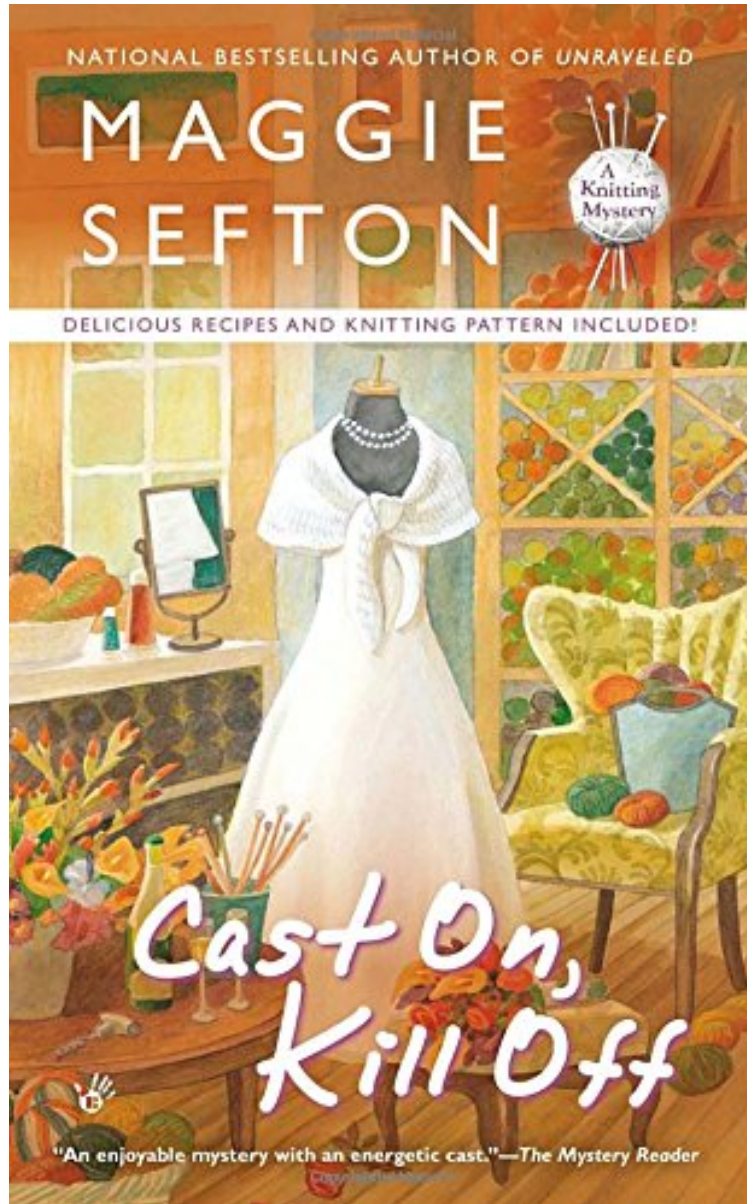


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Cast On, Kill Off (A Knitting Mystery)

Maggie Sefton

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Maggie Sefton : Cast On, Kill Off (A Knitting Mystery) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cast On, Kill Off (A Knitting Mystery):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Could use an editor By Cherie M in EP CO The story was interesting enough even though there was little mystery. I identified the victim and the guilty party before the murder occurred.

Since I live near Fort Collins and have frequently visited Lambspin and the Back Porch Cafe, it is always fun to hear of events there. An editor would REALLY help. A seventy year old might speak of someone's "sleuthing" but it does not ring true coming from speech of thirty year olds. There are way too many adjectives. How many times did one character have to be called "pharmacist Christine" for example? We got that she worked at the Super Duper drug store the first time. Most of all, someone needs to convince the author to drop all the drawn out replies. Every book in the series contains far too many "Ooooooh yes", "Okaaaaaaaay", "Noooooooooooo" and other such responses. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. a disappointment
By margretI have read all the books in this series and enjoyed most of them a lot. I also have lived in Colorado for some years and enjoy the Colorado feeling of the books. This book was a disappointment for me though. The plot was very thin and it was obvious very early on who the murderer was. More than that I felt that all the characters lacked personality and depth, at least as much depth as one can expect in the cozy mystery genre. Finally I found it rather annoying that the characters in the book keep addressing each other by name in every sentence. When I meet a friend for lunch I dont ever use their first name to begin or end everything I say to them. So that too made the conversations artificial and in the end I was just counting how many times this happened and didnt pay much attention to what they said. I know this author can write really fun and enjoyable mysteries. I hope her next book will take her back to her best!
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.
ridiculous!
By Lyn4RestIf you want to re-read Trixie Belden mysteries, do it! Or read this -- characters are one - dimensional, and so unbelievable. If you want believable characters, Trixie and her small gang of family and friends do a much better job of being 'real' and likeable. I read this -- and one other "Knitting Mystery" because I knit. At the finish of both books, I was annoyed that I had wasted my time reading this rather than just knitting....

Wedding bells are ringing in Fort Connor, Colorado, and the House of Lambspin knitters are abuzz with excitement. But when a murder interrupts the wedding planning, Kelly Flynn will have to solve this crime fast to ensure the killer doesnt wind up on the guest list Kelly Flynns knitting pal Megan is about to get hitched, and Megan has found the perfect seamstress, Zoe Yeager, to create the bridesmaids dresses. But Zoe is harboring a secret. Bruises on her face show a troubling side of her marriage, and just after she finds the courage to leave her husband, shes shot dead. Zoes husband is a key suspect, but there are others who might have had designs on her death. Its up to Kelly and her knitting pals to use their sleuthing savvy to solve the case. Theyll have to stitch up all the loose ends before they can don their dresses and escort Megan into the land of happily ever after
DELICIOUS RECIPE AND KNITTING PATTERN INCLUDED!

"An enjoyable mystery with an enegetic cast and plenty of knitting and spinning."--The Mystery Reader
"If you like a little romance with your murder, you'll be hooked on Kelly Flynn!"--Feathered Quill Book s
"A fun read."--Fresh Fiction
"An interesting amateur sleuth."--Genre Go Round s
"An excellent story with a little extra."--Once Upon a Romance
About the Author
Maggie Sefton was born and raised in Virginia, where she received her bachelors degree in English literature and journalism. Maggie has worked in several careers over the years, from a CPA to a real estate broker in the Rocky Mountain West. However, none of those endeavors could compare with the satisfaction and challenge of creating worlds on paper. She is the mother of four grown daughters, currently scattered around the globe. Author of the nationally bestselling Knitting Mysteries, she resides in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado with two very demanding dogs.
Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.
One Kelly Flynn looked at her reflection in the seamstresss three-way mirror. The royal blue taffeta fabric shimmered under the bright spotlights shining down from the ceiling. Kelly turned to her left and admired the lines of the bridesmaid gown. Her friend, Megan, had used her own bridal gowns strapless design to model the bridesmaids gowns, except they werent floor length. The skirts flared gently past the knee instead. Megan had also chosen strong vibrant colors for the dresses. Kellys was royal blue, Lisas was lemon yellow, and Jennifers was shamrock green. Megans sister Janet, who was the matron of honor, was wearing her favorite fire engine red. Kelly had laughed when Megan told her she wanted a bold rainbow, not those pale pastels she saw so often. Not bad, Kelly thought to herself, admiring the fabrics shimmer as she turned to the right. She had to admit Megan had a good eye for color. The royal blue set off Kellys dark hair and fair skin perfectly.
How does it feel, Kelly?
the seamstress, Zoe Yeager, asked from the floor, where she sat cross-legged, dressmaker pins in her hand.
It feels great, Zoe. You did a wonderful job, Kelly said, feeling the fabrics crisp texture beneath her fingers.
You look gorgeous, Kelly, Megan said from the corner of the room, where she sat making calls on her cell phone. Only three and a half weeks before Megans and her boyfriend Martys wedding, and all the intricate plans had to fall into place. I told you that color would look fabulous on you, Megan said as she paged through her bridal schedule book.
Right as usual, Color Genius, Kelly bantered. I bow to your expertise.
Zoe laughed from her spot on the floor as she ran her fingers over the hemline. I swear, Megan, you and your friends make me laugh, especially Jennifer. She is hilarious.
Well, thats Jennifers specialty, making us laugh, Kelly added.
Stand straight and dont move for a minute, Kelly. I want to give this hem a final check. Zoe scooted backward on the floor, leaned over, and peered at the bottom of the dress. Okay, now turn in a circle slowly, she instructed.
Kelly did as she was told while Zoe scrutinized her handiwork. Kelly observed a slight blue smudge on the side of Zoes face which she hadnt noticed before. Zoes

medium-length brown hair had obscured it. Looks good, Zoe decreed, rising from the floor. Let me help you take it off, and Ill put this one on the finished rack along with Lisas and Jennifers. Kelly allowed Zoe to unzip the dress and help her step out of it, hoping nothing would happen to the gorgeous creation once she was in charge of its safekeeping. Zoe shook the fabric and examined it inside. Now that Zoe was closer, Kelly could see the middle-aged womans face better. There was definitely a blue bruise along Zoes jawline that hadnt been there before. What happened, Zoe? Did you fall down or something? Kelly asked, concerned. Youve got a bad bruise on your face. Zoe looked slightly startled, then color began to stain her cheeks. Uh, no . . . I . . . Im just clumsy. I tripped over my back porch steps, thats all. She reached for a satin-covered hanger. Here, let me put this away in the work closet. And she hastened from the room, taking the royal blue creation with her. Megan approached, holding Kellys slacks and short-sleeve top. Early September, and it still felt like summer outside. Dont ask her anything else, Kelly, Megan whispered when she was closer. Those bruises are from her husband Oscar. Mimi told me Zoe had confessed to her about her husbands abuse a year ago. Mimi tried to get her to leave him, but Zoe hasnt so far. Megan glanced over her shoulder to the doorway. I cannot understand why women stay in those relationships, Kelly. A familiar scowl darkened Megans pretty features. Kelly slipped on her crisp slacks. I think its because theyre scared, Megan. Scared of what will happen if they try to leave, especially if there are young children at home. Megans scowl evaporated and was replaced by a contrite expression. Youre right, Kelly. I know you are, but there are shelters here in town for women to escape to with their children. I just wish Zoe would think about going. She doesnt even have children. Id like to think so, too, Megan, Kelly said, slipping the lightweight top over her head. It seems everyone has a breaking point, when they decide enough. Zoe came around the corner of the fitting room, a gauzy bit of ribbons and tiny silk flowers in her hand. Here, Kelly, lets take a look with the headpiece. I finished this one yesterday. Kelly took the delicate confection and fingered the tiny seed pearls and blue and white silk flowers that adorned the taffeta-wrapped headband. This is so pretty, Zoe. Simply exquisite. Zoe beamed. Thank you, Kelly. I love working with those silky flowers. They turn out so nicely. Try it on and lets take a look. Kelly did as directed, adjusting the headpieces small combs into her hair. Gazing at her reflection, she almost didnt recognize herself. Kelly never wore ribbons or flowery things. But the way Zoe had arranged them, they were very flattering. I look like I should be going to a fairy tale ball in some castle, rather than poring over financial statements, she teased. Well, wait until Steve sees you in this dress, Megan said slyly. He may invite you to one of those fancy Denver charity balls. Kelly deliberately didnt look at Megan. She already knew what Megan was doing. Smiling. Now that Kelly was working in Denver several days a week, she and Steve had lunch or dinner together whenever they were both in town. Consequently, Megan had made it a point to offer frequent suggestions as to other recreational activities Kelly and Steve could pursue. Suggestions, Megan always claimed. Planting seeds, Kelly surmised. Once Steve started driving up to Fort Connor this past spring and summer to play baseball on his old team, Kelly and Steve had a chance to be in each others company on a regular basis. Familiar ground. It had made it easier for them to move to the next step of having dinner together. Of course, Megan and the rest of the gang were careful to maintain a relaxed environment. No expectations, Kelly had told them. Now that she and Steve had gotten past their sudden and dramatic breakup last year, Kelly figured both of them needed simply to be friends right now, while they figured out what came next. What did the future hold in store? She didnt know. All Kelly knew was she enjoyed having Steve back in her life. After all, theyd started out as friends before they became lovers once before. Maybe they could again. Right now, they were two friends who really enjoyed each others company. They talked on the phone every day, even when Steve was traveling on business for the Denver company where he worked. Having watched his own small architect and builder business go belly-up in the recession that followed the recent housing debacle, Steve threw his energy and creativity into Sam Kaufmans construction company. Sam appreciated Steves efforts and encouraged him to follow up on new ideas. Steve had jumped at the chance. Zoe glanced from Megan to Kelly and back again, a smile tweaking her lips. Whos Steve? Kellys boyfriend? Kelly didnt even have time to answer. Megan did it for her. He was for over two years. Then they split up last year. All of us are hoping theyll get back together. She flashed that Cheshire cat smile Kelly had seen frequently these past six months. I havent heard a word from Kelly, Zoe teased. Whys Megan answering for you? Kelly pretended to continue admiring the pretty headband. Because she does it so well. Megans got an overactive imagination. Its not my imagination, Megan retorted. Weve all seen you two whenever youre together. Youre a matched set. Kelly had to laugh at that, and so did Zoe. Removing the delicate headband, she returned it to the seamstress. She makes it sound like were bookends. Now I know what Im going to give you and Marty for a wedding present. A set of monstrosity bookends. Maybe two huge moose heads or something. Please, dont. Marty would probably fall in love with them, and wed have them on the living room bookshelves. Megan rolled her eyes. You are so funny, Megan, Zoe said, chuckling. Let me put this away and check my daytimer. Now that Kellys gown is completed, weve finished everything with three weeks to spare. Wonderful job, Zoe, Megan said as the seamstress headed for the curtained doorway that led to a workroom in the rear of the small shop located in a neighborhood strip mall. Kelly checked the mirror and fluffed her shoulder-length hair. Youre right on track, Megan. I hate to sound like an anal accountant, but I am. Planning makes all the difference. Megan drew her cell phone from her pants pocket as she returned to her chair in the corner. Youre preaching to the choir on that one, Kelly. I couldnt have done it without my lists. Which reminds me that I have to check on those caterers again. And that

reminds me I have to finish up one of my clients financial statements. Ive got an appointment with him tomorrow. When will you be in Denver again? Megan looked up from her cell phone screen. Later this week, and no, Steve wont be there, Kelly teased. Hes visiting some specialty building firms at a conference in Oregon. Too bad. Megan shot her a wicked grin before she spoke into the phone. Hello, this is Megan Smith. Is Kevin there? I need to change my wedding reception estimate again. Kelly felt sorry for caterer Kevin. Megan had been increasing the guest list estimate every week for a month. Kelly grabbed her shoulder bag and started for the door. The sooner she finished those financial statements, the sooner she could take a break at Lambspun, the knitting and fiber shop close to her cottage. She had been burrowed in work for several days for her Fort Collins real estate investor client, Arthur Housemann, and her Denver developer client, Don Warner. Letting her mind return to matters financial brought another thought from the back of her mind. She needed to pay Zoe for the dress. Kelly was always scrupulous in paying small business owners by check. That way, they kept the entire amount rather than pay credit card fees. It was a small thing, but could make a real difference to a small business owner like Zoe Yeager. Her sewing business had grown substantially thanks to Zoes creative designs. Small business success stories always made the accountant lobe in Kellys brain buzz. Only the strongest and best survived, especially in a recession environment. Kelly changed direction and walked through the curtained doorway that led to Zoes workshop. She was about to turn the corner into the lighted area when Zoes sharp voice held her in place. Dont give me excuses. I told you I needed that gown finished by tonight! Kelly didnt hear anyone reply, so she assumed Zoe was on the phone. I dont care how late you have to stay up. Just finish it tonight, do you hear? Or Ill take it out of your wages. You can bring it to the shop on your way to work tomorrow morning. And dont call me again. Im busy. Kelly quickly turned and retreated into the outer dressing room once again, not wanting to disturb what was obviously a heated conversation. She was also surprised at Zoes tone of voice. It was sharp and dictatorial. Ugly. Whenever Kelly saw her, Zoe was always so pleasant and cheerful. Kelly couldnt help wondering whom Zoe was talking to. Megan was clicking off her phone call, so Kelly approached and lowered her voice. Zoe is in the midst of a phone call. I cant wait, so would you ask her to please mail me a bill, and Ill send a check right away? I need to finish some financial statements. No problem. She needs to send bills to Lisa and Jennifer, too, Megan said, running her finger down the smartphones screen. You can add it to one of your to-do lists, Kelly said as she left. Kelly walked across the driveway separating her look-alike cottage from the Spanish colonial beige stucco, red-tile-roofed farmhouse that had inspired the cottages design. Once the farmhouse for Kellys aunt and uncle, it was now a lively knitting and fiber shop. The cottage had become Kellys when her Aunt Helen was murdered nearly four years ago. That was the tragic event that had brought a transformation in Kellys life. Shed responded to the warmth and camaraderie of the knitting shop family of regulars. They had become Kellys family, replacing the ones whod passed away. Kelly left her life as a corporate CPA in Washington, DC, and switched gears entirely, drawn by the warmth and friendship that beckoned to her from the friends shed made at Lambspun. She turned at the sound of her dog Carls deep Rottweiler bark coming from the cottage backyard. Carl was standing on his hind feet, front paws on the chain-link fence, warning the golfers on the adjoining golf course not to trespass. Few disobeyed Carl, Kelly noticed. Kelly admired the colorful annuals that were still blooming in the flower beds bordering the walkway that led to Lambspuns front door. Bright red geraniums and white impatiens beside deep purple petunias. Fringy dianthus alternated with sturdy orange marigolds. Colorful easy low-maintenance plants. The very same that Kelly had put in the planters lining her cottage walk. She paused beside the shady patio, debating whether or not to knit here instead of inside the shop. Early September temperatures were still delightfully warm, in the low eighties. The sun shone brightly in the gorgeous blue sky that arched over the golf course. Colorado blue, Kelly called it. Late afternoon, and the sun hadnt even begun its descent toward the ridges of low mountains on the west side of the university town. The foothills, as locals called them. Beautiful was Kellys word. Tempted to drop her knitting on the nearby table or wrought iron chair, Kelly decided she would first see what Lambspuns owner, Mimi, was doing. She hadnt had a chance to drop in and visit with her for several days. Pushing the heavy wooden door open, Kelly stepped inside the wonderland of color and texture and sensuality that always greeted her whenever she entered the shop. Yarn, yarn everywhere. Wooden crates were stacked one upon the other in the foyer. Shelves lined the walls of the adjacent room. Fat balls and loosely wound skeins tumbled forth from all of them. Tables and chests were piled high with yarns. Sweaters, scarves, and vests dangled from the ceiling and shelves. Long puffy loops of yarn draped along the walls. Wool, cotton, silk, mohair, alpaca, cashmere. Any fiber your heart desired. Well, hello, Kelly. Its so nice to see you, Mimi said as Kelly entered the foyer. You havent been here since last week. Mimi was stacking twisted coils of terra cotta red yarn in a tidy pile beside similar yarns in the middle of an antique dry sink. Moss green, burgundy wine, copper ore. Autumn colors, Kelly noticed. Although it was still summer outside with balmy Colorado temperatures, the Lambspun crew always had an eye for an upcoming season. Seasonal colors always appeared in the shop overnight, it seemed. She would walk into the shop and find rooms totally transformed as if by magic. Kelly attributed it to the Lambspun elves, as she called Mimi and her two main helpers, Connie and Rosa. Kelly fingered one of the terra cotta red skeins. HAND-DYED, the label read. It was a merino wool, not as thick as some of the others shed touched. It would require a smaller needle but would be perfect for making fall and winter knitted hats. Or mittens. Hows that bridesmaid shawl coming? Mimi asked as she gave the yarn piles a pat. Guilt drew Kelly from her fiber indulgence.

Oh, its coming slowly. Ive been swamped with work and havent been able to knit very much. She headed to the adjoining main room and dumped her knitting bag on the long wooden library table that served as meeting place for scores of fiber workers of every description. Not only knitters showed up around the Lambspun table, but also crochet lovers, or hookers, as they called themselves. Quilters turned up, too, as well as spinners, who set up their wheels in the corners. Weavers regularly worked their creations on the larger looms in the two rooms adjoining the large one. Kelly always thought of Lambspun as an equal opportunity shop. Whatever your fiber tastes and inclinations, you would find someone at Lambspun to share them. And Mimi helped spread her expertise in all the fiber arts through a full schedule of classes. Kelly had noticed new classes in tatting and lace embroidery. They both sounded tricky to her. Would you like me to help you with it? Mimi offered as she followed Kelly into the room. Id be glad to. Now Kelly felt even guiltier. Lisa, Megan, and Jennifer had already finished their shawls. But not her. Now Mother Mimi was offering to rescue her. No, no, Ill get it done, she promised as she settled into a chair at the table. No other customers around. Good. Maybe she could get more knitting done. Interesting conversations always distracted her, shed noticed. She pulled the royal blue bundle from a plastic bag she had protecting it from the jumble inside her knitting bag. There were knitting needles of varying sizes, a tape measure, stitch markers, copies of previous patterns shed worked, and not one but two plastic containers of yarn needles, perfect for tucking in dangling yarn ends. She held up the bundle which formed a large triangle and examined her work so far. It didnt look bad. The loose-knit design would be very flattering over the bridesmaids bare shoulders. Look, youre halfway finished, Mimi said with her encouraging smile before she returned to straightening books on the shelves. Kelly knew Mimi was doing her nurturing best to be kind. Normally she would make a joke, but instead a remembered thought came to mind. My bridesmaid gown is all finished, she said, picking up her knitting stitches where shed left off. Megan and I went over this morning. Zoe has finished everything, including the headbands. Three weeks early, too. Megan was delighted, of course. Of course. Megan has to stay on schedule, or Or therell be hell to pay. And well all have to listen to it, Kelly joked. Mimi laughed her light laugh as she checked the other bookshelves. I was going to say woe to the vendors who were not keeping up. That, too. Tell me something, Mimi. When I was there this morning, I noticed a dark bruise on Zoes face and asked her about it. She got kind of flustered and said she was clumsy and tripped on some stairs. But Megan told me when we were alone that Zoe has an abusive husband. She said Zoe had talked to you about it. Mimi turned from the bookshelves and sat across the table from Kelly. Her cheerful smile was nowhere to be seen. Worry lines appeared on Mimis face now, showing the years of worrying about others. Yes, that is true. Its so very upsetting. Ive known Zoe for the six years shes been in Fort Connor. I remember when she first started her shop four years ago. And I noticed those bruises appearing last year. I asked Zoe about it, and she tried to dismiss my concern like she did with you. But I kept after her. Finally, she admitted that her husband Oscar had become increasingly abusive since hed lost his new consulting business. He was trying to make it as a financial advisor so he could leave his regular job with the power company. Mimi began to trace a pattern with her finger on the light wood of the table. She said he started to drink heavily, and thats when he began hitting her more. Apparently he only hit her occasionally before that. Mimis voice had acquired an edge. I simply cannot bear it when smart women stay with men who abuse them. There were no children to worry about. Oscar had kids from an earlier marriage. I told Zoe I would take her to the battered womens shelter here in town, but she refused to go. Ive told her that every time I see her. Its gotten so she stopped coming in here to visit. She knew Id remind her of my offer. I cant force her to go. Mimi gave a little shrug and met Kellys eyes. I wish I could. With Oscar drinking more, theres no telling what he might do. Kelly had let her knitting drop to her lap. That is so sad, Mimi. Zoe is so lively and full of energy. And . . . and so talented. I know, its so Her sentence was cut off by shop helper Connie, who walked into the room quickly. Mimi, Ive got that New England yarn vendor on the phone. It took me half the day calling. You wanted to talk to him. Mimi almost leaped from her chair. Yes! Absolutely. Sorry to leave so quickly, Kelly, but Ive been trying to reach him for weeks. No problem, Mimi, well talk later, Kelly said as Mimi hurried from the room. Kelly returned to the loose-knit shawl as she let the disturbing images Mimi had described dart around her head.