



Guidebook to Murder

Lynn Cahoon

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In the gentle coastal town of South Cove, California, all Jill Gardner wants is to keep her store--Coffee, Books, and More--open and running. So why is she caught up in the business of murder?

When Jill's elderly friend, Miss Emily, calls in a fit of pique, she already knows the city council is trying to force Emily to sell her dilapidated old house. But Emily's gumption goes for naught when she dies unexpectedly and leaves the house to Jill--along with all of her problems. . .and her enemies. Convinced her friend was murdered, Jill is finding the list of suspects longer than the list of repairs needed on the house. But Jill is determined to uncover the culprit--especially if it gets her closer to South Cove's finest, Detective Greg King. Problem is, the killer knows she's on the case--and is determined to close the book on Jill permanently.

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Guidebook to Murder Details

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From Reader Review Guidebook to Murder for online ebook

Linda says

Jill Gardner owns Coffee, Books, and More in the city of South Cove, CA. When Jill moves to the California coast, she meets and becomes close friends with a sweet, elderly lady, Miss Emily. Miss Emily has no one to look out for her, and she becomes like a mother to Jill as their friendship flourishes. When Jill finds Miss Emily dead in her bed, grief hits her hard. Did Miss Emily simply die of old age, or did something sinister happen to her?

Jill's friend, Amy, works for Mayor Baylor, who's a mean spirited man, threatening to condemn Miss Emily's unkempt property to try and force her to sell to a developer who wants to build apartments on her land. When Jill inherits Miss Emily's property and assets, it starts a chain of events that lead to a killer who will stop at nothing to get what they want! Jill unveils Miss Emily's hidden talent! Amy suddenly goes missing!!

This satisfying cozy mystery is rich in humor, compassion, and friendship. The characters are enjoyable, and there is a hint of romance between Jill and Detective Greg King. Everything centers around the murder mystery, and Jill's combination bookstore and coffee shop.

I received a complimentary copy of this book from NetGalley and Kensington in exchange for an honest review.

Karen B. says

This was a fun, light read and a typical cozy. If you don't like cozies you won't like this. Jill has fallen in love with the small town after meeting Miss Emily who befriended her. A former lawyer, Jill now runs a small coffee store /bookstore. There is a death by poisoning providing the main "murder mystery". A handsome detective on the case to whom Jill finds herself attracted. Just wish the whole married or not married discussion had come up earlier in the book instead of Jill constantly struggling with the issue. There are many questions about the inheritance Jill receives, regarding family members who thought they deserved most of the pie, not just a tiny speck of a piece. In addition, there are complications with others wanting the house. There was also a surprising artist and art thievery involved. It was just a plain, fun, light cozy.

LORI CASWELL says

South Cove California is a tourist stop along the coast. Jill Gardner owns Coffee, Books, and More and she just wants to make enough to keep the business open. She is relatively new to the town. It was meeting Miss Emily one day that convinced her to move to South Cove. Miss Emily is an elderly woman who has had a bunch of businesses crop up around her home. Her house needs a lot of work but when she receives a letter telling her the town council is going to condemn her home or force her to sell to a big developer she calls Jill in a panic. Jill calms her down and tells her they will work things out. But before that can happen Miss Emily passes away very unexpectedly. She leaves her home and all its problems to Jill, but Jill thinks Miss Emily was murdered and sets out to prove it even as the killer tries to put Jill out of business permanently.

Dollycas's Thoughts

I knew I was going to love this book and I sure did. Jill Gardner is a great character. She is down to earth and her confidence while shaky at the start continues to grow throughout the story. She also likes food and she features some tasty treats in her shop. There will be even more if Aunt Jackie has her way.

Aunt Jackie is a lot like my mom was, do things now and get permission for them later. Jill asks Aunt Jackie to help her with the store as she deals with Miss Emily's house and all that entails and Jackie took "help" to a whole new level. I was laughing out loud.

I was sad that Miss Emily became the murder victim. She was quite a woman and she has a few secrets. I would have loved to spend more time with her.

South Cove is also home to Detective Greg King. A handsome guy that just keeps running into Jill. The sexual tension is thick enough to cut with a knife. It is going to be fun watching this relationship progress.

The mystery is great too, I just wish I had Jill's energy, not only does she find out what happened to Miss Emily and why, she also makes substantial repairs to Miss Emily house. Of course she has outside contractors to help but just pulling everything together while painting and decorating was miraculous and a joy to read.

There is a lot going on in this book. The pages just flew. I have been trapped by this Tourist Trap mystery and can't wait to be trapped again by Mission to Murder coming July 31, 2014.

Judy Collins says

A special thank you to Kensington Books and NetGalley for providing an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

A wonderful series to curl up with on a rainy afternoon. A light and entertaining read--Think small business, quaint town, shops, espresso, bookstore, cafe, coffee, galleries, inns, and a good cozy mystery which **GUIDEBOOK TO MURDER** offered; full of lovable (and not so likable) characters and friends in this small South Cove, CA tourist town.

Jill, a former lawyer has inherited Miss Emily's house (she befriended her years ago), and of course the city wants to tear down the house for a new condo real estate development. With other things in mind and begins her fight with small town politics and meets many obstacles, and of course Emily's family, the mayor, real estate developers, attorneys, threats, and now faced with the circumstances which surround Miss Emily's death and secrets, and then then her best friend goes missing.

As the mystery unfolds (who did it), many possible suspects and secrets to keep you turning the pages. My only input would be more background of Miss Emily and her past, as I agree with some of the other reviewers.

Loved the main character, Jill at times, however other times not, as she was back and forth as a door mat. She owns the quaint Coffee, Books and More, along the coastal Pacific, after having moved from a larger

city after her divorce, interacting with many tourists while they are in the area – life is good until she inherits the home of her old friend and Detective Greg (possible love affair)?, gets involved – mystery begins . . .

If you like cozy books, bookstores, small towns, and a light mystery, this book is for you; however, if you are a serious thriller mystery lover, it might not be your cup of tea. The front cover was a nice draw and appealing if you are a book lover. My first book by this author--definitely look forward to reading the next book , “Mission to Murder” #2 in series “A Tourist Trap Mystery.” (sneak preview at the end – with mentions of Aunt Jackie, Sadie, Greg, Craig, The Castle, a mystery writer, fortune teller, a B&B and of course a murder mystery–something to look forward to-coming summer 2014)!

<http://judithdcollins.booklikes.com/p...>

Barbara says

The setting and premise of this cozy mystery were appealing - a bookstore/coffeeshop an hour or so from San Francisco, and a heroine who has escaped hectic city life after a divorce. The premise held up - evil developers pursuing and maybe murdering locals to do their dirty deeds and make loads of money.

Many cozy heroines have love interests. But the writing of these scenes read more like parts of a bodice ripper which I found very annoying. It made the book seem as though it couldn't decide whether it was a mystery or a romance novel. Cozys invariably include potential romantic partners for the main character. My objection was to the style of these passages which disrupted the flow of the book.

I also found some of the actions of various characters infuriating. How can someone go missing for days and the police refuse to investigate? How can a character have her property vandalized and receive multiple threats before the police do anything? (view spoiler)

I might read another of these but only if I find one at the library.

Yvonne says

In the quiet coastal town of South Cove in California, Jill Sanders sets up her shop “Coffee, Books, and More”. Jill loves to read and wants nothing more than to make the shop a success. Things turn out to be not so quiet when she gets a desperate phone call from her elderly friend Miss Emily. It seems the town council is issuing her ultimatums to get her old house in shape or else. Miss Emily seeks out Jill’s assistance, but when Jill arrives, she finds her friend dead. The police are sure it was of natural causes, but Jill isn’t buying it. The autopsy supports Jill’s belief.

When Miss Emily’s will is read and Jill inherits everything, the police turn their sights on her. She has become their prime suspect, but Jill has a list of her own. The list of people who wanted Miss Emily dead is growing every minute. When Jill’s best friend, Amy, goes missing, she turns to the handsome detective on Miss Emily’s case, Greg King, for help.

Jill fears for Amy's safety. She absolutely cannot lose someone else she's close to, plus her own life hangs in the balance when threats begin coming fast and furious to her doorstep. As Jill tries to satisfy the council's demands for repairs to the house, she meets obstacle upon obstacle.

She finds herself dealing with Miss Emily's disinherited relatives, art thieves and building developers. Each one has dollar signs in their eyes and Jill wonders if one of them could also be a killer.

I love starting on the ground floor of a cozy mystery series. It's great fun to meet new characters and visit new places. This story is no exception. I thought the two main characters Jill and Greg were wonderfully portrayed. They are strong characters and the supporting cast were equally as strong.

My one problem was that there was a misunderstanding between the main characters that could have been solved on page one with a simple question. That was bothersome but didn't ruin the story for me. Jill did seem to take a few unnecessary risks, but that's the nature of a cozy mystery. The main character usually does do things that make the reader scream "NO!", but it's all part of the excitement and adventure of a mystery story.

I didn't figure out the real culprit until Jill did, so that's good. The story took a few twists and turns that I didn't see coming and that makes it even better to read. I will definitely be checking out the next one which is due out in July.

FTC Disclosure: NetGalley provided me with a copy of this book to review. This did not influence my thoughts and opinions in any way. All opinions expressed are my own.

?Susan? says

A good start to a cozy series that takes place in a cute little town where nothing ever happens outside of the normal. When Jill, a gal in her thirties, decides to run away from the big city and big career, she eventually lands in South Cove where she feels at home from the first day she arrives. Miss Emily, an older resident, befriends her and their relationship blossoms into a a very strong mother daughter type of bond.

Upon a call from Miss Emily concerning a legal matter, Jill decides to go over to her house the next day to visit and share some legal advice. Unfortunately it is a day too late, Miss Emily had passed in the night, however, she was in good health and Jill knows that there is something fishy going on. There are quite a few people who would benefit from Miss Emily's death so Jill starts an investigation of her own to the chagrin of the local police.

A murder mystery with a bit of drama and a side of unrequited romance. Jill was a believable character and the story line was good. The ending was a bit abrupt but a fun, light, Daily Deal, cozy never the less. Susan Boyce did a great job narrating and I am looking forward to getting to some of her other titles in my library.

Annie says

a most excellent 5 star read! review to come...:)

guidebook to murder: a tourist trap mystery:

I knew right away I was going to like this book. What a hoot. I don't take notes while reading, that would so wreck the book buzz I get but, upon reflecting for the book review I could not stop chuckling!

Jill Gardner, owner of Coffee, Books and More in the small town of South Cove, California is just like all the rest of us, she is plagued with self doubt, yet strong and tuff when she needs to be. She fantasizes about food constantly and really enjoys eating yet, is aware of it and of course always thinking about losing those extra 10 pounds. Of course she wants a good man yet, doesn't really want to want one. I related to and very much enjoyed this character. The confusion and sexual tension with the very handsome Detective Greg King is quite fun.

We meet Jill in her book & coffee shop one morning when she gets a phone call from her neighbor down the street, her dear friend 80 year old Miss Emily who is very upset that yet again she is being pestered by the town council to sell her beloved but very run down home so they can build an apartment complex. Jill wants to help her so she enlists her friend Amy who just happens to work for the city to look over the paperwork and maybe clear up these problems for her friend and neighbor.

The next day on her way over to Miss Emily's house to tell her what Amy found out, what Jill finds out is a dead, possibly murdered Miss Emily! Jill soon finds out Miss Emily had no family...or does she, so she left everything to her and with so much to do and sort out, she calls her aunt to come and help her out at the Book & Coffee shop. Jill and Detective King are on the case of who killed Miss Emily and what they find turns out to be a treasure trove of excitement! There are some thrilling and scary near misses when they and people they love come close to getting hurt but what they do find ultimately is an attraction for each other. I loved Aunt Jackie and I'm hoping she will be in the next book too. I Loved the storyline, characters and the humor but, most of all I liked Jill.

I got this book for a review from Net Galley

Kathi Daley says

Loved it.

Lark of The Bookwyrm's Hoard says

Review originally published at The Bookwyrm's Hoard.

Guidebook to Murder takes the well-known "unexpected inheritance" plot and gives it almost too many twists in the form of additional "treasures," a mayor and developer intent on condemning Jill's new house to put up condos, and several other possible claimants to Miss Emily's estate. Throw in an attractive but possibly married police detective, a series of threats, a sudden disappearance, and tensions around Jill's coffee shop and bookstore, and poor Jill is suddenly up to her ears in troubles.

Despite its plethora of complications, the plot works pretty well overall, and author Lynn Cahoon succeeded in pulling the wool over my eyes regarding the main villain's identity. I say "main villain," because the author doesn't make trying to pin all the nefarious deeds (of which there are a fair few) on a single person,

making the challenge of identifying the perpetrator(s) more difficult for the fictional sleuths -- and more fun for the reader!

I did think Jill's book-and-coffeeshop would feature more prominently in the mystery, and it's one of the things that drew me to the book in the first place. I'm hoping the shop will play a bigger role in the next mystery, but I understand why this book couldn't revolve around it. Jill has more than enough on her plate just dealing with her inheritance, making urgently-needed repairs to the house, and trying to find a murderer; it simply makes sense that her shop has to take a backseat for a while.

My only real peeve about the novel, other than the sheer unlikelihood of so many unexpected things occurring so close together, is that Cahoon resorts to a common and overused ploy to increase romantic tension: the long misunderstanding that could be easily cleared up with a single conversation. Frankly, that trope drives me nuts; a reasonable, rational adult would simply confront whatever issue is causing the tension and talk about it. But that's a personal preference, and since the relationship isn't the main focus of the book, I didn't find it as annoying as I would have in a romance novel. Aside from that one complaint, the budding romance is sweet and charming, with plenty of potential for future books.

Guidebook to Murder is entertaining and fun despite its minor flaws. I like Jill, her aunt Jackie, her friend Amy, and Detective Greg King, and I look forward to seeing what happens to them next. Most important, the mystery kept me guessing almost to the end, and that's not always easy to do! I'm already looking forward to the next book in the Tourist Trap series, *Mission to Murder*, due out July 31.

FTC disclosure: *I received a review copy from the publisher. All opinions are entirely my own.*

Ian says

When Jill Gardner moved to South Cove, CA she was looking for a fresh start after her divorce and a quiet life running a café / bookshop. But then one of her close friends, Miss Emily tells her the council and a developer are trying to bully her into selling out and shortly thereafter she turns up dead. Jill knows there is something hokey going on and convinces the town's detective to investigate.

Adding to her woes, Miss Emily left everything to her except the family bible which she left to her greedy relatives. Now the family are threatening to sue, council is threatening to condemn the house, someone is stealing from Miss Emily's estate and a murderer is on the loose. Throw into the mix Aztec gold and expensive art works and the scene is set for a bit of a mystery romp.

Guidebook to Murder isn't perfect. The story is quite straightforward...entertaining without ever being particularly challenging. But Jill is pretty damned awesome (what's not to love about an amateur sleuth who runs a book store?) and even if the male characters aren't all that interesting, the female characters who inhabit her world are really quite delightful and set the book just a little higher than other cozy murder mysteries.

Many thanks to Kensington and Netgalley for providing me with this ARC

Rane says

Jill Gardner has left behind the fast paced life as a lawyer and a marriage gone south to settle South Cove, California and open a book store Coffee, Books, and More. Things maybe slow at the shop but they are peaceful until, a sudden call from her dear friend, Miss Emily, things quickly go downhill. Miss Emily is receiving threats to kick her out of her home, Jill thinking to find out more about this and check on her friend find herself in devastated when she finds her friend dead. Dealing with the lost Jill has much more on her shoulders when Miss. Emily has named her, her heir, inheriting everything along with a lot of trouble. Because Jill starts receiving her own threats along with pressure from the city and an outside builder wanting the house and the confirmation that Miss.Emily was killed. Now it's a race to find the killer before Jill is next on the list.

I was quickly wrapped up in the story from page one. A owner of a bookstore, come on what's not to love? The overall trouble I had with the book was the MC Jill. She had ALOT to deal with and as a human being who has lost a dear friend it's portrayed very natural. The trouble was at times Jill showed no backbone toward certain characters when in others she would stand her ground. I wanted her to speak up and really show some gumption. I also think that was the beauty of it all was Jill was a complete human in her actions and thoughts and knew when to push and back off.

Along the ride Jill has some backup in her friend Amy and Detective Greg King aka the love interest to help her as she starts to gather clues.

The mystery was very well paced with Jill digging into Emily's past with a lot of surprises on the path with the killer being somewhat of a surprise in itself- only goes to show one don't judge a book by its cover.

A great start to a series. I'm truly looking forward to the next book in this series!

ARC courtesy of NetGalley

Jenni Schell says

This is the kind of book that I love. It had everything that I look for; a great plot, a wonderful mystery, an amazing heroin, a murder that I didn't figure out, and topped off with a hint of romance. This is a fantastic read.

* Jennifer says

First in a new series that I received via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. A very strong start and really likeable characters. A very solidly plotted mystery as well.

Full Review: <http://jenn.booklikes.com/post/814918...>

Linda says

Good first book in the series. I liked the California coast town setting and the characters were likeable too. The mystery was good and kept me guessing. The ending seemed kind of rushed and may be could have just benefited from the last scene being set up as an epilogue instead of a continuation of the last chapter.
