" as compared to her previous offerings.

Do not be misled by the page count in this book. It says 384 pages but in truth the story itself is only 279

pages. The remaining 105 pages are recipes, tips and information concerning holiday gift giving organizations. Not that that is wrong, it just misleads the reader when you know the story is ending, but there is quite a bit of pages to go.

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### **Danielle Gonzalez says**

I enjoyed this holiday mystery with Clare Cozy. One of her favorite customers is a travelling Santa and has filled Clare with holiday spirit. Inspired by his festive nature, Clare decides to have a taste session to unveil a season of fa-la-la-lattes for the Village Blend. When he is late to the shop, she finds him down the street in an alley, shot dead. She is introduced to two new detectives who think his murder was a common thief. However, Clare with her investigative prowess, finds clues to make her believe there is more to Santa's death than a common robbery. I found with this story that I am starting to like Clare's ex-husband, Matt, much more than I used to. I like that they can have such a nice relationship as ex-spouses. He is much more endearing in this book than in others. I also love the pairing of Clare and Detective Mike Quinn. He respects Clare's investigative skills and encourages her rather than asking her to stand down. I love all of the characters in this series, and really liked this story. This one has additional recipes at the end, and I can't wait to try the one for chocolate covered cherries. Yum!

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### **Mary Ann says**

This is a coffee house mystery. When Claire goes out to find out what happened to Alfie, a friend who works as a traveling Santa, she finds him dead, but when she goes to see what he was doing, she is knocked off her feet and unconscious. When she comes to she meets the homicide detective and she immediately doesn't like him. She calls on her paramour, Mike Quinn, and her ex-husband to help her find out who really murdered Santa.

I listened to the audio of this book. While the story was good, I was not happy with the narrator. There were too many times where she dropped her voice and we had to turn up the sound and then would suddenly get too loud and we were dropping it back down. This happened throughout the whole story and made the story not as interesting. At times we just let it play without adjusting and missed whole segments. There were also many times where my husband and I agreed that we were glad that the kids were home while we listened to the story. He even commented that Bill Engvall was correct in his assessment of bodice rippers.

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### **Annie (Under the Covers Book Blog) says**

HOLIDAY GRIND is the perfect concoction for those cozy mystery lovers you like a little bit of action but also want something to get you into that holiday mood. As you may know, I'm a huge sucker for holiday themed novels and when I learned that Cleo Coyle had not one, but two in this series, I got really excited.

This book is book eight in the Coffeehouse Mystery series. Although it's a book that is well into the series, you can definitely read these as standalone since each new book features a different crime. In this particular

book, Clare Cosi is expecting a traveling Santa to arrive at her coffeehouse to bring some Christmas cheer to her employees and loyal customers but when he doesn't show she grows concerned. She goes out to find him and discovers him dead in an alley. That's when the investigating occurs and in this one, Clare gets herself into a few messes that I found hilarious.

I freaking love Clare. She's a good mix of curious without being dumb about it. I can understand her drive, especially with this one since the victim is a good friend of hers. If you're a Romance addict like me, then you'll be happy to note there are some good scenes with Clare's hot boyfriend, Mike Quinn and her ex-husband, Matt. Man, let me tell you, I love these guys. Mike is a little more quiet, a little more serious while Matt is more of your typical ladies' man. I love both and am extremely jealous that Clare has both men in her life in some capacity. In Romance, you'll never see an ex so frequently in a series except when they appear as the villain so I LOVED that we get to explore this dynamic in this series. If you can't tell already, I'm hooked and I'm looking forward to reading more from Cleo Coyle.

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### **Roy says**

The definition of a 3 star book.

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### **Caitlyn says**

Just truly awful. Just a terrible story full of poorly fleshed-out characters doing inexplicable things weirdly. I fucking love hating these books.

There are full quotes worth criticizing, but I've just started including them in my updates because they are too juicy to save for the end. Instead I just wanna point out my rising tide of insight as I went through this particular novel: similar to reading the third book in this series, I suddenly noticed things I'd been finding unpleasant for hundreds of pages.

(view spoiler)

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## **Amy says**

The more I think about it, the more I realize how much this book annoyed me. I completely don't buy that the NYPD would allow a civilian to "consult" on high profile murder cases, so I'm not really on board from the beginning. I hated how Clare is casually sexually harassed throughout the book, and it's usually for laughs. And there was waaay too much plot and not enough description for my tastes. By the end, I felt like I needed a flow chart or something to keep track of all the plot threads, characters, and suspects. I guess it came together at the end...? but then I felt like certain plot threads (Mike's trouble with his ex-wife, for example) were complete unnecessary and wasted my time. The author could have cut out all the unnecessary plot stuff and thrown in some sparkly description, instead - details that would help the readers fall into the story, rather than feel like they're racing from one event to the next. Oh, and finally - I find it ridiculous that every one of these novels (I've read three, but I'm assuming they all end in this fashion) ends with Clare catching the killer before the professionals.

I'm definitely over this series, and if I want something Christmas-y to read next year, I'll go with something like Jean Shepherd's A Christmas Story

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## **Toni (T.C.) LoTempio says**

What can I say that i haven't said already about this series. another great one! There's always a twist at the end, and the characters are so finely drawn you think they're sitting right next to you. Love, love, love!

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## **Morgan says**

Not finishing this because I read the series out of order and skimmed to the ending. Predictable most of the time.

So, here's what bothers me.

If we're supposed to have an empowering female detective in this day and age, why is she being sexually harassed in every freaking book? It's fine describing her looks, so readers can visualize what the character looks like. However, are most male NY police officers a leery twat? I know every cop is different based on their personalities, but you would think that many would have enough common sense to understand putting their jobs at risk voicing their sexual desires towards people in the holding cell or interrogation room. (view spoiler)

To the next point: When it comes to the actual female police detectives, Soles and Bass, they are pretty flirty as well. I don't know if I'm coming off as a prude, but if real police officers are supposed to be serious while having some dry humor, then that disturbs me a little. We know Matt is hot, but you would think any straight female or gay male cop wouldn't act like a scatterbrain moron around smexy suspects or witnesses. The only time I would think that any smart cop would fall short on is not suspecting an old lady of doing anything.

Last point: Being an amateur detective. Understanding this is a cozy mystery (although it gets a little cynical and morbid at times), I don't care about the coffee/recipe facts. In fact, the author does alright imbedding her java jive with the mysteries. However, when it comes to Clare sleuthing, either she is reluctant on doing it or

just bulldozes into it. Many times, she isn't right about the murderer or the motive. I don't expect her to know everything, but there are moments she is completely way off the radar. The only thing I find hilarious is that she knows how to weasel her way past the suspect's comfort zone and gain new leads from there. Every time the unknown assailant tries to kill her, she comes back like a nasty yeast infection. Criminals beware!

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\*Reviewed by Ann

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### **Mainon says**

I needed a tasty little morsel to get me out of work mode and into the holiday spirit, and this cozy mystery certainly fit the bill. Coffee lovers will get plenty out of the delicious- sounding drink descriptions (and the litany of recipes in the back of the book), and mystery lovers will have fun figuring out whodunnit. Fair warning, there's a bit of steamy (steamed milk?) romance and suggestive language, though I wouldn't call it graphic.

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### **Paige says**

Another great book from this wonderful series. It is Christmas time in NYC and at the Village blend nothing still and quiet. When a sidewalk Santa is shot Clare jumps into motion. With each addition to the series the reader gets to know and love all the characters more and more. And also with each book Clare gets more and more into crime solving. A nice Christmas read.

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### **Daryl Gerber says**

Really enjoyed this read. The coffeehouse isn't the main focus. The story about a homeless Santa is and it's compelling

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