



Devil's Food Cake Murder

Joanne Fluke

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The USA Today Bestseller Guaranteed to Satisfy Your Sweet Tooth!

Hannah Swensen has to admit life is pretty sweet. Things are going well in the romance department and her bakery's delectable confections are selling as fast as she can bake them. Even her good friend Claire is head over heels with her new husband, Reverend Bob Knudson. If only they could find time to take their honeymoon!

When Bob's childhood friend, Matthew Walters, comes to town, it seems like divine intervention. Matthew, like Bob, is a Lutheran minister with a stubborn sweet tooth. Since he's on sabbatical, Matthew is happy to fill in for Bob while he and Claire take that long-awaited honeymoon. It sounds like the perfect plan--until Hannah finds Matthew face-down in a plate full of Devil's Food Cake, a single bullet in his head. It will take some sleuthing to sift out the killer, but Hannah is sure of one thing: even the most half-baked murder plot can be oh so deadly. . .

Features over Ten Cookie and Dessert Recipes from The Cookie Jar, Including Red Devil's Food Cake and Carrot Oatmeal Muffins!

"Fans will be eagerly awaiting the next installment." --*Booklist*

"Joanne Fluke is the doyenne of deadly desserts with her deliciously popular Hannah Swensen series." --*Publishers Weekly*

Devil's Food Cake Murder Details

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Author : Joanne Fluke

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From Reader Review Devil's Food Cake Murder for online ebook

Marian says

Devil's Food Cake Murder has a twisty sort of murder. Just when you think you've guessed the twist, it zigs where you thought you thought it would zag.

But really, at this point I'm reading to find out what's going on with the usual cast of characters. As we inch closer to resolving the whole Norman/Mike/Hannah triangle, something else is thrown in the mix.

Norman's odd behavior at the end of the last book is explained, as is his habit of running off and lying to Hannah about his "dental emergencies." I can't say I saw that twist coming, but it's really cruel to have that as the cliffhanger. Next book now please!

Also: While Mike is still doing stupid things (he's dating Bev, too and doesn't say a single word about it to Hannah for the entire book) he isn't as obnoxious this go round. Maybe I just had enough Moishe to distract me or the fact that Hannah is finally realizing that Mike will never be the right choice for her.

Now, if only Doctor Bev would get herself knocked off...

James says

I am just over half way through the Hannah Swensen cozy mystery series with #14, Devil's Food Cake Murder, written in 2011 by Joanne Fluke. When I flipped through the Acknowledgments section in the paperback, it noted that Hannah was voted as the most liked non-detective crime solver that year... how interesting! I love the series and think she's quite fun, but each book seems to get a little lighter on plot and heavier on recipes. I preferred the balance in the earlier novels, yet they are still always a great read... even if I'm now down to about an hour to push through them despite being over 300 pages. When I flip 10 pages to skip the recipe, it breezes by quickly.

In this caper, Hannah finds the dead body of Reverend Bob's temporary sit-in while he's on his honeymoon with Claire. Hannah's mom is watching Claire's fashion shop all the while trying not to insult the customers when they pick the wrong outfits for their body type. But the biggest change in this Lake Eden puzzle is Hannah's dating life. She's waffled between Mike and Norman for 13 books, beginning to see them both wane at her indecision and start seeing other people... well, now there's a massive decision that will change the events in future books. In one way, I'm glad, as she was stringing them on for far too long. I agree with taking time to play the field, and maybe it's only been 2 to 3 years in story time, but it feels like a decade!

As for the mystery, nothing extraordinary, and it didn't really involve many characters we've met before except one adorable octogenarian, so it was not my favorite. I still enjoyed all the side interactions in the town, the developing relationships between Hannah and her family, and the set-up for the next book in terms of Hannah's love life. I'm sticking with it, but I hope there's more mystery coming soon! 3.5 stars...

Merand says

Oh the injustice of it all! This is probably one of the best Hannah Swensen mysteries in a while. The story was good, I hadn't fingered the murderer right away, and of the twenty recipes included, I've just got to make fifteen of them! If that isn't high praise, I don't know what is. But, and I won't give anything away, the frustrating love triangle that makes me think I won't bother reading anymore of these mysteries came to quite a dramatic head and the story ends with a cliffhanger! Seeing as this book just came out last week, I'm probably several months away from seeing any resolutions. I guess I'll console myself with some tasty treats like Mocha Trifle or Pear Crunch Pie or Raspberry Vinegar Cookies or Chocolate Euphoria Cookie Bars! I may even have to buy this book since it will cost me a fortune to copy all those recipes anyway!

Tamara says

As a rule, I enjoy these books. I visit each new installment in the series with the same inexplicable fascination of a family spending a few days in Disney World: glad to be there; taking in the faux scenery; but ever-so-glad to return home to more comfortable shores, devoid of excess. The "bad guy" always gets caught. The setting is familiar and cozy (albeit snowy and cold). And aside from drinking far, *far*, too much coffee, the characters are quirky, fun, and fairly predictable. Plus, every time I read one of the Hannah Swensen books, I'm reminded strongly of eighth grade and reading Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder secretly with a flashlight under the covers (like I did with *The Notebook*) - maybe because they're all basically the same.

With all of that in mind, however, I found this book a little less palatable than the rest of them, mostly because there was one thing I deemed an unforgivable transgression on the part of the author. And it wasn't the stilted, unnatural dialogue that borders on the sickeningly cheerful. It wasn't the fact that watching *Bambi* is deemed a "rite of passage" for a six-year-old (I had two reactions to this: one, "**WTF?** If it's that sad it makes the girls cry for days, *don't watch it*, rite of passage or not!"; and two, "Well, *I've* never seen it, and I turned out *fine*"). Or the overkill of the details (because, in some cases, that's cool, like in *The Scarlet Letter*). Or the predictability of the ending. Or the writing which, at best, can be described as mediocre. Or the gag-inducing descriptions of Mike's kisses (yes, I said that). It wasn't even the horrific descriptions of some of the recipes (Chocolate Euphoria Cookie Bars, for example, are "*six-layer cookie bars with chocolate cookie crumbs on the bottom, semi-sweet chocolate chips next, miniature marshmallows on top of that, white chocolate chips sprinkled on the marshmallows, chocolate cereal layered on top with some milk chocolate chips over everything*" - and a dentist eats them with fervour!). Or the excessive use of hyperbolic language, making everything "devastating" or "horribly wrong." Or the self-righteous attitudes of every. Single. Character. Or even Hannah's incessant and unnecessary correction of grammar (yes, I said *that*, too).

No. I overlooked all of that and managed to find the storyline more than vaguely interesting. What I found unforgivable, especially in an author like Fluke who researches her books impeccably, down to the cut on a diamond described on page eleven or so and unmentioned since, was this passage:

"...I think it's a slam dunk."

"Slam dunk?" Hannah repeated. "Don't tell me you're watching basketball on television!"

"It's true. I am. It's all Bev's doing. She likes to watch the Minnesota Wild on my big screen. She says it's the patriotic thing to do when you make your home in Minnesota."

The **Minnesota Wild**, Ms. Fluke, are a *hockey* team. A professional, NHL hockey team. Not basketball. That's the Minnesota Timberwolves. You're telling me no one in the editor's office noticed this?

Andrea Angelyna says

If you don't mind poor story construction, faceless characters, dialogue-driven children's book plot, complete lack of imagination, random injections of pro-gun propaganda (wtf Joanne? No really, wtf?), references to Christianity every third or fourth sentence, and a mysteriously octogenarian-sounding 30 year old female protagonist who sounds like every crappy romance novel heroine I've ever read about (her hair! tis unruly! her figure! tis not a size 3!)... then maybe, just maybe, this book won't piss you off.

I can't even properly express my disgust. Thankfully, I consumed most of it during a six-hour car ride, during which I really couldn't have been doing anything better with my life. All I wanted was a quick cozy mystery to take the edge off in between bigger books, but man... I can't even see the 8-year-old version of myself thinking this was anything worth finishing. I implore you, don't give this chick your money. Don't even check it out of your library and give her money by proxy. If you're that hard up for unoriginal recipes, try Taste of Home magazine or a Google search. Uck.

Karen B. says

I was writing this review and then it disappeared. I wish I knew which key I hit that made that happen and could undo it.

Well I as I was saying ... This book was rather disappointing to me. First about the plot. I figured out the "who dunit" as soon as the murderer was introduced.

It just seemed to take Hannah a while to find it. I'm not surprised because she probably was too busy writing out all those recipes. For the first time I found that there were too many recipes here! I am a dessert junkie so when I get tired of reading dessert recipes it's bad. As a dessert junkie, I like things super sweet and normally am someone who would like to add chocolate chips to almost any dessert but these recipes were all way too rich and instead of making me hungry they made me feel overwhelmed. That never happens with me and dessert recipes. But the main problem with the recipes is that the author included just too many of them. It interfered with the flow of the story. (By the way, does everyone understand the beating an egg in a glass?) I am assuming this is an expression used in Hannah's area because I keep picturing drinking glasses. About 3/4 of the way through the book I got to skipping the recipes.

As I said I found the plot rather unbelievable. I'll leave it there so as not to giveaway any spoilers.

I am getting tired of Joanne's characters not changing. Hannah is always either writing down recipes or baking cookies at home or the shop and delivering cookies to everyone she visits. (It's a wonder to me that her shop makes a profit with all that she gives away.) Lisa telling the stories of Hannah's crime solving is getting a little stale to me.

Maybe the character of "lenny" was supposed to be a red herring but to me it was useless information.

Hannah's romantic woes are becoming tedious as well. I like the way Norman treats her but his attention and care to not match his actions at the very end of the story. He's usually a pretty strong character and in this book I thought his feelings for Hannah were even more intense than previous ones. Mike on the other hand, seems to appear attractive, but that's it. I don't see him enjoying Hannah's company.

It was good to have Michelle back. I like when the three sisters work together with their mother.

Maybe it's time for the author to think of a new series.

Is it just me, or do most of the stories take place in the winter? This book describes how beautiful it can be in the summer, but I don't think I've read one that takes place in the summer. That must mean that Hannah is getting pretty old!

Luckily the book I started this evening is not a cozy, not even fiction.

Darcy says

I am getting a little tired of these books. I find it hard to believe that every where Hannah goes in the town people feed her and give her recipes handy for her. I also find it hard to believe that everywhere she goes she brings cookies with her and the amount of people that come in her back door and eat cookies for free. This is her livelihood.

I also am getting tired of the love triangle. I like that she realizes that Mike isn't for her, but find it weird that she still keeps going out with him and seems to lose her mind when he kisses her. Norman was weird in this book, so very unNorman like. We do find out why, but that reason makes me think less of him. He has paths that he can choose that would allow him to do what he wants in both ways. I did like that he was honest with her in one regard, something that Mike never has been.

One other aspect that I found odd was that all of Hannah's family surrounded her right away to help her figure out the murder. In the past she had to drag them into things, now it seems like they are waiting for Hannah to find the next body.

I will keep reading these books (I love the recipes!), but sure won't run right out for the book.

Zom says

This book may be one of the worst I've ever read. Here are some general problems I had with it:

1. The fact that I was able to figure out the ending, several pages in. It was so completely obvious, that it just made the annoyingly folksy characters seem especially moronic for not cluing in faster.
2. The fact that 60% of the non-recipe text, still consists of people a) eating food that the narration simply MUST describe because OF COURSE we need to know the details of practically every single meal these

characters eat b) discussing food they are about to eat, or just ate c) talking about recipes and who gave them to our ridiculously bland heroine Hannah Swensen d) making cookies, discussing cookies, naming off cookies, praising cookies, planning cookies, ad nauseam. Seriously, the fact that more text was devoted to food, and in particular cookies, rather than the mystery is ridiculous. I suppose I should have expected that though, when I picked up a book with the title "Devi's Food Cake Murder".

3. The fact that even when IMPORTANT PLOT TWISTS (and I use the term "plot twist" loosely, because Stevie Wonder could have seen these coming a mile away) occur, the characters STILL don't stop talking about cookies or recipes. No, the "earth shattering" news get a throwaway sentence or two, because we must have the characters talking about what's REALLY important, aka the cookies or chocolate.

4. The ridiculous cast of folksy characters. Hannah, the 30 year old who has two men in love with her despite being completely bland and who goes on chaste dates that include dinner, a one kiss maximum and baking bread. The evil slut, Doctor Bev, who is SKINNY! and has a NICE HAIRCUT! how dare the harlot! The ridiculous mother, who thinks A BAR, the horror!, is too dangerous for her daughters to go to together, even though said daughters are in their 20s and 30s. Grandma Knudson, enough said.

5. The stilted, unnatural dialogue.

6. The unnecessary trick of having one character say a moderately "uncommon" word or phrase, to be followed by another character explaining what that means to the audience. Is the intended audience of these books grade school children, who need to learn their vocabulary for the spelling bee? Seriously, adults do not need to be pandered to like that, they can pick up a dictionary if they really need it that bad.

7. The somewhat related to no. 6, trick of having one character say something, and have a second character spell out exactly what that meant, even though the readers have to be practically brain dead not to understand. For example when talking about a dress that a woman (Bonnie) wanted to buy, but that would be unflattering to her figure:

"For one thing, it has a darling draped look over the hips" Andrea told her. "And Bonnie has her own draped look over her hips."

Hannah began to smile "I get it. The little black dress would have accentuated one of Bonnie's figure flaws"

Do you get it Hannah?? DO YOU?? Was it really, that difficult to understand what Andrea was saying? Did you really need to spell it out for the audience?? I'm pretty sure everyone "GOT IT" the first time around.

Really, there is not a single redeeming thing about this book. And it is a New York Times bestseller (the reason I picked it up in the first place, since that must mean it's good, right??)? JESUS TAKE THE WHEEL.

Clare says

I can't quit you, Hannah Swenson, even when you drive me crazy.

In this latest installment, Hannah and 92 year old Grandma Knudson are solving the mystery of the replacement Reverend in Lake Eden. And the only thing wrong in Hannah's love life is that Norman seems to be very involved with his new dentistry partner Dr. Bev, a woman Hannah describes as 1/3 her dress size. This one was on the goofy side, with Dolores going undercover (again) at the Eagle Bar. Moishe's up to his old tricks again too.

The editing in this one was a little sloppy since instead of identifying Minnesota's basketball team as the Timberwolves, she calls the basketball team the Minnesota Wild, which is instead the hockey team.

And Hannah is now providing recipes for cat food. Gack! The Butterscotch Bonanza Bars were a major disaster, but the Nutmeg snaps were a hit.

Emily P - I'm willing to give up on most series if they're not working for me but I have to find out what happens next.

Linda Hart says

Poor grammar. Boringly predictable plot. Unbelievable and annoying characters. Tedious detail with no imagination. Unnatural, repetitive dialogue. An unfinished ending in order to get you to read the next book in the series, which I will never do. Poor writing and story construction. Since this is on NY Times Bestseller list I'm really concerned about my fellow American readers. The book is a bust, but there are some good recipes.

Nicole says

Sometimes I wonder why I like these so much. I don't make the recipes (which are increasing in number with every book, it seems, taking up a lot of space). I get annoyed by Hannah, who is 30 but acts kind of like a grandma (she doesn't know how to use email and cell phones and is shocked at any implication of sex?) and I frequently feel like the author has not been back to Minnesota in a while (referring to MN's basketball team as the "Minnesota Wild" is unforgivable). The mysteries aren't even the focus of the book anymore, it's more about revealing recipes and character development.

But they are a fun, fast read, and I do like the characters. Will she ever choose between Mike and Norman? What will Moishe get into next? Who is Delores flirting with now? Will anyone ever mention that serving only cookies at a catered function is ridiculous?

I loved the cliffhanger ending. After so many books where Hannah's love affairs were left right where they started, this was refreshing and I'm looking forward to the next installment (when I will not make the recipes and will chafe at Hannah's elderly behavior). Hopefully Hannah's new nemesis will be the next one to turn up baked in a pie or something.

Diane says

Based on other reviews, I have to assume I'm not the demographic that these books are aimed at. I picked this one up as filler and since I like cozy mysteries, especially ones involving food, I thought it'd be interesting to compare it to other books in the same genre. Personally, I was not impressed. The writing is at a young adult level, the characters a bit too folksy for my taste and not a lot happens except for baking cookies (using friends/relatives recipes), delivering cookies to others and going on G-rated dates. Who really

goes out to dinner and then follows that up by baking bread (and no that's not a euphemism). If I hadn't been told Hannah was in her 30's, I would easily have thought she was in her 70's.

There also seemed to be very similar characteristics between Hannah and Goldy (of the Diane Mott Davidson series) - baker/cook, check; drinks copious amounts of coffee, check; dates/married to a cop, check; eats tons of chocolate, check; unruly curly hair, check; member of Lutheran church, check. The main difference between Hannah and Goldy is that Hannah at least seems like a rational, friendly person.

I think I'll stick to Kerry Greenwood's series. Those books are well written, intelligent and a bit edgy, if not a bit nutty.

Brandy says

Ugh! Why do I continue to read these?! There's no action, barely enough suspense to even be considered a mystery! The characters are all so proper, they sound like they should be in one of Delores' regency romance novels instead. And I find it hard to believe so many people eat cookies for breakfast, lunch and dinner! If these people are eating all those desserts and drinking all that coffee, the whole town would be obese and completely wired! And chocolate does not cure all cases of stress! I wish that part were true, but the whole book is just ridiculous! Even the recipes are starting to get formulaic! And if Hannah can't figure out her man situation yet, she's not as smart as she thinks she is!!

Jodie Hill says

I've read all the Hannah Swensen books, and I think this one was probably the weakest. Figured out the "who done it" pretty early on, and got bored with the details of Hannah making cookies at the shop and at home. The recipes were too many, and the directions for the ones I did skim were bordering on "baking for dummies" level. If I hadn't been reading this on my kindle, I would have skipped the recipes entirely and probably hopped to the end to see what the cliffhanger was this time. Both of her love interests were out of character, and her emotional angst over what Norman was doing with Doctor Bev got old quickly. Cheap shot ending with the cliffhanger - Norman is doing what we would expect him to do given the information revealed at the end, but it's an antiquated response and not the only solution to the situation. Sorry, his fiancée left him and didn't tell him something that important and NOW is trying to mess with his life? I also find after 14 books, Hannah's indecision on who she should end up with annoying. Pick one and stop stringing these guys along already!! I'd like to find out more about what's going on with Delores and Doc Knight.

Kasia says

I read these in order so yes, I have read the previous books and this was as delicious as expected, maybe a little predictable because after all these years I do get conditioned to the formula used but never the less, when I'm in the mood for a Fluke, nothing else will do! Best part was the ending of course, It actually made me speak out loud, shouting something like "no way!" which only made waiting to read the next book harder, perhaps that's why I didn't...

We get the usual baking, sleuthing, Moishe troubles set in a cozy setting, but the most important and juiciest part was Hannah and Norman and the third wheel. I know she will probably never settle down (cant force yourself to be attracted to Norman) but reading about it is sure fun, besides the woman is in her twenties (although she sounds more mature) and who says she needs to settle down like an ancient piece of furniture, bogus hogwash... anyways, there were a few parts that annoyed me (Hannah suggesting that certain someone marries someone else because of a certain thing) which brought the book back to 10000 BC to me.. Other than that I loved it, the mystery was a little cleverer this time but I was still able to nudge most of the truth myself and the food, yummm.... I like how she includes savory and sweet things, I have tried a few over the years and they were very tasty, cozy home style things...

- Kasia S.
