



Last Bite

by Amy S. Peele



Fiction - Womens

312 Pages

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Book Review

Reviewed by Asher Syed for Readers' Favorite

In Amy S. Peele's *Last Bite*, after the funeral of her husband, Vincent Carlo Sortino, in Chicago's Little Italy, Angie Sortino expects to settle his affairs, but Mario Longetti takes control of his pension, forcing her to take a housekeeping job at City Hall to track what Vincent left behind. Her search leads to a storage unit he kept hidden, where she finds records linking city contracts to undisclosed payments that place Mario at the center of those dealings. At the same time, Angie helps her niece, Gina, and her friend, Kim, build a catering business, moving from small tastings to paid events, until a contaminated dish at a children's party threatens their business. As the financial pressure increases and Vincent's past begins to surface, Angie must decide how to act with the information that others are trying to control.

Amy S. Peele's *Last Bite* is a wonderfully written novel with a lot of moving parts. Peele does an excellent job of keeping all the plates spinning and mixing up the drama, like an angry confrontation at a Chicago steakhouse in front of diners and staff, and a violent attack outside City Hall, where all paths lead to the hospital. Angie Sortino is the main character we want to root for, and as the story progresses, her footing becomes stronger. I love Gina, who is disaster-prone but honest in working through failed attempts and learning from them. Peele has a knack for turning settings into visual spaces where Chicago becomes a character in its own right, from a Little Italy funeral home that deserves an offshoot called *My Big Fat Italian Funeral*, to Murphy's Bleachers near Wrigley Field hosting a gathering bubbling with baseball culture and neighborhood camaraderie. Readers who adore stories with a bit of mystery, a lot of food, and urban living will love this book.