



Cliff Diver

Carmen Amato

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Imagine if you were the first and only female police detective in Acapulco, investigating crime in a city both deadly and breathtaking. Mexican drug cartels battle for control and politicians are bought with blood money.

The detective squadroom reeks of machismo. The lieutenant is a dirty cop who has trapped you into silence.

That's the situation for Detective Emilia Cruz in **CLIFF DIVER**, the first book in the sensational police procedural series taking the mystery scene by storm. Unexpectedly put in charge of the investigation when her lieutenant is found dead, Emilia uncovers the lieutenant's sordid sexual past as well as his involvement in a kidnapping and counterfeit money scheme.

Reputations are threatened by her discoveries and truth is for sale. Emilia becomes a pawn in an ugly game of checkmate and corruption played by Acapulco's ambitious mayor and the powerful police union.

Rival police detectives take aim at Emilia's investigation. Their ringleader is a prime suspect. Hotel manager, Kurt Rucker has some helpful advice for Emilia but the heat between them is too hot to handle.

Feeling like one of Acapulco's famous cliff divers hoping not to crash on the rocks below, Emilia must choose between truth and survival. But no matter what choice she makes, she won't be ready for the shock of the water.

And neither will you.

Grab a margarita and come on down to Acapulco . . . If you can take the heat.

Cliff Diver Details

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Author : Carmen Amato

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From Reader Review Cliff Diver for online ebook

C.K. Raggio says

Cliff Diver is one of those books that has you rooting for the good guy from chapter 1, or in this case, the good girl. Emilia Cruz is a junior detective, the only female detective in Acapulco's police force. She's young, intelligent, a loving daughter, a hard worker and growing a really thick skin as each work day passes. Nobody wants her there, not even her own partner, but Emilia doesn't give up easily. And when she's thrown head first into a seemingly impossible situation her tenacity is put to the ultimate test.

When I think of Acapulco, I see the sun, hear the ocean waves and smell the strong scent of coconut oil on tanned skin. Amato paints a different picture. Still beautiful, but also peppered with political corruption, counterfeiting money, drugs, and straight out bad guys pulling the marionette strings on everyone and anybody they feel like.

These are the people that Emilia is forced to cross in a high profile case. Is she up to the challenge? Will she do the right thing? Or will she get swept up into their corrupt web? The end of this fast-paced, but informative (I love books that I not only enjoy but learn from) thriller will definitely surprise you. And one particular twist in the end left me not only open mouthed, but wishing I could kill one of the characters myself.

I recommend Cliff Diver for people who love to learn a little something while being highly entertained. A great thriller/police procedural that you shouldn't miss!

Mona Grant-Holmes says

Good detective story. Setting was in Acapulco, Mexico. The protagonist, Det. Emilia Cruz, is the only female detective on the force. The Lt. Inocente, who is in charge of the detectives in her precinct is found dead on his speed boat. Det. Cruz is promoted to Lt. placed in charge of the investigation. She reports her findings to the Police Union President and the Mayor of Acapulco. Emilia is not sure she should head the investigation. She has had to deal with the resentment of her male co-workers, but now they must report to her?! How will this work?

Quillracer says

This was a well-told story with plenty of turns to keep the reader guessing. Amato delivers good tension and action. The setting – Acapulco, Mexico – was a pleasant change from the more common one and gave the novel a bit of a different feel. But it did not paint a very positive picture of Mexican politics or police.

But there was nothing unique here, nothing to raise this book head and shoulders above others in the genre.

I won't actively hunt down more books in the series, but I won't pass them up if they come my way.

Laurel says

book:Cliff Diver[17344470]

I recently finished Carmen Amato's *Cliff Diver*. It features Emilia, a female detective in Acapulco, Mexico's all-male Police Department. To say she has a rough go of it would be an enormous understatement! None of her male counterparts want her there, and it was only because Rico, her existing partner, volunteered to take her on as his partner. If he had not done so, she would not have allowed to become a detective, despite achieving the highest marks on the detective's exam.

She suffers many types of harassment from all sides, including from her boss, Infante, who runs the department. Emilia finds herself in especially deep waters when Infante is murdered, and she is unexpectedly placed in control of the department and the investigation into his death, by the leader of the police union. Who is to be trusted in the department? In the mayor's office?

Emilia is one of the most appealing female characters I have encountered in some time. In addition to a hellish work environment, she is dealing with a mother with dementia, and facing the possibility that her devotion to a career has likely removed any chance for a family life.

The author has lived in Mexico, and her writing is gritty, realistic and totally believable. I read this in a day, and instantly wanted to buy the next installment, *Hat Dance*. Her writing brings to light the contemporarily-relevant themes of sexual equality and harassment in both the workplace and within a culture. Additionally, she shines a light on police corruption, drug cartels, and the wide gap between classes in countries where rich tourists sip champagne, while the majority of the country's citizens live in abject poverty.

There are some fairly violent sections in this book, along with adult behaviour that many would find disturbing, but the content is not gratuitous.

A compelling read, and I am anxious to move on to see how Emilia copes with her next case.

annapi says

Emilia Cruz is the first female police detective in Acapulco, and her colleagues don't make it easy for her. In this first book of a series, she has to deal with a murder, a kidnapping, a drug ring, counterfeit money, and all of this not knowing who to trust in Mexico's notoriously corrupt system.

I enjoyed this much more than I was expecting to. I only picked it up because it satisfied a game, but was pleasantly surprised. I've only been to Mexico for a short weekend on vacation and so have no idea what it's really like to live there, but it is notorious for police corruption and violence, and this book has a gritty realism though it's not too graphic. Emilia's troubles with her misogynistic fellow detectives feel all too real. The mystery was complex, the resolution satisfying, the characters interesting. I will definitely be continuing the series.

Sharon Michael says

Although I have no personal knowledge of the Mexican law enforcement scene, this book definitely feels

authentic. Characters are individuals, a new setting for me and although the overall tone is a bit more noir than I usually prefer, this read very well and definitely kept my attention.

Good characterization, a tough, determined female police officer in a difficult environment, believable plotline. Close look at what appears to be a realistic portrayal of a difficult law enforcement situation and the community officers work in. One of the better police procedurals I've read for awhile.

Cheryl Landmark says

Dark, gritty, edgy....this was a compelling and suspenseful read with some surprising twists and turns.

Emilia Cruz was such an appealing character--strong, tough, resilient and fiercely dedicated to her job despite working in a poisonous environment of blatant hostility, sexism, harassment, lies and political corruption. On top of that, she also had to deal with her emotionally fragile mother who, it seemed, was steadily declining into dementia.

Of all the male characters, I admired Rico the most. Even though he didn't really want Emilia in the police department as much as his fellow officers, he was the only one willing to take her on as a partner, and he seemed quite protective and respectful of her at times. I also had a soft spot for the gringo, Kurt Rucker, who was handsome, sexy and smart and captivated Emilia despite her best efforts to avoid the attraction.

Right from the start, the plot plunged the reader into the deep, dangerous waters of drugs, corruption, and violence and never let up in its intensity and suspense.

I would highly recommend this book to fans of the genre.

Nancy says

The title is a little weird and doesn't get explained until at least halfway through the book. The plot got a little too complicated at times. I was pretty sure I knew who killed Fausto early on, and I was right. There are just enough clues that an alert reader can figure it out. I thought the characters were generally well-developed. While I was frustrated with Emilia at times, it makes sense that she'd be at loose ends since she was thrust into a position she wasn't ready for. It was also clear that knowing whom to trust was next to impossible. So while I thought it was weird she didn't get someone to break into Fausto's desk drawer, I can see why she didn't---just one of dozens of things she had to check out. The use of Spanish helped with the story development, but there were a few too many words that I thought should have been explained in context a little better. There were a a dozen or so minor editing glitches, but they didn't hinder the flow of the story. I'm quibbling between 3 and 4 stars...I'd read another book about Emilia, but not sure I'd pay for one, so I guess I'll go with 3 stars.

Norm Hamilton says

Carmen Amato's novel, *Cliff Diver* (An Emilia Cruz Novel) opens the tangled weave of intrigue that is the life of Acapulco's first female Detective, Emilia Cruz.

A truly excellent mystery novel. The writing is classic with descriptions that allowed me to put myself in the streets of Mexico and the people living there...all without me ever setting foot in the country for real.

Many twist and turns and surprise encounters bring the reader along in the story. There is excitement, intrigue and pathos - along with enough humanity to bring the story to life and make it feel real.

A wonderful read by author Carmen Amato. Highly recommend.

Sandra says

In *CLIFF DIVER*, author Carmen Amato pulls readers into the world of Mexican corruption and propels them along unpredictable twists and turns at heart-pounding speed. Her writing is strong and lean, and she paints a realistic picture of good and evil through vivid descriptions of setting, intriguing characters, and convincing dialogue.

Amato's main protagonist, Emilia Cruz, is a feisty and clever detective who combines law enforcement with an innate sense of ethics as she leads the investigation into the death of her shady lieutenant. Through Emilia's eyes, we experience doubts, fears, and suspicions and hold our breaths as she confronts the "bad guys" and risks her life in trying to dig up the truth. Deeper layers of the plot expose more evidence and had me second-guessing the names on my suspect list more than once. How Emilia deals with the outcome of her investigation is a stunning development in itself and offers readers much to ponder.

The story ends on an upbeat note for Emilia whose life basically revolves around her police work: a likely romantic relationship with a handsome luxury hotel manager. Will we read more about Kurt in the next book?

To mystery lovers who enjoy the challenge of an action-packed whodunit, this is definitely one you'll want to add to your reading list. Highly recommended.

Nancy says

The plot was so convoluted and involved so many characters and so many twists and turns that I had trouble keeping track of what was going on. The worst part, however, was the romance. These two people meet in a police station, she is assigned to drive him back to his hotel, they have a near-death experience, they hardly speak to each other, and suddenly they are madly in love or in lust or in who knows what. While heading a murder investigation, dodging rapists, dealing with crooked union officials, taking care of her mentally challenged mother who has taken up with a homeless man, and trying to survive heavy political pressure, Emilia has time for silly schoolgirl fantasies about a man she's seen once or twice and has hardly spoken to at all. Give me a break! I would strongly advise the author to drop the silly romance, streamline the plot and

eliminate half the characters!

Jeff Tucker says

Emilia Cruz is the only female homicide detective on the Acapulco police department. The other detectives don't like working with a woman. When a murder shakes up the department, Emilia has to find a way to investigate the crime while dealing with uncooperative coworkers and sexual harassment. The investigation uncovers other crimes and Emilia finds that her efforts aren't appreciated by the department or the city of Acapulco that would like to keep the city's reputation clean. There's a lot going on here. There are several subplots that keep the story interesting. I thought this was a pretty good book. It's mostly about the investigation and there's not a lot of action, although there is some. It's well written, very readable and moves at a good pace. I liked the exotic setting in Mexico. The strong female protagonist is interesting, complex and a sympathetic character. I enjoyed the book.

Toni Osborne says

The Emilia Cruz Mystery Series

This edgy police procedural mystery takes us into the heart of Mexico's drug war. It features Emilia Cruz the first and only female detective in the Acapulco. She is a strong Latina woman, although she has been a cop for over 12 years and 2 years as a detective she has to fight for every inch to stay on top in a squad room full of men that didn't want her and are trying by any means to break her but Emilia is a tough cookie and very good at what she does.

The main plot is quite captivating, an adrenaline charge page turner at its best. Emilia is in charge of the murder investigation into the death of her shady lieutenant. This case is high profile and much pressure comes from politicians, other cops and the powerful union. Things are not easy: police files go missing and trails lead in multiple directions... there is even a kidnapping and connection to the cartel and some counterfeit moneyEmilia finds herself a pawn in an ugly game of corruption..... and feels like the famous cliff divers of Acapulco.

As in all good mystery Emilia meets hotel manager Kurt Rucker and over the course of the story attraction between them quickly complicates matters....

This is excellent multi-layered story with various engaging twists and turns, vividly told through the eyes of a tough and vulnerable protagonist. This is a great and fantastic mystery filled with suspenseful and intriguing moments, all this against the beautiful backdrop of Acapulco. This story wouldn't be this good without great characterization and snappy dialogue. Emilia is the perfect sleuth at the top of the list and this would mean little if it wasn't for the excellent supporting cast, in which there are many. There is an extra bite, a sub-plot keeping Emilia looking for las perdidas, in "Hat Dance", the continuing thread we will see how successful she will be... can't wait...

Lee Holz says

Cliff Diver is an unusual mystery/thriller primarily because of the culture in which it is set: Mexico with its endemic police corruption. Having said this, the book is a tour de force with an intriguing mystery, lots of violence and well-drawn and fully developed characters, particularly the protagonist: Detective Emilia Cruz. Highly recommended for lovers of police procedurals with a touch of the exotic.

Carmen Amato says

I'm the author so will offer an excerpt in lieu of a review:

He was looking at her, not at the cliff divers, and Emilia heard herself babble nervously. “Going off a cliff, not ready for it. Not knowing if I’m going to hit the rocks and be smashed to pieces or not.”

Emilia watched as the young diver swung his arms and rolled his neck and she wondered if he was doing it for the crowd’s benefit or if it was a release for his fear. He hunched his shoulders forward, then pulled them back. His knees bent and his thigh muscles rippled and then he launched himself into the air.

For a moment he was silhouetted against the spectacular sunset and then he curled himself into a somersault. The crowd gasped in unison as his body rotated and his hair seemed to kiss the cliff face. Then he stretched out, straining for distance, and completed a soaring arc that plunged him into the water like an arrow shot from a bow and Emilia felt the strain and the pain and the rush of cold water.
