



Gluten for Punishment

Nancy J. Parra

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With her mother's death, Toni Ryder returns home to OilTop, Kansas bringing her gluten-free bakery business with her. But Toni has never felt at home in her hometown and cooking wheat-free in the middle of wheat country isn't making her any less a fish out of water. When Toni becomes a suspect in OilTop's first homicide investigation in twenty years, she must count on her crazy family and follow the clues to solve the mystery and clear her name.

Gluten for Punishment Details

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From Reader Review Gluten for Punishment for online ebook

Bridgett Strawbrich says

In this fantastic first in series by Parra (Miss Coco if you're nasty) you will find a main dish mystery followed by some gluten-free cozy for dessert! The characters are well developed and Marie Antoinette Holmes is easily the most spunky cozy heroine out there. It's a must read for anyone looking for a book that's easy to digest!

Erin says

2.5 stars for the strange detail issues. For example, in my reality, flour bombs + people coated in wheat flour + open bakery door = no-longer-GF-certified premises, but that didn't happen in this case. She kept serving the food that she'd put out, and it didn't sound like she had to decontaminate the bakery. At the very least, she allowed all the people--including herself--who'd gotten coated in flour to enter and touch things in her store, which astonished me to the degree that I was completely distracted from the point of this early scene.

Somewhere near the beginning of the book, Parra says Toni lived in Chicago for 15 years, but then later on in the book, she says 10 years. Again, the inconsistency yanked me out of the story.

And finally, the scene where Toni is kneading & proofing the dough to work through her anger: I have been gluten-free for about seven or so years now, and I have NEVER kneaded any gluten-free dough. The purpose of kneading is to develop the gluten and evenly distribute yeast gases. Gluten-free dough is usually more like thick cake batter, or at the very least too sticky to do much more than spread or drop into a baking container. Did Parra not consult ANY gluten-free bakers before writing & publishing this book? But then, she includes recipes at the end of her book, which implies that she--or someone she knows--does bake GF foods. Perhaps Parra should have consulted this website (or one of hundreds like it) before writing this scene: (Scroll down to the section on bread baking) <http://www.eatingglutenfree.com/glute...>

However, I did find someone who created a GF bread dough that does need to be kneaded: <http://www.nourishingmeals.com/2011/0...> Which means it is possible, if not probable that Toni could have sort of kneaded her bread dough. Probably not long enough to work off her anger, though. And then there is the issue of how long the character "proofs" her dough vs how long GF dough can/should be proofed. But I'm tired of focusing on all the things that annoyed me about the book and pulled me away from the story.

Irritations aside, I enjoyed the basic story of a newly divorced woman who'd inherited her mother's house in her hometown in Kansas and who'd therefore moved back home and opened a gluten-free bakery in the heart of wheat country. A local farmer sabotages her grand opening, and when she later finds him dead in front of her store, she becomes the main suspect in his homicide. When the police seem disinclined to search elsewhere for the culprit, she takes matters into her own hands and agrees to assist her eccentric grandmother by asking around, gathering information to locate the real murderer, despite the increasingly personal threats she receives.

I was correct in my suspicions as to one of the guilty parties, but I didn't solve the whole thing.

For readers' advisors: story and character doorways, no sex, and if there was any swearing, I don't remember it.

LORI CASWELL says

With her mother's death, Toni Ryder returns home to OilTop, Kansas bringing her gluten-free bakery business with her. But Toni has never felt at home in her hometown and cooking wheat-free in the middle of wheat country isn't making her any less a fish out of water. When Toni becomes a suspect in OilTop's first homicide investigation in twenty years, she must count on her crazy family and follow the clues to solve the mystery and clear her name.

Dollycas's Thoughts

A Fine Debut!

Parra has created a very interesting protagonist in Toni. Her gluten free bakery in the heartland adds drama and also informs about an allergy that has come to the forefront in recent years. Celiac Disease (those who are sensitive to gluten) is said to affect 1% of the U.S. Population. Her mystery shines the light in a fun and entertaining way with recipes too!

She also introduces some great supporting characters. Chain smoker Grandma Ruth was my favorite. She really has Toni's best interests at heart and she constantly butts her way into every situation. Toni's friend and taste tester Tasha tries to keep Toni calm but she has someone new in her life that is making her a bit crazy. Toni also has not 1 but 2 men who would like to be more than just friends.

The author makes the story current and real by blending in true life issues like farms changing how they do business today and the dangers of foreclosures in the rough economic times. Her plot is believable and has plenty of twists to keep those pages turning.

OilTop seems like a great place full of quirky people. Perfect for a cozy mystery series. I look forward to returning again soon!

Beth says

Between the almost complete lack of editing, random time jumps, gluten free preachiness, alternately whiny and rude "heroine", and the complete ridiculousness of the "big reveal" this was just outright bad. I wanted to like it but I couldn't and I certainly won't be reading more in the series.

Alissa Kowalski says

Gluten for Punishment is packed full of interesting characters (Grandma Ruth), fantastic plot twists (I was actually surprised by the identity of the murderer), and the best cozy heroine so far, Marie Antoinette Holmes, the badass gluten free baker! I genuinely enjoyed this cozy from start to finish and I cannot wait to see what happens in the rest of the series!

* Jennifer says

3.5 stars because:

1. WHY WHY WHY do cozy author's suddenly think love triangles are the way to go?!?!?!?! They are an annoying, irritating turn-off. Ugh!
2. Honestly, if I had to read the otherwise-likeable protagonist, Toni, go on one more time about "I'll never trust a man again..." blah blah blah, I was going to toss the book down and walk away.

OTHERWISE...

A very good first in a new series with an excellent plot - I had a major part figured out pretty early on, but it didn't matter at all because the ending was excellent. Seriously, this is not your normal cozy climax.

The characters were well written - likeable, quirky. I'd like the author not to make grandma's smoking habit so front and centre like it's a badge of coolness or something, because it diminishes what would otherwise be a delightfully eccentric, quirky character. Best friend Tasha seems likeable enough as well. And BOTH romantic interests sound hot and lovely, but Ms. Parra - don't do it!!! Give one to Tasha or something, but NO LOVE TRIANGLES!!!

Look forward to the next one.

Mark Baker says

Toni Holmes is opening a gluten free bakery in the small Kansas town where she grew up. She's expecting a little trouble from the local wheat farmers, but someone throws wheat filled balloons during the grand opening. Then a dead body is found outside her front door.

I liked Toni and the rest of the characters. However, I found the plot frustrating because events doubled for any real clues or twists. Poor editing left in several major mistakes as well. I won't be going further with this author.

Read my full review at Carstairs Considers.

Jonathan says

This book was a quick, fun read, that I'd recommend.

The characters were realistic, and fun. I especially loved the incorporation that author did by adding multiple characters with special needs.

The setting was also great, though the author calls the town a small town, where I'm from 10,000-15,000 people would be a large town.

The mystery was also good, a lot of twists and turns. I guessed the killer beforehand but the story was still entertaining to the end.

The only real problem I had was the book took me awhile to get into. Besides that an entertaining read. I'll be reading the next one!

Fred says

Gluten For Punishment is the first book in the A Baker's Treat Mystery series by Nancy J. Parra.

This is delightful new series. A good story, interesting characters and a touch of discussion on celiac disease. My favorite character has to be Grandma Ruth, Toni's grandmother, what a spunky, funny lady.

Toni Holmes has inherited her mother's home in Oiltop Kansas and after a disastrous marriage has moved back home. Toni has just opened Baker's Treats a gluten free bakery. The irony is that the Oiltop is surrounded by wheat fields and this does not set well with some of those in the community. Others just aren't sure how good items can be without flour.

The day has come for the Grand Opening of Baker's Treat and as the crowd is gathering, a George Meister started spouting off against Toni and her bakery. Then someone tosses a couple "flour bombs" at Toni's storefront. The next morning Toni has been at the bakery for a couple hours and decides to take a break out front. She finds a body in the horse trough out front. The police arrive and it is soon learned corpse is Meister.

What with the confrontation Toni had with the deceased, she immediately becomes a person of interest. Not only will this effect her storefront business, but her computer has been confiscated as well, so that her online sales will suffer too. Toni's Grandma Ruth was an investigative reporter until the paper downsized and is enlisted to help look for clues that will lead them to the guilty party. But just as they are getting a good start, there is another killing.

Parra provides the reader with a well told story and an interesting cast of characters. Meister has had run-ins with a few of the locals. The bank has foreclosed on his farms and has made it difficult for the bank to get a quick sale. Tasha, a childhood friend, helps Toni, or does she something to hide. Brad, her lawyer, is there for here and hoping that they can be better friends once the killer is caught. Then there is Sam. Hunk number 2. Sam meets Toni soon after she opens Baker's Treat and seems to always be around when something goes wrong for Toni.

Even though Toni says she is not interested in a relationship right now, I am looking forward to future books to see what happens in the romance department.

Gluten-free recipes are included in the book.

OpenBookSociety.com says

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

Brought to you by OBS reviewer Dawn

I have wondered about the fuss related to gluten free foods. It is fully explained in Gluten for Punishment.

Oiltop is a town of farmers, they don't take kindly to the idea of gluten free food.

Toni comes home to open her own bakery. She knows it will be tough but she doesn't shy away from that. During her opening, Toni gets pelted with flour by an on-looker, though no one saw who did it.

Soon after, a dead body shows up outside her shop. That is when it gets interesting.

Tasha, Toni's closest friend, has a son with allergies/special needs. He benefits from a gluten free diet. I love how Parra explains Celiac disease and the need for gluten free food.

I love Toni's Grandma Ruth. She is a great character in the story. She prompts Toni to dig deeper, to find out what's going on. When another body shows up, Toni needs to find the truth before she is blamed. All the while, she is receiving threats, her shop is vandalized multiple times and she's trying to run a business. The positive point: the controversy drew in the gawkers and she sold a lot of baked goods. It gave her quite the opportunity!

Two local men are interested in Toni but she's fresh from a divorce. Brad and Sam are pretty funny, both being jealous of the other.

Toni is a tough cookie. She gets knocked down more than once but she gets right back up. She will not let anything stop her.

This is another great book club choice. Women will love this book as will bakers. Some of the baked goods sound so delicious! I was nearly drooling. LOL.

It's a really good book.

Mason Canyon says

Who knew gluten-free could be so enticing?

Baker Toni Ryder makes her own way in the baking world preparing allergy-safe, gluten-free products for her online bakery, Baker's Treat. When she opens a gluten-free bakery in the heart of wheat country Kansas, she may have gone over the top. Skeptical residents aren't sure about her flour-free ways and then a local wheat farmer is found murdered outside her shop so suspicion grows even more.

The bad publicity and increasing vandalism could cause Toni to have to close her shop. She's determined to find the real killer so she enlists the help of her eccentric and feisty grandmother. But when a second murder is discovered, Toni realizes the killer is out to do more than close her shop. Finding the real killer is the only way to save her shop and her life.

Author Nancy J. Parra has the start of a delightful new series that not only entertains but informs readers. Parra has given her protagonist Celiac Disease providing readers with a closer look at how gluten-free can be delicious. She has made Toni likable and realistic with many secondary characters to add to the mix.

Parra has placed the story in a small town setting having an eye for detail that makes the reader feel they are there. GLUTEN FOR PUNISHMENT moves at a good pace keeping the reader guessing as she includes a few twists and turns along the way. The plot holds the reader's attention from beginning to end.

While the story deals with living a gluten-free lifestyle, it's not overpowering. The focus stays on the cozy murder mystery and the captivating cast of characters. This is a tasty treat for the cozy murder mystery lover.

GLUTEN FOR PUNISHMENT is the first installment in the exciting new Baker's Treat Mystery Series. An added bonus is the delicious gluten-free recipes included in the back such as Gluten-Free Blueberry Coffee Cake.

FTC Full Disclosure - This book was sent to me by the publisher in hopes I would review it. However, receiving the complimentary copy did not influence my review.

Melodie says

Yet another cozy 1st in series that's pretty solid! I would have gone 4 stars, but looks like another "triangle" and I am SO over that gimmick! Totally played out and if you can write a story that's that good otherwise, why do you have to stoop to that? Good characters and a good mystery. I had kind of figured it out for the most part, but the twist at the end came out of left field! Get rid of the "triangle" and you should be around for the long haul, Ms. Parra! Mostly Recommend!

bella says

Nancy J. Parra delivers an absolute delight of a mystery in Gluten for Punishment, the first book in the Baker's Treat Mysteries.

Following her mother's death, Toni Ryder is returning home to Oiltop, Kansas. Toni is opening a new bakery in Oiltop, a gluten-free bakery. Oiltop is right in the middle of wheat country and Toni expects the locals to take a little while to adjust to her gluten-free bakery, called Baker's Treat. However she doesn't expect protests and murder, and that's just what she finds herself in the middle of.

As a newly diagnosed Celiac (those who are sensitive to gluten) I was pretty excited to find out that there was going to be a mystery series about a gluten free bakery. I love reading all the culinary cozy mysteries, but unless I take the time to adapt the recipes to gluten free I simply can't make the gorgeous food in the mysteries. Gluten for Punishment not only provides a mystery series that mystery lovers can sink their teeth, it also provides some delicious gluten free recipes!

Right from the first chapter, Toni and the residents of Oiltop had me interested. The chemistry between Toni and her family and friends reminds me of my own family, and I could tell this was one cozy mystery town I would be wanting to visit again and again. In particular, I think Grandma Ruth (who could rival Janet Evanovich's Grandma Mazur for "crazy (sorry unique!) grandma") with her antics is definitely going to be a fan favorite.

Gluten for Punishment is a dynamite mystery that I have a feeling is going to be very popular with mystery readers. Whether you have a gluten-sensitive diet or you're wanting to sink your teeth into a fantastic new series, Gluten for Punishment is definitely worth a read!

Dawn Michelle says

3 1/2 Stars

This was a decent read for me; I was annoyed at all the "mouth references" [She set her mouth in a firm line; He quirked his mouth a little to the side etc etc] that she almost constantly made [it is funny the little things that annoy the heck out of us], I was not initially crazy about Toni OR her best friend, and ala Hannah Swensen, we have two men "fighting" over one woman. I truly hope that they don't drag this out over the series because I am not sure I can take it in another series.

I had the one aspect of the mystery figured out fairly quickly, but the other one was a complete surprise and also quite sad.

I will read the second one to see if I want to continue, but to be honest, I do not have high hopes for this series. :-(

RebeccaS says

I really enjoyed this book and think this will be a fun series. I loved the main character Tori and admire how strong she is (even though it sometimes got her into trouble). Opening a gluten-free bakery sounds extremely difficult, especially in a small town that has many incomes dependent on the wheat industry. Add a murder outside the store, constant threats, and Tori as the number 1 suspect, and you would think it was impossible. I enjoyed following Tori and her grandmother's investigation, though I did guess part of the solution about halfway through. (view spoiler) I liked how this book focused on allergies, autism, and the gluten problem. I know a couple people who are allergic to gluten and it sounds like an awful allergy to have, especially when it comes to all the care that has to be taken when eating outside the home. I also know people who have given up gluten for other health reasons, and was interested to learn that avoiding it and other allergens can be good for those with autism. I can't wait to learn more in future installments. I hope this love-triangle development doesn't get too out of hand. I am excited to return to this series soon!
