

***Buried in a Good Book* by Tamara Berry**

In the first of the *By the Book Mysteries* we find Tess Harrow and her daughter Gertrude getting off the grid at Tess's late grandfather's rustic cabin in northern Washington state. The cabin has no running water, no electricity, and unbeknownst to them - a dead body in the nearby pond. Things might have been okay if someone hadn't decided to go fishing with dynamite in said pond, but fish guts and human remains rain down on Tess and Gertie immediately upon arriving at the cabin. Obviously this is not the best start to their summer. But since Tess writes popular suspense novels, featuring the fictional Detective Gonzalez, she figures she can help out with the investigation. Too bad the local sheriff is a dead ringer for her fictional detective, and he is not too keen on their similarities.

For a small town, Winthrop sure has lots of folks who could be suspects. Is the highly overqualified bookmobile librarian involved? Or is it one of the deputies? How about the family that runs the local logging company? What about Bigfoot? This mystery goes in a lot of different directions and will keep you guessing. The ending is definitely satisfying. You will be very glad to see that character getting carted off to jail.

I was honestly a little annoyed with Tess at the beginning, but I did soften toward her a bit by the end of the book. Like most cozy mystery protagonists, she makes some terrible decisions that put her (and in this case also her daughter) in harm's way. Considering her successful writing career, the fact that she's dedicated to researching her plots, and the fact that she can spout off all kinds of knowledge about crime at the drop of a hat – it almost felt out of character for her to get into some of the scrapes that she does. It just felt to me that she should have been more cautious going into certain situations.

That said, Gertie is clearly the best character in the book, by far, and I think I'd like to read some cozies from her point of view! For now I will settle with reading more of this series.

GK