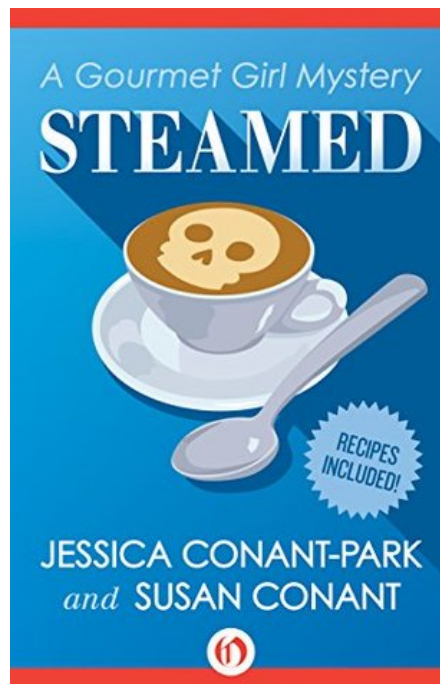




Steamed

Jessica Conant-Park , Susan Conant

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Chloe Carter's Internet date commits the ultimate gastronomic faux pas: He dies before dessert

Ever in search of the perfect meal—and the perfect man—twenty-something grad student and food connoisseur Chloe Carter draws the line at speed dating. But when the Massachusetts native reluctantly signs up for Back Bay Dates, she's soon communicating with a guy after her own heart. According to his online bio, *DinnerDude* is Eric Rafferty, a blond, six-foot foodie. They meet at a five-star restaurant where everyone seems to know Eric, and he and Chloe are given the celebrity treatment. But their first date turns out to be their last: Before Chloe can say *crème brûlée*, Eric is found in the men's room, fatally stabbed in the neck.

Suddenly at the center of an investigation into the life of a man she barely knew, Chloe plunges into the cutthroat world of trendy restaurants. Her romantic life picks up again when she meets sexy chef Josh Driscoll—who's also the prime suspect in Eric's murder.

This ebook features mouth-watering recipes sure to satisfy more than just your appetite for crime.

Steamed is the 1st book in the Gourmet Girl Mysteries, but you may enjoy reading the series in any order.

Steamed Details

Date : Published December 8th 2015 by Open Road Media Mystery & Thriller (first published March 2006)

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Author : Jessica Conant-Park , Susan Conant

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From Reader Review Steamed for online ebook

Juli Pennock says

Eh. Did not work for me. I thought I might like Chloe at the beginning. I thought, "Well, she's different. She's a little edgier. She's...interesting." I tried. I kept reading. I wanted to like the book. I wanted to like Chloe. Turns out I did not. Like her. At all. I thought she was spoiled and kind of stupid and too focused on getting a boyfriend. And what's with the coffee maker? She's going to put up with a coffee maker that doesn't work instead of shelling out \$20 for a new one? Come ON. Seemed like an affectation. An excuse to whine.

Also: she's pursuing a degree in something she doesn't care about/actively dislikes just so that she can get an inheritance. I can't respect that.

There were flickers, in the beginning, when I thought the tide might turn. She's prickly as all get out and as a prickly-pear myself, I thought maybe that would be her humanity. That *thing* that I'd relate to, that would make me love her. Nnnnnnnnope. She just comes off shallow and needy, to me, at least. Also pretty bitchy.

Much as I probably am, in this review.

Whatever. I also have to say: the dialog sounded SO wrong in my head-ear (you know what I mean). Clunky, repetitive, flat, just bad. I had to stop after the tomato-tasting at the parents. Too awkward. Annoying. The relationships didn't seem natural or real AT ALL. (Oh and by the way, regarding Chloe's first "date" with Josh: what dude EVER calls a chick he just met "my lovely one"? outside a gothic romance? GAH. That cheese-grated my nerves.)

Yeah. I had to stop reading it. I don't even care whodunit.

To redundify (IS a word, now): I did not like it. Not in the slightest. I do find that kind of weird, because I love Susan Conant's Holly Winter. Now I'm going to have to go back and re-read those dog-lover's mysteries because I just had a horrible thought: what if I was so distracted and charmed by Rowdy and Kimi (and I was/am: I love dogs in general and Mals in particular) that I skimmed over similarly horrible dialog in that series? My favorite cozy series! My whole cozy-world is rocked! (I'm kidding. Mostly. I'm pretty sure...)

Did not finish.

Audrey says

Ugh. I am so so so sick of these types of book. Awkward, yet attractive girl can't seem to hang onto a boyfriend (so to fill in the empty spaces, she's sleeping with her good looking downstairs neighbor. Who is a cad). Meets really nice guy, makes a fool of herself several times, suffers miscommunications and misunderstandings, bedroom encounters are accidentally foiled, solves aforementioned problems, finally goes to bed with really nice guy, story ends amid rainbows and sunsets. Oh, and girl solves the murder mystery along the way.

The lifestyle portrayed in all these chick-lit types of books (romances, mysteries, etc) is so pitiful and uniform, shallow and aimless. Again, ugh.

Lis Carey says

Twenty-something Chloe Carter is looking for a degree in social work, true love, and good food--not necessarily in that order. She's just started graduate school for her master's degree in social work, and she's also just discovered that her very hot boyfriend, who lives one floor down in their condo building, is two-timing her with a hot blonde.

Her sister thinks she should get organized about her search for love--online dating or speed dating. Speed dating is right out, but in a weak moment, she signs up for Back Bay Dates, with the user name GourmetGirl, and is soon communicating with DinnerDude. They arrange to meet at the hot new restaurant, Essence.

DinnerDude, real name Eric Rafferty, is an annoying date, though they share a real interest in gourmet food. He goes from annoying to impossible when he leaves the table to take a phone call, and turns up dead in the men's restroom just before dessert.

This is a lively, interesting cozy mystery with some interesting twists in the plot. On the other hand, at times Chloe is pretty darned annoying herself. She's way too cool to take some of her social services education seriously, even as she finds the class in group therapy unexpectedly useful. Many of her dating problems are directly due to her doing things she knows are foolish. At times, her saving grace is that her sister, Heather, is so utterly, self-righteously certain she's right about everything involving Chloe's life. She's the one who recommended Back Bay Dates, for instance...

On the flip side, this is a story set in Boston, and it makes good use of Boston and Cambridge as a setting. It's just a lot of fun.

Overall, recommended for a good, light read.

I received a free copy of this audiobook from Audible in exchange for an honest review.

Jan says

What a disappointment :(I so enjoyed Flat Out Love by Jessica Park and Steamed had all the makings of the start of a winning mystery series for me. Jessica wrote it with her Mom Susan Conant, it took place in Boston, and the main character is a foodie named Chloe Carter. Turns out I just didn't care for or about Chloe AT ALL :P By the end of the book I was so zoned out I couldn't honestly say whodunit. I don't care either. I hope Jessica's future books continue to resemble Flat Out Love more than the tepid Steamed.

Tina Bembry says

The writing was pretty hokey, and the suspense about who did it was pretty lackluster until the end. I read this kind of book for a light fun read, so my standards aren't super high. So although I finished it, I wouldn't say it was a very satisfying read.

Kristen says

If you love great culinary cozies, you'll enjoy the Gourmet Girl by Jessica Conant-Park, daughter of Susan Conant of the Dog Lovers Mystery series. Meet Chloe Carter. She's a graduate school for social work, just to make her uncle Alan happy, which was written in his will. Not only that, she's depressed. Her boyfriend/neighbor neighbor cheated on her. Her sister Heather suggested her to go to Back Bay Dates for online dating. When she did it in despair, it was too late. She went on the boring blind date ever with Eric Rafferty, when she witnesses hostility at the restaurant they went too. Later on, Eric winded up dead. Now, it's up to Chloe to figure out who killed him, while she feasted her eyes on Josh, a chef at a rival restaurant, going to school, and figuring out massive confusion. When she gets closer to the truth, she might end up as the next victim. Great culinary recipes included!

Jeanette says

This book annoyed me in so many ways. The main character was childish and her love interest was arrogant. I had no affection for the main character and was grateful to be rid of her at the end of the book. Her thought processes were very immature for a 25 year old college graduate. The only thing she seemed to care about was getting a buff, gorgeous boyfriend. That said, I did enjoy the description of going through he self-checkout line at Home Depot. That at least was funny.

Becca says

Could not get through this. The central problem is that the main character is deeply, intensely, IMMENSELY unlikeable. A spoiled rich girl who has never been out among the unwashed masses, she is constantly complaining that ordinary offices spaces are ugly, lack of marble countertops is depressing, caring about inequality is boring, ugly men can be dated if you get "stuff" out of them, people on first dates should only be served by ugly waitresses so the woman isn't in "competition" for man's attention, food snobs are awful but she wouldn't date any man who didn't know what arugula was, and on and on and on and on and on.

And lest you think the authors are setting her up to be an intitially immature, shallow, and pretentious twit who comes to understand through her interactions with the hoi polloi how little she actually knows of life --- no. That's who she is at the beginning, middle, and end (I skipped ahead).

You know the book sucks when you're hoping the boyfriend IS the killer so he will hack her to death and put you out of your misery.

Maybe they plan to have her realize how horribly repugnant her 1-percenter values are in another volume of this series, but I won't be sticking around to find out.

Sonya says

Not a bad mystery but a little to much girly stuff for my taste. Do I really care about what color they dye there hair or the clothes they wear on dates?

Amy says

This book was so bad I'm debating bursting into tears. I can't believe something so horrible was published. I can't believe I finished it. By the end, I wasn't even telling myself 'it MUST pick up!' I was just thinking, 'I've made it this far. If I make it to the end, I can rant about it.'

It is one of those books that leaves you wanting to gouge your eyes out. I am not even sure this book belongs on my '*what might have been*' shelf. There is almost nothing redeemable about it.

Okay, but seriously. Deep breath.

WHAT DID I JUST READ?

I didn't expect anything mind blowing. I might even have been happy with mind numbing. I figured *Steamed* would be something light and fun. Its passed off as a mystery series revolving around gourmet food. What's not to love?

A few sentences in and I realized I had not gotten a good mystery, but something more akin to chick lit. Well, even chick lit with a mystery can be decent. And I like food.

How bad could the match up be?

But seriously.

There is not a single, likable character in this entire book.

The main character, Chloe? The one promised as an intelligent grad student who uses dates to get the gourmet food she loves?

Words desert me.

She is THE most selfish, conceited, brainless, man-crazy, obnoxious human being ever. Let's begin, shall we?

After catching her non-boyfriend with another woman, she calls up her...I don't know what to call him. Friend with benefits? Who isn't her non-boyfriend but functions/(functioned?) as one? Anyway. She calls him up and is like 'Come make out with me to make the Jerk downstairs jealous.' And non-boyfriend 2 goes

'Uh, no. I now have a real girlfriend and she wouldn't like it.' And the main character whines about it! She can't comprehend how he would be so selfish as to not drop everything and come make out with her just because he's like, *in a committed relationship*. What makes the whole scene so weird is that non-boyfriend 2 has *no role* in the rest of the book. So that scene illustrates what? How awful she is?

Not a good introduction.

But wait, it gets worse. Because, after whining about it, she decides to get revenge on her cheating non-boyfriend by joining an online dating website. After getting asked out, she's like, 'Heheh, what a great thing. Now I can make non-boyfriend jealous by bringing a guy back with me!' (Because sleeping with a man you met online after your first date on the off chance your kinda-sorta ex will notice his car downstairs is *such a fantastic revenge plan*.) Anyway, she doesn't get to put this plan into action as her date ends up dead, stabbed in the restaurant bathroom.

Ooooh, you mistakenly think, as I did. *This is going somewhere*. WRONG. Chloe experiences no remorse about her date's death or finding the body. Instead, she whines about everyone wanting to hear the story. The only reason she shows the slightest bit of interest in his death is when she shows up at his funeral and meets a *haaawwwt* chef, who happens to be the prime suspect. (It is a good thing he is hot, as Chloe has made it *ever-so-clear* that she would never even *consider* dating someone who was less than an Adonis)

Anyway, as she frequently states, she can't have her new boy toy going to jail! So she decides to investigate the murder...which mainly means she not-so-subtly hangs out with dead date's parents and convinces her grad school classmates to spend school time gossiping and surmising and basically providing her with a bunch of people to cast the blame on. After every encounter, our intrepid Nancy Drew then calls the Detective in charge of the case and oh-so-helpfully provides him with all the suspects her classmates have come up with.

I'm surprised the detective didn't change his number after the second call.

Now, despite the fact that the detective, for good reasons, warns her to

and shows no sign of arresting Chef-Boy, Chloe still blunders around attempting to 'solve' the mystery. Except she really isn't doing much detective work at all. 95% of this book is Chloe lusting after men and preparing to have sex...it would have been awkward if it wasn't so utterly dull. I spent most of the book going:

Chloe isn't just stupid in her romantic life, either. She's at grad school because her uncle or some other person for some super unclear reason left her an inheritance provided she gets her Master's degree. So basically, she gets to go to grad school for *free*. Is she excited? Does she embrace this incredible opportunity? Gosh, no. This is Chloe we're talking about. She chooses Social Work without researching it at all because it sounds interesting, then whines and bemoans every class she has to take. As someone who is working her tale off to afford to go to grad school someday, I found this character's total lack of appreciation for her extended education infuriated me more than anything else.

The mystery/conclusion was so trumped up and dramatic I might have given it one star for the ending alone. Absolute rubbish. The only reason the author gets away with it is because, really, no one cared about the murdered man anyway and you've basically forgotten about him by the time you reach the end.

There are weird, awkward scenes thrown in everywhere for no purpose. Weird characters that don't really have a role but are put in there because the genre demands them (married older sister/caring but fabulous best friend/best friend's boyfriend, etc. All it was missing was a gay guy)

I'm glad it is over. Now all I have to say is...

Rebecca Burke says

Chloe Carter finds herself with an insatiable appetite for good food and a good man. The possibility of find both within one shot is more than appealing. That's why Gourmet Girl (screen name) decides to take another shot at dating Dinner Dude (corresponding screen name). Dinner Dude is found to be Dinner Dud. During the week she joined an online dating site she becomes acquainted with a murder victim and a suspect all in one week.

Excellent plot line and intriguing possibilities set the scene for a wonderful romantic entanglement which is outlined throughout this book.

Kimberly says

I made myself finish this because I can't toss aside a book unless it's really bad.

The ending was lame. Chloe was annoying. I couldn't get into the writing style and the book felt offbeat.

Kyong-Mi says

I thought it was a pretty good book. Excellent? Almost. It was definitely an easy read, and that's basically what I look for in a book, something that isn't going to have me read a sentence twice to understand it. I liked the fact that Chloe was silly, had many mishaps, anger issues while being someone other women go to for advice; it made her an ordinary woman. Others reviewed her as immature for 25, however I am in my mid-30s and have met many older people much more immature...however that's what made her funny. The book had many points that made me laugh out loud.

Brianna says

I thoroughly enjoyed this one and changed my mind several times about who I thought committed the murder! The humor jumps off the pages, and I found myself quickly loving all the characters. Josh, however, was my favorite :). Can't wait to read up on GourmetGirl in the next book of this series!

Cat Fithian says

I thought I'd like this, but there is too much about fashion and shallowness and not enough substance in the protagonist . . . for me, anyway. I'm not finishing it.
