



A Peach of a Murder

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All year round, retired schoolteacher Phyllis Newsom is as sweet as peach pie-except during the Peach Festival, whose blue ribbon has slipped through Phyllis's fingers more than once...Everyone's a little shook up when the corpse of a no-good local turns up underneath a car in a local garage. But even as Phyllis engages in some amateur sleuthing, she won't let it distract her from out-baking her rivals and winning the upcoming Peach Festival contest.

She and all the other contestants guard their secret, original recipes with their lives-and talk a whole lot of trash. With her unusual Spicy Peach Cobbler, Phyllis hopes to knock 'em dead. But that's just an expression-never in her wildest dreams did she think her cobbler would actually kill a judge. Now, she's suspected of murder-and she's got to bake this case wide open.

A Peach of a Murder Details

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Author : Livia J. Washburn

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From Reader Review A Peach of a Murder for online ebook

AngryGreyCat says

A Peach of Murder is book one in Livia J. Washburn's A Fresh Baked Mystery Series, which now boasts nine books. The protagonist, Phyllis, is perfecting her peach recipes for competition, when a murder occurs at the peach orchard. Her son is a local cop and that gives her an in with inside information and leads that she wouldn't know about otherwise. Phyllis's husband has died and she has turned the family home into a boarding house, mainly for retired teachers. One is an older good friend of hers, Mattie, who is sadly showing the first signs of dementia.

The plus was the resolution of the mystery and the tie up of all the threads, exceptionally well done! The hints were there, but subtly done. The theme of baking/cooking contests was fun and entertaining, just seeing the petty rivalries that such events stir up. The negative was I just didn't find Phyllis all that exciting or likable. She is the stereotypical school marm character and comes across as judgmental to me. Maybe being a teacher I am just sensitive to that portrayal of us? I think if you like very, very clean cozies that exemplify southern Christian values you will enjoy this more than I did. It is well written and I said the mystery piece was handled very well.

Laurie says

A Peach of A Murder was a wonderful beginning to a fun, light cozy series. Phyllis Newsom is a widowed retired schoolteacher living in a house with several of her close friends and fellow retirees from the world of education when she is unexpectedly thrown into the mix of a murder. While she is picking peaches for a cooking contest at the county fair, the owner of the orchard is found dead under mysterious circumstances and Phyllis may be one of the only witnesses to the crime. After her son, a sheriff's deputy, takes her statement and the cops seem to get nowhere on their investigation, curiosity takes over and Phyllis and her friends begin chatting with the network of small-town buddies to dig deeper into the lives of the deceased and his family. Meanwhile, another murder takes place at the cooking contest just as Phyllis serves her cobbler. Being present at both scenes makes Phyllis and her friends fall under suspicion and in an effort to clear their names, they must do a little detecting of their own.

Livia Washburn hit a home run with this story. I adored the characters and thought the plot was clever. Phyllis is a witty and strong older woman, her friends reminded me of The Golden Girls and their new male roommate threw enough kinks into the works of the house to add humor at every turn. The banter between Phyllis and Sam is charming and while there is no real romance, their platonic chemistry is irresistible. While falling in love with the characters, I discovered the plot was outstanding. Rarely does a cozy mystery capture a reader's imagination enough to make the killer undetectable but in this case, I wasn't able to see the clues until the very end of the book. I began putting things together along with our amateur sleuths and the story was riveting by that point. I was slightly disappointed by a little twist at the end but the situation was fitting and my disappointment was completely a personal issue. In no way should it detract from the books rating. Overall, I gave this book a 4 star rating but if I was able to be more specific, it would have received 4.75. It was "A Peach" of a cozy mystery and I highly recommend it!

Mark Baker says

The annual peach festival is coming and Phyllis is hoping she can finally beat her friend and roommate in the baking festival. However, she gets distracted when some murders start happening. I didn't like the characters, the plot was bad, and the writing was distracting.

Read my full review at Carstairs Considers.

Shala says

Nice cozy mystery. I really enjoyed the characters being older and former teachers. I look forward to continuing the series.

Brenda Kirton says

Good to finally read the first of the series. I can definitely feel what the characters are like. Multiple seemingly unrelated murders, with a very unexpected connection. But when you look back it fits. Very good mystery.

Melissa says

This is murder meets the Golden Girls. The four main characters are retired teachers who all live together. While the characters weren't quite enough to hold me interest, I did think it was good. I did not figure out the killer until the main character started realizing who it was. The recipes are great.

Avid Series Reader says

A Peach of a Murder by Livia J. Washburn is the first book of the Fresh-Baked Mystery series set in modern-day Parker County Texas. Phyllis Newsom is a retired teacher, a widow who decided to keep her home and share it with fellow retired teachers as roommates. Carolyn Wilbarger is not only Phyllis' roommate, but her rival in the annual peach festival cooking contest. Phyllis and Carolyn are very secretive about their original contest recipes, concealing their cooking efforts from each other in the shared kitchen.

When the judge samples Phyllis' cobbler then drops dead, it stuns everyone at the festival; when the autopsy determines he was poisoned, Phyllis knows she didn't do it, but feels compelled to discover who did. She investigates the judge's life, family, friends and business associates. Her knowledge of townspeople (former students) from years of teaching serves her well in her questioning.

Several murders occur; it's hard to imagine they could be connected, but she eventually ties together all the evidence and understands the pattern.

Her newest roommate, Sam Fletcher, turns out to be a wonderful assistant sleuth, as well as a kind and compassionate man. Once Phyllis' conservative roommates get over the fact he's a man, they enjoy his companionship.

The cozy mystery is filled with Southern small-town culture, like dressing up for funerals to show respect, regardless of the heat, and preparing a roast in Coca-Cola. And of course, recipes are included.

Camille says

A Peach of a Murder by Livia J. Washburn

A Peach of a Murder is obviously a murder mystery. And to top off the fun, it's a baking murder mystery! It is the first book in Livia J. Washburn's baking mystery series: A Fresh-Baked Mystery.

Phyllis Newsom lives in the area of Texas famous for its peaches. Each year a huge peach festival occurs in the town, complete with a baking competition, and this year Phyllis is determined to win.

However, Phyllis has a rival, her own boarder, Carolyn, who has taken blue ribbon the past two years. Phyllis is determined her peach recipe will win, and so she heads over to the Bishop farm with her boarders and close friends Mattie, Eve and Carolyn.

Mattie is helping Phyllis to choose the best looking peaches, which Eve is helping Carolyn find the best peaches on the other side of the orchard. Mr. Bishop, a pleasant man who was once suspected of beating his son, has been helpful with their peach-gathering needs.

A few minutes later, Phyllis goes to find Mr. Bishop to ask him something and when she does, she unfortunately finds him dead, squished under his car.

The question is: did the jack fail? Or did someone cause it to fail on purpose?

A few weeks later, Carolyn and Phyllis are working hard at perfecting their secret peach recipes for the festival. Phyllis has come up with a great idea for a spicy peach cobbler with candied ginger to really add that spicy kick.

On the day of the peach festival Carolyn and Phyllis are both anxiously awaiting judging of their tasty peach recipes. Carolyn has come up with a peaches and cream cheesecake and Phyllis is just a bit worried that she may not win, as tasty as her spicy peach cobbler is.

After praising Carolyn's work, the judges reach Phyllis' booth, and in the middle of tasting her peach cobbler one of the judges, Donnie Boatwright keels over dead throwing suspicion on Phyllis' cooking, and on anyone else that the judges tasted food from, including Carolyn.

Phyllis is determined to get to the bottom of the Boatwright death, ruled a murder, and feels it in her heart that the Bishop death is somehow not an accident, and connected to the Boatwright murder. But in their peaceful town, who would have a motive to kill them both?

Read A Peach of a Murder to find out!

I thought this was a cute and cozy little murder mystery. I like baking mysteries and this was no exception. However, it also was not exceptional. While I will read the next book in the series (since I already own it) I doubt this will be my favorite baking mystery series of all time.

Definitely a quick and easy, worthwhile read, and I definitely did not guess who the killer or killers were until right as it was revealed at the end. A bit of a surprise, and almost a bit unbelievable, but I guess it is up to each reader to decide how believable, or not, the identity of the murderer or murderers is.

I say 3.5 out of 5 stars. Not bad, definitely cute, but not extraordinary.

Lynn Demsky says

A really entertaining good read! I enjoyed the characters, and how they all not only live together but work well in this story! Kept my interest and didn't guess who did it until the author told me. Already ordered the 2nd in this series! Of course I enjoy peaches also so.....

Sandra Bašić says

Slatko i zanimljivo, poput bresaka. Puno likova, zaplet i rasplet, sve što treba. Meki krimić za opuštanje, za ovaj žanr sasvim u redu. A ni recepti nisu loši, osim onog gdje se pečenje polijeva Coca-Colom, ne mogu to ni zamisliti :)

Linda says

Good start to the series. I liked the characters and look forward to seeing what happens to them in the future. Good mystery as well.

BJ Rose says

Good first book in a series that I plan on continuing! It involves senior citizens and retired teachers, both of which describe me, so I was able to (mostly) relate. I also enjoy baking, so that works for me as well. Kudos to the author for doing a good job of masking the identity of the murderer, which I did not figure out until the main character did.

Diane Morasco says

A Peach of a Murder kicks off Livia J. Washburn's mouthwatering Fresh-Baked Mystery series. Yummy!

Let me tell you straight away, you will definitely be on the hunt for a Peach Festival & some heavenly peach-pie piping hot from the oven. Oh, go ahead, toss on a few scoops of ice cream. I'm not Paula Deen so

homemade is not necessary for this foodie. Good 'ole Turkey Hill or Blue Bunny does the trick. Crazy good!

I read A Peach of a Murder w/ my faux Texas accent which is actually quite good... thank you JR Ewing!

Livia's description about life in Weatherford, Texas is unbelievable. I wanted to go visit the gritty, broiling Texas climate in search of a Peach Festival. Which is a plus whenever I'm reading any book, but especially a cozy! If the author pulls me off the island & plunks me down into their fictional town it is definitely a winner.

Washburn has an uncommon way w/ words & knows how to create a stirring tale. A Peach of a Murder is a delectable debut. Washburn doesn't toss nonsense into a baking pan & expect it to taste good. It is good because all the ingredients to prepare a well written & interesting story is included in this pungent cozy.

What I thought was impressive was the way Washburn weaved the mystery, showcased the ladies various degrees of friendship, introduced a man in their enclave & touched on a very delicate matter. A Peach of a Murder isn't your standard whodunit, Washburn seasoned it w/ layers of twist & turns.

Washburn showcased her writing chops by encompassing different story lines & crocheting it all together in a delightful bow.

A Peach of a Murder has a terrific cast of characters. Phyllis isn't the only witty character to grace the pages of Washburn's baking debut. I'm not a fan of the Golden Girls... the theme song is torture enough. I just can't get into those biddies, yet, I pictured Rue McClanahan as Eve. 'Nuff said!

A Peach of a Murder is a zesty start to an engaging series. Phyllis made me ache for my grandma who passed away when I was 8. For me, 23 years is too long to be w/o a grandma & while reading this baked delight she wasn't too far away.

So, what 'cha waiting for? The Peach Festival to pass ya by? Grab a copy of A Peach of a Murder. After all, Weatherford is the Peach Capital of Texas.

I also love the cover. I just wanted to jump in & voilà end up picking peaches @ Newt Bishop's Orchard.

Psst... I'm a cover tart!

Jeannie and Louis Rigod says

This was a very likable book. The mysteries were well-crafted and kept my attention while learning to enjoy the new characters within the plot. The dialog was readable and made the book a pleasure. I was surprised but not after the explanation of the culprit whom seemed a victim as well as a killer.

I will read the next in the series.

Dharia Scarab says

Since I don't normally write reviews unless I have something specific to say, here's the break down of how I rate my books...

1 star... This book was bad, so bad I may have given up and skipped to the end. I will avoid this author like the plague in the future.

2 stars... This book was not very good, and I won't be reading any more from the author.

3 stars... This book was ok, but I won't go out of my way to read more, But if I find another book by the author for under a dollar I'd pick it up.

4 stars... I really enjoyed this book and will definitely be on the look out to pick up more from the series/author.

5 stars... I loved this book! It has earned a permanent home in my collection and I'll be picking up the rest of the series and other books from the author ASAP.
