

The PUMPKIN SPICE CAFÉ

IT'S THE SEASON TO FALL IN LOVE...

LAURIE GILMORE

THE PUMPKIN SPICE CAFÉ

Dream Harbor Series

Book 1

LAURIE GILMORE



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To the bearded, most-flannel-wearing guy I know. Thanks for always providing so much inspiration.

Playlist



- We fell in love in october** - girl in red
- Dancing With Your Ghost** - Sasha Sloan
- invisible string** - Taylor Swift
- Autumn Leaves** - Ed Sheeran
- Amoeba** - Clairo
- Falling** - Harry Styles
- Remember That Night?** - Sara Kays
- Hands To Myself** - Selena Gomez
- Another Love** - Tom Odell
- ceilings** - Lizzy McAlpine
- Wildest Dreams** - Taylor Swift
- Before You Go** - Lewis Capaldi
- Haunted House** - Holly Humberstone
- cardigan** - Taylor Swift
- Video Games** - Lana Del Rey
- Flicker** - Niall Horan
- 34+35** - Ariana Grande
- The Night We Met** - Lord Huron
- Dandelions** - Ruth B.
- Kiss Me** - Sixpence None The Richer
- Everything Has Changed** - Taylor Swift
- Dreams** - The Cranberries
- Maroon** - Taylor Swift



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Chapter One

Jeanie Ellis had never killed a man before, but tonight might be the night. Desperate times and all. She clutched the baseball bat tighter in her fist and crept down the rickety, back staircase.

She hadn't slept in three nights. Not since moving into the apartment above her aunt's café. Well, *her* café, technically. Jeanie was officially the new owner of The Pumpkin Spice Café, her Aunt Dot's pride and joy until exactly two weeks ago, when the older woman announced she was retiring – and taking off for the Caribbean for a few weeks to work on her tan. Apparently, Dot could think of no one better to take over her beloved café than her favorite – and *only*, as Jeanie pointed out – niece. An idea that now seemed completely absurd as Jeanie tiptoed off the last step prepared for battle.

Every night, she'd heard strange noises. Scritch-scratch type noises with the occasional clangy-bangy type noise. At first, she'd tried to chalk it up to the wind, or maybe an animal scurrying through the back alley. She absolutely refused to let her mind take off down a path to the worst-case scenario, like she usually did. She would *not* allow herself to imagine an escaped serial killer creeping up her back steps. That banging was definitely *not* an armed robber, here to take the meager change her aunt kept in the cash register.

Jeanie was starting fresh.

Jeanie was a new woman.

The quaint seaside town of Dream Harbor and its inhabitants knew nothing about her, and she planned to take full advantage of that.

A shuffling noise at the back door caught her attention. She would take full advantage of her ‘New Life, New Jeanie’ plan as soon as she figured out what was keeping her up at night. No one could live a laid-back, quaint, small-town life with a murderer outside their back door. That was just logical.

She choked up on the bat and crossed the small hallway between the stairs and the door that led to the alley behind the café. Although ‘alley’ wasn’t quite the right word for it. Alley conjured images of overflowing trash cans and scurrying rats. But Jeanie wasn’t in Boston anymore. She was in Dream Harbor, which she was convinced someone must have actually dreamed up. It was far too idyllic to have sprung up naturally. No, the space behind the café and the other businesses on Main Street was more like its own little side street, with room for delivery trucks and tidy trash bins. She’d even seen some of the other shop owners taking breaks and chit-chatting back there during the day. Not that she’d talked to anyone yet. She wasn’t quite ready for that, for being the new kid.

Jeanie shook her head. Her thoughts were way off track, and she was about to be potentially murdered. Alley or not, whatever was out there was keeping her awake, and after three nights without sleep, she was barely holding it together. She rested the bat on her shoulder and reached for the doorknob. It was nearly dawn and a weak gray light seeped through the window over the door.

Oh, good, Jeanie thought vaguely. At least I’ll be able to see my attacker before I die. With that less-than-pleasant thought in her head – not at all the positive new persona she was shooting for – she yanked open the door—

And came face to face with a crate of small pumpkins. Gourds? It didn’t matter, because before Jeanie could get her produce names sorted, the giant