

## ***Bean to Bar Mysteries Media Kit***

*Amber Royer*

*When one of her employees drops dead in the middle of the grand opening party for Felicity Koerber's bean to bar chocolate factory, she learns*



### **The Newest Sleuth in Galveston just wants to make chocolate!**

*Felicity Koerber has had a rough year. She's moving back to Galveston Island and opening a bean to bar chocolate factory, fulfilling a dream she and her late husband, Kevin, had shared. Craft chocolate means a chance to travel the world, meeting with farmers and bringing back beans she can turn into little blocks of happiness, right close to home and family.*

*She thinks trouble has walked into her carefully re-built world when puddle-jump pilot Logan Hanlon shows up at her grand opening to order custom chocolates. Then one of her employees drops dead at the party, and Felicity's one-who-got-away ex-boyfriend – who's now a cop – thinks Felicity is a suspect. As the murder victim's life becomes more and more of a mystery, Felicity realizes that if she's going to clear her name in time to save her business, she might need Logan's help. Though she's not sure if she's ready to let anyone into her life – even if it is to protect her from being the killer's next victim.*

*For Felicity, Galveston is all about history, and a love-hate relationship with the ocean, which keeps threatening to deliver another hurricane – right into the middle of her investigation. Can she figure it out before all the clues get washed away?*

Genre: Cozy Mystery

Buy Link:

<https://www.amazon.com/Grand-Openings-Can-Be-Murder/dp/1952854083/>

Book Details

***Grand Openings Can Be Murder: Bean to Bar Mysteries No 1*** – February 2, 2021, Golden Tip Press, \$12.99. \$12.99. Available as paperback and e-book, in the US.

Get a Sample

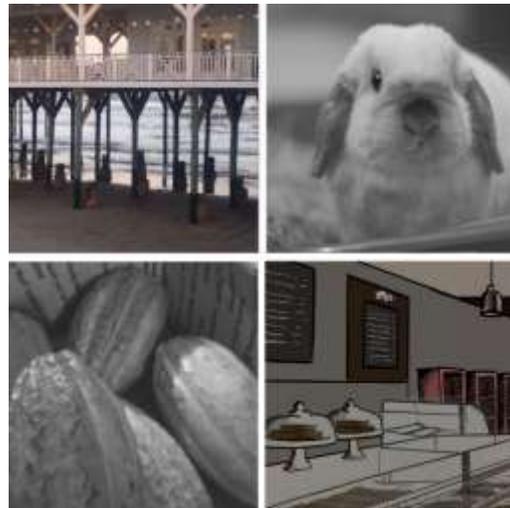
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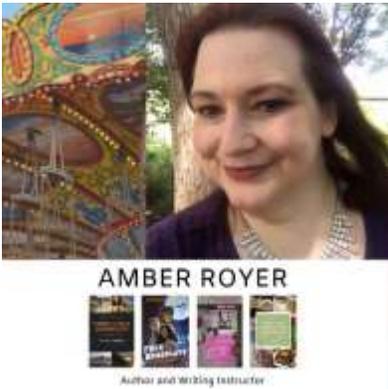
Hashtags

#beantobarmysteries #grandopeningscanbemurder #felicitykoerbermysteries  
#amberroyerbooks #greetingsandfelicitations #knightleythebunny #kembridley  
#galvestonmystery #texasmysteries #chocoholic #foodiefiction #deathbychocolate  
#chocolatemaker #ametursleuth #cozymysteries #adventurefiction

In this series, you get:

**Hungry From all the Chocolate**  
**An Amateur Sleuth Rebuilding Her Life**  
**An Adorable Bunny**  
**A Surfer Girl Baking Assistant**  
**Dirty Horchata**  
**Social Media Addiction**  
**Historic Galveston Island**  
**Cajun Culture**  
**Coffee and Books**  
**Complex Love Interests**  
**and did I mention chocolate?**





## Author Bio:

Chocolate Bio: Amber Royer writes the CHOCOVERSE comic telenovela-style foodie-inspired space opera series and the BEAN TO BAR MYSTERIES. She is also co-author of the cookbook THERE ARE HERBS IN MY CHOCOLATE, which combines culinary herbs and chocolate in over 60 sweet and savory recipes, and had a long-running column for Dave's Garden, where she covered gardening and crafting. She is also the author of STORY LIKE A JOURNALIST, a textbook/workbook

for novelists. She blogs about creative writing technique and all things chocolate related over at [www.amberroyer.com](http://www.amberroyer.com). She also teaches creative writing in person in North Texas for both UT Arlington Continuing Education and Writing Workshops Dallas. If you are very nice to her, she might make you cupcakes.

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## Features Angle

In researching her Chocoverse science fiction novels, Amber has gotten to know a number of real-life chocolate makers. These creative innovators were her inspiration for Felicity, her sleuth in the Bean to Bar Mysteries. As part of her research, Amber has visited cacao plantations and chocolate factories, taken classes in chocolate making and choco-molecular gastronomy, and even started growing cacao trees as potted plants – indoors, in Texas.

## Amber Talks About Her Chocolate Journey:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=er7ygbIHlqA>

## Presentation Topics:

Royer is an experienced educator and presenter. She is at home on panels relating to writing craft, mystery, space opera, and humor.

She is also available to talk about non-fiction topics including the history of chocolate, how chocolate is grown and processed, and chocolate tastings for writers.

## Tip Sheet

-- This book takes place on Historic Galveston Island. Much of the history surrounding the hurricanes is real, as are the art sculptures mentioned in *Grand Openings Can Be Murder*. The neighborhoods I talk about are actually there. However, the small businesses are fictional, as are all of the people Felicity interacts with. I tried to stay true to the feel of the town, while peopling it with murder suspects, which is a hard balance to strike.

-- I grew up a ferry ride away from Galveston. My hometown, Nederland, is part of the Texas Gulf Coast, sharing many of the same cultural elements as Galveston, and many of the same worries about hurricanes and flooding. It just isn't much of a tourist draw. I set the novel on Galveston Island because I wanted Felicity to have a shop with that whole "quaint destination" feel, as a backdrop for her adventures.

-- I wanted an opportunity to celebrate my own Cajun heritage in this series. While Felicity's family is half Cajun, half Italian, my own family has both Cajun and German influences. (German and Dutch influences are surprisingly common in Southeast Texas, which makes sense once you unravel the history.) But that can make for some interesting clashes in cooking styles, as I learned growing up. There are also some truly colorful stories in the Cajun side of my background, which may find their way as fictionalized versions into later parts of the series.

-- I am also a cookbook author (co-authored with my husband). *There are Herbs in My Chocolate* started out as a project for the local herb society, and turned into a personal challenge. How many different ways could we come up with to combine culinary herbs with different forms of chocolate, from nibs to cocoa butter, The cupcake recipe Carmen makes at the beginning of *Grand Openings Can Be Murder* is straight out of the cookbook. Bonus recipes for the mystery series are on my web site.

-- This series deals a lot with social media, and figuring out the differences between the lives people cultivate on-line and who they really are inside. This reflects to some degree my personal love/hate relationship with my own social media. I post a picture of my cup of coffee . . . a ton of people like it. I spend three hours building a blog post on writing craft with detailed examples . . . and like three people like it. I really do feel like people write the stories they need to tell themselves, and I'm obviously telling myself something about the divide between social media and self worth.

-- Major themes in this series include: Dealing with loss, starting over, the power of family, how everyone deserves second chances, and finding authenticity in life.

## Sample Q&A:

### Q. Where did you get your idea for this series?

This is another of my 'kitchen sink' books, which is what I like to call bringing together a lot of my favorite elements. Chocolate has become sort of my thing, so I wanted to include that in a different way than in my chocolate-related science fiction. I also love a good mystery. Some of my earliest literary influences were Hank the Cowdog and Encyclopedia Brown, and I never outgrew my enjoyment of that sense of adventure and puzzle solving. I've also always been fascinated by the history of Galveston Island, which is part of the Texas Gulf Coast, where I grew up. I've actually taken a couple of other runs at novels set on Galveston, which I completed when I didn't have as much skill as a writer. My agent once told me that you wind up borrowing the good pieces from your earlier work, and that is definitely the case here.

### Q. What do you love most about this series?

I love the ability to give Felicity both roots and wings. She's starting over in life after her husband's death and a career change, but I didn't want her to be starting over broke. After everything I took away from her, I at least gave her the money to travel, which will become important over the course of the series. Not all craft chocolate makers can afford to do so, but many of the ones I've talked with have visited the country of origin, to speak in person with the farmers or cooperatives growing the cacao beans they buy. At the same time, Felicity's chocolate-making operations are based out of her hometown. She's got family close by, and will have to deal with conflicts rooted in her past, and the people she grew up with.

### Q. How much is Felicity like you?

I think all my characters have a little of me in them – even the bad guys. There's a lot to Felicity that's like me. Felicity has a good heart, and she genuinely feels bad when she makes mistakes while investigating. And like me, she loves books and reading and a good cup of coffee. And she has a huge Cajun side to her family. But unlike me, she's good at chemistry, and has a medical background,



while I was too squeamish to even do my own experiments in high school biology. Which makes her strong and cool in a crisis, whereas I tend to go into panic mode.

**Q. What makes your story relatable?**

Felicity has a lot she's dealing with, and a personal flaw of avoiding emotionally difficult situations. I think a lot of people either do that – or would like to if they could. Many of us have dealt with loss, or with trying to reinvent our lives, just the way Felicity is. She has a family that truly cares about her, which helps to ground the story, even when Felicity winds up solving a murder and hiring a bodyguard – hardly actions you would expect from a craft chocolate maker.

**Q. Who is the most fun character from the Bean to Bar Mysteries to write?**

A. That would have to be Naomi, Felicity's aunt. She's a bit of a matchmaker and a busybody – but she definitely has Felicity's best interests at heart. And she's just a bit over the top. I made her a house flipper, which means she can be living in different places throughout the series, and for the foreseeable future, Felicity will be living with her. Naomi's husband Greg works offshore, and is only occasionally home, so Naomi benefits just as much from having Felicity close as Felicity does.

**Q. What character in your book are you least likely to get along with?**

A. Ash, the blogger who writes posts insinuating that Felicity is the murderer. He's a jerk, just because he can be, and in the scene where Felicity finally meets him, *I* want to slap him. He's going to be the bane of Felicity's existence throughout the series. But I think he's going to grow and develop into a tolerable person.

**Q. If you could spend a day with a character from your book, who would it be and what would you do?**

A. Logan. He's the puddle jump pilot who used to be a bodyguard. He has a great sense of humor, and a serious number of stories he could tell. If I was spending the day with him, it would have to start with a flight lesson, and then a charter flight, getting his from-the-air viewpoint on places important to him in the story and in his backstory. Of course, we'd have to stop somewhere amazing for lunch, where I'd get him to tell me what he really thinks of Felicity.

**Q. What was the first book that made you cry?**

A. I was an avid reader even as a kid, so I don't know if it was actually the first time I cried over a book, but the one that shattered me was *Bridge to Terabithia*. That character death shook me to my core. There are hard lessons you have to learn as a kid, and sometimes a book changes everything. Character deaths are one of the hardest things to write well, and that book could be used as a textbook example of how to do it right: give the character unfinished relationships, make him sympathetic, make him real, and then pull the rug out from under the reader. I hope I do it half as well in my own work.

**Q. What one book has most influenced your writing.**

A. If I have to choose just one, I would say Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. I love the dynamic created between Jim and Silver, who are on opposite sides, and yet emotionally *are* what the other is missing. Silver's the father figure Jim lost, and Jim represents the honor Silver wishes he could get back. Another thing I love about *Treasure Island* is how nothing is ever wasted. Every bit of foreshadowing comes back up, in unexpected and important ways. The way this influences the *Bean to Bar Mysteries* is that need for complex relationships. And then there's the whole element of second chances and small redemptions, which seems to pop up in everything I write.

**Q. What's one thing in common between most of the books you read?**

A. As far as genre and subject, I read eclectically. I obviously read a lot of sci-fi, but I also adore a good cozy mystery, and will always have a soft spot for YA. Basically, if it's not super dark, I'm in. One of my writing students recently asked me for a list of my favorite classics. I sent her a list that included *Little Women*, *Frankenstein*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Vanity Fair*, *Emma* and *Fahrenheit 451*. And I realized that basically, these are all character studies at heart. Which makes sense. Because as much as there is capital-P PLOT happening in all my work I still chose to write the *Chocoverse* in first person. Because I believe that plot won't matter to the reader unless the characters are changed by it, shaken to their very cores and transformed so that the reader can be transformed a little bit too.

**Q. What do you love most about the writing process?**

A. There's something to be said about each stage of the process. There's such a spark of discovery when you're outlining a book, doing character interviews, getting to know the world and the people. And there's a sense of satisfaction that comes from shaping a completed work into a polished finished product. But the best part has to be that first draft. It's the part in between, where you can see things starting to arc in the direction that final draft will need to go, but you still have the freedom to change things and backtrack and figure stuff out. It's like the outline was the hypothesis, and now you're getting to play mad scientist and run the experiment without any safety protocols. It could blow up in your face. But more likely, it's going to be more amazing than you ever imagined.

**Q. Anything you'd like to say to your readers and fans?**

A. Yes. Thank you. I hope you enjoyed solving the mystery along with Felicity, and getting to know her and her family and friends. I had a great time in their world, and I hope it shows. Feel free to let me know using the contact form on my web site. If there's a character you love, or part of the world in this or any novel that excites you, tell the author. It totally makes our week.

