



## To Brew or Not to Brew

*Joyce Tremel*

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## To Brew or Not to Brew Joyce Tremel

**An all-new mystery series set in a Pittsburgh craft brew pub, featuring a brewmaster with a head for sleuthing.**

The Allegheny Brew House is a dream come true for Maxine “Max” O’Hara, who went all the way to Germany for her brewmaster certification, and is now preparing to open her own craft brew pub in a newly revitalized section of Pittsburgh. But before she can start pouring stouts and lagers to thirsty throngs, there’s trouble on tap. Suspicious acts of sabotage culminate in Max finding her assistant brewmaster and chef Kurt Schmidt strangled in one of the vats.

Between rescuing a stray gray tabby she names Hops and considering a handsome ex-hockey player as her new chef, Max doesn’t have a lot of time to solve a murder. But with a homicide detective for a dad, she comes to criminal investigation naturally. And if someone is desperate enough to kill to stop her from opening, Max needs to act fast—before her brand-new brew biz totally tanks...

INCLUDES RECIPES

## To Brew or Not to Brew Details

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Author : Joyce Tremel

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## From Reader Review To Brew or Not to Brew for online ebook

### Dawn Frazier says

I have to start by saying that I was on the fence about reading this book, only because of the "brewery" aspect of the story. I don't drink beer, or go to bars of any kind. But, I am so glad I read this one after all, because it has now ended up being one of my very favorite books of the year!!! I loved it!!! Fantastic writing, and characters, and I love the setting of Pittsburgh, as it is one of my favorite cities. I love the hockey references, (especially to the Penguins, my favorite hockey team!), and I love the romance that is brewing with Max and Jake. This book is full of so many twists and turns, and poor Max is just being put through so much turmoil by trying to open her brewery. I could not wait to see what happened, but at the same time, I didn't want it to end. I cannot wait to get my hands on the next in the series!! Do not miss this book!!!!

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### LORI CASWELL says

#### Dollycas's Thoughts

This series is off to an exceptional start. This author has a strong cozy voice and she has written quite a mystery.

Hometown girl, Maxine "Max" O'Hara, comes back from Germany ready to open The Allegheny Brew House. But clearly someone is doing everything they can to prevent her from opening. The acts of vandalism were troublesome but finding her chef Kurt Schmidt dead in one of her precious vats made her wonder if her dream was ever going to come true. Her dad, a police detective, thinks Kurt's death may have been an accident. Max knows it was murder and she is going to prove it.

I like these characters. We only meet Kurt briefly but I really liked him too and was sad he was the victim. But as Kurt exits, Jake enters. He is a friend of Max's brothers and she had a huge crush on him. Max comes from a big family, 5 older brothers. We are also introduced to a kitten Max rescues and quickly names Hops.

Brew pubs are popping up all over and I am overjoyed that they have entered the cozy scene. The author educates us just enough without getting too technical about how craft brews are made. We also learn a little brewing history as the building housing the The Allegheny Brew House was once a part of a large commercial brewery.

I did figure out the guilty party a bit before Max but that did not take away from my enjoyment. I wanted to see what happened with Jake and Max and see Max realize her dream. I think the two of them make a great team. She also needs someone to have her back because she does speak her mind even when she could be talking to a killer. I guess it is good she not only has Jake but her family and friends there when she needs them.

We are given a couple recipes at the end of the book and just a taste of Tangled Up In Brew, the next book in the series. I will be ready to belly up to the bar as soon as it is released.

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### **Amanda says**

I must admit, when I started this book, I had some mixed emotions. I'm from western PA, but have never been a big fan of Pittsburgh, so I was afraid I would hate the setting. I also rarely start a brand new series, for fear I'll love it and have to wait too long for the next book. Happily, though my second fear was realized, my first fear was unfounded. If I lived in that area, I could spend a lot of time on Butler Street! This is the street where most of the action in *To Brew Or Not To Brew* takes place. Max's brewery, and her friends' shops are all there.

I found most of the characters in this book very likable, especially the main character, Max, and her chef, Jake. I'm looking forward to getting to know them, and some of the secondary characters like Kristie and Candy, better as the series goes on. I'm especially curious to find out Candy's past, as she seems to know more than just your average neighborhood baker.

The story itself was believable, with the plot and resolution not at all far-fetched. I think Max was quick to accuse people of things they may not have done, but other than that, she behaved and talked like a regular person. I wasn't too sure who the killer was until almost the end, which I like. I don't want to go through the whole book thinking the main character is dumb because the killer is too obvious!

It was really interesting to me to learn a bit about the beer brewing process. I've always been curious to know more, and to see it in action. And the food that was mentioned in the book (with two recipes at the end!) sounded delicious. Except pierogies. I really don't like pierogies.

All in all, I really liked this book and am eagerly awaiting the next one. I did win this book in a contest and am happy I did! I'm a huge cozy mystery fan, but there are so many available, I'm not sure I would have picked this one out on my own.

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### **Yvonne says**

After earning her brewmaster certification in Germany, Maxine "Max" O'Hara goes to her hometown in Pittsburgh and opens her own brew house. Things get off to a rocky start, to say the least. Her assistant, Kurt Schmidt, is killed in one of the vats. The death is declared an accident, but Max is convinced it was murder. It couldn't be a coincidence that the death followed several pranks at the brew house as they get closer to opening day.

Max's father is a homicide detective but he's ruling on the side of an accident. This means Max plans to take matters in her own hands and find out who is doing this to her new business. First, she has to hire a replacement for Kurt. Fortunately, a close friend of her brother's, who happens to be Max's childhood crush, is looking for a job. Former hockey player Jake Lambert is more than willing to take the job. With her business almost ready to go, Max devotes her time to catching a killer.

A new cozy mystery series! It's so much fun meeting new characters and new settings. I'm not much of a beer drinker, but I was craving beer as I read through this book. I was hooked on this one right from the start. I even liked Kurt very much and was kind of shocked that he was the victim. It happened early in the book so

the mystery was drawn through from beginning to end.

The cast of characters were all portrayed to perfection. Often characters in a new series can be stiff as readers get to know them, but not with the one. I felt they were already old friends that I could not wait to re-visit. Oh, and there's a little kitty! Isn't the kitty in the cover great? That little pink thing in the cover is the cast on the poor kitty's paw.

The plot was intriguing and very well written. It kept me guessing almost to the end. It amazes me that this is the author's first novel. She seems like a pro to me and I'll be looking for the next book she writes.

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FTC Disclosure: The publisher provided me with a copy of this book to review. This did not influence my thoughts and opinions in any way. All opinions expressed are my own.

### **Penny Watson says**

I love the premise for this cozy series...woman-brewer who opens a new pub in Pittsburgh, my home town!

It had a nice romance "brewing"...ugh, that was bad. Sorry.

I really enjoyed the details about beer, and I loved the Pittsburgh setting. The neighborhood around her restaurant is filled with fun shops and interesting characters.

Looking forward to reading the next book!

Grade: B

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### **Ellen says**

#### **No spoilers**

I really liked this book. The mystery was well thought out, with plenty of red herrings. Looking forward to reading the next in the series.

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### **Amanda McGill says**

For full review and a cute picture of my cats - The Limit of Books Does Not Exist

I really enjoyed To Brew or Not to Brew, it had a great set of characters and it's definitely a series that I want to return to!

*Maxine "Max" O'Hara is just a month away from her dream of opening her own craft brew pub in*

*Pittsburgh. There is still a lot to do and the tragic event of losing her chef and assistant brewmaster doesn't help with her opening fast approaching. Max swears that Kurt's death wasn't just a tragic accident, but does she have enough evidence to change the mind of the homicide detective in charge, who just happens to be her dad!*

I enjoyed that the story took place revolved around a brew pub that was also located in Pittsburgh. I really enjoy the city of Pittsburgh and I understood the references to their well known athletes in the city. I learned a lot about brewing, but thankfully the author didn't focus too much unnecessary information about the art of brewing.

Like I mentioned above, I really enjoyed the cast of characters that were in the novel. I really liked Max as the main character and she had a great supporting cast (love interest, family and friends). The biggest negative was that the mystery was pretty obvious (at least to me). I solved the case pretty early and was just waiting for Max to figure it out.

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### **Fred says**

To Brew Ir Not To Brew is the first book in the A Brewing Trouble Mystery series

A great beginning to a very fun new series.

Maxine "Max" O'Hara is looking forward to opening her brewpub in about a month, but there have been unexplained small acts of vandalism occurring while the remodeling has been going on. Then one evening, Max gets a call from Kurt, her assistant brew master and chef, telling her to come back as he has found the reason for the vandalism. When she arrives, she cannot find him, but soon finds him on the platform of the mash tun, dead. Fearing, that her chance of opening might not materialize she starts a little investigation of her own. But first she needs to find a replacement for Kurt and that comes in the form of Jake Lambert, a former ice hockey player and childhood friend of her brothers and someone she had a crush on growing up. Jake proves to be just what she needed, and maybe in more ways than just as the chef.

Max, with the help fellow shop owners and book club members, Candy and Kristie set out to find the person or persons, who were responsible for the vandalism and Kurt's murder. Some crucial help comes from a very unlikely source. This book has an interesting and believable cast of characters. From Candy and Kristie, who always have Max's back to Max's brothers: Father Sean and Mike, who are still protective of their "little" sister. And of course her father, a police detective, Sean, Sr..

Delicious sounding recipes are also included in this exciting new series.

Will definitely be watching for the next book.

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### **Lisa Ks Book Reviews says**

A strong start to the Brewing Trouble Mystery series, TO BREW OR NOT TO BREW, is suds above in originality.

I don't drink beer. I know nothing about beer. But I do know good writing when I read it, and author Joyce

Tremel is a good writer. One of the things I love about cozy mysteries is learning about new subjects. While beer isn't something I would set out to study about, Ms. Tremel made me enjoy what I learned.

This book had an easy flow that propelled the story along at a great pace. With very likeable characters, and an adorable cat named, appropriately enough, Hops, there was always something happening to keep the reader drawn in. One of those I'll-just-read-one-more-chapter type of books, but then you keep reading because you just don't want to put it down.

If you're looking for a new experience in your cozy mystery reading, give TO BREW OR NOT TO BREW a try.

You'll find a couple recipes and a preview of, TANGLED UP IN BREW, book 2 in this fun new series by Joyce Tremel.

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### **Melodie says**

Not a bad read, not a really good read, IMHO, but a fair read. Learned more about beer than I ever wanted to know (not a beer drinker), but the mystery wasn't bad. I'll read the next one.

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### **Lacey says**

First of all I want to say thank you to Goodreads that I was able to win this novel in a giveaway! I can't remember the last time I won anything of any kind so thank you for the huge thrill I got from the "you're a winner!" Email. Secondly I need to tell everybody who intends on reading this novel, DO NOT read the acknowledgments first!! It ended up giving away the who the murderer was (not by directly saying who it is, but if you put two and two together you can figure it out real quick), so don't read them until you're finished reading the book itself. All in all though I really enjoyed this book. I am a huge cozy mystery fanatic as well as a beer lover so this book automatically seemed like a win win to me. From the main character Max to her lovely adopted kitten Hops you can't help but fall in love with each character in this book. They're all just so incredibly likeable. I'm definitely looking forward to the next book in this new series!

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### **Diane ~Firefly~ says**

A good start to a new mystery series.

Max is opening up her own brew pub but weird things have been happening. And when she finds a dead body, she realizes the problems aren't accidents. Now she needs to find a new chef while figuring out who wants to stop her business from opening enough to kill for it.

#### **What I enjoyed:**

\* Max. I liked her for the most part. She is determined to get her business going and has some good friends and family in the area.

\* Supporting characters were pretty interesting, especially Max's brothers.

\* No love triangle in sight.

What could have been better:

- \* The mystery. It was pretty obvious who was behind it fairly early.
- \* Max's habit of accusing people. She just went full steam ahead with accusations based on limited evidence.
- \* (view spoiler)

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### **Colleen Shogan says**

I really enjoyed this book. The characters were likable and well developed, the premise was enjoyable, and I loved reading a mystery set in Pittsburgh. Joyce gets Pittsburgh right in this book, which I appreciated. I am really happy I found a new mystery series to read.

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### **Janet S says**

Great start to a new series. I loved that the setting was so different - a brew pub. I loved Max and Jake. I also liked the Jake was an ex-hockey player. Fun story! I can't wait for the next one - Tangled Up In Brew.

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### **Mark Baker says**

Maxine "Max" O'Hara is only a month away from opening her new brewpub in Pittsburgh. Unfortunately, she is having very bad luck with things that keep going wrong. Her friend Kurt, who is supposed to be in charge of the kitchen, thinks it is sabotage. After he calls Max one night, she arrives to find him dead in the brewery. Was he right? Can Max find the killer before her new business tanks?

While the book started with a bang, it then slowed down a bit to set up the series before fully getting into the mystery. By the time we reached the end, things were moving quickly and I couldn't put it down before the great ending. The characters are charming and leap off the page. I'm already looking forward to visiting them again.

NOTE: I was sent a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Read my full review at [Carstairs Considers](#).

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