

***The Golden Spoon* by Jessa Maxwell**

First-time author Jessa Maxwell bakes up an intriguing mystery in *The Golden Spoon*. A review by author Janet Evanovich states “This delicious combination of Clue and *The Great British Bake Off* kept me turning the pages all night!”

Betsy Martin of upstate New York is popularly known as “America’s Grandmother” with her abundance of baking cookbooks and her hit television baking competition, *Bake Off*, which is filmed in a tent on the grounds of her family mansion. This season, however, the producers want to liven things up by bringing in a celebrity cooking co-host, Archie Morris – her polar opposite. Enter six contestants for the season – ranging from a 21-year old marvel to a retired life-long baker. Author Maxwell introduces each character and then presents the unfolding of events over the course of about four days. Each chapter is from the viewpoint of one of the contestants and Betsy herself.

The prologue from Betsy’s viewpoint hints at what is to come, although it does not reveal who perishes. The author then starts from the beginning with the contestants arriving. Things start hopping on Day One of the show when an odd mix-up occurs which sends an unfortunate baker home. Then something else really odd occurs the next day. By the end of Day Four, there is a dead body dangling from the roof of the tent during a severe storm.

It’s a classic who-done-it mystery (with a bonus secondary mystery), and the author includes some interesting plot twists and structural elements which keep you wondering until the end. With seven different main characters, it does take a while to remember who is who, but once you get the characters straight, the story flows quickly. A recommended read with a freshly baked scone and pot of tea.