



# Death Makes the Cut

*Janice Hamrick*

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The first bell of the new school year hasn't even rung, and Texas high school teacher Jocelyn Shore is already at the scene of a murder. Friend and fellow teacher Fred Argus has been found dead on campus, and it isn't long before the annoying, albeit attractive, Austin police detective Colin Gallagher uncovers evidence that Fred might have been selling drugs to students. Shocked by her loss as well as the insinuation that Fred was a dealer who got what he deserved, Jocelyn starts asking the kinds of questions guaranteed to set fellow teachers, administrators, and parents on edge.

With the school serving as the setting for a big-time director's latest film, her investigation could hardly have come at a worse time. Jocelyn, however, finds clearing her friend's name far more important than the needs of a pesky movie crew and doesn't care who knows it. But it's only when she's attacked while on set that she realizes someone is determined to make sure the secrets hidden by Fred's death remain hidden no matter what the cost.

Humor, romance, and murder abound in Janice Hamrick's follow-up to her Minotaur Books/Mystery Writers of America First Crime Novel Award--winning debut, *Death on Tour*, and make *Death Makes the Cut* a charming addition to this outstanding new series.

## Death Makes the Cut Details

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Author : Janice Hamrick

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# From Reader Review Death Makes the Cut for online ebook

## Jan says

4 1/2 stars. Jocelyn is home in Austin preparing for the start of a new school year. One of her favorite history teachers is also the tennis coach and is known to everyone as Coach Fred. Fred has been teaching and coaching for years and is known to be loved by pretty much everyone. So when he turns up dead, everyone assumes that it is natural causes (Fred was a major smoker). But when evidence shows that Fred was murdered and that drugs might be involved, Jocelyn is determined to find the murderer and clear Fred's name of any scandal.

This was an excellent cozy. Jocelyn and her cousin Kyla are a hoot. We get to meet a whole cast of characters from the school, students, teachers and administration. We also have a new hunk in the form of an Austin detective. So much is going on but not so much you can't keep it straight. There is some action and romance. It really has just about everything. Now I have to wait for the next one.

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## Elizabeth says

On the last day of summer vacation history teacher Jocelyn Shore is busy getting her classroom in order awaiting the onslaught of the more than 2000 Austin, Texas teenagers who will be saying goodbye to a hot steamy summer and beginning a new school year. Jocelyn hears the loud voices of what appears to be an abusive confrontation between Fred Argus, fellow teacher as well as the tennis coach and a typical unrealistic parent who thinks his freshman son should be team captain (Really?) and she rushes in where others fear to tread confronting this angry blustering man as if he were an errant school boy himself. This approach is effective and the situation is resolved but aptly named Fred Argus is not behaving in his usual manner and he leaves for home.

The next time Jocelyn saw Fred was on the floor of the tennis shed, lying with his milky white eyes blankly open surrounded by some tennis balls. Fred was an older man in his sixties who was a teacher as a second career. Despite being a coach he was known for his spindly white legs and his two pack a day smoking habit. Jocelyn knew him to be an excellent teacher and she credited him with teaching her more than she learned in all her formal years of education with regard to how to impart knowledge to the teenage mind.

Despite the fact that the police are called it is natural to assume that this death was a natural one and although Jocelyn is deeply saddened the pressing issues of the first day of school is upon them. Aside from her own classes she is expected to help her look alike cousin Kyla teach a course to girls about technology as part of a community service program. It doesn't take long for it to become clear that this death is really a murder. Before the day is out she finds that she is also the new interim tennis coach.

But Jocelyn is not too busy to realize that that Fred had been on the trail of some wrong doings and as she begins to investigate she puts herself in danger. The clues are there for the reader to join in the hunt for the murderer. He will murder again before he is through.

This is a lively fast paced story with an excellent cast of characters. The setting is a bit unlike high school as I knew it, but hey, the times they do change. It may help that I read it at this time of year but I felt the sweltering Texas ambience like I was there. The characters have developing nice backgrounds which were

introduced in the first of the series DEATH ON TOUR

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### **Kathy says**

Janice Hamrick is a new to me mystery author so I was very excited to read this book. You do not have to have read the first in the series, Death on Tour, to enjoy Death Makes the Cut.

This novel is set around the activities at the high school in Austin, Texas where Jocelyn works. Jocelyn Shores, a teacher who loves her job, is plunged into a mystery at the beginning of the school year when a fellow teacher is murdered. Complications occur in Jocelyn's personal life when she meets handsome detective Colin Gallagher. Complicated because she is still involved with Dallas travel tour provider Allan. Allan who is out of town is there to help Jocelyn like Colin is.

Jocelyn is attacked, her home ransacked and another teacher is murdered. What is going on behind the scenes in Jocelyn's school? This is a well written, enjoyable mystery. It will be released in July....be sure to pick up a copy.

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### **Roxanne Kade says**

This book was a quick, easy read, with an exciting murder mystery which kept me on my toes. Jocelyn Shore's life turns upside-down the minute Fred Argus is found dead in the school tennis shed. After a rumor starts that Fred's murder was the result of a drug deal gone wrong, Jocelyn makes it her mission to clear his name. This only leads to more trouble as she is thrown into a twisted web of lies, blackmail and embezzlement.

The story could have very easily become predictable but it didn't. I was kept guessing every second of the way and I could never quite pinpoint who the perpetrator was. Each suspect was creepy in their own way, and they all seemed to have the means and motives for wanting Fred dead. When Jocelyn falls victim to a brutal crime, she wonders if it's just coincidence or is it related in any way to Fred's death, and if so, why has the killer's attention turned to her? Could it have something to do with the note Fred left for her, or is her snooping causing more trouble than she expected?

I really enjoyed playing private investigator alongside Jocelyn. She is such a fun character. She's witty and smart, and doesn't hate herself in any particular way, which seems to be a trait of most characters these days. The only time she ever really puts herself down is when comparing herself to Kyla, her cousin and BFF. Speaking of Kyla, she is just as fun a character as Jocelyn. The banter between the two was so real and I could almost imagine sitting right next to them as they spoke about men, guns and alcohol. Although Kyla can be a bit self-centered and rude at times, especially when she and Jocelyn are likened to each other, I still thought she was a wonderful friend in times of need.

On top of everything else Jocelyn has to deal with, she is forced to battle the feelings she develops for the gorgeous, "knight in shining armor" detective Colin Gallagher while still trying to figure out her long distance relationship with Alan Stratton. All I can say is that I'm Team Colin all the way.

This book is filled with many light-hearted moments which lifted the somber mood of something as serious as death, and I often found myself snickering. All in all this was an excellent read, very different from what I'm used to but a wonderful change.

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### **Lisa Kay says**

★★★★½ Love this series. The writer is great. It kept me guessing till the end. I was fixated on the wrong suspect! Ugh. Doesn't happen often, but it all made sense in the end.

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### **ExLibris\_Kate says**

The first thing I do when I read a mystery is to try to figure out "who done it" as early as possible. Well, that didn't workout so well for this book because I think all three of my initial theories were wrong. Death Makes The Cut was full of witty dialogue, strong characters and lots of turns that will keep you guessing. I really liked the school setting because it gave you a multitude of motives and suspects without any of them being too obvious. Throw in just a touch of romance and you have a book that avoided predictability and kept those pages turning.

Janice Hamrick really captured the flavor of Austin that runs the gamut from Hollywood film crews to good ol' boys. I had so much fun reading this boo!. It's been a long time since I've read a mystery and I was reminded how much I enjoy this genre. Janet Hamrick created a story with twists, turns and lots of characters worth loving. Jocelyn is smart, funny and very determined and I also enjoyed Jocelyn's cousin, Kyla as well as all of the teachers and students that made the story so well-rounded. If you are looking for an enjoyable and smart mystery, this book should be at the top of your list!

This book is the companion to Janice Hamrick's first book, Death On Tour. However, you do not need to read the first book in order to enjoy Death Makes The Cut.

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### **Thomas Hamrick says**

I can honestly say that this series is one of the best series I have ever read. I absolutely love it and couldn't put it down for one moment. What I especially like about this author is how her use of such descriptive words paints such a vivid picture in your mind, it is like you are transported to the scene and are sitting in the corner with your little bucket of popcorn and bag of M&Ms watching the story unfold.

This book follows Jocelyn Shore to her hometown of Austin, Texas. In this town, she is a History and French teacher at Bonham High. When she arrives on the first day of school she is thrown into shock when she sees her dear friend and fellow History teacher dead. I'm not going to reveal the next plot twists and heart wrenching events that take place, but let's just say this book is definitely worth the read.

Another reason I enjoy these books is because of the character development. The characters and their

personalities are just so relatable. What I also like about these character, Jocelyn in particular, is that you are never going to know what happens next to them. It gets me so excited!

I also like this book much better then the first one in the series. I say this because in the first book I wasn't kept as guessing as much as I was in this one. In the first one, I had a hunch on who did it and my hunch turned out to be correct, but in the second book you are left completely guessing on who did it until the very end. I probably had three or four people who I thought it was before the real killer was revealed. And when I did find out who the murderer was I gasped out loud, I was definitely not expecting that.

I absolutely cannot wait for the next installment in this series. I'm pretty sure it's already out I just need to go out and buy it. If you haven't read this series yet, I implore you to go out and get it today. you will not regret it.

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## **Martin says**

The second Jocelyn Shore mystery is just as much fun as the first, just as lyrical and comic, just as well written. You have to do without the magic of Egypt, but Janice Hamrick can create her own magic in her native Austin, Texas. Building A of Bonham High is as gloomy and foreboding as any ancient temple complex. But there is a big difference in the books: in *Death on Tour* there is so much fun to be had, you can think of the whodunnit format as an extra bonus, while in *Death Makes the Cut* you are drawn into the mystery on page 1, and become almost as desperate as Jocelyn for the answer. The reader is remorselessly sucked down into a vortex of terror ...

... well, that's putting it too strongly. Let's say it's comedy-horror. Perhaps not unlike *Teenage Fangst*, the movie in which, by an extraordinary chain of circumstances, Jocelyn makes a startling and involuntary cameo appearance, itself a quite perfect combination of rich comedy and shrieking horror.

Jocelyn grows on us with every page. This is despite her severe limitations as a detective, which I'm sure she'd be the first to admit. Sherlock Holmes would have thought her even denser than Watson. (And the massive workload dumped on her in the oversized, under-resourced school where she works is sufficient excuse for the slow pace of her sleuthing.) But her natural courage, sense of justice, and feline curiosity amply compensate for reduced deductive powers and occasional lapses of plain common sense.

Jocelyn's cousin Kyla also grows on us. For me, the Jocelyn-Kyla interaction is the best thing in these books. A perfect example of those woman-woman relationships that an extreme left-brained male like myself can study and observe, but never really understand, like an unimaginative zoologist investigating the mating behaviour of exotic animals.

There is a very entertaining youtube video by Janice Hamrick on reviews by the common reader, of which this one by me is yet another dreary example. Do check it out:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVYC6H...>

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## **Glen says**

A cozy based in Austin, Texas.

When the tennis coach at her school is murdered, Jocelyn Shore starts poking around. There's a lot going on at the school. A film is being shot, the drama club is out of control, and all the usual stuff that happens at a school. Jocelyn has the usual messy personal life, and meets the super cop who can't catch a cold/ potential boyfriend.

I felt like the climax/solution was a little lacking compared to other cozies, but still worth reading.

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## **\* Jennifer says**

I wasn't sure I'd read this one, after reading *Death on Tour*, the first in the series. It was good, but it didn't really grab me and I found it hard to get excited about the characters. I especially had an issue with Jocelyn's cousin Kyla. So *Death Makes the Cut* sat on my TBR pile for quite some time before I made myself pick it up today. I'm awfully glad I did - a great improvement in my opinion! Kyla still has moments of shallowness, but she's *\*much\** more likeable and it's now more evident why she's Jocelyn's best friend as well as family. The story line is also greatly enhanced by the introduction of Detective Colin - a romantic interest a person can get excited about! I know Alan is everything that is good and right in a man, but he didn't seem to have that spark of machismo that makes the love interest in these books so interesting. Having said that, I hope this is NOT the beginning of some silly love triangle that is only going to piss me off and turn me off the books.

The murder plot was well done - the suspects are all obvious, but it's never clear exactly who the murderer is until the end. I was pretty sure I knew, but never ready to say "X did it!" definitively. And I wouldn't have been totally correct anyway.

Overall, this book was a lot of fun to read, it kept my attention thoroughly, and I cared very much about how it ended and what happened to the characters. I'm looking forward to the next book.

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## **Beth says**

The wait is finally over. *Death Makes the Cut* is the sequel to Janice Hamrick's *Death on Tour*. It continues the story of Jocelyn Smith as she returns to her job in Austin Texas as a teacher and again stumbles upon another mystery. She discovers the death of fellow teacher and tennis coach Fred Argus. Several of the characters from the first book return. Jocelyn's look alike cousin Kyla, and Jocelyn's Dallas based boyfriend Alan continue to add humor, romance, and tension to the story. New characters include fellow teachers, students and a new love interest Austin Police Detective Colin Gallagher. All these characters are so well developed and believable that you feel as though you know them personally. Again, I found myself laughing out loud at the humor in this book and guessing at who the real killer must be. It is a wonderfully enjoyable mystery to read with an unexpected end

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## **Kat (Kindred Dreamheart) says**

Death Makes the Cut is book two of the Jocelyn Shore series. I first discovered this series last year when I came across a copy of Death on Tour on the "NEW" shelf at my local library. This is a mystery series that offers all the drama like the Sookie Stackhouse mysteries but without the paranormal. Jocelyn is a high school history teacher who can't help but get mixed up in solving untimely & bazaar murders. In book one she ran into trouble while vacationing in Egypt. In Death Makes the Cut she's back home in Texas, yet the mayhem still follows when her friend and colleague is found dead in the tennis shed on school grounds.

I continue to adore the characters. Jocelyn has a great sense of humor. The cousin, Kayla also always offer the comic relief. The other supporting characters introduced in this book were also equally entertaining. One thing I noticed about this book was everyone looked like a suspect. Seriously, there were so many seemingly guilty parties that I almost believed they were all in cahoots. I really enjoyed the build up as well as ultimate conclusion. I was able to figure out the culprit in the last novel rather quickly; yet this one kept me baffled until the very last second. This series only gets better and better.

The romance was a bit disappointing in the beginning considering how the last book ended, yet that quickly changed and morphed into a love triangle that I never even saw coming. Wow! Now I am anxiously waiting to see which turn Jocelyn's love life will take. I sincerely hope the author allows the reader some insight along with solving the case in the next novel.

\*I reviewed a free copy of this novel for an honest review.

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## **Katherine Decker says**

Jocelyn Shore is back at it again. She's back home and getting ready for the start of the school year. Her biggest concerns will be lesson plans and grading, or will they... Murder once again manages to creep into her life and quickly Jocelyn is coaching tennis and solving crime. Add in an attractive and persistent Detective Colin Gallagher and you have the makings of a great, and somewhat romantic murder mystery. Janice Hamrick has written a great follow up to Death on Tour and I can't wait for the next book in the series.

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## **Mary (BookHounds) says**

<http://maryinhb.blogspot.com/2012/07/...>

### **MY THOUGHTS**

#### **ABSOLUTELY LOVED IT**

Jocelyn is back in Austin, ready to start the uneventful school year as she has planned, teaching French and History. Well, it doesn't do according to her lesson plan when she finds her mentor and fellow History teacher, Fred, dead in the school's tennis office. Enlisted to take over as tennis coach, she thinks the police



aren't doing enough to catch the killer, especially when the police suspect him of selling drugs. Jocelyn thinks those drugs were planted by the killer and wants to clear his name. The detective, Colin, assigned to the case, questions her and some of those questions become personal. As Kyla, Jocelyn's cousin notes, Colin is hunky and hot -- my words not hers, but you get the point. Since Jocelyn is now in a long distance relationship with Alan, Kyla thinks that Jocelyn needs to date someone local and Colin couldn't agree more. Also, a famous director, Michael Dupre, is using the high school as a film site and rings in Jocelyn's tennis team as extra which absolutely fries the drama teacher, Roland, since he would love nothing more than audition for the director to get his big break. While the kids are filming, Jocelyn is attacked and ends up in the hospital and when she is finally released, she finds her home burglarized and trashed. Colin comes to the rescue and puts her on surveillance. As Jocelyn collects more clues to Fred's murder, her best friend and fellow teacher, Laura, finds a few suspicious things about the drama department and the school's finances. Jocelyn warns Laura not to get too nosy because of what happened to her and things don't go well for Laura as she uncovers more dirt about the school accountant, Pat.

My favorite line is the story is when Laura, described as tiny, tries to drag Jocelyn to see something in the school's theatre: "She tugged at me, trying to pull me after her. It was a little like a dachshund trying to move a fully loaded Yukon sled." I bet you can guess why this is my favorite! This is a fast paced and easy to read story, just perfect for the hot days of summer. I love that Jocelyn is not perfect and just like a dachshund, she tends to stay on scent, even though her logic knows she should just give up on the hunt for the killer. Everything is believable and right down to the interactions with her cousin Kyla, students and other teachers just rings true. I did have an ARGHHH moment at the end of the story where things are left up in the air with her love life. I really hope there are more books planned for this series since I just adored everything about it.

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## **Betty says**

Solidly in the cozy mystery category. Pleasant enough read, but too easy to guess major clue points. On the other hand, sometimes you just don't want to work that hard. Bonbon, anyone?

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