



Engaged in Death

Stephanie Blackmoore

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All appears peaceful in sleepy Port Quincy, Pennsylvania--but in this small town, old grudges die hard. . .

After dumping her cheating fiancé and cancelling the wedding, Mallory Shepard can't bear another disaster. So when the former bride-to-be unexpectedly inherits Thistle Park, a ramshackle mansion in her ex's hometown of Port Quincy, it's a problem she can't afford--literally. Abound with stray cats, peeling wallpaper, and nosy neighbors, Mallory is dying to sell it off--once she finally fixes up both the place and her messy life. . .

Turns out, Thistle Park has its charms. But the honeymoon phase is abruptly cut short when an unwanted visitor is found dead on the front lawn. Enlisting the help of her sister Rachel, Mallory vows to unveil the killer before she herself becomes married to the suspect list. . .

Engaged in Death Details

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Author : Stephanie Blackmoore

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From Reader Review Engaged in Death for online ebook

Linda says

Review to follow....

Brooke Showalter (Brooke Blogs) says

Engaged in Death by Stephanie Blackmoore is the first book in the new wedding planner mystery series. I was absolutely delighted when Kensington approved my NetGalley request to review this one. I loved the cover, the title and the description. When I started reading the book, I was not disappointed. Ms. Blackmoore delivers a top-notch cozy mystery with delightful characters, plenty of twists and turns, and a town full of quirky residents.

Mallory will be marrying Keith in a few days ~ but before that happens, she receives a mysterious envelope with some photos painting Keith as an unfaithful jerk. Heartbroken, but thankful for the reprieve from Keith and his overbearing mother, Helene, Mallory holes up in a hotel to lick her wounds. The one member of Keith's family that Mallory got along with was his grandmother, Sylvia. When she passes and Mallory finds out Sylvia deeded her grand old house to her, Mallory isn't sure what to think.

I loved so much about this book. Mallory and her sister Rachel are wonderful characters. The town of Port Quincy was the perfect setting for this story. I live in eastern Ohio, but the closest city to me is Pittsburgh, PA. It was so easy for me to relate to the story and the settings. I was so wrapped up in the mystery and I quickly became invested in the characters and the story. I'm already counting down the days until the next book in the series comes out.

Mary Brown says

Engaged In Death
Wedding Planner Mystery, Book #1
Stephanie Blackmoore
5 Stars

Synopsis:

"Had me in its spell from page one. Readers will love this." --Leslie Meier

All appears peaceful in sleepy Port Quincy, Pennsylvania--but in this small town, old grudges die hard. . .

After dumping her cheating fiancé and cancelling the wedding, Mallory Shepard can't bear another disaster. So when the former bride-to-be unexpectedly inherits Thistle Park, a ramshackle mansion in her ex's hometown of Port Quincy, it's a problem she can't afford--literally. Abound with stray cats, peeling wallpaper, and nosy neighbors, Mallory is dying to sell it off--once she finally fixes up both the place and her messy life. . .

Turns out, Thistle Park has its charms. But the honeymoon phase is abruptly cut short when an unwanted visitor is found dead on the front lawn. Enlisting the help of her sister Rachel, Mallory vows to unveil the killer before she herself becomes married to the suspect list. . .

"I had great fun reading the adventures of nouveau sleuth Mallory Shepard as she wrangles corpses, kittens, and a cheating fiancé in this charming debut mystery." --Laura Levine, author of Death by Tiara (Goodreads)

Review:

Mallory Shepard is all set to get married in a few weeks. Sure, her bossy future mother-in-law has taken control of her wedding, but she can let that slide. And she can also let the fact that her future mother-in-law does not seem to really like her very much slide. After all, she is not marrying her but rather her son. But what she cannot let slide is the fact that her fiance has been cheating on her and she has proof positive. When she calls off the wedding and learns that she has inherited a rundown mansion, she is not sure if her luck has taken a turn for the worse or the better. When a dead body is found on her front lawn right after she moves, she knows that her luck is on a downward slope. To make sure that she is not considered a true suspect, she decides that she will try to find the murderer herself. After all, she takes it personal when her yard is used as a dumping ground for murder.

The characters are well developed, well rounded and three dimensional. I enjoyed watching the relationship between Mallory and Rachel, her sister, grow and develop. When they were younger, Mallory kept an eye on her sister and tried to keep her in line. Now the tables seem to be turned and Rachel is very willing to help Mallory and keep her on track. The secondary characters added another layer of depth to the book and most of them are people I want to get to know better.

The mystery was carried on well throughout the entire book. There are plenty of suspects with numerous motives to consider and a lot of clues to shift through. I was not sure of the killer until it was revealed at the end. And there is more than one mystery that needs to be solved, such as who tried to kill Mallory. She does not know if that incident is related to the murder but she intends to find out. I liked the fact that there were multiple mysteries to figure out.

The writing style flows smoothly and the book is an easy read. The author is very talented in her descriptive writing and pulled me into the pages and held me captive. I really enjoyed the small town setting and all the quirkiness that goes along with it.

I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a well crafted cozy mystery. I was very surprised to learn that this is the debut cozy mystery for this author. I cannot wait to read book two in the series.

I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for a honest review. I would like to thank NetGalley and Kensington Books for the opportunity to read and review this book.

DeB MaRtEnS says

Thank you to Kensington Books for an advance paperback copy, through Goodreads Giveaways. It is always such a pleasure to win one of the books which a publisher has so graciously offered to followers of GR.

Engaged in Death, A Wedding Planner Mystery has an eye-catching and colourfully enticing front cover. A suspicious-looking calico cat eyes a heavily decorated three tiered wedding cake sitting on a wooden table, while kittens amuse themselves with tangles of white ribbon. The shabby-chic kitchen is busy with bouquets in bows, wedding favours, cookbooks, rose petals... And a cake knife and server covered in what could be -- BLOOD?!! I absolutely love the cover!

With that book cover, Stephanie Blackmore's novel has a great deal to live up to, right from the beginning. Mallory Shepard, lawyer, snoop, betrayed fiancé and the ditsy protagonist of this new series is a study in contrasts. The adorable woman who initially graciously gave way to her future mother-in-law's wedding plans suddenly runs amok, hyperactive, hyper anxious, querulous and full of evasion to the local police force. Yes, Mallory unprecedently inherits her ex-fiancé's relative's house. Yes, the place is a near tear-down and developers and fracking companies want to buy it, but old Aunt Sylvia refused both options and Mallory will honour her wishes. Then a dead guy shows up on the lawn. Her sister Rachel finds love, living with her and bakes the best cake at the fair. The mayor is "handsy" with women, in full view of everyone. The house yardsman gives her and Rachel the creeps. The ex and his mother take her to court, and the yummy guy next door defends her. Garrett, that hot lawyer, becomes a love interest. Mallory does lawyer snooping at her lawyer firm. Mallory tries to find someone to take her wedding slot, because she can't get her deposit back. Mallory organizes a wedding... Someone else is killed. Someone is having an affair. Who, what, how, where, when? Yikes!

The cast of characters and subplots dingle and dangle, and sometimes find their way back to each other. There isn't one red herring; there are just so many stories and people that the threads become a bit thin, and the suspense is almost flat until near the very end. Once it does pick up, Blackmoore does a great job. A bit more time spent earlier on the culprit would have enhanced the story, and perhaps made the identity less easy to guess. I was really hoping for a bit more wedding planner, and that was a mini part of the plot.

Stephanie Blackmoore has the bones of some good future books for her Wedding Planner Series. Less would be a bit more, and give the reader a chance to enjoy her character Mallory who was a bit too overloaded and rushed in Engaged in Death. Nuance is important if weddings are central to the structure of the story; a reader will be looking for the details from that wedding planner, as well as a great cozy mystery.

Three stars, an enterprising start to a debut mystery series.

Peggy R says

I thought this was a delightful first in a new series. The author has a wonderful descriptive writing style which was terrific because it really allowed me to picture some of the scenes throughout the book. The plot had a steady pace that kept me engaged throughout the entire book. The characters are wonderful and pretty well rounded for a first book. I liked the relationship between the sisters Mallory and Rachel. The mystery was solid and I thought the author wove the subplots together nicely so they were all tied up by the end of the book. There are also recipes at the end of the book that sound like they would be tasty.

A full review will be posted to my blog closer to the release date.

I received an ARC from the publisher Kensington through Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. This did not influence my opinion and the thoughts expressed are my own.

Sandee says

Very good cozy mystery! I loved the characters and especially that they grow through their experiences. The relationships are realistic and complex. The mystery is interesting. I am looking forward to reading more in this series!

Jill says

Who can't love a book that uses the words "nebby" and "yinz"? What a fantastic start to a new series. Stephanie Blackmoore makes you fall in love with the characters. Throughout the book you are cheering and crying right along side of Mallory, the main character. I really enjoyed the twist at the end of the book. The Pittsburgh setting was special for me because I call Pittsburgh home. This is going to be a great series if this first installment is any indication. The theme, Thistle Park B & B seems like it is going to be fun and attention grabbing. I'll be pre-ordering the next in the series for sure!

Dawn Frazier says

Excellent book, I loved it! I was hooked from page one all the way to the end, I can't wait to read the next one.

Betty says

The first book in a new series and new author for me. Mallory Shepherd receives a plain brown envelope shortly before her wedding. It contains pictures of her fiance with an another woman. Mallory canceled the wedding to dismay of her fiance and his Mother. She is surprised when she receives the title to her fiance's family home. The first night Mallory spends in the dilapidated mansion, the next morning she finds is a dead body on the lawn. This book is character driven and Mallory and her sister, Rachel will grab your interest immediately. There are Helene and Keith, her fiance, both are unlikable. The police chief Truman whose character changes during the story. Her neighbor, a teenager is caring for the stray cats in the mansion. The cats, a calico, and her kittens add much to the story. The description of the area, house, work, and fracking are fantastic and you feel you are there. I am looking forward to next book.

Disclosure: I received a free copy from Kensington Books through NetGalley for an honest review. I would like to thank them for this opportunity to read and review the book. The opinions expressed are my own.

Melodie says

I was a bit apprehensive about this one. Sounded like it might be a bit too cutesy. However, I was VERY pleasantly surprised with just how much I liked this one! Good characters, even the "femme fatale" younger

sister and a very good story. The second one comes out the end of January and I'm eagerly awaiting it!
RECOMMEND!

Meg says

A good first book in a relatively new series. At times things seesawed back and forth, or felt like too much was going on, but I enjoyed the premise of the story. It was one of the few times in my extensive reading when I figured out who done it but it was a good journey.

Lisa Morin says

Engaged in Death by Stephanie Blackmoore is the first in a new series featuring Mallory Shepard and takes place in the quaint town of Port Quincy, Pennsylvania. I was hooked by the story from the very beginning. As the story opens, Mallory is just 3 weeks away from her wedding. Instead of being excited, Mallory just wants it to be over, her future mother-in-law is determined to have the wedding the way SHE wants it. When Mallory receives an anonymous package in the mail, it sets the course for disaster. When an unexpected inheritance comes her way, Mallory has high hopes, until she finds a dead body in her front yard.

I found this book to be exciting and I could not put the book down. The author is new to me but I am hoping to see more in this fantastic series. The characters appeared very real and I found myself at the edge of my seat towards the end. I will be suggesting this book to other cozy mystery readers, I think they will enjoy this fast paced cozy mystery.

I received an ARC of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for my fair and honest review.

LORI CASWELL says

Dollycas's Thoughts

As soon as I read the above synopsis for this book I knew I had to read it as soon as possible. Thank you Kensington for the early copy!

Mallory had no idea who she was engaged to, but his overbearing mother was pushing her over the edge. Finding out the guy was cheating on her was just icing on the cake. Then in a weird twist of fate she inherits Thistle Park, a mansion in need of loads of tender loving care. Mallory is faced with putting it up for sale but to that she is going to need to make some improvements. Finding a dead body in the front yard was not the renovation she had planned. The wedding was cancelled but her sister's arrives to help in anyway she can. Never knowing she would be helping Mallory catch a killer.

So much happens in this story that intrigued me in addition to the murder. The house that Mallory inherited could be amazing in the hands of the right person. My imagination was running wild with ideas. Then what do you do when your wedding is cancelled and the venue refuses to return your huge deposit? You will have to read the story to find out.

As far as the murder, the man wronged so many people, meaning there are so many that could want him dead. Her ex-future mother-in-law could even be involved. Surely she wouldn't kill someone, or would she? The clues seem to lead in circles at times but that just added to my reading pleasure.

Mallory starts out as a "goes with the flow" type of woman, but scorned she is a force to be reckoned with. She is a lawyer who is smart and organized and definitely doesn't need a man making decisions for her. I was so impressed with her transformation just in this first book. I can't wait to see what she takes on in the next story.

Her sister, Rachel, has yet to find her niche. She has tried several things but doesn't really stick with anything long. She tends to find herself living with her mom and step-dad or having them bail her out of situations. Mallory is the responsible one, timid about trying new things. They each need to rub a little off an each other and they will make a fantastic team.

I enjoy the way Ms. Blackmoore writes, it is so descriptive. I could picture everything so clearly. She also unfolds the story at a brisk pace.

Even the secondary characters are fleshed out, real and believable. Keith, the ex and his mother Helene, are excellent characters to dislike. I am not going to lie, I would not have shed a tear if one of them was the body in the front yard, but they turned the story on its ear in their own way. The neighbors are interesting and the Chief of Police just happens to live in the house behind Thistle Park, with his son and granddaughter.

This is a fabulous debut! A great start to what I hope will become a long running series!

I see the next book in the series, *Murder Wears White*, will be out January 31, 2017 and is available for pre-order. I am looking forward to it already!

Lisa Ks Book Reviews says

A promising debut to the new Wedding Planner Mystery series.

All in all I enjoyed *ENGAGED IN DEATH*. It did take me a little while to get into it. Something with the characters just wasn't clicking with me at first. But further into the story, as author Stephanie Blackmoore fleshed them out, the book started to move faster for me.

Ms. Blackmoore has a flare for description. I could clearly visualize each scene as though I was in the room with the characters. I could hear the sounds, and smell the aromas.

ENGAGED TO DEATH was a solid mystery, with a well done reveal. There were just enough suspects to get me guessing until the reveal. I was close, but has changed my mind at some point. That will teach me to second guess myself. ;-)

Make sure to check out the back of the book where you will find some tasty recipes, and an excerpt of book two in the Wedding Planner Mysteries, *MURDER WEARS WHITE*.

Patty says

Engaged in Death by Stephanie Blackmoore is the 1st book in the Wedding Planner Mystery series, and I loved it. Mallory Shepard is set to get married to Keith in 3 weeks in Port Quincy, Pennsylvania. Her soon to be mother in law has taken over her wedding plans, the only bright light is Keith's grandmother Sylvia who Mallory loves. Suddenly Sylvia dies, and Mallory receives a package proving that Keith is cheating on her. The wedding is called off and Mallory finds out she is set to inherit Sylvia run down mansion. When a dead body is found in the front yard of Sylvia home, Mallory must quickly find the murderer and clear her name.

I am so excited about this new author and series. Not only is this book funny, it has a great mystery. There are twists and turns around every corner. Just when I thought I figured out the murderer, it changes. I found this book to be a quick read, with a well developed plot and characters. I am looking forward to reading the next book in the series. If you love cozy mysteries full of quirky characters and a likable protagonist, I strongly recommend this book.

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