



# The Cakes of Monte Cristo

*Jacklyn Brady*

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Jacklyn Brady

**The Cakes of Monte Cristo** Jacklyn Brady

**In the fresh new Piece of Cake Mystery from the national bestselling author of *Rebel Without a Cake*, a pastry chef becomes embroiled in a suspicious death as a mysterious curse casts a pall over an annual New Orleans ball.**

Rita Lucero, co-owner of New Orleans's Zydeco Cakes, is thrilled to be catering an annual ball held at the Monte Cristo Hotel. Designing the high-end desserts is her priority—until she stumbles upon a mystery long-buried at her shop. It's an ornate ruby necklace, hidden underneath her staircase and rumored to be cursed.

After the gem's appraiser suddenly drops dead and Rita herself is targeted by a menacing stranger, she's no longer laughing at local superstition. Now with five cakes on order and an investigation into the necklace's past revealing layers of unsettling clues, Rita has reason to keep looking over her shoulder while she's frosting. Because any way you slice it, the next victim of the legendary curse could be her.

## The Cakes of Monte Cristo Details

Date : Published January 5th 2016 by Berkley

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Author : Jacklyn Brady

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Genre : Mystery, Cozy Mystery

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## **From Reader Review The Cakes of Monte Cristo for online ebook**

### **Danni says**

good book.

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### **Melodie says**

I always enjoy this series and this one was no exception. The story of the necklace was interesting and made for a good tale. Good characters, great setting and a good story...you can't go wrong! Recommend!

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### **E. says**

3.75 stars

This mystery story blends a delicious amount of tasty temptation with a lovely flavor of life in New Orleans. There are quite a few secondary characters who have interconnections and even though this story can be read as a stand-alone, I suspect that it would help if one was familiar with prior events. There are quick recaps sprinkled throughout the story, but sometimes it seems like there are actions that seem a little odd within the context of this story that would be clearer if one is familiar with the series. There were some elements that were irksome to me, particularly the erratic behavior of the newest employee who swings between self-effacement and blatant disregard of Rita's wishes, as well as Rita's initial cavalier dismissal of the dangers inherent in carrying around a very valuable piece of jewelry which may or not be cursed, and the final resolution felt a bit forced to me. Despite all of my reservations, however, I was fascinated by multiple facets of the story, including the creative cakes being created and the atmosphere of a city that is almost a character in itself. I think this is a fun quick read that will appeal to cozy mystery fans who like a bit of a paranormal twist in their tales.

"The Cakes of Monte Cristo" by Jacklyn Brady is a cozy mystery that is part of the 'Piece of Cake' mystery series that stars Rita, the owner of the Zydeco Cakes bakery in iconic New Orleans. A new employee's accidental discovery of a stunning necklace causes a resurgence in stories about curses as well as a fanning of an ancient feud plus a distressing string of violent encounters that escalate. Added to the stress of catering one of the premiere events of the season, it is possible that the business (and its owner) may not survive long enough to solve the mystery of the necklace.

© Night Owl Reviews

I received a copy of this title in return for an honest review.

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**OpenBookSociety.com says**

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/th...>

The Cakes of Monte Cristo

A Piece of Cake Mystery, Book #6

By Jacklyn Brady

ISBN 9780425258266

Author's website: [www.jacklynbrady.com](http://www.jacklynbrady.com)

Brought to you by OBS Reviewer Jeanie

Synopsis:

Rita Lucero, co-owner of New Orleans's Zydeco Cakes, is thrilled to be catering an annual ball held at the Monte Cristo Hotel. Designing the high-end desserts is her priority—until she stumbles upon a mystery long-buried at her shop. It's an ornate ruby necklace, hidden underneath her staircase and rumored to be cursed.

After the gem's appraiser suddenly drops dead and Rita herself is targeted by a menacing stranger, she's no longer laughing at local superstition. Now with five cakes on order and an investigation into the necklace's past revealing layers of unsettling clues, Rita has reason to keep looking over her shoulder while she's frosting. Because any way you slice it, the next victim of the legendary curse could be her.

Review:

The Cakes of Monte Cristo is a wild romp through New Orleans as Rita tries to keep one step ahead of a killer...or a curse, depending on one's perspective. Rita is part owner and manager of Zydeco Cakes; her mother-in-law, Miss Frankie, is also part owner as Rita's husband died unexpectedly when she was filing for divorce. Miss Frankie is a sweet, proper Southern lady who looked at Rita as if her daughter, high praise from this southern lady!

Rita's best friend, Simone, is the daughter of Evangeline Delahunt; mother and daughter could not be more different. Zydeco Cakes has the honor of gaining the contract to cater and provide elaborate cakes – masterpieces – for the annual ball for the Vintage Clothing Society at the Monte Cristo Hotel that Evangeline coordinated. They were elbow-deep in planning and working on the cakes amidst their usual orders when they had to hire yet another receptionist. Edie, the queen of the office, was due to return soon from maternity leave but they needed interim help. Long-time employee Estelle offered to have her niece Zoey interview for the temporary position. On the young woman's first day at work, while accidentally losing hold of boxes from the 2nd to the 1st floor of the business, found a hidden treasure, literally, in the steps.

Miss Frankie wanted nothing to do with this treasure! She recognized the very expensive settings and gems to be lost since the late 1800's. The heritage and lore behind the jewels indicated that a curse had been placed on them, as people seemed to die while the gems were in their possession. Pooh-poohing the idea of a curse, Rita took the jewelry to an appraiser. That night the appraiser died; it appeared that during a break-in at her shop, she had a heart attack and died clutching the necklace.

One would think New Orleans to be a very small town the way the rumors began to fly about the jewelry. Of course, Zoey wanted to be in the local newspaper article as one of the finders of the treasure of mixed value. Rita wanted to find the family who truly would own the jewelry and return it to the heirs of the original owner – and of course, one of the more prominent ladies in the Society claimed to be the rightful owner. Oh, how to get five cakes complete with both cake and decorating surrounding the tall dress form atop each cake

to look like elegant couture of earlier generations, plus keep the staff focused, keep the jewelry hunters away and oh, try to avoid being killed by someone who was stalking her. Piece of...I won't say it.

It is easy to warm up to Rita and Miss Frankie, the best of the best in the mystery, to me. Edie, the new mom, definitely had my sympathy! Rita was among the best defined characters, as well as Simone. The rest, including much of her staff, were enigmas, yet each was unique in their talents and are seen primarily through their actions and conversations. Miss Frankie was somewhat discreet, and Ox was definitely tight-lipped, someone that I don't know if I could have trusted. Some of the society ladies seemed to be simply shells with too much money and not enough motivation to help others become better.

The Cakes of Monte Cristo is the sixth offering in the A Piece of Cake Mystery series; it can be enjoyed as a stand-alone or as part of the series. I would enjoy reading the earlier cozies to feel more familiar with Rita, her potential suitors, and Edie, and watch them grow the business. To me, there was often a much more serious air than in many other cozy mysteries, and realistic in the respect of concern for the bills, the staff, or not offending potential clients. The mystery was very well designed and perfectly executed, with red herrings and plot twists that keeps the reader on their toes. I highly recommend The Cakes of Monte Cristo. Foodies will appreciate the challenges faced by Rita and her staff; and those who like well-written mysteries or enjoyed earlier books in the series.

\*OBS would like to thank the publisher for supplying a free copy of this title in exchange for an honest review\*

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## **LORI CASWELL says**

### Dollycas's Thoughts

I am so glad we finally return to New Orleans and Zydeco Cakes. The author set us up in Rebel Without A Cake for The Cakes of Monte Cristo and Rita and her staff are taking on their biggest job ever, the Belle Lune Ball. They needed to bake 5 gorgeous dress form cakes complete with the accessories and they are catering the affair too. When the Monte Cristo Hotel ballroom is flooded just days before the event Rita has to settle for a smaller venue, but at least it is still in the same hotel. As if she doesn't have enough on her plate, Zydeco is short staffed because Edie is out on maternity leave and the temps to replace her have been nightmares. Rita finally hires Estelle's niece, Zoey. Rita vows to make it work even after a freak accident that destroys part of the beautiful old home that houses the business. Especially when a very interesting discovery is made. A discovery that leaves one woman dead and Rita extra cautious as she tries to piece together all the clues before she gets herself frosted.

I love this series! These characters are some of the best ones around. They work together from early morning until sometimes late at night. They go out for drinks together and have fun. They are as close as family and genuinely care about each other. Like family they have their little spats too. They also bake the most amazing cakes! The cover is nice but the picture I have in my head from the descriptions is nothing like on the cover. Rita makes so many peacock like feathers out of fondant and paints them all to look so real. The image is crystal clear in my mind along with all the other beautiful dress creations that were made. Thank you Jacklyn for the amazing imagery brought forth from your words.

The author not only paints us beautiful pictures with her words, she crafts quite a plot as well. She gives us

plenty of twists, surprises, and a few tense moments before we reach the end. She introduces some new characters and one quickly got on Rita's nerves and mine too, well frankly everyone around her. No, she wasn't killed but I would not have been surprised. There is always the next book. :)

I do hope there is a next book, or two or three and we don't have to wait too long for a return. Each of these characters "slice" of life has been delightful. If you haven't taken a bite out of this series yet, start at the beginning and enjoy! You can thank me later.

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### **Jonathan says**

*Really 4.5 stars, but I rounded up.*

I guess all good things have to come to an end, and that's the truth with this series. Recently, when Penguin went on their huge cozy cancelling spree, this was one of the series that did not make it. It's really a pity. However, there's nothing I can do about it, so there's no sense dwelling on it. *The Cakes of Monte Cristo* was an wonderful end to a series, and Ms. Brady left off perfectly; she could go on independently if she wanted to, or she could end it here. Highly recommend this series!

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

THE CAKES OF MONTE CRISTO is a delicious recipe of mystery, mayhem, and murder.

Six books into this series and author Jacklyn Brady still knows what it takes to keep her readers engaged and happy. THE CAKES OF MONTE CRISTO is for certain the icing on the cake of this series!

The intricate plot of this story captured me. Each chapter being better than the last, I found myself reading far later into the night than I should have. But it was worth it to see how this wonderfully written book turned out.

The characters in the Piece Of Cake Mystery series, old and new, are all so multi-layered. There are times I related to protagonist, Rita Lucero, and other times when I didn't see eye to eye with her. But that's a good thing. It added to the realism of her character.

There is no doubt about it...author Brady has another hit on her hands. I'm sure you'll agree when you're slicing through the pages of this mystery.

Make sure to check out the back of the book for some tasty recipes!

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### **Christine says**

Rita Lucero is the owner of Zydeco Cakes. She has her first big catering job making high end desserts for the ball at the Monte Cristo hotel. Rita and her temporary office manager find a ruby necklace hidden in the stairs at the shop. When Rita shows it to her mother in law she gets upset because she believes that the necklace is cursed. Rita doesn't believe in the curse until she has it appraised and the appraiser soon turns up

dead. Rita begins looking into the history of the necklace to help her solve the mystery. I really enjoyed the mystery in this book . I liked Rita taking Estelles niece under her wing and wish I could see more of the character. I highly recommend this book.

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### **Jerri Cachero says**

While training a new employee, Rita discovers a priceless ruby necklace with a tragic history. Seems that anyone who owns the necklace dies. Not good news for Rita and Miss Frankie since it was found at Zydeco Cakes.

In order to make sense of the "curse" and find out its value, Rita takes the necklace to a local appraiser who dies during a robbery. Is it the "curse" or an unfortunate death? Rita decides to find out for herself without becoming the next victim.

The "Piece of Cake" series is a wonderful cozy mystery set in New Orleans and it has all the flavor and excitement you would expect! Can't wait for the next adventure!!

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### **Jessica says**

Mystery with a history! Rita and the gang at Zydeco Cakes bakery are in full swing with the busiest season coming up! That's right its time for the annual Belle Lune Ball, New Orleans biggest fashion event! This time Rita is determined to make her cakes as rich as rubies she has discovered hidden beneath the antebellum beautiful staircase at the bakery! Will Rita discover the rich history behind the mystery to the beautiful necklace in time before the ball or will it tarnish her own reputation?

As usual Rita and the gang at Zydeco have made me laugh, cry and kept me anxiously on my toes! I gotta say, I did NOT see THIS ending coming this time... I'm so sad to let this series go. I honestly wish it could go on longer. I've had so much fun reading the "Piece of Cake Mystery" series by Jacklyn Brady, they by far some of my most favorite cozies. If you want a GREAT cozy to get started on this is IT! These books will not disappoint! I will definitely miss not having new stories but, I have no doubt I will pick up this series again to re-read from time to time. With a feeling of going back to New Orleans and the family and friends at Zydeco like it's coming home. Jacklyn Brady you couldn't have wrote a better ending to this series!!!

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### **Kay Wright says**

Supposedly a murder mystery, this tale of cake making in New Orleans is more about the characters than the murder. In this one it's actually an accidental death and incidental to the plot which revolves around a ruby necklace found in the stairwell at Zydeco. I have no idea why I like these silly mysteries. Maybe because I enjoyed watching Charm City Cakes build amazing cakes. I do love Rita's mother in law and just melt when she calls her sugar. So NOLA,! The history of her building, the story of a wife and mistress fighting over a necklace, even the ins and outs of catering a big fund-raiser, are lightly covered.

They are fun but honestly, the titles are the most clever part of the books.

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### **K.A. Davis says**

With Mardi Gras season underway, it's always fun to read a book set in New Orleans, giving the reader a peek at this wonderful city! *THE CAKES OF MONTE CRISTO*, by Jacklyn Brady, is the sixth book in her Piece of Cake Mystery Series. While it is not quite yet Mardi Gras during the time period of the story, Jacklyn still makes the reader feel like they are walking the streets of New Orleans, tasting, hearing and smelling all that it has to offer.

Rita Lucero shares ownership of Zydeco Cakes with her mother-in-law, Miss Frankie. (After Rita's almost ex-husband was found murdered...but that's another story...) Rita has been contracted to provide five showstopping cakes designed to look like vintage dresses for the Belle Lune Ball, along with catering the event. Stressed out and with her office manager on maternity leave, Rita agrees to hire a temp to fill in at the front desk. Within hours of Zoey starting work, she's managed to do considerable damage to the staircase which unearths a stunning antique ruby necklace.

When Miss Frankie sees the necklace she immediately tells Rita to throw it in the river and never mention it again. There has been a deadly curse on the piece since the Civil War times and anyone who tries to own it dies. Instead Rita takes it to a jewelry appraiser and leaves it. That night the appraiser is murdered while clutching the ruby necklace in her hands. While Rita still doesn't believe in the curse she does believe that someone is after the necklace and may be willing to go to desperate measures to obtain it. The police, however, think it was just a robbery gone bad with nothing to do with the necklace. When Rita becomes a target, it's apparent she must find the culprit before the curse becomes a reality.

Jacklyn writes a fast-paced story with lots of unique characters. I loved how she wove the necklace into the story, entwining its history with Rita's current day contemporaries that kept me guessing to the very end who the culprit was. In addition to a wonderful story, Jacklyn provides numerous recipes that Rita served at the Belle Lune Ball.

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### **Tina at A COZY GIRL READS AND WRITES Blog says**

You won't find another more decadent or more scrumptious mystery as *The Cakes of Monte Cristo*. I love getting lost in the *A Piece of Cake Mysteries* and in *Zydeco Cakes Shop*, a shop that is co-owned by Rita Lucero and owned by her mother-in-law whom she calls Miss Frankie. *Zydeco Cakes* is making delicious cakes designed in the shape of elegant dresses for the Belle Lune Ball and the Vintage Clothing Society.

Also for the first time catering this event and everyone at *Zydeco* has all hands on deck baking, decorating and cooking and preparing for the event to take place at a local hotel in New Orleans. After hiring a new temp at *Zydeco*, Zoey, her and Rita stumble upon a long lost hidden treasure under the stairs at *Zydeco Cakes*. It's a opulent ruby necklace that has a long and heartbreaking history of love and betrayal and has a supposed curse that if any one is in possession of it bad luck and death will soon follow.

Rita takes the necklace to a appraiser, soon after there's a robbery at the appraisers vintage shop and she drops dead of a sudden heart attack and it is discovered she was scared to death by the robber and it's



considered murder. After getting the necklace back from the police after the robbery investigation goes sour Rita becomes a target of someone who wants the necklace really badly. Bad things keep happening to Rita and she soon fears for her life. The cure may be responsible and Rita may be the next to die.

Saying I love this series would be an understatement. And it's only the second book I have read in this series but I do hope to catch up soon. A very engaging and entertaining trip to New Orleans in the A Piece of Cake Mysteries that is just sweet perfection. The Cakes of Monte Cristo kept me guessing and in suspense until the end. The best part was the mystery of the ruby necklace and how it was all connected to certain characters, it was the best part of the story.

FTC Disclosure Thank you to the publisher and/or author for providing us with a copy of this book for review. This did not influence our thoughts in any way. All the opinions of the book and review are honest and our own.

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## **Julie says**

Kindle

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## **Ed says**

#6 in the Piece of Cake series. Rita Lucero, sometimes level-headed co-owner of Zydeco Cakes, finds a ruby necklace hidden within a staircase. Her normally level-headed partner (and mother-in-law) recognizes the necklace and tells Rita it is cursed and to throw it in the Mississippi River.

The necklace had been missing for a century and a half but two rival families want to claim it and Rita finds her life in jeopardy. Thin mystery with too much emphasis on an old curse.

A Piece of Cake mystery - Rita Lucero, co-owner of New Orleans's Zydeco Cakes, is thrilled to be catering an annual ball held at the Monte Cristo Hotel. Designing the high-end desserts is her priority, until she stumbles upon a mystery long-buried at her shop. It's an ornate ruby necklace, hidden underneath her staircase and rumored to be cursed. After the gem's appraiser suddenly drops dead and Rita herself is targeted by a menacing stranger, she's no longer laughing at local superstition.

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