



Pie Hard

Kirsten Weiss

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Will Val pie hard on national TV?

Business at the bakery may have slowed down, but Val Harris isn't about to eat humble pie--not until a reality cooking show decides to whip the struggling Pie Town into shape. If Val can tolerate criticism from an abrasive pastry chef during filming, the free publicity might turn the unusual opportunity into the sweetest deal she didn't know she needed.

Except no one in San Nicholas has an appetite for dessert once murder steals the spotlight. When the show's bossy producer gets pushed to her death, Val and her flaky, septuagenarian pie crust expert, Charlene, follow crumbs in hopes of finding the killer. But with cameras still rolling and the shocking identity of the victim's replacement a guaranteed recipe for disaster, Val needs to stay cool long enough to solve the crime and keep Pie Town from falling apart--or else she just might go up in smoke before she ever graces the small screen.

Pie Hard Details

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Author : Kirsten Weiss

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From Reader Review Pie Hard for online ebook

Cindi says

There is a lot, and I mean A LOT, going on in this book. A reality show being filmed at Pie Town, a coven camping outside Val's home, a long lost father returning out of the blue, and two murders. Whew, see what I mean? But yet it all seems to gel and is tied together well.

While Pie Town is a struggling new business, It is doing as well as a new business can be expected, even if Val expanded a little too quickly at such an early age. But when her landlady, employee, and friend, Charlene, surprises her with the cast and crew from reality show, Pie Hard, Val eventually gets over the shock and realizes a little inconvenience is a small price to pay if she can get some solid business advice out of the fiasco.

After the first night of filming the producer is pushed off a cliff to her death and things just go down hill from there. Then her long lost father shows up to take over production and she's not quite sure what to make of him. She angry at him for having walked out on her and her mother all those years ago, but as with any story, there are two sides to it. Will she let him share his and believe him? Can she even trust him? Should she?

As the filming continues, the star pastry chef, Ilsa is murdered and the number of suspects is down by one. Who is targeting the Pie Hard gang and why? Eventually, taking a page out of an Agatha Christie book, Val gets the list of suspects together and the truth comes out. But it's not over yet...not until the fat lady sings...and she's not quite ready for her aria.

All in all this was a good story. While it's the third in the series, it's the first I have read, though I have read the Perfectly Proper Paranormal Museum series by the author. Her wit is quick and full of sarcasm and being a Jersey gal, I enjoy that. This was fine as a standalone. I didn't miss anything from the first few books in the series that the author didn't shed some light on where needed. Looking forward to more from Kirsten Weiss.

Kirsti says

Thank you to Netgalley and the publisher for the chance to read this book!

This is the third Pietown mystery, and unfortunately I haven't read the others. It is unfortunate because this one was very good, and I enjoyed my time spent with Val and Charlene very much! They were a quirky pair that made for a very different kind of cozy, and I must say Val puts up with a lot from her crazy land lady and her schemes! It all works out though, and a murderer is of course caught after some sleuthing. The only bad thing about this book is the multiple references to microwaved water for tea...I know there can't be anything WRONG with it exactly...but there is something wrong with it haha.

A fun series with Pie themes that are sure to make your mouth water. Four stars.

Patricia Romero says

At Pie Town, Val Harris is still in her first year and while business is a little slow right now she isn't about to throw in the towel.

Unbeknownst to Val her much older pie crust baker, Charlene has signed the shop up for the reality television show Pie Hard. Walking into her shop to find strangers and cameras is not what Val needs at the moment. But with Charlene whispering in her ear listing all of the good things and publicity they would receive, she caves.

Pie Hard, like all reality shows, thrives on drama and trust me there is no lack of drama in this tale. Rude, late, and pushy, Val doesn't know how much of this she can take. Charlene has already forgotten to tell her she rented a piece of the land where Val's tiny house sits to a group of Yurt loving, goddesses for the week and she still isn't sure if she has a boyfriend or not.

When one of her gaming regulars, Ray calls to say he just saw a body fall off the cliff at the hotel where the entire crew is staying, Val and Charlene are on the case. Val is hoping they all just go on home, but no, fate has something even more shocking in store for her! The new producer.

When even more bodies start piling up they know they need to solve this thing before Pie Town dies a hard death!

What makes a really good Cozy Mystery Series? Characters. And Ms. Weiss has given us an abundance of them. Not the typical ditzy ones. Characters you could meet in any small town. They have depth, flaws, quirks, just like the rest of us. They are relatable. This is what I like to call an intelligent cozy. There are so many layers of intrigue in this one that I read it straight through! Just when you think you know who did what and why, you don't. I love it when I read a story and go WHAT?? at the wrap up.

Very Well Done!

Kensington February 26, 2019

Thanks so much for the ARC KW!

Caroline Dube says

Valentine Harris is just a baker. But, Val can't be just a bakery owner. Val's bakery is struggling, but she knows it will be ok. With the help of her "partner" (employee), Charlene, Val's bakery Pie Town is featured on the Reality TV show "Pie Hard". From the onset Val is not happy about this. Those on Pie Hard do nothing but end up bashing a bakery, and her struggling shop needs help, not bad press. Pie Hard brings in a group of TV stars, TV production personnel, and even some strange characters. Throw in a bunch of garden goddesses and Val is sure to have an interesting week.

Soon after production begins, Regina, the producer of the show dies in a tragic accident. This accident becomes more confusing with the death of the Pie Hard pastry chef and star being murdered. An arson. A bomb. Will Pie Town ever recover from all of this bad press??

Pie Hard, by Kirsten Weiss, was the first Pie Town Mystery I have read and yet it was so easy to meet the characters. This book was a quick read and one that kept me guessing until the very end. Even when I thought I had figured out the "Who done it" I was quickly reminded that I was not the detective in this case. Ms. Weiss gives us a fun book that keeps us guessing the whole time!

Peggy R says

This is the third book in what has been a really entertaining cozy mystery series to date. I love all of the titles. In fact, the title of the first book is what drew me to check out the series. Then I read it and fell in love. This book is a nice addition to the series. The characters are fun, eccentric, quirky and seriously, who can resist a book with a narcoleptic cat. Val and her sidekick Charlene are going to be featured in a new reality show that will help the struggling Pie Town. And.....you guessed it, something goes wrong leading to murder and mayhem. I love how the author has written Val and Charlene. They complement each other in personality and temperament. Who knew two bakers could find so much trouble. This time around, we get a glimpse into Val's past with the arrival of the crew that will be filming the reality show.

The mystery is well done and while there are not that many suspects to choose from, trying to guess the identity of the killer was harder than I thought. The author did a great job of distracting me with clues and backstories that made me continue to second guess myself. The book had a nice pace and I thought it was well plotted. I like how the characters are growing and developing and I'm looking forward to reading more books to come in the series. I'm hoping one day we will get the answer to whether or not Charlene's cat Frederic is really narcoleptic or just incredibly lazy and spoiled.

I voluntarily read a digital ARC provided to me by the publisher, Kensington, through Netgalley.

Shelly says

Pie hard is a solid cozy mystery with quirky, likable characters and a dash of suspense. Val Harris, owner of Pie Town, a bakery specializing in pies in San Nicholas California, is about to be thrust into the spotlight on an episode of Pie Hard, a reality-based show that promises to turn businesses into instant successes. When the TV producer plunges to her death the same day she arrives in town Val can't help but suspect foul play. But that is not the only mystery to be solved. The strange man that had shown up in her bakery that morning, is on the beach as the tragedy happens and fills in for the deceased producer has something oddly familiar about him. When the foodie star of Pie Town turns up dead Val knows she needs to get to the bottom of things fast. I highly recommend this book to cozy mystery fans. The Pie Town Mystery series is fun, light and entertaining.

Kendrea Parsons says

Pie Hard is a really enjoyable cozy mystery. I had read the first book in this series, but not the second.

Honestly, I don't feel like I was too lost even though some stuff obviously happened in the overall growth of the main characters. This book introduced a couple of new characters that I hope we learn more about in future books. The murder mystery aspect of the story was good, but I was honestly more interested in the other mysteries going on in Val's life. I'm looking forward to the next book in the series to see how certain aspects of Val's life evolve after this book.

Note: I voluntarily reviewed a free copy of this book in exchange for my fair and honest opinion.

Nicole Cox says

I enjoyed this book. I wish I had read the first 2 not because it's necessary just because I like to read series in order. Kirsten Weiss does a Great job of giving enough background so your caught up but not so much that you feel like she's just rewritten half of the other stories to fill this one. Pie Hard had many twists and turns, however it did take me a bit before I got to the "just one more chapter" thing. Which may be more that I'm not a paperback fan. They've always been more difficult to read but this was an ARC and well worth the time spent reading it.

Carrie says

Pie Hard by Kirsten Weiss is the third book of the cozy Pie Town Mystery series. Each book in the series has it's own self contained mystery to be solved so they could be read out of order or as a standalone if choosing to do so. There is however some character building carried over from book to book so reading in order would give the full picture.

In the first book of the Pie Town Mystery series readers were introduced to Valentine "Val" Harris who had moved to San Nicholas along the coast in California thinking she was going to be starting a whole new life by opening up her own business and marrying her fiance. Six months later all Val had left was her business when her fiance had called off their wedding and after putting all her money into her dream, Pie Town, she knew she had to do whatever it took to make the business a success.

However, Val and her pie crust maker, Charlene, seem to have the worst luck when it comes to finding dead bodies but the duo are becoming better and better at finding the murderers. When Charlene surprises Val by bringing in a reality television crew from the show Pie Hard to film the shop Val isn't too sure about taking part. When she gets a call from a regular that another body has been found Val thinks it's the end of the series in the shop when it turns out the producer is the latest victim but the show must go on as they say and the danger surrounding the show continues.

The Pie Town Mystery series has quickly become one of my favorite cozy series to read. There is that quirkiness I enjoy with a small town vibe and all of the characters are likable but Charlene steals the show with each new addition to the series making them quite hilarious with her antics. If I had any complaints with this latest it would be that I need more Charlene in the action but the mystery is still fun to follow along and try to solve through each twist to the story. 4.5 stars for this latest book in the series and as always I will welcome the next when it comes.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

RO G'ma says

Pie Hard is the third book in Kirsten Weiss' A Pie Town Mystery series. The mystery is well plotted and entertaining, the characters are eccentric and likable. There are plenty of suspects to choose from and lots of clues to sift through in order to try to figure out whodunit.

Valentine 'Val' Harris is the owner of Pie Town in the small town of San Nicholas in California. Charlene, Pie Town's talented piecrust maker, poses as Val's business partner and arranges for a reality TV show, which focuses on struggling bakeries, Pie Hard, to feature Pie Town in one of their segments. Val isn't thrilled with the surprise and is worried because the show has the reputation of being overly critical and harsh, but reluctantly agrees to allow them to proceed because it will provide much-needed exposure for them. While it was common for strangers to come into Pie Town, two new customers were there the same morning as the TV crew, and they both seemed familiar to her, but Val couldn't place either of them. Ray MacTaggart, a Pie Town regular, calls Val and tells her that he's on the trail beneath the cliffs at the Belinda Hotel and needs her to come right away because someone was dead. When Val and Charlene arrive at the hotel, Ray tells them he heard shouting and then a woman, later identified as Regina Katz, the show's line producer, flew off the cliff; and he's convinced she was pushed. Val spots the two Pie Town "strangers" up on the cliff. The next morning, Frank Harris, one of the "strangers," announces he's the replacement producer, and later claims to be Val's estranged father. Chief Shaw removes Detective Gordon Carmichael from the investigation, claiming he's lost his objectivity. Val and Charlene start asking questions and looking into the murder, bringing Ray in to help with research. When a second member of the show is murdered, and other crimes are committed, Val worries about the impact it will have on her business. Gordon, who's trying to build a relationship with Val, is supportive of their investigative efforts, but only if they study for and obtain PI licenses.

I received an Advance Reader Copy of this book from NetGalley and voluntarily reviewed it.

Barbara Tobey says

An engaging and entertaining cozy mystery. A reality show brings murder and notoriety to the pie shop. Any publicity is good publicity may not be true in this case. Some surprising family issues. A little romance. Good friends and a strange yurt appearance keep things hopping. Thanks to the publisher for providing a copy via NetGalley.

Kathleen Gray says

Val's right to have been a little skeptical about working with the reality tv show Pie Hard. Her bakery, Pie Town, is doing ok but this is a chance to get publicity etc. Sigh. Of course, because that's the sort of luck she has, a producer on the show is murdered and Val, along with Charlene, must investigate. Charlene, btw, is a terrific character. She's a mature woman who says what she thinks. Thanks to Netgalley for the ARC . A good cozy. This is the third installment but and while I've read them all, am sure you could enjoy this equally

well as a standalone.

Beth Walsh says

Though this is the third in a series, it's the first Pie Town book I've read. (Actually, it's the first "cozy mystery" I've read! Only realized this year that's a thing!)

The premise was great—Val's bakery, Pie Town, gets chosen for the reality show Pie Hard, a show that turns around struggling bakeries. But when someone starts killing off the crew, Val & her sidekick Charlene need to solve the mystery before her business goes down in flames.

The characters were loveable & the setting was perfect. I loved the description of the bakery & the pie making process. The mystery kept me guessing til the end, & had a satisfying wrap up.

I'm looking forward to reading the other 2 books in the series, The Quiche & the Dead & Bleeding Tarts.

Can't wait to spend more time with these people!

Mary says

This is the 3rd installment of the Pie Town series. Val Harris runs Pie Town and when Charlene (her pie crust expert) signs up the bakery to be on Pie Hard a reality series (of course to be known to be really harsh and critical .. good reality TV right?) Val reluctantly agrees and as new customers appear who seem oddly familiar appear and when the show's producer is killed and then one of the new customers is the new producer .. seems like that is just a little too convenient not to mention he claims to be Val's Father. Val and Charlene begin investigating and bring in some regulars in the shop like Ray to help (after all he is the one who alerted Val to the dead body). Another crew member is found dead along with a lot of other stuff. Val and Charlene ultimately put it all together and it was a busy mystery with lots going on so it kept me engaged the entire time. Looking forward to the next one.

Elaine says

Title: Pie Hard

Author: Kirsten Weiss

Genre: Murder Mystery, Fiction, Cozy Mystery, Food, TV Reality, Sequel

Plot: Val Harris has her own little cozy pie shop that is doing well. It's not going to make her rich anytime soon but she's not living on the street either and has employees so that's a plus. She lives in a little converted shipping container and her landlady is her friend and employee, Charlene. Together they form Baker Street Bakers and stick their noses into trouble whenever trouble comes around. Detective Grumpy Cop supports

her meddling - with the argument that she needs a PI license first.

Val has her hands full when Charlene surprises her with a reality TV crew to film their little pie shop for their show, Pie Hard. Uncertain but lured in with the promise of publicity, Val reluctantly goes along with the scheme. When producer Regina turns up dead, Val decides that TV reality might not be so hot for business after all.

Likes/Dislikes: A pie shop isn't something you hear about every day and a murder mystery with a reality tv crew always sounds intriguing. Unfortunately, this mystery never quite gripped me like previous mysteries. I didn't feel connected to or interested in the characters (I don't really know how old they are or what they look like either). And I really would've had Maureen be the killer because it would've stumped my husband. But I liked the pies and the recipes at the back of the book and I liked Grumpy Cop (whose name eludes me because of reasons), and I thought it was a well-constructed mystery that kept me guessing till the end. It just won't top my favorites list.

Rating: PG-14 and up, mainly for content (it's a murder mystery).

Date Review Written: February 1st, 2019

I received a copy of this book courtesy of Netgalley for my honest opinion. I wasn't required to write a positive review and the opinions expressed in the above review are my own.
