



Cake and Punishment

Maymee Bell

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In the first of a delectable new Southern-set baking cozy series, Sophia Cummings, pastry chef extraordinaire, must craft the perfect cake for an old friend's wedding while sifting through the suspects in a murder.

Bucolic Rumford, Kentucky has glowing fields of bluegrass, a fine selection of bourbons, and now a professional pastry chef. Broken-hearted Sophia Cummings has come home from New York City. She's not there a minute before she's charmed into making her high school friend Charlotte's wedding cake. The kitchen at the Rumford Country Club seems perfect until Chef Emile's body is discovered, sprawled near the stove, a cast iron skillet on the floor close by.

With one look at the shiny, new frying pan, Sophia knows it's not Emile's. She offers her knowledge to Sheriff Carter and her talents to Evelyn, the manager, who needs an interim chef. The mood in the country club is grim: Emile's peppery personality had burned members and staff alike. Sophia wonders which one of them burned him?

Perfect for fans of Joanne Fluke and JoAnna Carl, *Cake and Punishment?* with authentic Southern recipes! will satisfy your sweet tooth.

Cake and Punishment Details

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Author : Maymee Bell

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From Reader Review Cake and Punishment for online ebook

Patty says

Cake and Punishment by Maymee Bell, aka Tonya Kappes, is the 1st book in A Southern Cake Baker Mystery series, and it is wonderful. Sophia Cummings works as a pastry chef in New York City, but when she catches her boyfriend, a chef, with their co-worker she goes back home to Rumford, Kentucky to regroup. When her friend Charlotte from high school needs someone to make her wedding cake she agrees. When the head chef for the wedding is found dead, Sophia rushes to find the killer. I strongly recommend this book. This book is a quick read, that I could not put down. I am anxiously waiting the next adventure for Sophia.

I received this book in exchange for a fair and honest review.

Linda says

Sophia Cummings left the hustle and bustle of New York City for much slower paced Rumford, Kentucky. Her relationship is in ruins, and resulted in her being fired from her job as a successful pastry chef. Sophia agrees to help bake pastries for several local events although she only plans to stay about a week longer. When Chef Emile at the country club is apparently murdered in cold blood; gossip says he had affairs with several of the club members, with or without their husbands' knowledge. The number of people who disliked Emile is enormous and the suspect list is long. When Sophia casually starts snooping and asking questions, her life is threatened. Can the handsome Police Chief Carter pinpoint a killer and keep Sophia safe from harm?

I found this story a scrumptious debut cozy from Maymee Bell (aka Tonya Kappes). It's a well written and polished Southern cozy and I felt right at home and immediately immersed in the dialogue and scenes. The pacing is steady and held my interest at all times. I like when the protagonist finds what they've been looking for right in front of their eyes. I believe readers who are fans of culinary Cozies will love Cake and Punishment! I look forward to reading book two. The author includes some delicious sounding, down-home recipes!

??Hannah?? says

This was a nice beginning to the series. I liked the small town and the characters. It was nice that while Sophia was back she reconnected with an old friend. I was also happy to see that she has a new love interest. I was surprised by who did it. Which is always nice. I don't like being able to figure it out right away. I just hope that the next book will be just as good.

Carol (Bookaria) says

This book was a fun and delicious read! It has everything a light-hearted mystery should have: **some romance, some mystery, and humor.**

Sophia Cummings is a pastry chef in a upscale restaurant in New York. After finding her boyfriend in a compromising position with another woman, she decides to go back home to Rumford, Kentucky, just for a few days. Back home her friend Charlotte is getting married and Sophia agrees to bake her wedding cake, for this task she will use the Rumford Country Club's kitchen.

All is well until the main chef at the country club is found dead and Sophia decides she will do everything possible to find out who committed the murder.

The story is **light-hearted and fast-paced**. The author did an excellent job with the imagery and description of scenes. The main character in the novel is a chef and she explained some of the cooking and baking processes in a fictional setting, for those of us who love cooking this is great.

There are some recipes included at the end of the book, these delicious treats were mentioned throughout the story.

Overall, **I enjoyed the story** and recommend it to mystery lovers.

Thanks to NetGalley, the author, and the publisher for providing me with a copy of this publication in exchange for an honest review.

NicoleG says

A fun first in series mystery by Maymee Bell with recipes, romance and murder!

Sophia Cummings is a pastry chef who goes back to her hometown in Kentucky after a bad breakup.

Before she has time to wallow in self pity or her own delectable desserts, she's recruited by the country club to fill in for the murdered chef who was cooking for her friend's wedding. Not only does Sophia take charge of creating a spectacular wedding cake, she also takes it upon herself to help solve the murder case! If she doesn't act fast, her friend Charlotte might not be able to have the wedding of her dreams. With the help of southern spy girls and a **VERY** friendly (and handsome!) detective, Sophia the CSI baker knows she has to sift out the killer or she will have baked her last batch of Red Velvet Crunchies!

I thought this was an entertaining start to a new series. Engaging and relateable characters full of Southern quirks! A few predictable elements but still an entertaining cozy mystery. The author went above and beyond when she included LOTS of tempting recipes! I am looking forward to the next book in the series.
I voluntarily reviewed an ARC from the author.

Shelly says

This is an enjoyable start to a new series. Cake and Punishment is the debut book in A Southern Cake Baker Mystery series. Sophia, a pastry chef in NYC, discovers her boyfriend Noah has been cheating on her, so she

heads home to bucolic Rumford, Kentucky. But things aren't as peaceful as they appear to be. A pastry chef turns up dead and there are quite a few people who wanted him that way. This book is perfect for readers who love quirky characters and thick southern charm. I was fortunate to receive an advanced reader copy provided to me by the publisher through NetGalley. This did not affect my rating. I have provided an unbiased and honest review.

LORI CASWELL says

Dollycas's Thoughts

When I first saw the cover of this book I didn't know the author was a pseudonym for Tonya Kappes, but as soon as I read the first page, I knew I was reading a book by Tonya Kappes. She has a distinctive writing style and her characters are so much fun.

This new cozy series introduces us to Sophia Cummings, a pastry chef at a top Manhattan restaurant. That is until she finds her boyfriend, also a chef at the same restaurant, cheating on her. She decides to head home to Rumford, Kentucky to get a break. She quickly runs into a friend from high school and finds herself making her wedding cake. The reception is being held at the Rumford Country Club where Sophia used to work. She knows she will have everything she needs there to create the wedding cake of her friend's dreams.

Unfortunately, when she arrives she finds the club's head chef, Emile, dead on the floor with a cast iron skillet nearby. She notices something about the pan and informs Sheriff Carter. The next thing she knows she has accepted the job as an interim chef for the club. Maybe while working there she can find out who clobbered the chef, but her main concern is that her friend's wedding goes on without any more interruptions or dead bodies.

This series is off to a divine start. Sophia is a talented chef with a huge heart. She loves creating desserts that make people happy. She couldn't say "no" to anyone, which is why she ends up committed to baking things even after the date she plans to return to Manhattan. Her mother, on the other hand, is demanding, bossy, and you know a mom that really loves her daughter. She is also not beyond a little matchmaking. Her father does his best to keep the peace and has a strong bond with his daughter. It was great to meet all of Sophia's high school friends, even the one she doesn't recognize. These characters are so well developed already in this first book. I am excited to see the beyond high school relationships grow and evolve. Their Southern charm shines throughout the whole story.

The author has filled these pages with a great whodunit too with plenty of suspects and twists galore. So well-plotted and full of clues and just the perfect amount of humor.

Ms. Bell's descriptive talents set the scene perfectly. She has created this wonderful little town of Rumford and I escaped away right into it.

Southern charm, mystery, great characters, fantastic dialogue, and a bit of comedy make *Cake and Punishment* a must read! The talk of sweet treats will also have your mouth watering.

Carrie says

Cake and Punishment by Maymee Bell is the first book in the new cozy A Southern Cake Baker Mystery series. In this series Sophia Cummings has returned to her hometown of Bucolic Rumford, Kentucky from New York to nurse her broken heart with family and old friends.

No sooner that Sophia arrives home though she finds that her old high school friend, Charlotte, is getting married and is without a cake baker. Since Sophia is a pastry chef back in New York Charlotte does her best to convince her to take over the job for the wedding.

Just as soon as Sophia agrees to do the wedding and goes to check out the Rumford Country Club kitchen she however end up finding a bit more than pots and pans when she stumbles on the body of the chef. Since a kitchen is Sophia's comfort zone she immediately jumps in to help point out clues at the scene when the law arrives.

Cake and Punishment by Maymee Bell was a solid opener for this new cozy series infused with southern charm. The author seemed to do a good job giving it that southern vibe along with plenty of talk of mouth watering treats to set the scene. What I found a bit lacking on my side though was any real unique quirkiness to the characters to truly make the book stand out a bit more to me. I'm always looking for that bit of spark to really wow me and with this one I didn't quite find it yet although I did enjoy the mystery.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.com/>

Karen says

Cake & Punishment by Maymee Bell is coming out in May, published by Crooked Lane Books and it made me Ugly Cry! I loved this book. Maymee Bell has set up a truly wonderful southern cozy town in Kentucky and in a great cozy way. I love the way she wrote this book and the setting for main character Sophia to come home too. While some of the book is set up so you know and hope what is going to happen, the mystery and murderer actually caught me off guard. I found that I was so involved in how the wedding was going to get off the ground, kept me perfectly distracted from the clues Maymee gave of the Killer! It was so easy to picture the town and the homes that are described in the story as well as the country club. I truly enjoyed this mystery and cannot wait to see what happens in the next one. This book actually made me feel like yes sometimes you can truly go home again. Great first in series Maymee Bell you have a reader in me!

Jessica Robbins says

*I received a free copy of this book from Netgalley which I voluntarily chose to write an honest review for.

Incredible start to a brand new series. We get to follow Sofia as she returns home to Kentucky after being cheated on in order to heal. She just happens to get wrapped up in a murder while she's there. I was loving the Southern charm and all the cooking she does to distract herself. It kept me hungry even while we learned more about the murder. Add some colorful characters and you end up with a cozy mystery that you won't be able to put down. A must read for fans of culinary cozy mysteries. I absolutely loved it so I give it

5/5 stars.

Micky Cox says

A cozy mystery wrapped in southern charm and humor! What's a girl to do when she gets her heart broken, why visit her hometown of course! However, as with most journeys this one opens up a crossroads in the life journey for the main character especially after finding a dead body may mean disrupting a friend's happily ever after! Characters full of wit, charm and interest to keep you connected to the plot and entertained for hours this is definitely a new series that I can't wait to read more of!

Lisa Ks Book Reviews says

Southern cozy at it's finest, author Maymee Bell has penned what is sure to be one of the top new cozy mysteries of 2018.

As a lover of culinary cozies, I had been looking forward to CAKE & PUNISHMENT since I first heard about it. Starting a new series can be a bit dicey. You're never sure if it will live up to your expectations. I'm happy to say, this book did that and more!

CAKE & PUNISHMENT drew me in immediately. Great characters, southern charm, detailed descriptions that made me feel like I was part of the story, and a truly wonderful murder mystery all kept me turning page after page until I was blindsided by the clever reveal.

If you have to be choosy about what books you can buy, make sure CAKE & PUNISHMENT is one of the ones you choose. Seriously, a fabulous mystery, and tasty recipes, you won't go wrong with this one!

Sandy Bartles says

This is the first book in "A Southern Cake Baker Mystery" and it is a very enjoyable read. The author puts in just the right amount of fun and mystery and tops it off with a lovable cat. Sophia Cummings is the head pastry chef at a big-time restaurant in Manhattan and has come home to Rumford, Kentucky, for a break after finding her now ex-boyfriend in a compromising position. One thing leads to another and she finds herself filling in temporarily as a chef at the country club after the murder of their head chef. The book has a lot of laughs and the author even throws in a mighty handsome sheriff to top everything off.

I voluntarily reviewed an Advanced Reader Copy of this book.

Elle's Book Blog says

Release Date: May 8, 2018

Genre: Cozy Mystery

Actual Rating: 5 stars

Wohoo! This book is the PERFECT southern, cozy mystery. And, it's the first in a brand new series- one of which I am very much anticipating for the future (can I have it now, please!?!). Also, this book is a culinary cozy, meaning a lot of it revolves around a murder AND delicious desserts, which is an absolute FAVORITE of mine. If any of this sounds good to you, then this is a must read! Even if you aren't a fan of the genre or are new to it, I would highly recommend starting it with this one. It's delightful, fun, and scrumptious! I can't wait to try some of the recipes from the book.

Without getting to deep into the plot, I'll give a little summary of what to expect. Sophia Cummings is a pastry chef who lives in NYC. However, after finding her boyfriend in a compromising position with a woman they both work with, she returns home to Rumford, Kentucky for some much needed down time. But this down time that she craves comes to a sudden halt when a murder takes place at the beloved country club! Not wanting to get involved, but having so choice because her instincts are too sharp, Sophia finds herself searching for the killer with a little help from old friends and a new flame. Will she make it back to Manhattan alive? Or will something/someone make her see that being back in her old stomping ground is what she really needs? How about that killer? Will she find out who it is before she's next? You'll have to read to find out!

With a little romance, some sleuthing, delicious desserts, and a TON of charm, *Cake and Punishment* is going to be a hit with readers! Mystery lovers will be delighted in the sleuthing and those who love to bake are going to want to try these recipes! It's an all around PERFECT cozy, and such a fun book to read. **I highly recommend it .**

PS: Did you know that Maymee Bell is bestselling author, Tonya Kappes? I didn't. But because I was so enthralled in this book I went out and immediately purchased some of her older titles. I can't get enough!

Tari says

I did not want this book to end, that's how good it was! From the small town Southern setting to the amazing characters and their overall chemistry with one another, I loved everything there was about this mystery. I do admit that I was able to guess the killer but it was fun seeing how that person got caught. Retribution came swiftly to the killer at the end, but to me it was very satisfying.

Sophia Cummings was head pastry chef for The Manhattan, an exclusive New York restaurant, who, after finding her boyfriend Noah, their main chef, with the hostess, needed some time away to keep herself sane. She came back to her hometown of Rumford, KY where just about right away she found herself the cake baker for her good friend Charlotte's wedding. The more word spread about Sophia's amazing desserts, the more people just assumed she would be staying. Sophia even let herself dream about staying every so often when she saw that the local bakery had closed. Conveniently, her friend Madison was the listing agent for it as well as a very cute little cottage.

Sophia didn't think there would ever be a murder in this small town but when the country club chef was found dead and Evelyn, the general manager became the main suspect, Sophia felt it was only right to clear her longtime friend who had given her her first job right there at the country club. Hopefully Sophia and her other friend Madison can figure out who the killer is before Sophia becomes the next one killed!

This book had so many fun and likable characters! Sophia's mom, Bitsy, was a real trip! She had a way of getting her way all the time but everyone loved her for the kind person she was. I felt like any of the main characters would make for some really good friends especially Madison and Charlotte. At first I wasn't sure whether to trust Charlotte's fiance Brett or some of the other suspects to choose from. I did pick the correct one but I feel like the author helped a lot by planting clues that I picked up on.

I could totally picture this book as a TV mystery movie since it has everything they look for in a very sweet but compelling mystery. There was a wedding, a budding romance, a few tense or scary moments but the very happy ending that I always love when I read a cozy mystery. This book fit everything I have come to expect in a great cozy! I absolutely cannot wait for the next book!

I voluntarily read and reviewed an advance e-copy of this book provided by the publisher and NetGalley.
