



The Probability of Murder

Ada Madison

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Dr. Sophie Knowles is a professor with a way of making even the most complex math problems fun for her students. But when the school's beloved librarian is found shot to death in the stacks, Sophie learns that her friend was more complex than she ever knew. Now, Sophie must take on some rigorous deduction homework before the chances for another murder on campus increase exponentially...

The Probability of Murder Details

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From Reader Review The Probability of Murder for online ebook

Mary Ronan Drew says

The Probability of Murder, the second book in the Professor Sophie Knowles mystery series, was released yesterday. It arrived at about 1:30 (pre-ordered) and I had finished it by 1:30 today. Delightful!

Sophie teaches math at a small New England college. Her beau, Bruce, is a helicopter pilot for MAstar, a rescue and transport service, and he is an ice climber. She has a delightful sidekick, Ariana, who is New Age personified and owns a bead store. And Sophie is friends with the librarian at Henley College, Charlotte Crocker.

Except that one Friday afternoon when the math and science students are holding their weekly party to honor an important scientist or mathematician (this week it's Moebius) their cell phones start ringing. The police and ambulances are gathered around the entrance of the library next door and it is soon apparent that the librarian has been a victim of murder.

A few days before Charlotte had asked Sophie to keep her gym bag and now that the woman is dead, Sophie decides to look inside. She finds something much more interesting than dirty gym clothes.

While Bruce is off on a weekend climbing trip in New Hampshire Sophie decides to help their friend, Virgil, a police detective, to figure out who would want to kill Charlotte. Sophie begins to ask questions and discovers that Charlotte was not the person she pretended to be. As the weather turns nasty up in New Hampshire, the situation at Henley becomes increasingly complicated and dangerous for Sophie.

The first book in this series is The Square Root of Murder.

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Linda says

3.5 stars. Very enjoyable 2nd book in the series. It's been a while since I read book 1 and that didn't make any difference in reading this book. This was well written and I went right along with Sophie following the clues. Looking forward to the next one.

Wendy Koscierynski says

I have a child in college right now and I loved the setting. I enjoyed the math professor being female as well.

Linniegayl says

For the most part I enjoyed this mystery, the second in the series featuring mathematics professor Sophie

Knowles. Once again Sophie becomes involved in the murder investigation of someone in the small college town, this time the victim is a friend and college librarian.

The ultimate murderer wasn't completely obvious to me from the beginning, and this time there were plenty of intermediary villains. That being said, I had issues with some stupid things Sophie did withholding information from the police. I also questioned why one of the villains would completely out-of-the-blue confess virtually everything to Sophie.

So this would probably be a straight C for me, an average read. As with the first book in the series, having a woman mathematics professor and the setting a college campus probably raises the grade a bit.

Anastasia says

The Probability of Murder by Ada Madison is the second book in A Professor Sophie Knowles Mystery series. When her friend, librarian Charlotte Crocker, is found murdered, Sophie learns that there is a lot her friend had kept secret and there were many that wanted her dead. Sophie gets caught up in the investigation which helps take her mind off her boyfriend's hazardous mountain climbing. I enjoyed the book which focused as much on the dangers of mountain climbing as it did on the murder as well as various scams. I loved the puzzles and brainteasers scattered throughout the book as well as at the end. Altogether an informative and entertaining read.

Bryn says

First I was bored, then I liked it, then the ending was just a bad cliché. It's a basic cozy mystery, a mild read, with some interesting characters and others based on inaccurate and annoying stereotypes.

Victoria Wright says

This is the second book in this series, and I enjoyed it as much as the first. I probably would have done much better in college stats and probability if Sophie Knowles had been my instructor.

This book, set on a small college campus in Massachusetts and the surrounding town, is well-written and well-plotted. I found myself feeling the surprises at the twists and turns the same way the main character felt them. The subplot featuring the character's significant other was exciting, too. Again, I found myself empathising with her. This book felt more character driven than you usually find in a mystery of this type.

The author plays fair with the clues in this story. The reader doesn't discover anything about the murder or the victim before the main character does. The main character suffers some frustration when she finds out some hidden facts, and once again, I was right there with her. Most fun for me is that I didn't figure out the mystery until just before the main character did.

I love this series, and I look forward to another one.

Lauren says

Another Friday party in the Benjamin Franklin lounge and Professor Sophie Knowles is looking forward to her weekend getaway with her medevac pilot boyfriend Bruce Granville when everyone's cell phones start going off at once. Someone's being carried out of the library on a stretcher, dead. Sophie's friend Charlotte Crocker has been murdered and it looks like the librarian everyone loved might not have been as squeaky clean as Sophie thought.

Ada Madison's *The Probability of Murder* is a good quick read, a soft mystery with a likeable heroine who manages to solve the crime while still worrying about her ice climbing boyfriend and being a good teacher. The story was good, though I could have done with a bit less of Sophie doing busy work to distract herself. I enjoyed the character interactions and would like to see more about how Sophie maintains a friendship with seemingly flighty Ariana. Not sure how I felt about the character detail of Sophie writing word problems as a side job/hobby, it seems like the kind of thing that would come up again later but it wasn't used much here. Overall, my problems with the book were more pacing related than anything.

On the other hand, I really liked the characters. A few of the students and professors seemed like the folks that every college has which helped make Henley read true. The atmosphere was good, very small town or artsy part of a small college town. I'd definitely read more of the series.

I give *The Probability of Murder* a four out of five, it earns it.

Debbie says

"*The Probability of Murder*" is a mix of cozy mystery and suspenseful general fiction. Sophie decides to solve a murder mystery (which takes only half of the pages) while worrying about her boyfriend who may have been hurt while engaged in a dangerous sport activity. This is the second novel in a series, but you don't need to read the previous book to understand this one and this novel didn't spoil the mystery in the first book.

I should warn you that Sophie does not use logic to solve this case. Granted, logical people don't always act logically, and it's realistic that she's very emotional in this situation. She even wonders where "the logical Sophie went."

The problem is that I picked up this book expecting her to use logic to solve the mystery. Instead we get scenes like the one where she sees where a series of facts is pointing but she likes the person it points to, so she decided that following where the facts lead "isn't logical." Or a scene where she's told a certain person is probably a dangerous killer and to stay away from them, and instead she confronts them with a "so you killed her..." and thinks that's rational behavior.

Due to a twist about the victim by the end, I also felt that some of the things we initially learned about the victim were left unexplained by this new slant about what she was doing. I didn't feel very satisfied by the mystery.

However, I did enjoy the loving and supportive relationship Sophie had with her boyfriend and how she had to deal with the risks he took in his job and his hobbies. The characters acted in realistic ways and dealt with realistic issues. The suspense was high due to the worry about the boyfriend's safety and the threat of a killer on campus.

There was no explicit bad language and no sex scenes. Overall, I'd recommend this mystery as long as you aren't expecting a Sherlock Holmes type logic to be used in solving the case.

I received this book as a review copy from the publisher.

Jeannie and Louis Rigod says

Dr. Sophie Knowles, a mathematician and scholar is enjoying the weekly department food/drink party at Benjamin Franklin Hall at Henley College, where she is the Math department head. Sophie is also looking ahead at some quality time with her boyfriend, Bruce, a med-evac with MASTar rescue.

As they head out for a quick trip to Boston, they walk into crime scene tape. Sophie learns her friend, Charlotte Crocker, the schools librarian has been murdered. As the shock pours through her mind, Sophie feels that the true story is not being released. The equation doesn't match the facts and Sophie begins to wonder what are the correct factors in this case.

To add additional suspense, Bruce continues his plans to climb a dangerous mountain with his friends in New Hampshire and the weather is worsening. Bruce is too confident, in Sophie's mind, and her worry increases.

Luckily, Sophie is left at home with her best friend, Araina, and with the best friend of Bruce's Homicide Detective Virgil. Little does Sophie know just how much she is going to need both of them as home invasions, robberies, fraud and deceptions swirl around her orderly life.

This was a great read and I am so looking forward to the next in the series.

LORI CASWELL says

Dr. Sophie Knowles is a rare college professor who has a way of making the most complex math problems fun for her students. She hosts weekly parties celebrating famous scientists and mathematicians. They are quite popular with the students.

The fun quickly ends when Charlotte Crocker, Sophie's friend and college librarian, is found dead in the stacks. Everyone loved Charlotte until it was learned that her entire life was just a web of lies. Sophie can't believe the woman she knew had such a checkered past. So instead of grabbing a couple of days away with her boyfriend Bruce, she needs to do her own homework and formulate a plan to catch the killer before there are any more deductions of students or staff. She is on her own as Bruce takes off on a ice mountain climb, so she has to worry about him too!!

Dollycas Thoughts

College campuses are full of big, old buildings full of mystery. They are also full of plenty of suspects. Sophie is very distracted in this story by events involving her boyfriend but it doesn't stop her from working her way through the clues to solve the problems doing her best to catch the culprit. The author combines both situations in a very exciting and entertaining way.

If math was not your favorite or best subject there is no need to be afraid of this series. Being a mathematics professor you may think Sophie takes a very analytical approach to solving the crime, but she is more of an emotional solver when it comes to finding this murderer. She is also very open to having pizza with the Bruce's friend, Detective Virgil Mitchell to pump him for information.

This is a fun, captivating cozy to escape into today!!

Rachel Kramer Bussel says

I wasn't sure if I would like this series, because I'm not quite the math or puzzle whiz professor Sophie Knowles is. Indeed, I didn't know what some of the puzzles she references are, but I liked the story anyway, especially the cozy campus world Madison introduces us too, as well as Sophie's relationship with her boyfriend, Bruce, who is off climbing a mountain for much of the plot, which becomes its own subplot. Sophie is ultra logical, yet the puzzle she has to unwrap of her friend, or possibly former friend, who led a double life and has been killed, keeps her up at night. Sophie is a mix of levelheaded and, rightfully, fearful, such as when she finds her home has been broken into, but the heart of this book is her heart, which is confused over whether her librarian friend was even partially who she seemed, and whether she can handle the worrying that comes with loving someone as adventurous as Bruce. I enjoyed the world of academia built here, with its office politics and struggles over budgets and wacky characters, who never felt overly wacky or misplaced. I look forward to reading the rest of this series.

Joe says

Not as many puzzles.

Max says

I really enjoyed this at first, but I feel like it sort of fell apart by the end. Sophie is at one of her weekly science and math parties when everyone's phones start ringing, and she hears there's been an incident at the school library. It turns out that Sophie's good friend the librarian has been murdered. Of course, it soon also turns out that the librarian wasn't who Sophie thought she was, and Sophie feels betrayed and yet compelled to find out the truth of who killed her "friend". All of this was pretty enjoyable, as there's a lot of fun deception and ferreting out of clues and information. However, the first thing that brought the book down was the subplot about Sophie's boyfriend, who's going on a mountain climbing expedition with some friends. A storm closes in and Sophie loses contact with him, causing her to spend as much time fretting about him as she is figuring out who done it. My problem is that I simply don't care about the boyfriend, because I know he's not going to get killed off. Furthermore, the mountain climbing plot starts to overwhelm the mystery towards the end, and yet it feels like it exists solely to set up some aspects of the final confrontation.

Relatedly, the climax and the revelation of the murderer's identity is rather underwhelming. The murderer doesn't necessarily not make sense, but they are pretty disappointing, especially since a single slip up that manifests as a single clue within the last thirty pages is what gets them caught. All in all, the math and puzzles feel like window dressing rather than an essential part of the narrative, and I definitely enjoyed this installment much less than the first one. However, since there's only two more books in the series anyway, I may give the rest of it a shot on the theory that this might represent a low point.

Donna says

Thanks to this book, I'm adding a new shelf to my Goodreads library for the first time in years: "mystery-cozy." Until now, all mysteries were shelved under "mystery-suspense" (one term or the other being descriptive of some books, with a few best described with the combined term).

It occurs to me, though, that the kind of "suspense" offered by a good cozy is different than the suspense offered by a mainstream murder mystery (such as those by Jonathan Kellerman) or an action-adventure novel (like those by Lee Child). I read cozies differently than I do the mainstream genres, in different moods and sometimes for different reasons.

So my new category at this moment contains this one book by the pseudonymous Ada Madison (and I liked it well to pick up another by the same author, if the occasion arises). Of course this also means I need to do a little reorganizing of my virtual "shelves," but that's okay. At least I won't have to dust!
