



The Baker's Apprentice

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Judith Ryan Hendricks, who Booklist has said "calls to mind Barbara Kingsolver in her affinity for wise women and the power of close female friendships," continues the saga of the Queen Street Bakery in **The Baker's Apprentice**.

Wynter Morrison -- first introduced in the bestselling **Bread Alone** -- has found contentment in a life very different from anything she ever imagined: making bread on the night shift, learning the fine points of running a bakery, and exploring the possibilities of a relationship with Mac, her on-again, off-again love interest.

But Mac's failure to deal with issues in his past creates friction, Wyn's soon-to-be-ex husband is turning their divorce into guerrilla warfare, and she is reminded of how quickly life can reverse direction without warning.

Mac's abrupt departure is a shock, but conflicts at the bakery and her friend Tyler's tragic loss afford Wyn little time for brooding. Then letters from Mac begin to arrive, casual and distant at first, but gradually becoming more personal and revealing.

In his absence, Wyn finds she not only learns more about Mac but also about herself, as she becomes Tyler's mentor, passing on the wisdom and healing power of bread making. Her new self-awareness and resiliency will be tested when the Queen Street Bakery's existence is threatened, as well as when Mac returns and she must decide whether there is still a place for him in her life.

From critically acclaimed author Judith Ryan Hendricks comes the next chapter of the Queen Street Bakery, where questions are answered and old friends are revisited.

The Baker's Apprentice Details

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From Reader Review *The Baker's Apprentice* for online ebook

Laurel Osterkamp says

The Baker's Apprentice, by Judith Ryan Hendricks, is the sequel to *Bread Alone*, which is the story of a woman named Wynter, who moves to Seattle after her marriage with a Los Angeles hotshot ends. In the Pacific Northwest she finds happiness through simplicity, and that includes baking bread professionally and finding love with a free-spirited guy who delivers firewood.

In *The Baker's Apprentice*, Wynter is presented with a whole new set of problems. Her love interest, Mac, can't open up or commit, her bakery is going under, and a young girl she works with is simultaneously pushing her away and clinging to her in a time of tragedy. Wynter has to decide what she is willing to put up with and whether her needs and desires outweigh her pride.

I was excited to read *The Baker's Apprentice* because I loved *Bread Alone*. Hendrick's descriptions of Seattle and bread baking were at once earthy and glamorous, and I really enjoyed reading about Wynter's change in life style and her European way of doing things. There's more of that in *The Baker's Apprentice*, and Hendricks does a good job of writing about real-life situations. Mac is focused on more in this book, and his perspective is told with such compassion that even though I started the book not liking him a lot, by the end I was rooting for him 100%.

However, this book is sort of like part 2 of *Back to the Future* – not as good as part 1, and a clear set-up for part 3, with its completely unresolved ending. I found that frustrating, especially since I endured some slightly boring parts of this book in order to reach what I thought would be a payout at the end.

But I'm sure I'll be reading part 3 despite it all.

Heidi says

Most likely due to my feminist reading of the past couple of weeks... I find myself done with Judith R. Hendricks. (Good thing she's also done with me as I've read all of her work.) Though I have enjoyed her books, I can't say that *The Baker's Apprentice* did much for me as far as sequels go. It felt too much like a Romance Novel and not enough like a Woman's Lit. Novel. That said, I was hoping for a prequel... a story of Wyn's time in France. Instead she cops out of a trip to Paris with her BFF to attend to a snotty EMO teenager dealing with her BFF's suicide. I mean, give me a break! I don't know one woman who would do that! Especially because said teenager HAS a family..... Wyn is **not** a hero and I can't believe that Hendricks tried to make her into one. **And Then!** To add injury to insult, Mac (the commitmentphobe) snakes off because he has to "figure himself out" (something only a MAN could do, btw), writes a stupid book (in the long run becoming the breadwinner *shock *horror) and returns to beg forgiveness by proving his testosterone fueled bad-boyness and stealing the sign from her failed business as a keepsake. Of course Wyn forgives him – I mean who can resist that, right? ... and they are last seen flying off into the starlight on their way to reconnect with his mother. Can it get anymore "*As The World Turns*" than that????

Ok, ok... so my critique is on her story (not my own) and not on the book as a whole. I just didn't like it. This is her first sequel... maybe she will learn from it. But I truly feel that she ruined the story, introduced a whole gambit of new characters, trivialized the existing characters and then left everything up in the air. Again. That may work for solo novels, but not sequels – unless... Is she planning on turning this into a trilogy? In that case, I might reconsider. I'm going to have to research this. It will change my attitude

immensely.

I find nothing on my theory. That's not to say it isn't possible, but until I know better, I'm going to have to contend with "I didn't like this book". Mac is unbearable, Wyn is weak. Taylor goes from a rock-hard independent chick to a slobbering idiot with a mommy complex. Hendricks finds a way to take every strong female character and reduce them to miniscule, depleted losers – bitter, abused and alone or in some way dependent on a man, usually for happiness. It's **DISGUSTING**. The only character that I could relate to at all was MC, a minor character who did her own thing but somehow knows to give great advice on relationships - because you know, she's been there, done that and decided it wasn't for her. Hmmm...

I'd say, "Give me Avery! Give me Soleil!" but the more I think about it... they're kinda romantics too. Come on Hendricks... challenge yourself!

Miriam says

You'd think that if a book is titled, The Baker's Apprentice, then the primary plot would revolve around the apprentice. Instead, this underdeveloped and irrelevant subplot takes up perhaps a quarter of the book. Or perhaps it refers instead to the ongoing essential nature of being a baker, in which case you'd expect the bakery and bread baking imagery to recur as a dominant motif. Hendricks prefers to have her tale unfold everywhere else. The bakery itself appears even less frequently than the apprentice.

Even apart from this nonsense, the story fails. The main character, Wynter, is deeply in debt and constantly bemoaning her status, but is never required to make choices that depend on her poverty. She does eat out at restaurants frequently. While we are told she sometimes runs along the Seattle paths with her love interest, running itself is not part of her daily life. Nor, for that matter, does it ever seem to be a part of his even when he has relatively few demands on his time.

Perhaps the author should have set the ideas aside to proof a little better.

Craftnut - says

After the delight of the first of this series, Bread Alone, the sequel falls short. Wyn deals with money trouble and a protracted divorce. Much of the book is tied up with her boyfriend Mac and his trip to 'find himself' in the Yukon which has nothing to do with Wyn's apprentice, Tyler. The lovely scenes in the bakery are missing from this novel, very little is actually devoted to the title character. I find it distracting and irritating when characters make monumentally stupid decisions as Wyn does when a large amount of money is stolen and she doesn't take any steps to do anything about it. Things go from bad to worse, and the ending leaves much unsettled. I found the story disjointed, as if the author couldn't decide where to go with it, and frankly some decisions made by several characters made no sense at all. Perhaps that is by design to lay groundwork for a third book, but I won't be reading it.

Holli says

I'm glad I know there is a 3rd book in this series or I'd be highly disappointed in the ending!

Patricia Geller says

Fun. There is one about the same character that predates this but started reading out of order so skipping it.

Grace Harwood says

I'm never a big fan of sequels - they generally disappoint and something about them smacks of "writer unable to think up new and original characters and therefore recycling old ones" - this one was more disappointing than others because the original book, Bread Alone, was so hugely enjoyable. Wyn Morrison is back, but this time her broken heart has healed and she's lost a considerable amount of her charm along the way. Now she's seemingly more obsessed with sex than with her baked goodies. The recipes in Bread Alone were part of the plot, skilfully interwoven and not at all out of place - in the sequel the author has struggled to slot them in in any meaningful way and as a result they stick out like a sore thumb making little contribution to the story. That is, if there even is a story - the plot is random and haphazard - a series of events which are just occurring to the main character (and, yes, okay, life is like that, but this is a book - with a story which should be as well crafted as any artisan loaf). Hugely disappointing - I couldn't even finish it.

Melodie says

You have found your calling, what you consider to be your life's purpose. Life is good. All should be well, right?

Wyn has settled into her new career as a bread baker at the Queen Street Bakery. She has taken on an apprentice, passing on her knowledge to another. But what is so right with her career, is so messed up with her new relationship with Mac. After an idyllic vacation together, there is radio silence and then he gives her the heave ho with the standard, "It's not you it's me" line and takes off to Alaska.

Here we go again. Or...do we? I thoroughly enjoyed this sequel and look forward to another book by this author.

Jami says

If there's not a third book coming then this book sucks. Tolerable story with an ending that killed it or lack of ending that is.

Margaret says

this is a sequel to "Bread Alone" and Hendricks third book as "Isobel's Daughter" came in between. She has become a much better writer. I probably gained 3 pounds reading about the food and the bread. The book begins with her and Mac sort of together but only sort of as he goes off to Alaska. The descriptions of Seattle and of the tiny town in Alaska just make you want to go there. Wyn takes on an apprentice, Tyler who she teaches to be a baker. Over the course of time she becomes more like a mother as Tyler loses her best friend. There might be another book as things were sort of left hanging. less sex.

Elizabeth says

Technically this series could have continued since the story just kind of stopped but (spoiler) since the bakery is closed I guess the theory is that it is done. Like the other it's odd because the first part is told as a story and the 2nd part is told in the point of view of the 2 characters. I like the first part better but it held my attention.

Chris Conley says

Oh boy...bread, issues, bread!!!! This follow up to Bread Alone was every bit as terrific as the first. I hope there are more so I can follow Wyn, Mac, Tyler and whoever else comes into their new world.

nimrodiel says

I haven't checked yet, but I'm really hoping that there is another book chronicling Wyn's life. The book spiraled up to its ending, and left me hanging wanting to know what happens next. I love it when a book grabs my attention like that.

This was just as good as Bread Alone was. I'm really glad that I was recommended these books.

Tina P. says

UGH!!!! I'm SO MAD that I just spent all this time reading this sequel book! I can't stand books when there are so many unanswered questions. I won't spoil it to those that are reading but I basically got to the last page thinking that there HAD TO BE some pages missing. What ever happened to X? What was X about? Oh man. I was so invested in this story from Bread Alone to this book and it just kills me that I don't know what really happened. It got so weird at the end, it felt so rushed. And then.....NO ENDING.
BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!

Laura says

Still enjoyable but not anywhere near as good as the first in this series!

Claudia Jones says

A good book

I thought this book was good. It was an ok sequel in some spots a little boring but none the less it was good

Nicki says

I really did like this although it was a bit different to the first book Bread Alone. One thing I did find strange from the offset was the name change for Cody to Tyler. I couldn't work that out at all, in fact I had to look back at the other book to make sure I wasn't imagining it. The writing is great lots of descriptions of people and places, although I did find the 'Mac' chapters a bit laborious, maybe because his character was annoying me. All in all it was a good story and I feel satisfied after reading it.

Mrunmai Kulkarni says

After a really long time, I found a book which was hard to put down. I found myself eager to leave the office and get back home to read the book.

Funda says

Truly enjoyed this sequel... Although the story line diverges into two parallel plots, both Wynter's and Mac's stories introduces memorable, even peculiar characters. Only Maggie as a character is underdeveloped and her story does not add much to the book. I must say, I liked the gentrification discussion angle.

Maria says

I had read the first book in this series (Bread Alone), and really enjoyed it. Therefore, I was looking forward to reading the second book to continue where the first book left-off. I found that this book was good however, it didn't really talk too much about the bakery itself, more so about Mac's journey in finding himself, and Wyn's way of dealing with his absence. I would have loved to read more about how Tyler and the others adjusted to their roles in the bakery, instead of reading about Mac's endless winter nights in the Yukon. Although it is discussed about the bakery's closure, it doesn't seem to be the central focus of the plot. We are left with a cliffhanger at the end of the book so, let's hope the third book solves that, and more.
