


Murder al Dente

Jennifer L. Hart

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Pretty please with spaghetti on top? Andy Buckland has always dreamed of being a chef. But after a live studio audience is stricken with food poisoning during her debut cooking show, she finds herself blacklisted in the culinary community. The only job open to her is working in her family's southern pasta shop, and, to make matters worse, her first assignment is serving baked ziti to her former lover and his spoiled bride-to-be at their engagement party! But a broken heart and a bruised ego are the least of Andy's troubles when she discovers a dead body at the party with the words "welcome home" written in flour next to it. Is it a warning? A threat? Or a frame-up job? Andy is determined to find out. With the help of her over-the-top Italian family, Andy will prove that she has what it takes to not only cook the best dish in town but also catch a killer, too! Recipes included!

Murder al Dente Details

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Author : Jennifer L. Hart

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From Reader Review *Murder al Dente* for online ebook

FangirlNation says

Murder al Dente, the first in the Southern Pasta Shop Mysteries by Jennifer L. Hart, begins with good promise as Andy Buckland debuts her own live cooking show when the entire TV audience doubles over with food poisoning. With no one willing to hire her now, Andy must return to her small hometown from Atlanta and live with her grandfather while helping out in the family's dying pasta shop.

Read the rest of this review, more reviews, and other wonderful, geeky articles on FangirlNation

Catherine says

I really liked this book.

Pretty please with spaghetti on top?

Andy Buckland has always dreamed of being a chef. But after a live studio audience is stricken with food poisoning during her debut cooking show, she finds herself blacklisted in the culinary community. The only job open to her is working in her family's southern pasta shop, and, to make matters worse, her first assignment is serving baked ziti to her former lover and his spoiled bride-to-be at their engagement party! But a broken heart and a bruised ego are the least of Andy's troubles when she discovers a dead body at the party with the words "welcome home" written in flour next to it. Is it a warning? A threat? Or a frame-up job? Andy is determined to find out. With the help of her over-the-top Italian family, Andy will prove that she has what it takes to not only cook the best dish in town but also catch a killer, too!

Dawn Frazier says

Another great book by Jennifer Hart! This is the first in a new series, Andy was really hoping her TV show would take off and be a hit, but the audience wound up with food poisoning, so she has no choice but to go back home and work in her family's restaurant/pasta shop. This book is a fun read, lots of twists and turns, and a touch of romance. And the recipes throughout the book will really have you craving Italian food! I loved it, and am looking forward to the next in the series!

Megan says

This was a fun light read, the perfect "distraction" mystery. I'm not a big fan of recipes in books (though I did appreciate the extra notes meant to build on character development in each recipe) and I knew who had done it by the half way point, but I devoured the whole book in a matter of a few hours and just enjoyed the whole thing.

The characters were interesting and believable (for the most part, I take issue with the Molly character but anyway), the story had nice pacing, and the perfect amount of light mystery mixed with chick-lit relationship

stuff. The book I finished right before this was super disappointing and full of little writing flaws so I was mostly grateful to have a well-paced, well-written book to indulge in while I was sick in bed.

It's nothing ground breaking, but I plan to keep reading the series for the fun of it.

Kira says

Three months ago, Andy Buckland botched her big break. She gave a live television audience food poisoning. Now, after being blacklisted by most of the food industry, Andy's back working at her family's failing pasta shop. Unfortunately, her first job is to cater her ex-boyfriend's engagement party. When a chef from her past is murdered at the event, it's up to Andy to figure out who really did it. With the help of a hot private investigator, who just happens to be her ex-boyfriend's fiancé's half-brother, she looks into the chef's past. Some things, however, are better left buried and someone is trying real hard to keep it that way. Can Andy solve the case before it's too late? Can she save her family's pasta shop?

Narrator, Suzanne Cerreta brings a humorous touch to Hart's food mystery. The well-developed characters are brought to life with Cerreta's unique voices and intonations. She easily navigates the author's mix of action, internal dialogue, intrigue, and humorous scenes with ease. The plot is well developed and engaging. Readers who like humorous food mysteries with a little bit of romance will have a hard time putting this audiobook down.

Leanne Hunt says

I wasn't prepared for the humour in this romance novel. I read the audio version and found it absolutely delightful. The author depicts her characters with beautiful quirks and the narrator picks them all up and turns them into gems. I especially enjoyed the way the narrator handled the Italian and New Zealand accents, as this really added something special to the reading experience.

Jennifer L Hart is a talented author and I will certainly look out for other books by her. A great holiday read, perfect for escaping the stress of work life and ideal for fanning into flames the spark of feminine longing!

Caitlin Copp says

Andy Buckland was loving life as she debuted in her own cooking show. When the entire audience got sick from a dish she cooked, she figured her cooking career was over and returned to help out her family's pasta shop. As if that isn't bad enough her first job is catering her ex's engagement party! When she stumbles upon a dead body at the engagement party she's not sure how things can get much worse, but she's determined to clear her name.

Gary Sundell says

A fun read. I am looking forward to reading the rest of the series.

Poor Andy, short for Andrea, Buckland is all set to make it big on a cable food network. The studio audience gets food poisoning from the dish she has prepared. She ends back home to help her great aunt and grandfather run the family pasta shop. While she is catering a local event for her family business, she discovers a dead body with the words "Welcome Home" written in flour which has spilled on the floor near the body.

Sara says

I read this thinking that I was going to get a mystery with some light romance. What I got was ALL romance and the tiniest amount of the most uninteresting murder mystery ever. The main character is in no way a sleuth. She investigates nothing; there are multiple chapters in which the case is never mentioned or even thought about. Halfway through the book, I'd begun to believe that the author had forgotten she was writing a mystery. The conclusion was clunky, rushed, and completely devoid of tension. And despite the lack of any clues, suspect interviews, or other typical amateur sleuth investigation, it was painfully obvious who the killer was by the middle of the book. We learn nothing about either the victim or the murderer, so there is no emotional connection to solving the case. The "sleuth" herself doesn't seem all that interested in it. In other words, it fails as a mystery novel.

Unfortunately, even as a romance it falls flat. The main character seems to believe that everyone is talking about her (they're not) or out to get her (they're not), and she has this weird fixation on arch-enemies and old high school nemeses. I found it really difficult to like her, her love interest (an accent on legs, apparently, but that doesn't make him interesting), and her family and friends.

Definitely not the "mystery" series for me.

Bruce Curran says

Murder Al Dente
Jennifer Hart

Spoiler Free Review

Murder Al Dente is the start of a new series for talented author Jennifer Hart. In it she serves up her own recipe for mystery and it is a tasty one at that. Pull up a chair and get ready to dig in.

In Murder Al Dente we are introduced to Andrea (Andy) Sofia Buckland. She is a thirty something chef who's dream of hosting her own TV show was crushed when the audience got food poisoning. She has returned to her hometown and the family pasta shop to regroup and to help her grandfather and her great aunt save the business oh, and to solve a murder as well.

Jennifer has a light hand with her books writing well crafted, well-paced books with interesting characters and inventive plots. Murder Al Dente is no different. She has populated Andy's home town with some interesting characters as well as created a family for her with quite a few quirks and an interesting backstory. As the book progresses we find Andy's backstory is also complex.

I found Jennifer when I started reading her “Laundry Hag” series. While I am probably not her usual target audience I was hooked. She has a wonderful sense of humor and the books are the light and humorous stories that I have gravitated to in recent years.

She also recently introduced another series called “Damaged Goods” set in Miami. An experienced author with a quite a few books under her belt this new series adds to her range. Murder Al Dente straddles the traditional cozy genre and the romantic suspense genre. I think fans of both will be pleased.

So for a light fun and entertaining read give this one a taste. I think you will be glad you did.

Now for the disclaimer: I was given an advance copy for an honest and fair review.

Ian says

Andy almost made it to the big time as a celebrity chef. Then on live TV she prepared a meal that left her audience literally throwing up in the aisles. Disgraced she returns to her home town with her tail between her legs only to find the family pasta shop in financial dire straights...and with her reputation as the 'death chef' there isn't much she can do to help out.

Then another celebrity chef, the man who she suspects sabotaged her food turns up dead in the kitchen of an event she was catering and things go from bad to worse. With the help of an old friend and a mysterious outsider she starts investigating the crime.

If I was going to write a book, it wouldn't be a cozy mystery. It's a well defined sub-genre with well defined rules. The thing is, those rules are quite restrictive. You can change the curtains, you can move around the furniture, but that's about it — you really do break those rules at your peril. And because of that, cozy mysteries often feel the sameish.

Well, thank the lord for Jennifer L. Hart. She's one of the few authors of cozy mysteries who can keep my attention. She follows all the rules, but her characters have an intelligence that is refreshing and she avoids all the usual potholes. Add a lively sense of humor and you have a book which kind of works on every level.

Donna says

This was a pleasant mystery centered all around food. There are many pasta and sauce recipes throughout the book that made me hungry while I was reading. I may even have to try one or two of them sometime. The mystery wasn't obvious and kept you guessing until the end. This is the first time I have read anything by this author and it wasn't bad. I enjoyed it immensely.

Chris says

More pitfalls than the 'Perils of Pauline'. Lots of fun and good recipes included.

Jenna says

Jennifer L. Hart's *Murder Al Dente* is a mouth-watering murder mystery combining wit, humor, and romance; one of my favorite books of the summer by far.

After a disastrous debut on a television food channel, Andrea Buckland returns to her family-run pasta shop, *The Bowtie Angel*, in North Carolina. But her road home isn't smooth sailing. A car crash, some hard financial facts, and discovering a dead body litter Andy's first few days back in Beaverton. On the plus side, there is Malcolm Jones - a handsome new guy in town with surprising connections to the community.

In a very short amount of time, I've really fallen for Jennifer L. Hart's writing. From cozy mysteries and romance, to science fiction and fantasy, she masters it all. Her stories are always funny, captivating, and attention-grabbing. In addition to all of that, *Murder Al Dente* includes some seriously appetizing pasta recipes that enhance the story that much more. I'm very impatient for more from Andy, Jones, and Jennifer!

Imjussayin says

More love story than mystery I found *Murder Al Dente* a book that held my attention. And that is surprising. Romance is not my thing, but I was pleasantly surprised by this read. So much so, I'm going to read book 2 and hope that it is disappointing. I don't want another Jennifer L Hart series to read. I enjoyed *Two Guys Detective Agency* and I am eagerly awaiting *Part II Second Helping*.

The beginning of the story will prick your curiosity. And very quickly you will find yourself investing in Andy Buckland, protagonist and would be TV chef star. After a public disaster, Andy returns home. Andy's homecoming is a difficult one partly because it is born of failure. So she is a little paranoid. There are a series of events, twists and turns, that keeps your attention but the book often cuts to scenes and that can feel disjointed. And perhaps strangely, it's the murder that seems out of place.

The characters are all charming, even the wrongdoer. But I think it's the subplots that made this book. It neatly takes unexpected and sometimes humorous very human turns.

Take it as read, that the author Jennifer L Hart knows how to write. Hart is an experienced author. So the story, for the most part, flows and was not flawed by grammatical error.

If you want something different and romance is not your thing. Then this difference might be right for you.

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Book Rating

Sexual Content: U

Language: U

Violent: U

Would I read the next one ~~or reread~~?: Yes

My rating system (* = star)

0* Could not finish this book (waste of time)

1* Finished the book but didn't like it.

2* Finished the book it was okay.

3* A good read worth your time.

4* An excellent read often with a novel concept or unusual plot.

5* A great read. A prominent example of the genre.
