



# Grace Under Pressure

*Julie Hyzy*

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**Grace Under Pressure** Julie Hyzy

**From the author of the successful White House Chef mysteries.**

Everyone wants a piece of millionaire Bennett Marshfield, owner of Marshfield Manor, but now it's up to a new curator Grace Wheaton and handsome groundskeeper Jack Embers to protect dear old Marshfield. But to do this, they'll have to investigate a botched Ponzi scheme, some torrid Wheaton family secrets-and sour grapes out for revenge.

## Grace Under Pressure Details

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Author : Julie Hyzy

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## From Reader Review Grace Under Pressure for online ebook

### Sabrina says

As much as I love my romances, I do have a soft spot for really good Cozy Mysteries. Now, when the two genres mix it up, I'm all over it. When I found out that *Grace Under Pressure* wasn't only a Cozy, but that it also contained a little romance, I really couldn't wait to read it.

The opening scene really pulled me in and was a great introduction to our main character Grace Wheaton and Marshfield Manor, the grand estate where she works as a curator. The scene was a perfect set-up for showing Grace's character and also a little slice of info on the estate.

Julie did a wonderful job tying what were seemingly random events together to create a tangled web of a mystery for Grace to solve. I loved how Julie expertly placed small nuggets of information that would pop up again as major clues and also the red herons she throws in along the way keep you guessing.

While there is just a hint of romance in this book, I found the growing relationship between Grace and Jack to be extremely interesting and I really want to read the next book to see how it develops. There is a hint of mystery surrounding Jack and it not only intrigues Grace, it does me too!

A well-written twist of a mystery, *Grace Under Pressure* was a satisfying cozy that already has me ready for the next in the series. Cozy fans will find much to love about this book and will appreciate some of the larger plot points that will come as a complete surprise.

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### Heidi (Yup. Still here.) says

I could never really get into this one. I love her White House Chef series so I think I will stick to that series.

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### Hannah says

It wasn't until I'd finished reading *Grace Under Pressure* that I realized how apt the title is. The protagonist, Grace, takes "not buckling under pressure" to whole new heights! It's a likeable trait in a main character, and it's largely what I liked about this first installment in the Manor House mystery series – it's not really your classic detective novel with well-paced investigation, but it's fascinating watching Grace handling the numerous tasks she has as curator of Marshfield Manor while juggling her investigation into Abe's death on top of family matters. Readers of amateur detective novels who've tired of the bumbling, clueless protagonist will probably enjoy reading about Grace, who is a marvel of patience, diplomacy and epic management skills. Like the title, there's no name more apt for this character.

As for the actual mystery, it originally appeared to be a "simple" case of murder – the curator of Marshfield Manor, Abe, has been shot, which is what catapults Grace from being an assistant curator in her probation period to acting curator. The murder, however, is connected to a much bigger case where hundreds of people were scammed out of their money. In the midst of all this chaos is Grace's realization that she might have deeper ties to the Marshfield family than she'd previously thought, as well as problems with crazy hotel guests and catty staff members. There certainly isn't a single quiet moment in this book, but I rather enjoy the constant action. I did think that the reasoning behind the murderer's actions could have been clearer,

however.

(view spoiler)

I don't know whether I missed something or whether there's a hole in that logic somewhere. Either way, I wasn't overly bothered by it, and enjoyed everything else about the book. For those who like their romance, there is also a potential love interest for Grace in Jack Embers, the contract landscaper. Worth a read!

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## **Bird says**

First off, I thought the sleuth was going to be an elderly woman (partly because the blurb made it sound that way, and partly because the name "Grace Wheaton" conjures up an image of a kindly grandmother), so I was surprised that she was actually young. This threw me off a bit in the beginning, and it took me awhile to get adjusted.

Cozies usually have a strong sense of place, which I found lacking in this book. The side characters weren't very interesting, either, and some seemed pretty pointless (why, exactly, did Grace need to have two roommates?). Also, Grace's reasons for sleuthing, and the fact that the detectives involved seemed semi-supportive of it, didn't ring true.

But what really bothered me (and what I say at the risk of sounding like an idiot) is that the crime didn't really make sense to me. I browsed through some of the reviews, and no other readers seemed to have the same issues that I did. So either I really missed the boat on this one, or I just spent too much time dissecting the storyline.

(view spoiler)

Most cozies have a generic scene at the end where the killer confesses how/why he did everything. It can be pretty formulaic, but it at least clears up any lingering questions about the crime. Since this book didn't have any such scene, I'm left stewing over unanswered questions.

This is a one-star read for me. I won't be continuing with the series, even though the second book sounded interesting.

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## **Jonathan says**

If you are new to cozy mysteries and you are looking for good authors, Julie Hyzy is one I'd recommend, her writing is very good.

This book was really good, it started off fairly slow, but picked up and by the end I couldn't put it down. The characters were amazing, I loved all of them, even the ones you're supposed to hate, and the setting was

amazing. I'd love to work in a place like Marshfield Mansion.

The mystery was really well set up and the MC wasn't antagonizing when she was investigating. The ending was kind of rapid, but it all fit together nicely.

Overall a good book that I'd recommend. I already have the next one in a stack to read!

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### **Suzanne says**

After falling in love with Julie Hyzy's White House Chef series featuring Olivia Parras, it didn't take long to become hooked on the Manor of Murder Mysteries, and the main character, Grace Wheaton!

Grace becomes assistant curator at the famous Marshfield Manor after returning to Emberstowne, the home of her birth, to take care of her dying mother. While Grace's mom and aunt had grown up in Emberstowne, grace and her sister had moved away to Chicago at a very young age with their parents, and then Grace, after finishing college had moved on to take a job in New York. This homecoming is bittersweet for Grace, as she is faced with great personal loss and must pick up the pieces in her life. Marshfield Manor has always held a special place in her family's hearts and it seems natural to take a job there, especially since her grandmother had held a position at the manor many years prior to Grace's birth.

Shortly after taking the job at Marshfield Manor, a horrible murder occurs, and Grace suddenly finds herself promoted to curator of the manor, a move that in some ways points the finger to her for the murder. Grace must grapple with the changes at the manor, while coaching her roommates, and owners of Amethyst Wines, a wine shop in town, through their own crisis. As she delves deeper into the murder mystery, she finds that the manor and its people hold plenty of secrets, but will she get to the bottom of things before it is too late?

I loved this book so much, that I had to keep going, and read the next book in the series, "Grace Interrupted" right after finishing this book!

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### **Kate says**

I wish I could give a 2.5. The first 100 pages or so of this book are soooo slow and boring. I only forged ahead because I hate quitting on books. The second half of the book picked up and was much better but it took a lot of effort to make myself get there. I also thought that the main character, Grace, was somewhat unlikeable- her boss is murdered in cold blood and basically the very next day she is appointing herself as his replacement and taking over his office. Meanwhile no one has told her she could do this, and she is BRAND NEW to working at the Manor. She's just taking advantage of the confusion after the murder and trying to get ahead. That was a little grating and didn't endear me to her very much. Other than that the book was decent, but it has nothing on the White House series from this same author.

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### **Linda says**

Great start to the series! I really like Grace and the other characters. The setting in a manor (that I'm

comparing to the Biltmore in my head) was fun and different. The mystery was good with an exciting end. Looking forward to reading more in the series.

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### **Book Concierge says**

Grace Wheaton's lifelong dream has been to work at Marshfield Manor, the estate of millionaire Bennett Marshfield. Having returned to Emberstowne from New York to care for her dying mother, Grace is now the owner of a dilapidated "painted lady" Victorian and still on probation at her new job as assistant curator of the historic mansion. When curator and estate director Abe Vargas is murdered however, suddenly the new employee is tasked with organizing the mansion staff. And she also takes on some private sleuthing to help the police with the investigation.

This is a decent cozy mystery (first in a series). Grace is a likeable character – intelligent, resourceful, tenacious, and methodical. She does take a few unnecessary chances and doesn't always recognize the dangerous situations she encounters until it is nearly too late. At least she gets herself out of any jams, rather than rely on a strong, handsome man to rescue her. There's a hint of a developing romance, but that's all it is, a hint. There are also stories relating to her family background and her contentious relationship with her sister that are bound to be further explored as the series continues.

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### **Matt says**

Already a Julie Hyzy fan, it was a pleasure to read her other series, equally as light fare as the White House Chef books and filled with as much fast-paced action. As I mentioned in the other series' reviews, these are not heavy books to expand the mind, but more to entertain and provide some character development. The opening book of this series does just that, letting us into the world of old money, antiques, and a quirky main character who finds herself in the middle of murder. That said, I find this character and setting much more... well-fitted to crime solving than Ollie the Chef.

As assistant curator, we see our main character at the helm of the crime that occurs inside the museum/manor. She is in charge of all staff and doing her part to vet them for suspicious activity. This makes sense and Hyzy lays the groundwork for it by placing her character in such a position. This is not to dismiss the White House Chef series at all, but simply something to note.

Within this book, the dialogue is not overly cumbersome or even silly. It helps the book flow very well and matches well with the characters found therein. Hyzy has a knack for really getting to the root of her characters and presents them in such a way as to bring them to life off the page.

Kudos, Madam Hyzy. Another good series to recommend and enjoy!

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### **Ronna says**

I adore Julie Hyzy's White House Chef Mysteries, then I saw that she has her first in a new series out in Audio books, so I gave it a try. This series is just as interesting and was fun to listen to also!

Grace is a new assistant curator at (fictional) Marshfield Manor. Her family is from this area and she had spent many happy days here as a child. Unfortunately, a disturbed guest causing a huge scene and then a murder, causes Grace to have to start off her job with much more involvement than she had anticipated. Her gossipy nosey assistant, Frances, seems to know everything about everybody, but she's obviously no fan of Grace. But the hunky gardener, Jack, is considerably nicer. She's helped in stepping in to help protect the rich owner from danger by her two roommates in the beautiful but decaying mansion that her grandmother has left to her.

This mystery has lots of interesting details involving curating in an old mansion. All the different rooms and secrets are especially fascinating --I love old houses and secret rooms. The characters are intensely created with great flaws and creative personalities--some you love and some you love to hate. Hyzy has created another fun cozy series for sure. The narrator for the audio book is wonderful--creating voices distinct for every character. Definite winner!

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### **Cindy says**

Nice cozy book set in a manor book where the main character is employed as the main problem solver and lives with two gay men who own their own wine shop.

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### **Grey853 says**

This is the first in a Manor of Murder mystery series by the same author who does the White House Chef series. There are strong similarities in the two female protagonists, so even if I hadn't seen the author's name, I'd suspect it.

Grace Wheaton has always loved the manor and now she's the assistant curator for the historical attraction. When the curator is murdered, she gets an abrupt promotion and has to take over quickly. While she's very competent, as is Ollie in the White House Chef series, she puts up with a lot of insubordinate behavior from her assistant. For me that's the weakest part of both series. It might be my own bias, but I can't imagine being in charge of something so important and have someone talk to me the way these people do to Ollie and Grace. I don't care how well they did their jobs otherwise. If anyone spoke to me or acted the way they did, they'd be pink-slipped after the first warning.

That said, I did like Grace and I loved her obvious dedication to her job. I also enjoyed her relationship with her roommates. I hope that's developed in later books.

There's a lot of background on the manor and the beginning's a bit slow, but I did enjoy the book as a whole and look forward to the next book.

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### **Myhotstylist says**

one word: WOW

If ever you wanted to read a true to life cozy mystery, you will find it with in the pages of this fast paced engaging little gem of a book. I was hooked after the first page, and could not put it down. This was a well

plotted mystery, with no sex or curse words, surrounded by a beautiful setting within the walls of an old mansion. It kept my attention, and had me guessing up to the final reveal. This is my first book by Julie Hyzy, and she is now at the top of my favorite authors list. Im definitely hoping for a sequel.

The book opens with an action scene from the "bird room" at the Marshfield Mansion, where our lead character, Grace is on staff as assistant curator. During the distraction, her boss is found murdered in an upstairs room. Now as acting-curator, Grace has agreed to help sort out this mess to prove herself to the mansion owner, Bennett Marshfield.

Within the walls are antique artifacts, beautiful grounds, and a busy-body groutchy assistant, Grace ends up uncovering family secrets, hidden rooms, and a scam artist fast at work, all while trying to figure out who the killer is really after.....

This was an exciting, fun little book, and I cant seem to give it enough praise. There were plenty of plot twists and the setups were done flawlessly. Definitely worth reading.

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### **Kristen says**

I tried to like this, really, I did. It sounded right up my alley but it just didn't grab me and I did not finish it.

The characters in this did not engage me. They were either dull or unpleasant and I did not feel a connection to any of them. I find it hard to like a book where none of the characters are people I can feel a connection to.

Also, the story felt slow-moving and flat to me. Even though the murder happens right at the start, everything that comes next is S-L-O-W. Also, things felt cliched. Grace is presented as underestimated and not taken seriously, the cops come across as bullies and not so bright, the millionaire boss is obtuse, the secretary is a gossipy snot. I just felt like everyone in this was a cliché.

Finally, I was hoping for more about the living and working in a mansion and what that was like and that wasn't really there. I got as far as Chapter 10 and at that point I just wasn't into this at all, so I gave up and sent it back to the library. This one wasn't for me.

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