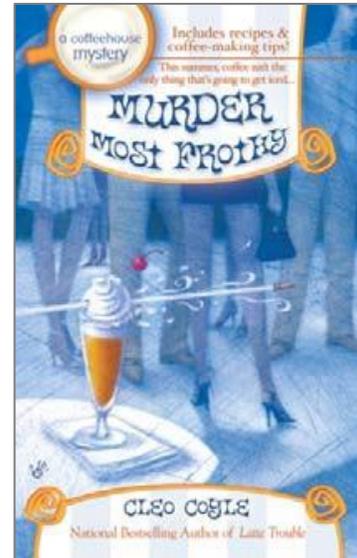


Reading Group Questions

The following reading guide was inspired by a set of questions composed by Jane Reed for a reading group discussion conducted at Java.net Books and Gifts, a coffeehouse and bookstore located in Cuba, Missouri. These questions may spark your own reading group discussion or help to keep it going. Feel free to skip questions or add your own.

Murder Most Frothy by Cleo Coyle **Coffeehouse Mystery #4**

Story Summary: Restaurateur David Mintzer invites coffeehouse manager Clare to spend her summer at his seaside home in the Hamptons, the fabled playground of the rich and famous. Clare agrees, taking on the job of training his restaurant's staff in the art of high coffee service. When an affable young waiter is shot dead, the local police come up with nothing, so Clare asks her own questions, beginning an investigation that may lead to a bitter end. An Independent Mystery Bookseller's Association bestseller.



1. ***Murder Most Frothy*** continues Coyle's technique of beginning with the viewpoint of an unknown killer. What is the killer's attitude toward the Hamptons' party guests? What assumptions can you make about the killer?
2. Who is David Mintzer? When David offers Clare a summer job in East Hampton, why does she finally decide to take it? Is a "coffee steward" a good idea?
3. Does Clare's daughter Joy need her mother's supervision or would she be better off if Clare left her alone? Is Clare an overprotective mother? Don't girls just want to have fun?
4. Who is shot by the killer in the prologue? Why does Clare think the wrong person is shot?
5. Who is Marjorie Bright? Did you suspect her of being the murderer? Who is Alberta? Did you suspect her of being involved in the crime? Why is Clare suspicious of these two women?

6. What do you think of Madame in this book? Were you surprised by her behavior? Discuss Madame's positive and negative traits. Do any of these traits help her as a sleuth?
7. Matt first met Breanne in the previous novel, *Latte Trouble*. Does Clare have an opinion about how their relationship is developing? Is it any of her business?
8. When you first met Bom Fellos in this book, what did you think of him? Did you think he would be a good match for Clare?
9. How does Clare track down "flipper foot"? Did anything about him surprise you? Why is his background as a Navy SEAL important to the plot?
10. When Clare first meets Jim Rand, what did you think of him? Did you suspect him of being involved with the crime? Did your opinion of him change by the end?
11. How does the subplot involving restaurant manager Jacques Papas contribute to the novel? How do you feel about what Papas did?
12. What do you think of Joy's behavior in this book? Considering the climax, the question might be asked again: Do you think Clare is an overprotective mother?
13. Were you surprised by the revelation of the killer at the end? What did you think of Clare's method of getting a confession?
14. Clare takes more risks in this book than in any previous Coffeehouse Mystery. Can you recall some of these risks? Did her actions surprise you; upset you; or make the book more exciting for you? Jim Rand tells Clare that she is become addicted to the thrill of investigating. Do you think he's right and the thrill of detecting is starting to feel like a jolt of caffeine for Clare Cosi?
15. This book describes the practice of "house shares" in the Hamptons as a way for regular people to afford a vacation where very wealthy people maintain expensive summer homes. Do you think Clare has an opinion about this practice, given her past experience? What does this practice say about our society?

16. Did David Mintzer have “good neighbors”? Do you see any universal truths in this book about people and their neighbors?

17. In the epilogue, Clare muses: “The Earth itself was just a rental. Our time on it was basically one big share.” Do you agree with Clare when she considers the book’s cast of characters and says: “The quality of our lives might simply boil down to whether or not we can all get along in the same house?” How do the subplots of this novel support that theme?

18. At the start of Chapter 7, Clare says: “My grandmother grew up in a world of straightforward sensibilities, when things were labeled simply and clearly. You said what you meant, and you meant what you said. But that was a long time ago, before SNL, MTV, metafiction, The Daily Show, and the saturation of practically every aspect of contemporary culture with irony...” What do you think the author is saying about the “sensibilities” of today’s world? Do you agree?

19. Despite her earlier views, Clare finally decides that a summer fling “doesn't have to be a crime.” Did that surprise you? Why do you think she gave in to the fling? How do you think her fling will affect her feelings for Mike Quinn?

Final Note: Cleo Coyle enjoys hearing from readers. She invites you to post to her on her “Coffee Talk” message board (in the upper right column) of her online coffeehouse at www.CoffeehouseMystery.com or write to her at:

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