



An exclusive excerpt from...

Murder by Mocha

A Coffeehouse Mystery

by Cleo Coyle

Includes chocolate recipes!

“...a tasty tale of multigenerational crime and punishment lightened by the Blend’s frothy cast of lovable eccentrics.” ~ Publishers Weekly

Coffee and chocolate have long been considered aphrodisiacs. Now Clare Cosi’s Village Blend beans are being used to create a lucrative new product, Mocha Magic Coffee, laced with secret herbal ingredients that will put the "magic moments" back into your relationship.

Clare plans to test this chocolate coffee on her boyfriend, NYPD detective Mike Quinn—when he's off duty, of course. But at the product's launch party, a beautiful, young executive is murdered, and Clare is convinced someone wants control of the mocha’s secret formula—and is willing to kill to get it. Can Clare stir up some evidence against a bitter killer? Or will she be next on the hit list?

“This rich and entertaining mystery blends atmosphere, unforgettable characters, and a killer plot that will keep readers hooked until the very end...” ~ RT Book Reviews



A Note from Cleo

*Although **Murder by Mocha** is the tenth book in my amateur sleuth series, any newcomer should be able to read the book as a stand-alone experience. To my longtime readers, I thank you from the heart for your very kind support over the years. To my new readers, welcome! I hope you enjoy your first visit to Clare Cosi's Village Blend, where coffee and crime are always brewing...*



Prologue

There is a great deal of wickedness in village life. —MISS JANE MARPLE, *THE THIRTEEN PROBLEMS* BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

Five years ago . . .

F*rom head to toe, the woman wore black.* Black for mourning, *she thought.* Black for death.

All day she waited, checking her watch, preparing the props, counting down minutes till uncertain light. When the sun sank low and the sky's blues deepened, she made her way to the railroad bridge.

With a quick unzipping, she exposed the belly of the large Pullman, specially outfitted for this evening's performance. She removed the old pair of white satin pumps, set them beside the four-foot rail.

In the warm purple twilight, yellow bulbs flickered on. "Spots for my stage," she whispered. "Kliegs for this Kabuki." Far below the river flowed, dark and distant as a starless night.

A popular eatery sat on the river's bank, a scenic patch near the country club stables of Bay Creek Village. She saw those diners, young and old, raising glasses, speaking civilly, adhering to dress codes.

Look at them, pretending to be decent, loyal, kind . . . Liars! Cheaters! Monsters! Hypocrites, every one . . .

Seven years ago, her mother's trial had been passing entertainment for all of them, a morsel of scandal to be relished with appetizers, forgotten completely by the second course.

"Hey! Down there! You wanted a look at me? Look at me now!"

Fading back into the shadows, she watched the round white faces moon her way. Seconds later, a brand-new shout echoed along the water, shattering the serenity of the eight o'clock seating. Customers leaped to their feet, knocked over cocktails, stained outfits with wine.

She knew what they were seeing, as they gawked upriver—a woman plummeting off the bridge. Down the body sailed, through violet sky, wedding gown ballooning like a favorite yacht spinnaker. The figure splashed and quickly sank, as if eager to reach the underworld.

"My world now," whispered the woman in black. "Now I am Persephone, queen of shadows . . ."

With a hollow thud, her purse dropped—well beyond any pool of illumination. Inside that bag was an epic tale, scrawled in perfect longhand on neatly folded sheets. Here

were the answers to the inevitable question, “Why did she do it?” along with enough IDs to satisfy every last dull, distracted authority on Long Island.

Hurrying toward a thicket of evergreens, she found a new path. At last, her plan was under way, blossoming like Aphrodite’s red anemone beneath the dying Adonis.

Sixty yards away, every diner would tell the police they had witnessed a suicide . . .

Well, *she thought*, this is one drowned corpse who’s about to be reincarnated. And, in this new life, no one will be judging me or my mother. The turn will be mine to act as judge, jury, and executioner.

CHAPTER ONE

Once you wake up and smell the coffee, it’s hard to go back to sleep. —FRAN DRESCHER

“What’s your pleasure?” I asked, holding open the Blend’s beveled glass door.

Against the pink champagne of the dawning sky, Mike Quinn’s grim face gave up a small smile—not that anyone else could tell. Like New York’s police commissioner, whose official photo had every cop in the city calling him Popeye, Quinn’s smile was more of a wince.

“Got something hot for me, Cosi?”

“Maybe,” I said, stifling a yawn. “But you have to come in to get it . . .”

As the corner streetlight flickered off, Mike’s broad-shouldered form moved smoothly by, snagging my hand as

he went. He'd been a street officer for years before making detective, and he brought that cop authority wherever he went, a quiet, commanding coolness that attracted me from the first moment he'd set foot in my coffeehouse.

While the heavy door swung shut, Mike backed me into the shadows of my empty shop. Flattened against an exposed brick wall, I looked up at him.

"I can't pour from this position."

"You can kiss from this position."

"True," I said, then my arms curled around his neck, and I finally gave the man a proper greeting.

Such was the oh-so-sweet beginning to my morning.

It wouldn't last.

Before the day ended, I would have two dead bodies on my hands—one a likely murder, the other something else entirely. Soon after, I'd have two female NYPD detectives on my case, a half-naked fitness queen ready to kill me, and a member of my staff dizzy enough with unrequited love to commit a felony.

None of the above was on my mind at the moment, just Mike Quinn's sturdy body pressing against mine and the kind of soft morning light that gave everything the illusion of beauty.

When Mike's head finally pulled away, I noticed the gray paleness of his complexion. His jaw felt wrong, too, like sandpaper, and thin strokes of crimson slashed the whites of his midnight blues. The details of his expression implied more than physical exhaustion. He looked mentally worn down.

"So," I said, keeping my tone light, "what kept you up all night?"

Mike's jaw tightened. He glanced away.

"Okay," I said, "come on . . ." Now I was the one tugging his hand, pulling him along. At the espresso bar, I moved behind the counter, scraped my Italian-roast brown

hair into a kitchen-ready ponytail, and began turning ordinary cow juice into liquid velvet.

Mike peeled off his rumpled sport coat and took over his favorite stool. Then he trained his gaze on me so he could drink in the ritual.

It occurred to me then, as I fixed his steamer, that most of our days are spent in ritual and routine, at least until some dramatic event jerks us off our hamster wheels, puts us on brand new ones.

Nineteen, for example, brought the end of my childhood—with the beginning of my daughter's. Joy's conception was far from planned. After marrying her father, I developed close bonds with his mother and began working in their family coffee business. Ten years later, my marriage ended, and (much to the dismay of my mother-in-law) I ended my job, too.

Taking custody of my girl, I retrenched to west Jersey, land of safer schools and saner streets. Then Joy grew up.

My daughter's coming-of-age came with her enrollment in culinary school along with a move to an apartment in the city I'd abandoned. At last, she was on her own, and so was I. At thirty-nine, I entered what felt like a second stage of adulthood; and even though I resisted making a change, I needed it.

My freelance food writing kept me far too isolated. Not that I'd been living like a nun—well, *almost*. I'd dated since my marriage ended, but every encounter had left me cold.

My subpar love life aside, Joy and her bubbly friends were no longer around. Without them, my quiet suburban ranch became intolerable. I wasn't simply alone anymore; I was lonely.

Returning to New York's Greenwich Village had its challenges (now there's an understatement), but I'd never been happier. I'd always loved managing this landmark

coffeehouse for my mother-in-law; and if I hadn't taken a leap of faith and admitted to her that I wanted my old job back, I never would've met the man sitting across from me now . . .

After texturing the whole milk, I coated the bottom of a glass mug with our newest bar syrup, poured in the thick white milk-paint, stirred everything to blend the shades, and slid my drinkable masterpiece across the counter.

Mike's brow furrowed. "Where are my shots of espresso?"

"You don't need caffeine. You need sleep. I made you a chocolate steamer."

He peered into the mug. "What's a—?"

"Steamed milk with a special syrup. In this case, tempered bittersweet, turbinado sugar, a kiss of sea salt, vanilla, pure almond extract, and *canela*—"

"Canela?"

"Mexican cinnamon. Still spicy but with less bite." I angled my head at the chalkboard. "It's the same syrup we use for our new Mexican Choco-Latte."

Mike sipped and his eyes widened, the shadows lightening a fraction. "Really, really amazing," he said, drawing out the words so suggestively I could have sworn he said, *Really, really orgasmic*.

I smiled. To me, great chocolate was like a perfect espresso—the quickest path between the abyss my customers were stranded in and a sensory experience of transcendent pleasure.

"We just started using a new chocolate supplier," I explained. "Voss, in Brooklyn. They're one of the few artisan bean-to-bar chocolatiers in the area . . ."

Bean to bar was the hottest trend in the confectionary industry, and the more I learned about it, the more I realized how much it had in common with my own seed-to-cup specialty coffee business—from partnering with

farms in developing countries to small-batch production and passionate service.

“They even import and roast their own beans like we do.”

“Sweetheart, it’s heaven in a mug,” Mike said. “But I still need the espresso hit. I have a one o’clock meeting with the first deputy commissioner, and I can barely keep my eyes open.”

“Then don’t. Crash upstairs. I’ll caffeinate you in time for your meeting.” (The irony of drugging up an antidrug cop didn’t escape me, but I could see Mike wasn’t up for that particular joke.)

“I can crash upstairs?” he said. “You wouldn’t mind?”

“You have to ask? Drink this up and I’ll tuck you in.”

“Tucking me in. I like the sound of that.”

“Good,” I said, moving to check the front door lock. “As long as you understand: *tucking* is not a euphemism for something else.”

“It’s only one letter.”

“You need your rest. You look like hell.”

“I feel like hell . . .”

“Then follow me . . .”

I led Mike up the service staircase to my duplex above the Village Blend. (I say “my” because I lived there, not because I owned it.) The apartment was an exquisite little perk that my former mother-in-law handed me with my new employment contract.

Madame Blanche Dreyfus Allegro Dubois had lived here herself for decades when she ran the Blend. Over the years, she’d packed the apartment with imported furniture, lovingly preserved antiques, and an array of paintings and sketches from Village artists (patrons of her shop for nearly a century), which is why she considered me a curator as much as a tenant.

While Mike followed me into the master bedroom, I started some quiet tucking-in-time calculations. The bakery delivery had been made, so I had forty, maybe fifty, minutes to get the truth out of this man before I had to open the shop.

“You want a snack before you crash?” I asked. “I made a batch of my Chocolate-Glazed Hazelnut Bars yesterday. You love those.”

“When I wake up,” Mike said, letting out a long sigh. “I’ll have four.”

I stepped close, tugged the knot of his tie. “So . . . are you going to tell me?”

“What?”

“What went wrong last night. It’s obviously weighing on you.”

As head of the NYPD’s OD Squad (a nickname for a much longer, official sounding moniker), Mike supervised a small group of detectives tasked with the job of investigating criminal activity behind drug overdoses.

Like the NYPD’s Bomb Squad, Mike’s team was based at the Sixth precinct, just up the street, but they had jurisdiction across all five boroughs, which meant Mike’s workload was heavy, his hours unpredictable, and the mental strain of political pressure periodically appalling.

For those reasons—and a few others—the man strapped on mental armor daily, along with his service weapon. In the quiet of the bedroom, however, I expected him to loosen that armor, along with this tongue.

“Well?” I pressed.

“You really want to know?”

“You really have to ask?”

Mike didn’t answer, just watched me pull his tie free and begin unbuttoning his dress shirt. He stopped my hands, peeled off his shoulder holster, and took his time hanging it off the back of Madame’s Duncan Phyfe chair.

“Two of my guys,” he slowly began.

“Which guys?”

“Sully and Franco . . . they spoke to a young man earlier in the week, an aspiring artist—

“Long Island City?”

“Williamsburg. The kid was our key witness in a case against a New Jersey dealer doing business in the city. Looking over his statements, given the ME’s findings, I had some concerns. I went with them both to re-interview...”

“And?”

“This kid had been working all week on a sidewalk painting. When he was finished, he went to the roof of his ten-story building and dived off.”

“Oh God. That’s awful . . .”

“His painting was an elaborate bull’s-eye. Nobody realized it until he jumped. He aimed right for the center.”

Mike moved to the carved mahogany four-poster, sank down on the mattress. “The morning papers already have the story, which I assume will be the subject of my one o’clock meeting with the first deputy commish. My captain asked me to take the meeting solo. He’ll owe me . . . he says.”

I sat next to him, touched his shoulder, felt knots as hard as baseballs. *Oh, Mike.* I dug in both thumbs, began to massage.

He closed his eyes and exhaled. “Thank you . . .”

I worked him over a minute. “So how messed up is your case?”

“Scale of one to ten? *Nine point five.* This kid was the fiancé of the girl who OD’d two weeks ago. You remember the one I told you about?”

“The singer?”

“Yeah, beautiful girl, barely out of her twenties. Came here to be the next Lady Gaga. The boyfriend was the one

who gave up the dealer. He'd also been the one buying his girl the stuff."

"It probably made him feel good," I said. "Knowing she needed him that badly."

"Except it wasn't him she needed," he said. "It was the drug."

"Sometimes love is a drug." (I wasn't speaking rhetorically. Given my history with Joy's father, I'd spent most of my twenties making *amore*-addled decisions.)

Mike's gaze shifted, as if looking for a change of subject. He found it. My sketchbook lay open on the bedside table. He leaned toward it, read the large letters I'd scrawled across the top.

"Aphrodite's Kitchen? What's this?"

"Nothing."

I'd been doodling elaborately around the margins: a big, voluptuous Venus emerging from the sea, a spatula in one hand, an oven mitt on the other. He picked up the book, clearly intrigued by my comic rendition of the Botticelli masterpiece.

"Hey, give that here."

He teased it out of reach, scanned my list of recipe ideas. "These sound pretty tasty. Any test batches coming my way?"

"As long as you make it to the launch party tonight. I'll be managing the samples table."

"Samples for?" He tapped his forehead. "Right. That magical mocha coffee."

"Mocha Magic Coffee."

"A rose by any other name."

"When the name is trademarked, there is no other name."

"I remember now. You told me about it a few weeks ago. Some new coffee powder that enhances . . ." He smirked. "What does it enhance exactly?"

“Alicia Bower claims it’s an herbal aphrodisiac, but I still have no idea what’s in it, other than my coffee beans and Voss’s chocolate. She’s keeping everything else to herself.”

“Didn’t you mention she discovered the active ingredients in India?”

“Yes, but I have yet to try it, and frankly, I’m skeptical about its potency.”

“Well,” Mike said, arching an eyebrow, “I’m happy to be your lab rat. Got any around?”

“I hate to disappoint you, but although Alicia has been hyping this thing online for weeks, the launch party is the first place anyone’s going to try the stuff. She has me serving it up as a beverage, and to showcase its versatility as a flavoring agent, we’ll have samples of mocha candies and bite-size pastries.”

“Now you’re turning cookies and cakes into aphrodisiacs?”

“Not me. All I did was share my chocolate and mocha recipes from the Blend. Alicia gave them to her chocolatier to make—Voss, the same Brooklyn boutique we’ve started buying from.”

“I don’t know, *Cosi* . . . sounds like those infamous Alice B. Toklas brownies.”

“Don’t you go looking for collars on my turf, Detective. Nobody’s lacing anything with cannabis around here.”

“Is that so?”

“Yes. In fact, Alicia claimed she was so happy with the results of my recipes combined with her product that she treated Madame and me to dinner last night so we could brainstorm more, which is exactly why my sketchbook is full of them.”

“Cannabis-free?”

“So far. And by the way, the original Alice B. Toklas recipe was for fudge, not brownies.”

“I hate fudge,” he said.

“You do not. Your mother told me she made cherry cordial fudge for you every Christmas.”

“Oh, chocolate fudge I’ll eat. What I can’t swallow is *fudging*—as in fudging statistics, fudging results, fudging the truth. Mathematicians call it a fudge factor—putting an extra calculation into an equation just so it will work out as expected.”

“Fudge factor?”

“Yeah. It’s what we law enforcement types call a scam.”

“Oh God . . .” The single word deflated me. “I just hope this aphrodisiac claim of Alicia’s doesn’t turn out to be one.”

Mike paused, studied me. “You’re not kidding?”

“What I am is worried.”

“Why?”

“Alicia has been using my Village Blend beans, that’s why. As soon as her product launches, everyone’s going to know it. So if this Mocha Magic stuff tastes like *merde* or doesn’t live up to its claims, then it’s my rep on the line.”

“Oh, sweetheart, no it’s not. Your customers know how high your standards are. That won’t change.”

“Bad reviews can do a lot of damage, Mike, especially if her Magic powder lays a big, fat chocolate egg.”

“You’re not the owner of this place; your former mother-in-law is.”

“Madame may own this business, but she’s leaving it to me and her son to run—and one day we’ll leave it to our daughter. I’m also the master roaster here, not just the manager.” I paused, took a breath. “Sorry. I just loathe not being in control.”

“I know you do. It’s how you’re built. It’s also why your coffeehouse runs smoother than the purr of a pampered kitten.”

“That’s nice of you to say, but—”

“But worrying isn’t going to change anything, Cosi. You’re fully on board with this thing. If it goes bad, you’ll figure out the next step. You always do. In the meantime, try to trust the process.”

“What I’m trusting here is my employer. I have no choice. Madame is the one who signed the contract with Alicia—months ago, as it turns out, without consulting me or her son. She just roped us into this thing . . .”

Despite my continual, borderline belligerent questioning, Madame had provided very few answers, beyond the vague explanation that Alicia was a dear old friend to whom she owed a great deal. (An NYPD detective I could handle. My former mother-in-law was another matter. The octogenarian took stonewalling to a whole new level.)

“Well, Cosi, like I told you,” Mike said, reaching out and curling a lock of hair around my ear, “I’m ready to test the stuff when you are.”

I smiled. “You’ll get your chance. Tonight.”

“Why wait?”

I laughed, but Mike wasn’t kidding, and the veteran street cop had some tricky moves. In one fluid motion, he caught my wrist, pulled me flat, and rolled. Now I was pinned on the mattress, at his mercy for a long, slow, delicious kiss.

“Seems to me,” I murmured, “you don’t need an herbal stimulant.”

“Do you?” he whispered, slipping his fingers beneath my henley.

Before I could answer, his mouth was covering mine again, kissing me so deeply that when he undid the button on my jeans, I had all the resistance of self-saucing pudding cake.

About then is when my cell phone went off, abruptly ending our tucking-in time. I might have ignored the darn

thing, but the *La bohème* ringtone was adamant. My employer was calling.

“Madame?” I answered.

“Clare, thank goodness you picked up. You must come at once.”

I glanced at Mike. “Come where? Your penthouse?”

“No, dear, you forget. After you left the restaurant last evening, I took a room here at Alicia’s hotel so I could enjoy breakfast with her this morning.”

“What’s wrong?”

“Just come to the Topaz, room 1015. I’ll explain when you get here. And tell *no one* where you’re going, *especially* that nice police officer boyfriend of yours.”

Oh, for heaven’s sake. “Why not?”

“Honestly?” She lowered her voice. “It’s a matter of life and death.”

“If that’s the case, call 911!”

“There’s an issue.”

“An issue?”

“Yes, you see . . . the situation is extremely delicate.”

“But—”

“No buts. And no more arguing. Keep the *Closed* sign on our door and hail a cab *tout de suite!*”

CHAPTER TWO

Leaving Mike Quinn’s big, warm body felt about as right as pouring a fresh-pressed pot of Ethiopian Yirgacheffe down the drain. He felt the same but (being the amazing man that he is) let me go without a grilling. He even agreed to come downstairs to wait for Nancy Kelly to show.

Nancy was my newest barista, an apple-cheeked twenty-something from “all over,” as she put it, “upstate

mostly”—rural was my guess since she was the only member of my staff who bragged she got up with the sun. (I wasn’t about to let my regulars down, so I rang her.)

With the Blend squared away, I hailed a taxi and rocketed north. My neighborhood’s sleepy lanes and ivy-covered bricks receded as Manhattan’s jungle of glass and steel grew. Soon we were rolling into the maze of cutthroat commerce known as Midtown. We zigged, we zagged, and finally we headed east, toward Lexington.

A less glamorous avenue than majestic Fifth or stately Park, Lex made economic sense for the Topaz, a tasteful enough inn (only a few minutes walk from the Waldorf=Astoria, the UN, and Rock Center) with more reasonable rates for lengthy stays.

At this early hour, the lobby was practically empty, save one distracted clerk who barely looked up from his desk as I rushed the elevator and ascended ten floors. Racing down the hall, I found the shellacked slab of wood marked 1015, lifted my knuckles, and—

The door jerked open so fast I nearly pounded Madame’s forehead.

“Clare! Thank goodness . . .”

It was just after 7 am, the sun was barely up, yet my former mother-in-law was already smartly shining; her silver-white hair smoothed into a glossy pageboy; her high cheekbones lightly brushed the pale terra-cotta of Village flower pots. Even the hint of lavender on her eyelids perfectly matched the orchids printed on her silk, kimono-style robe, making her vivid blue irises appear their own mercurial shade of violet.

Clearly, this “matter of life and death” (whatever it was) had failed to rattle her. But I wasn’t surprised.

“Survive everything,” she once told me, “and do it with style.”

The woman's fashionable aplomb was more than the product of a Parisian upbringing—or even the gently wrinkled chic of older New York ladies. All her life, Blanche Dreyfus had weathered countless personal storms, not the least of which was her family's escape from Nazi-occupied Paris. The harrowing flight had robbed the little girl of mother and sister, but she'd soldiered on.

Coming of age in New York, she found her bliss in the arms of Antonio Allegro, whose family had owned the Blend for a half century. Then Antonio died, tragically young, and Madame was left utterly alone with a boy to raise and a business to run (a clue to why she'd always treated the Blend's bohemian staff, and its motley bunch of customers, as family).

Later in life, she found a new mate in the wealthy French importer Pierre Dubois. She lost him, too, but not her sturdy resilience—or her steadfast support of my beloved Village Blend, one of the oldest remaining family-owned businesses in Greenwich Village.

For that, and many other reasons (especially her indefatigable support of my daughter), I loved her. Like the struggling actors, painters, playwrights, and musicians whom this woman had propped up or rescued over the years, I'd do almost anything for her, too, which was why I tried very hard not to be annoyed by her cryptic summoning.

"Alicia's inside," she told me. Stepping into the quiet hotel hallway, she pulled her room's door closed and leaned against it. "I thought it would be best if she stayed with me."

"This is about *Alicia*?"

"Yes."

"But this isn't her room?"

"No. This is my room. Alicia's room is down the hall. I didn't want her returning to it."

"Why not?"

“Alicia should tell you—in her own words.”

I reached for the door handle.

“Wait, dear. I’ll lead the way. She may need an interpreter.”

“A what?”

“An interpreter. She’s very upset.”

“About?”

Madame took a deep breath, let it out. “She’s innocent. Let me make that abundantly clear. Alicia simply is not capable of . . .” She closed her eyes, shook her silver pageboy.

“Of?”

“Murder,” she whispered....

Murder by Mocha

*Find out more about Cleo Coyle
and her books at her *virtual* coffeehouse
www.CoffeehouseMystery.com*

Praise for Cleo Coyle

“Clare and company are some of the most vibrant characters I’ve ever read. Coyle also is a master of misdirection and red herrings. I challenge any reader to figure out whodunit before Coyle reveals all.”

—Mystery Scene



THE COFFEEHOUSE MYSTERIES

**#1 *On What Grounds* * #2 *Through the Grinder* * #3 *Latte Trouble*
**#4 *Murder Most Frothy* * #5 *Decaffeinated Corpse*
**#6 *French Pressed* * #7 *Espresso Shot* * #8 *Holiday Grind*
**#9 *Roast Mortem* * #10 *Murder by Mocha* and
Coming 2012: *Coffeehouse Mystery #11*********

More Praise for Cleo Coyle's
Coffeehouse Mysteries

★ *Starred Review*: "Coyle's Coffeehouse books are superb examples of the cozy genre because of their intelligent cast of characters, their subtle wit, and their knowledge of the coffee industry used to add depth and flavor to the stories... Highly recommended for all mystery collections."

—*Library Journal* on **ESPRESSO SHOT**

“A realistic depiction of New York City high and low life....recipes, romance and caffeine-fueled detection add up to a lively tale.” —**Kirkus on ESPRESSO SHOT**

“...jolts of souped-up coffee, sweet cooking... and super sleuthing...a fun and gripping fa-la-la-la latte surprise.” —**The Huffington Post on HOLIDAY GRIND**

“Coyle’s coffeehouse mysteries (Espresso Shot, French Pressed, Murder Most Frothy, etc.) are packed with believable characters and topped with serious coffee lore and holiday recipes. This one will keep your cup piping hot.”
—**Kirkus on HOLIDAY GRIND**

“Both new and returning readers will love this ninth outing for Clare Cosi, amateur sleuth extraordinaire who remains sweet yet strong; bold yet fallible...Even readers who normally don’t pick up cozies will be right at home with the fast pacing and clever dialogue....” 4-1/2 stars
—**Romantic Times on ROAST MORTEM**

“Coyle incorporates a taste of the real-life bravery of the New York City Fire Department into her brilliantly fast-paced mystery, giving readers a glimpse into the lives of some of the hardest working men and women in America...”
—**Fresh Fiction on ROAST MORTEM**

“Coyle’s strong 9th coffeehouse mystery (after 2009’s Holiday Grind) pays tribute to New York City firefighters....Coyle (the wife-husband writing team of Alice Alfonsi and Marc Cerasini) even provides an appendix of useful tips and tempting recipes.”
—**Publishers Weekly on ROAST MORTEM**