



## A Cookbook Conspiracy

*Kate Carlisle*

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It's a recipe for disaster when bookbinder Brooklyn Wainwright is asked to restore an antique cookbook....

Brooklyn has always been a little obsessed with food, but it was her sister Savannah who became a chef, graduating from the prestigious Cordon Bleu school in Paris. She and her classmates all went on to successful careers, but none of them achieved culinary superstardom like Savannah's ex-boyfriend Baxter Cromwell.

When Baxter invites the old gang to participate in his new restaurant's gala opening in San Francisco, Savannah looks forward to seeing her friends, and even asks Brooklyn to restore a tattered cookbook—an old gift from Baxter—as a present for him. But Brooklyn immediately recognizes that the book, which has strange notes and symbols scrawled in the margins, is at least two hundred years old. She thinks that it probably belongs in a museum, but Savannah insists on returning it to Baxter.

Shortly after receiving the gift, Baxter is found dead, with Savannah kneeling over him, bloody knife in hand, and the rare cookbook has disappeared. Brooklyn knows her sister didn't kill him, and she suspects the missing cookbook might lead to the real villain. Now Brooklyn will have to turn up the heat on the investigation before Chef Savannah finds herself slinging hash in a prison cafeteria.

## A Cookbook Conspiracy Details

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Author : Kate Carlisle

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## From Reader Review A Cookbook Conspiracy for online ebook

### Julie says

Overall I thought this was the poorest showing in the series (2 star for series, 3 for the genre). It was disappointing, especially after the move to hard cover. I felt that the story wasn't as interesting as in the past, the characters participation in the story wasn't as 'necessary', and there were a number of character things that didn't appeal to me. All this lead to my it just feeling 'ok' to me.

What I didn't like:

**Missing staple characters:** No Vinny, Suzie, Gabriel, Ian, Minka, or other neighbors; no Robin to speak of (but that's ok b/c she lost her interesting factor shacking up with the brother.)

**Brook (& Derek) actually participating in the mystery:** She & Derek were mostly just passive observers to the whole mystery in my opinion. In fact no one really did any investigating. There was a little half-hearted searching but nothing I thought was consequential to how things revealed/played out.

**Savannah:** I had my fingers crossed by about 25% that she'd get offed. her attitude sucked, she was ungrateful to Brooke, seemed selfish and a bit dense. Unfortunately it got worse and she helped derail what could have been an interesting character addition in Dylan.

**Adding a cat:** SO cliche. I'm writing a book where the crime is people killing cats. I'm so sick of them showing up in cozy mysteries. :)

**Hand-holding/kissing in lieu of plot:** Felt like the point of this book was to mention all the times that Derek might hold Brooke's hand or kiss it or kiss her forehead or her neck or her head... in the course of a 2-3 week period. That's not substantive character development, it's not relevant to the plot, its boring when its the main focus.

What I liked:

**Family at a minimum:** Excluding Savannah there was minimal other interaction with her family. There was just enough in this book - a couple pages is all that is really bearable. Execution was well done and fit in well with the whole story.

**Brooke & Derek's relationship at the beginning and the end:** The bit with them having breakfast in the morning and their fight in the end, discussing renovations, that showed nice character development. Big miss on not having more of her with Dylan and how she'd fit in his family or how his family thought of her. Maybe to come?

**Book restorer/Food lover/San Francisco:** Like the character's profession, a bit of description of it and her appreciation of food and wine. I'm glad there was something towards the end about her concern about gaining weight. No woman her age who doesn't exercise could remain slender with that food consumption! Like the location.

**Brooke & Derek:** Great characters and they've actually matured throughout the series and evolved as a couple. That is HUGE in the cozy genre. Brooke's growing awareness of how the whole murder/witness business worked and passing it along was great. She's learning!

I'm hoping and expecting the next book to take place in France while Brooke is at a conference mentioned in this book. So, there's promise that we won't be saddled with her family, the cat will stay home, and Gabriel will help her with some wacky capers.

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### **Lindsey says**

This book was just good, which is sad as I had such high hopes for it. I think the move from a paperback to a hardcover really hurt the quality. There was just so much filler that wouldn't have been there in a paperback.

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### **Joe says**

Lighter than her usual story.  
Fun.  
I never felt any danger.  
The food sounds good.  
Not enough clues.  
A good visit with fun characters-friends.

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### **Carrie ♠ says**

Was looking for a book to listen to on trip to Ottawa (about 8 hour drive for me). This wound up being the perfect choice. I finished it just before arriving at my destination. It was a nice and light fun read. I have never read any of Kate Carlisle's books. Considering I started in the middle of the series, there was no problem with understanding any former storylines, as it seemed to me the author did a nice job of weaving facts/events into the current story.

The only thing that made this more like a 3.5 and not a 4 was that I would have enjoyed just a little more character development--and perhaps once I am more invested with the main characters after reading a few more books in the series, that could easily change.

I really did enjoy the mixture of the old cookbook by 'Obediance Green' and the Revolutionary War and sending secret messages within the pages of this so-called cookbook. Definitely a very nice surprise for me since I like those types of historical fiction stories (well historical fiction in general). The main reason I first choice this was that it takes place in the San Francisco Bay area.

After seeing a few other readers' comments about this book being slower/not quite as good as her other books, I'm definitely game to give another shot at reading all about Brooklyn. Hopefully, I will be able to find some other audiobook copies. The narrator wasn't too bad either...definitely not one of my favorites like Scott Brick, but I would certainly listen to her again

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### **Judy says**

This series takes me back to the beginning of this very blog. My review of *Homicide in Hardcover*, the first book in the *Bibliophile Mystery* series was one of the first on my blog. Okay, it was technically the fourth review I did. Back in the days when I had zero followers and was writing them for myself. No schedule, just randomly posting. I wasn't even giving them ratings. And now look, book 6 in the series and 2 exciting years later. We've both come a long way.

It has been awhile since I last spent time with Brooklyn. But it was very easy to catch back up and I enjoyed visiting with her. This time it wasn't Brooklyn who found a dead body, but her younger sister Savannah. In an eerily similar manner to how Brooklyn found her first body in *Homicide in Hardcover*. Luckily for Savannah, Brooklyn was first on scene and able to be by Savannah's side. Plus she now not only has contacts she trusts, but the experience to know how the investigation will go.

I liked seeing how culinary challenged Brooklyn was and her failed experiments with making a syllabub (or as I like to think of it, drunk pudding). The clues and suspects were varied and kept me guessing and second guessing. Brooklyn's, and in reflection the author's, fascination and respect for old books continues to shine through the story. This was another wonderful addition to the series, and I really need to find the next book, *The Book Stops Here*, as it is out and available. I found this book a 4 star read.

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### **Kari Anderson says**

From Amazon:

It's a recipe for disaster when bookbinder Brooklyn Wainwright is asked to restore an antique cookbook....

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When Baxter invites the old gang to participate in his new restaurant's gala opening in San Francisco, Savannah looks forward to seeing her friends, and even asks Brooklyn to restore a tattered cookbook—an old gift from Baxter—as a present for him. But Brooklyn immediately recognizes that the book, which has strange notes and symbols scrawled in the margins, is at least two hundred years old. She thinks that it probably belongs in a museum, but Savannah insists on returning it to Baxter.

Shortly after receiving the gift, Baxter is found dead, with Savannah kneeling over him, bloody knife in hand, and the rare cookbook has disappeared. Brooklyn knows her sister didn't kill him, and she suspects the missing cookbook might lead to the real villain. Now Brooklyn will have to turn up the heat on the investigation before Chef Savannah finds herself slinging hash in a prison cafeteria.

My Thoughts:

I listened to this book on audio book – and it was a great driving read. I always opt for murder mystery books when I am driving. They keep me paying attention, as I am constantly trying to pin the killer. This one definitely kept me on my toes. However, this is the 7th installment of the series, so I am a little behind. Carlisle did a good job of making this a stand-alone book, but I could have done with some more background on some of the characters and their relationships. As OCD as I am about starting a series at the beginning, with audio books it doesn't bother me as much.

I loved the characters in this book... especially some of the males... they can cook and have accents from across the country. Carlisle nailed it with the characters in this one!

I was also fascinated with Brooklyn and her career as a bookbinder. I'm sure the previous six books have more information on how she got into that, which to me is worth going back and reading them. There was a

bit of the binding in this book, but I would have loved to hear more. Total book nerd. Anything bookish. I'm hooked. What an awesome job!!

I give A Cookbook Conspiracy 4 out of 5 bookmarks and will definitely look for more of these books in the future.

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### **RebeccaS says**

4.25 stars

Brooklyn's sister Savannah, a world renowned Chef, is being featured in a new restaurant being opened by an old friend. As a thank you to him, she wants Brooklyn to fix up an old cookbook so she can give it to her friend as a gift. In fact, it was a book he had once given her, back in their culinary school days. Savannah is trusting and a little naive, but Brooklyn knows her "friend" Baxter is not a good person. So it is not surprise to us that he ends up murdered in his own restaurant. The suspects? All of his old culinary school "friends". Or are they really friends? We quickly find out that there are long histories between Baxter and all the characters...and he is truly a manipulative and calculating guy. Though none of them can believe that one of their friends is a killer....someone must have murdered him. And why?

Brooklyn of course jumps at the chance to investigate to help clear Savannah's name. She is reluctant to believe any of the culinary friends are the murderer, but she efficiently looks into each one as a suspect. I wish Derek was by her side for more of her investigating, because I LOVE HIM. I also adore her family, I would love to visit Dharma and live with them. I would happily take a protection spell from her mother.

I was actually not very surprised by the identity of the killer. (view spoiler) I also liked how the mystery revolved somewhat around the cookbook and learning more about its secrets.

This is one of my favorite series because of the awesome characters. Brooklyn is funny and strong and I love learning more and more about old books and book binding. Derek and her family and friends are amazing recurring characters and I feel like I really know many of them. I can't wait to continue this series

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### **Debbie Lester says**

Kate Carlisle returns to her Bibliophile Mystery series with A Cookbook Conspiracy. Readers who love food, as well as, books will be especially happy with this installment. With a combination of history, mystery and culinary craftiness this book offers a little something for everyone. The restoration of a valuable cookbook takes center stage and lands Brooklyn's sister, Savannah in some hot water. A great new whodunit to add to any readers collection.

What I liked:

Being a voracious reader for practically all my life makes me really enjoy books about books. The Bibliophile Mysteries satisfy that part of me that loves to learn about books, libraries, collections, and restoration. Carlisle generally uses a particular book in each of her mysteries to draw the reader in and lend authenticity to each story she creates. In her latest book, it's a very valuable cookbook that needs to be restored and which plays a big part in the murder that Brooklyn needs to solve. I loved the information about

the book and where it came from, the secret code that provides a lot of evidence and all things related to the restoration, however there was a little less of that in this book than usual for a Bibliophile mystery.

Kate Carlisle likes to add a bit of history to her mysteries and that always entertains me well because I am a history buff myself. Using the 240 year old cookbook also gave this book a different avenue of interest. Since Brooklyn's sister is a chef, and she is the one having the cookbook restored readers get to learn a lot about the behind scenes culinary world as well. I thought this was a great way to add new interest in the series and I think new and old readers alike will enjoy this part of the book.

Baxter Cornwall was a real piece of work, or so I think. Readers don't get to understand the true evil of this villain because he doesn't have any dialogue in the book. He is killed very early on and the reader is left to find out how bad he was and what he was capable of through the eyes of other characters in the book. It was hard to form a connection to a character who was such a huge part of the story, but is not really present in the book. His connection to Savannah carried that part of the story, but I found myself wanting a little more where the villain was concerned.

The mystery aspects of the story were quite well written. Carlisle used the cookbook to create a very intriguing situation in which Baxter is killed and the 240 year old cookbook holds the key to figuring out a current murder. I loved the combination of the past meeting the present in such a dramatic way. Carlisle never disappoints when it comes to keeping the reader in the dark. I didn't figure this one out until Brooklyn did.

What I didn't like:

I felt there were a few problems with this one but as usual they may just be my own hangups and not the general consensus. So take it with a grain of salt and read it and find out what you think. This book was more centered on the culinary elements than the book restoration and bibliophile aspects the series is known for. The villain was a bit uninspiring because the reader did not get to know him and why he was evil. There were also parts of the story that felt a piecemeal, or stitched together, including the visit from Brooklyn and Savannah's parents. It felt like it was only added so that the quirky family was present and not central to the story.

Bottom Line:

There were good points and bad points to this one. I loved the theme and idea behind the cookbook and the way it was represented on the story, but I wanted more relation to books and restoring them than to chefs and culinary interests. The combination of mystery and history really works, but the details were not there for this one. Not a bad book, but not my favorite of the series either.

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### **Robert Schneider says**

It was the slowest of the series so far. Never realized the main character was so whinny before. It was definitely padded. Never read a book which rehashed what's happened so far so many times in great detail. Glad I got it cheap but it wasn't worth hardcover status in the series.

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## **Sara says**

Ah, fluffy fun. This is part of series of Bibliophile mysteries and this is the only one I've read so far. I couldn't resist a mystery about a cookbook! It was unbelievable but a fast, easy read that was totally stress free. I actually think I'll read another in this series. Sure, I like to read The Great American Novel every now and then and I like a book that kills off all the characters (every now and then) but sometimes you have to have a book that you know will have a happy ending without too much romance. (I'd rather people get killed off than get swept off their feet.) So, although this had a tad too much sappiness and happily-ever-afterness, I give it a 3 star.

Seriously, though, the lack of knowledge the main character has about certain bookish things is a bit amazing. I think she would be smarter. But then that makes me feel good, doesn't it? Maybe it's the author's ploy to give me that "I know more than you" superior feeling as I read.

You also know it's a bit chick lit when there are sentences such as "I am so not going in there". Ah, well, it must have worked. I am so going to read the first book in the series.

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## **Barb says**

I always learn so much about bookbinding from reading one of Kate Carlisle's books. Plus, each one is centered around the restoration of a different antique volume. In *A COOKBOOK CONSPIRACY* the book in question is a handwritten cookbook from the time of the Revolutionary War, and there are dozens of hilarious quotes concerning the preparation of some pretty odd victuals. Then we have the chefs: eight old friends who graduated from Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. The settings are vividly described, the characters are believable, the plot is amazing. There's actually a connection between the old cookbook and the murderous events. And a new romance pops up for Brooklyn's sister, Savannah. We spend more time with the residents of Dharma, as well as hanging out at Brooklyn and Derek's San Francisco apartment. Kate Carlisle is writing some of the best cozy mysteries available today, and this book is a perfect example of the quality of her craft.

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## **Srivani says**

This book did not deliver on any of its promises -

- 1) It's a terrible murder mystery.
- 2) It didn't have any interesting tidbits about bookbinding.
- 3) Even though one of the protagonists was a chef and the book was titled 'Cookbook Conspiracy' it didn't have anything about food other than everybody getting together for dinners all the time while chefs from the group were dropping dead like flies.
- 4) The quotes from the cookbook in question is about the only saving grace of this book. The plot of the cookbook itself is very thin.
- 5) The protagonist who is supposed to be the crime-solver does nothing to actually solve the crime. She doesn't even read the 200 year old cookbook that she thinks is so awesome and valuable.

I didn't come out liking any of the characters. The writing is not the worst, but not far from it.

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## **Lily (Night Owl Book Cafe) says**

Thank you NAL Hardcover for providing me a copy of this book in exchange of an honest review!

4.5 Sold Stars!

Brooklyn is back in the seventh installment of A Bibliophile Mystery!

Brooklyn was always obsessed with food, unfortunately her cooking skills are sub-par and nothing ever comes out right. It was her sister Savannah who managed to attend of the most prestigious culinary schools in Paris, Cordon Bleu. Savannah and her friends graduated on top of their class, but it was Savannah's ex-boyfriend Baxter Cromwell who went out and became famous for his 'skills'

When Baxter turns to open a restaurant in San Francisco, he invites all the old gang from school to his opening gala where they will all be cooking for the restaurant that night. As a gift to Baxter, Savannah asks Brooklyn to restore one of the old tattered cookbooks that Baxter had once given to Savannah as a gift. A cookbook that is at last two hundred years old, with historical significances. Brooklyn cannot help but feel instantly drawn to the book and the woman behind it. When the book is restored and gifted to Baxter, shortly after he is found dead and the cookbook is missing!

Woo what a ride. Thoroughly enjoyed this one! I loved Brooklyn, she was so passionate about everything that she does, including restoring older books. I couldn't even comprehend how much work and care goes into restoring books until I read this one. The author and Brooklyn sure know their stuff and we get a glimpse of that through the story.

I loved the mystery, it had left me guessing until the very end. With all of the chefs being the possible suspect, the question of who killed Baxter and stole the cookbook hung tightly in the air. I couldn't help but wonder why they did it. With so many character, it wasn't hard to keep up. We get a glimpse of all of them as Brooklyn speaks to them and a little background from her time with them in Paris while she was visiting. It reminded me a little of Clue the game the way it was handled, heh It was very fun and exciting!

Derek was just wonderful and I love his relationship with Brooklyn and the way it progressed. Brooklyn knows she has a lot going on with her, especially since she keeps stumbling into dead bodies. But Derek is supportive, and loving and generally concerned for her. A wonderful swoon worthy male!

I loved this cozy mystery, it was a great read to put your feet up on. Filled with interesting characters. Including Brooklyn's mother, who is learning New Age tricks in hopes of helping protect Brooklyn. It was kind of amusing.

I really enjoyed the way this book progressed and the way to mystery flowed. With so much more going on, we get to glimpse into Brooklyns life, family and her job. A wonderful read that left me wanting more. Cannot wait for the next book in the series. Kate Carlisle sure knows how to write a mystery with memorable character!

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**Kevin says**

[ Savannah was a great main suspect in the murder, you knew right off that Brooklyn would have to find the murderer and save her vegetarian sister.

(hide spoiler)]

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**JoAn says**

A Cookbook Conspiracy by Kate Carlisle was another intriguing mystery in this series. I loved learning small facts about code encryption in this one from Derek's brother Dalton. I do enjoy this series and waiting impatiently for my library to send me the next one in audio book.

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