

### ***Assault and Pepper* by Leslie Budewitz**

This is the first book in the *Spice Shop Mystery* series set in a long-running spice shop at the Pike Place Market in Seattle. Having never been to Seattle myself, I really appreciated the detailed descriptions of the Market and the city. I really felt like I could picture it all clearly.

Pepper Reece has been running the Seattle Spice Shop for almost a year, after her corporate job basically imploded and she divorced her cheating husband, leaving her needing a drastic change of pace. Her employees are a pretty tight-knit group, and when one of them is arrested for the murder of a man outside the shop, Pepper takes it upon herself to figure out who really committed the crime. The man had appeared to be homeless, but it's later discovered that he was actually a local doctor. The mystery itself seems to almost be secondary to the world building and setting up the characters for the further books in the series, but I still found it enjoyable.

Each chapter starts with either a fact or quote about spices, which was a nice touch. There are lots of descriptions of spice blends and teas that they sell, as well as the different dishes cooked with the spices from Pepper's shop. Everything sounds delicious, so thankfully there are recipes for most of these tasty-sounding dishes at the end of the book!

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