



Throw in the Trowel

Kate Collins

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I'm used to buried bulbs, not buried bodies...

The couple that sleuths together...

Flower Shop owner Abby Knight has just returned from a romantic honeymoon with the man of her dreams. There's no reason for the bloom to be off the rose just because she and Marco are returning to normal life. But when Marco discovers a skeleton buried in the basement of his bar, it is a bit of a mood killer.

When the body is identified as a carpenter who went missing back in the 1970s, Abby and Marco decide to cultivate the clues to solve the cold case. What could be more romantic? But the deeper they dig, the more desperate the murderer grows. And if Marco and Abby don't unearth the killer's identity, they may not live to see their first anniversary.

Throw in the Trowel Details

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Author : Kate Collins

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From Reader Review Throw in the Trowel for online ebook

Chelsey Wolford says

Kate Collins and her Flower Shop Mystery Series have been at the top of my charts when it comes to Cozy Mystery books for quite some time now. I have patiently awaited one book after the next and have never been disappointed by the writing, characters, or the adventures and mysteries we solve alongside our brave heroine, Abby. I was wondering where Collins would take readers next, especially after Abby and Marco were married in the book prior to this one. However, I was wrong for even beginning to question the work of Kate Collins. She brought back all our loveable characters in this book, post wedding, and they were better than ever!

This was one of the most interesting mysteries that I have read in this series so far. A skeleton is found in the back of Marco's bar and Abby and Marco think that the skeleton might belong to a carpenter who went missing back in the 1970's. Collins knows just what to do to draw a reader in. This cold case mystery had me on the edge of my seat and I was so intrigued with a few of her key plot points and twists. It really does say something for an author that after 15 books in the same series, she can still keep readers guessing and hunting for clues just as quickly as the characters themselves.

Abby and Marco are not the only loveable characters in this series and I have said this from day one: Kate really knows how to incorporate secondary characters that readers can cherish and be delighted to see at any given time during the books. Grace and Lottie will always remain at the top of my list just because of the reliable and cozy nature they both have. You can always count on them to be right there when Abby needs them most with something freshly baked and a cunning quote to add to my journal!

A free copy of this book was provided to me by the publishers at Signet in exchange for my honest review

Nancy Baker says

Sometimes when the main character of a book gets married the story loses some of its sparkle but not so with Throw in the Trowel. Abby and Marco have just returned from their honeymoon when bones are discovered in the basement of Marco's bar. The police are in no hurry to solve this old case so Marco and Abby decide to investigate. This is the 15th book in the Flower Shop Mystery series, and is a must read for those who have read the others and a very enjoyable read for those who have not.

Fred says

Throw in the Trowel is the 15th book in the A Flower Shop Mystery series.

A wonderful addition it is, too. Not only is there a very good mystery, but we get a chance to visit with Abby, her family, her employee and Seedy, her three-legged rescue dog.

Abby and Marco have just returned from their romantic honeymoon to find that the pipes in the basement of Marco's bar, Down the Hatch, are in need of repair. The concrete floor has been removed and as Abby and Marco are looking at the mess, Seedy is busy pawing in the dirt. She soon uncovers some finger bones. The police are called and more bones are found. Marco refuses Abby suggestion to find out who the bones belonged to. Then when the bones go missing they start looking into the matter. The only person that has went missing in the area was Kermit Connors, who was a contractor working in that same basement when he went missing. Abby and Marco talk with the family and friends of Kermit and they all are sure that he left town with Parthenia Pappas, but she has returned town and emphatically denies that they left together. I can't forget to say how adorable Seedy and Princess are. I can just see Seedy being all proud of herself for the antics she does. Francesca was also around a little, maybe she will be around more in the next book. She's another that I wait to see what will come out of her mouth.

It was so enjoyable to visit with Abby's employees, Grace and Lottie. Grace as usual is there to keep the tea brewing and the scones baking. As always to provide a quote or two that fit the occasion. Yes, Jillian is back to give the reader something more to shake their head about. She now has a Boston Terrier that she is pushing around in a stroller. Getting used to the idea once she has her baby. The poor pup has had two trainers and is now seeing a pet psychologist. I must say that early on, Jillian was my least favorite character, but now I look forward to reading what she will come up with next. Of course there is Abby's mom who continues to make items for Abby to sell in the flower shop. These items continue to leave Abby speechless. Another enjoyable character is Tara, Abby's niece. Tara is a precocious young teenager and a carbon copy of her Aunt. Not only in looks but also in being so inquisitive. I can't forget to say how adorable Seedy and Princess are. I can just see Seedy being all proud of herself for the antics she does. Francesca was also around a little, maybe she will be around more in the next book. She's another that I wait to see what will come out of her mouth.

So looking forward to the next book, to what blooms.

April says

This was a cute, basically standard book in a series about a just-married flower shop owner and her hunky Italian husband. It is not the author's fault, but the book clearly states she is a little plump, yet the heroine on the cover (w/red hair like our main character) is model-tall and slim. Also, her dog has 3 legs, but the dog in the cover has 4. Boo to the artist illustrating! I found the change in voice surprising....the heroine usually speaks but every once in a while, the voice switches over to her husband, who only seems to care about one thing...protecting his wife. Surely a hunky former Marine could think about more than this one note! The investigation of the mystery seemed very realistic...lots of stumbling about (and over) clues w/out realizing what they are at first.

LORI CASWELL says

Abby Knight Salvare and her husband Marco have just returned from their honeymoon. Things went well at the flower shop while they were gone except for some minor adjustments that can be fixed with just a little time. Marco's Down The Hatch bar was not so lucky. A clogged drain led to the basement floor being torn up and a very interesting discovery. A skeleton. It may be from a man who went missing back in the 1970's. With the local police wrapped up in a current case Abby and Marco decide to solve the cold case themselves.

But the deeper the dig the realize the murderer is still in the area and is desperate enough to bury them right where he did the first body.

Dollycas's Thoughts

I just can't believe this is the 15th book in this series. I look forward to each and every one. They are always fresh and entertaining but comfortable like a pair of slippers. It is like visiting old friends.

I love the characters. While Abby is definitely my favorite character, Marco's mom Francesca is runner up because she reminds me so much of my own mother. Grace and Lottie are wonderful. Marco makes my heart beat a little faster. Maureen "Mad Mo" Knight and her craft projects continue to make me laugh out loud. Jillian is in dire need of a psych evaluation. And I can't forget Seedy, the dog Abby rescued from the pound. He has become the new flower shop mascot.

Kate Collins has created quite a mystery this time. It had me guessing right up until the end and I was on the edge of my seat as it all came together. Wow, that was close!!!

If you are a cozy lover you probably are already a fan of Kate Collins' work. If you are new to Kate this is a perfect book to start with but I guarantee you are going to want to read all the others.

aem says

Overall, while I enjoyed this, my first Flower Shop Mystery (though it is the author's 15th in the series), I do find the cluelessness of the "heroines" in many cozies a bit annoying. Abby is no Miss Marple or Jessica Fletcher or even Nancy Drew. And I am NOT a fan of Inspector Clouseau...

Can't these cozy authors make the heroines a bit more intelligent?

Abby does handle family dynamics well. But creating and handling 50 orders/flower arrangements in a few hours, while also taking a lunch hour to interview possible perps??? Really???

Debbie Lester says

Flower Shop Mystery number fifteen, Throw in the Trowel by Kate Collins is an excellent example of a good plotting and engaging characters. Collins has a knack for writing a solid story with enough twists and turns to keep the reader on their toes. With some unidentified bones, a missing carpenter from the 70's and issues with mother-in-laws, Abby and Marco are up to their ears in problems. If this is married bliss, they are in for a long road. A great addition to this beloved series.

What I liked:

As far as cozy mysteries go, Kate Collins is one of the best writers in the sub-genre. Her Flower Shop Mystery series has a huge following and many cozy readers name it among their very favorites. It's not hard

to see why. The latest book in the series, *Throw in the Trowel* is very well written and full of surprises. I wasn't quite sure how Collins was going to top her last novel in the series featuring the wedding of Abby and Marco, but I shouldn't have worried. They may have finally gotten married, but they were not out of the amateur sleuthing woods, so to speak. This was an excellently plotted novel.

Marco's bar, *Down the Hatch* is having problems with the pipes, which prompts the owner to do some digging in the basement. When Seedy, the three-legged rescue dog turns up some finger bones, it starts to get to a little crazy. Collins has a keen sense of what makes a mystery work for the cozy reader. It has to be unusual, but still believable. If it's too far fetched it becomes unrealistic and doesn't resonate as well with reader. Well, this one was right on the money. A carpenter went missing back in the 70's and Abby and Marco think the skeleton may be his. It turns out to be a very interesting situation with plenty of suspects and a great motive for murder. Collins gets an A+ for great plotting in my book.

One of the things that I enjoy most about this series is the long list of secondary characters who could turn up in any given book, but amongst my favorites are the the mother-in-laws. Abby's mom is always creating some far fetched creation that she wants Abby to display in flower shop including her latest masterpiece which is quite a prize. Marco's mom on the other hand, Francesca is always up rearranging and changing things that Abby doesn't want changed. She has a real penchant for change. These two along with cousin Jillian who's a bit of a kook give this series a great dose of comic relief that will keep the reader chuckling while trying to figure out those pesky clues.

What I didn't like:

The way to finding the killer was a very crooked path in this one. I love twists and turns but too many can be a bad thing. I thought this one doubled back a bit on itself, but that wasn't a deal breaker. It was still a very intelligently written novel, that will keep readers up late at night for sure.

Bottom Line:

You can't go wrong with a Kate Collins novel. You know you are going to get a mystery that will challenge you and make you really think before you figure it out. The plot will be well crafted and executed and the end will always be satisfying. *Throw in the Trowel* proves that this series is a long way from finished. There are plenty more stories to tell.

Linda says

I love the Salvare's! This was the first book after Marco and Abby's wedding and they are the cutest newlyweds ever. I enjoyed them solving a cold case and it was fun to have some of the book from Marco's perspective. The part I found unbelievable was that they took Seedy everywhere with them, including a the mall and in *Down the Hatch*. Looking forward to reading more with one of my favorite crime solving duos.

Kathy Bryson says

Abby is happily settling into married life in this latest installment of the *Flower Shop Mysteries* – sort-of! Handsome hubby Marco comes with a sunken mattress, no cabinet space, a larger-than-life mother-in-law,

and a skeleton in the basement. When Marco decides that investigating those old bones is too dangerous for his new wife, it's time to establish some ground rules. Add in the beginnings of teenage rebellion and 2 unruly canines and you've got an entertaining, madcap mystery!

Missa says

I don't know if it is because I have been super crabby or because prior to reading this book I had been heavily immersed in the eighteenth century world of an epic series but I just had a hard time reading this book. I have always found Abby to be a bit silly (like so many of the heroines of these cozy mysteries) but I've always enjoyed the character interactions and that she is not stupid insofar as the sleuthing is concerned. In short this series has always been the lighthearted mystery (with a little romance thrown in) that I am looking for when I want a quick, easy read. This time around I found Abby to be annoying as hell. Always whining about Marco not knowing how she feels about, well, almost everything. As if now that they're married he gained sudden mind-reading abilities. She also just needs to learn to tell people no. No Jillian I won't dogsit for you. No dear mother-in-law I did not appreciate you rearranging my workstation. No mom I really don't think my floral shop is the place to display your artwork, please find a different venue. I'm just so sick of every time I pick up what at first appears to be an interesting little mystery series the plucky, entrepreneurial heroine turns out to be a whiny girl with low self-esteem when it comes to everything except the sleuthing. *yawn*

Betty says

<http://www.newandusedbooks.com/index...>

Throw in the Trowel: A Flower Shop Mystery

By Kate Collins

Obsidian

February 2014

Marco and Abby Knight Salvare, as in Mister and Missus Salvare, are home from a fantastic and romantic honeymoon in Key West, Florida. Marco feels that he and Abby should leave sleuthing to the police, as he does not ever want to put his "Sunshine" in any danger again. However, Abby doesn't like this suggestion one tiny bit. She and Marco have been investigative partners for a few years and have solved a lot of cases that would otherwise have gone into the police's cold case files, or the wrong person put in jail. Therefore, when the basement of Marco's bar, Down the Hatch, has some plumbing problems and a really old skeleton is discovered buried under the concrete flooring, Abby is ready to start investigating, but Marco is a little reluctant. They accidentally discover what may be a clue as to the identity of the deceased, and start asking around. The police aren't in any hurry to start an investigation as they have some current cases that need attention, and Marco's basement cannot be fixed until it is no longer a crime scene, so what's a nosey newlywed couple to do but solve a really cold case – and put a family member in harm's way.

THROW IN THE TROWEL is the latest in the Flower Shop Mystery and showcases "Seedy", the pitiful three-legged mama dog Abby and Marco adopted. Abby's mother is now taking sculpting lessons and plans on a showing at Bloomers. Cousin Jillian is still pregnant, and this reader wishes the baby would get here early. Like all newlyweds, Abby and Marco are being pulled this way and that by their mothers. But the

couple is very content now that they have solved a mystery and bought a new mattress.

Betty Cox, ReaderToReader.com

*** Jennifer says**

This is not a bad read; the writing is good, the characters are likeable. The mystery plot wasn't a surprise, but it wasn't obvious either. I just think my tastes have changed and the series and I are not a good fit.

Full review: <http://jenn.booklikes.com/post/107083...>

OpenBookSociety.com says

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/th...>

Brought to you by OBS reviewer Kayt

This was another fun tale of Abby, Marco and the great cast of characters all centered around Abby's floral shop Bloomers. We get to see the crazy antics of Abby's cousin Jillian. And can actually visualize the bizarre art work Abby's mom will bring in to the shop for her to attempt to see. Abby and Marco are just back from their honeymoon and trying to get settled into married life in his tiny apartment with his horrible old mattress. Marco wants to protect his new bride, yet they still get drawn into a mystery when bones are unearthed in his bar's basement.

The cast of suspects is pretty easy to figure out in this one. However the twists and turns it takes to get to the truth keep this book interesting and fast paced. Abby's niece Tara once again helps to get to the bottom of things while placing herself in danger. Marco really stands out in the installment of Ms Collins' series. His love for Abby is heartwarming and solid. His desire to protect his bride is however very frustrating for Abby.

I have to say one thing that really kept this installment of the Flower Shop Mysteries from getting a 5 star rating will probably not bother anyone else. I could not get past Abby and Marco taking their 3 legged dog everywhere with them. If only everyone could do that, but laws prohibit it. Service dog yes, any other dog no. Yes, this is rather insignificant in the grand scheme of things, but as a service dog partner myself it throws things off for me. Every time I would read "Abby, Marco. and Seedy going to the mall, to the bar/restaurant, etc, it would grate on my nerves. It almost ruined the read for me. Silly maybe, but it cast a bit of inaccuracy on the whole book.

I did enjoy this book and it kept me entertained. I always love learning about flowers so those quick tidbits of info from Abby were a pleasure. Not as cumbersome and intrusive as some cozies can be when the main character talks on and on about their particular knowledge. I would easily have given this 5 stars if not for the misuse and over use of Abby's dog Seedy. It is a great format for rescue and I can understand Ms Collins' desire to push that to the forefront, I just think she over did it a bit in this installment.

I would definitely recommend this book to any cozy fan or fan of soft mystery. This is a great series, with wonderful writing and flow. It has a nice romance that is actually wrapped up and solid, rather than the maddening triangle of love that seems to be so over used in many cozies. The Flower Shop Mystery series is one of the best out there. It is always a pleasure to read them and wait for the next to come out. Even as a married couple Abby and Marco have not lost a step in the entertainment and investigation arena. As always, this is a fun read that keeps you smiling, laughing, guessing and anticipating whats just around the next page.

Trisha says

2014-02-12. Really enjoyable. I loved all the newlywed adjustments that they made and adding Tara to the sleuthing was fun. The whodunit it was difficult to figure out and ending great. Hate to have to wait another year for the next book.

Luffy says

I need to throw in the towel. I give up on this series. I've had enough. This book is so shamelessly a cash grab. Considering that events take place in the 'Abbyverse' every few months, this trail of mediocrity could go on for years. But not with me as a compliant reader. I'm out. I thought at one point that the finale would redeem a point for the book. It would have been an insult to all 2 star books that I've rated. But never fear, Kate Collins is here. Here to make sure that even the most rudimentary task of all, providing a routine finale to a cozy mystery, is botched as well. Blah. Oh yeah, I nearly forgot to tell that Nicky, the bosom friend of Abby is totally absent from this dreck. Unforgivable.
