



## Scrapbook of Secrets

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Having traded in her career as a successful investigative journalist for the life of a stay-at-home mom in picturesque Cumberland Creek, Virginia, Annie can't help but feel that something's missing. But she finds solace in a local "crop circle" of scrapbookers united by chore-shy husbands, demanding children, and occasional fantasies of their former single lives. And when the quiet idyll of their small town is shattered by a young mother's suicide, they band together to find out what went wrong. . .

Annie resurrects her reporting skills and discovers that Maggie Rae was a closet scrapbooker who left behind more than a few secrets--and perhaps a few enemies. As they sift through Maggie Rae's mysteriously discarded scrapbooks, Annie and her "crop" sisters begin to suspect that her suicide may have been murder. It seems that something sinister is lurking beneath the town's beguilingly calm façade--like a killer with unfinished business. . .

## Scrapbook of Secrets Details

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Author : Mollie Cox Bryan

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## From Reader Review Scrapbook of Secrets for online ebook

### Rocky says

I received a complimentary copy of this book from Goodreads First Reads.

I am a "scrapping" person so this was a really applicable book for me personally.

I really thought the tips and glossary of scrapbooking terms was a great idea.

This is not a life altering read, but it was a nice quick murder mystery/suicide.

Great job Mollie! Keep writing.

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### Katie says

Loved it! This is probably the best cozy mystery I have ever read--even if the mystery part is lite. Most cozies are light hearted beach reads that are well superficial. This one has a large cast of characters that are well rounded with different meaty social issues (the type other cozies avoid). These character are real and excellently developed. The first couple chapters come off a little disjointed as you switch back and forth through the characters, but once I got to know each of the characters I couldn't decide who I liked more. The other difference in this cozie is the scrapbooking is actually necessary to the plot. It isn't an add in how-to at the end of each chapter. It is how the mystery is developed and solved. Can't wait to see if this remains the same in the next book--which I'll be buying as soon as it is released.

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### Lisa says

The author is an old friend whom I know to be a wonderful poet, so I was delighted to find out that she is now the author of a mystery series. Scrapbook of Secrets is the first cozy mystery I have ever read and I truly enjoyed it. Mollie has a knack for spiriting the reader along. The writing is crisp and the characters are endearing, particularly Beatrice, a retired physics professor who keeps a protective eye on the town as well as on the group of sleuthing scrapbookers. The richest chapters--and my favorites--are written from Bea's point of view. As someone who is clueless about scrapbooking, I also enjoyed the tips and glossary at the end. I look forward to reading the next book in the series. In the meantime, I might even try my hand at scrapbooking.

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### Jennifer A.M. says

I picked this up for some light cozy mystery reading. It's really not very good. I was perpetually annoyed by the characters. There are several protagonists, but I think the main one is a young mother, Annie who has two young boys. Annie is often sad or confused by why she doesn't love motherhood as much as she thought she would. But then there are moments (several in fact) where her children deliberately wreck her stuff,

make giant messes etc. and she just sighs and blames herself for not being a better mother. Here's a little secret Annie. Your children are little sh\*\*s. You don't have to like them and cuddle them all the time. You can be mad they wrecked your stuff. I am SO not mother of the year, but Annie, you are a twerp. Plus, this book is about a scrapbook club, and it really just uses that as a thin line barely holding the plot together. I know I shouldn't expect much from this genre, but really, if I would never want to be friends with ANYONE in the book, that is saying something. Sorry Ms. Bryan, I will not be reading the next in the series.

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### **Vicky says**

I am about a third of the way through this book. At first I thought it was pretty disjointed. Actually it is disjointed. But then it sunk in that this book is written like a scrapbook, not just using scrapbooking as a foundation for the mystery. It reaches deeper levels than a typical cozy and i am thouroughly enjoying it.

Interesting book on multi levels that but at times it seemed as if the author perhpas had written a much longer version as the time lapses increased. I enjoyed the book and am anxious for the next one.

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### **Chana says**

A young woman, Maggie Rae, is thought to have committed suicide but it is awfully strange that someone has put all her pictures and scrapbook materials out on the curb right after her death. Hmmm, turns out it is murder (I didn't see that coming, did you?). Annie, her husband and two young children are new to the neighborhood and know Maggie Rae to say hi to. Annie meets a woman from a scrapbooking club and is invited to join. When Maggie Rae is murdered the scrapbookers pick up her pictures and books from the curb and decide to make books for the four children who are left without a mother.

As they make these books they discover a lot about the family, including eventually, the identity of the murderer. A lot of cheating spouses and unsatisfied lovers, people bored with marriage and children, "swingers". Sheesh, really?? "Swingers"? Is this still a thing?

I just wanted to read a cute piece of fluff with scrapbooking in it.

I thought it was well-written for an author's first book, but spare me all the adultery. I noticed that nobody was scrapbooking that.

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### **Ramona says**

I really liked this one even tho the ending was kind of abrupt. It involved scrapbooking and murder...two of my favorite things. LOL! The characters were fun to get to know and I look forward to learning more about them. I can't wait to read the next one.

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### **Stacie Amelotte says**

The bones of a good story are here; it just needs to be executed better. At first I thought it was pretty disjointed. But then it sunk in that this book is written like a scrapbook, not just using scrapbooking as a foundation for the mystery. It reaches deeper levels than a typical cozy and I thoroughly enjoyed it. One of the things I liked the most about this book is the representation of several generations and life stages among

the women who were part of the local "crop." You will quickly get caught up in the story and the diverse lives of the women. Multiple points of view from an array of fascinating characters from different walks of life, plus a deeper and darker story than often found in a traditional cozy help to make this a book worth reading. Look forward to reading the remainder of this series.

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### **Text Addict says**

This cozy mystery brings us to Cumberland County, Virginia. (Apparently by reading a lot of these things, I'll be able to vicariously visit the whole country.) And it's also one of two series I'm aware of that have scrapbooking as the, hmm, creative focus of the characters.

There's a lot to like about this book, such as: characters ranging in age from youngish moms to outright elderly; a Jewish point-of-view character who actually struggles with issues related to being Jewish in exurban Virginia; acknowledgment of racial issues (at least in the past); generally matter-of-fact dealings with issues of sex and sexuality and infidelity. And I'm okay with the slight supernatural element (ghosts).

Unfortunately, it has no narrative tension. The story meanders through multiple points of view, which is generally interesting but does little to advance the plot. I think the author's goal was to explore the repercussions of the victim's murder and of her activities prior to her death. Laudable, certainly, but the result is a series of incidents that connect poorly to each other and don't create much of a feeling of progress toward the goal of solving the mystery. This may be like reality, but reality doesn't make a good narrative.

Also, I was really annoyed by certain characters' decision to go off and confront the probable murderer. They're both smarter than that ... and then the whole confrontation fizzled rather than exploding.

The bones of a good story are here; it just needed to be executed better. I may give the forthcoming second volume of the series a chance, but I'm not sure.

ETA: The book is also a more-than-usually-noticeable grammatical offender - specifically, in failure to use the past participle tense. That's the tense used when a narrative already written in the past tense refers to events in its own past. For example, "Until today, she *had brought* cookies to every meeting," versus "Until today, she *brought* cookies to every meeting." Every time the simple past tense is used instead of the past participle, the reader has to work out whether the narrative is referring to its present, or to something in its past. Not good, especially when it's unclear which was meant.

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### **Julie Barrett says**

Scrapbook Of Secrets by Mollie Cox Bryan

The group of woman who meet to work on their scrapbooking have found out some interesting things. Weird things like one of their mothers getting stabbed in the neck, not feeling it, but having to be operated on. Their way home they drove by the one who had died to discover her husband had cleaned out all his wives things, all her scrapbooking so the woman take it all so they can go through it later. They do not think she committed suicide as she had young children. They hope to find more clues to back up the fact that they think she was murdered. One thing they find out had brought in a lot of money for the family.

The chapters are very short and there are a lot of them. I do not think with everybody involved that I could even tell you who is married to who and what kids they have. There are just so many people.

The mystery becomes more than that as other things come to light and things are happening to others in the community.

Love the glossary of terms used, tips and tricks and how to do scrapbooking. Also love that this is a series and there is more to come of the same type of mysteries with most of the same group of people. This means that maybe I'll be able to keep the characters straight.

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## **Kristine (The Writer's Inkwell) says**

Posted originally on my blog: [The Writer's Inkwell](#)

I put this book on hold after reading *Scrapbook of the Dead* through Netgalley a month or two back. While I had enjoyed that particular book, I clearly felt as if I had missed a few things by not reading the first couple of books in the series. Thus, leading me to eventually placing the first book of the series and hold through my local library.

Now, I almost wish I hadn't done that. Don't get me wrong, I still enjoyed the first book of the series I read. But after reading the book that started it all, I have to admit I'm surprised more than one book was ever published. Before I get into why I feel that way, let me point out that it's clear that the author's writing style has improved and the series is better off from the changes that have been made. Any and every thing I felt is wrong with this book, is strictly about this book and not the series.

So where to begin? Oh yes... Beatrice is stunned when her daughter points out she's been stabbed in the neck. This was actually a decent enough opening for the book and even the series. It's so out of left field that you can't help but be curious. That being said, I'm not buying that she had a huge kitchen knife stabbed into her neck and she didn't feel it. The doctor's story about there only being a few nerves in that region is utter bull and my suspension of disbelief only goes so far. You'd have had me far more convinced if you chalked it up to her size or even her age. But none of that is problem enough for me to care, especially since there are far worse things that bothered me.

Seeing as this is the beginning of a series, you'd expect more of an introduction. If not initially, what with Beatrice worrying about the knife in her neck, then as more of the characters are introduced. Don't get me wrong. You will get an introduction and back story for a few characters, but then when it comes to Maggie Rae, the victim in all of this, it's introduced as if you should already know who she is and what happened to her. In fact, everything about the introduction to this dead woman really pushed the limits of my suspension of disbelief. For one, I've never heard of a woman shooting herself in the heart and it being considered suicide. It's police work 101: Women typically don't commit suicide with a gun. People usually shoot themselves in the head for an instant death, as opposed to the chest or stomach, which would be painful, could take several minutes and is possibly survivable. Thus, why this is deemed a suicide is beyond me. Anyway, I'll get back to Maggie Rae. There's a lot of stuff to gripe about here and I'm only getting started.

One of the things I did enjoy about this book is the representation of several generations and stages among the women who were part of the local "crop." One thing I didn't like, is being told these women ran this town. I mean, by all means, if it were true, I'd have no qualms with it. But let's see, we have Beatrice who does nothing but complain because the town has grown so much, she barely knows anyone. Annie, is a relatively new member to the town and is so clueless in her own mothering capabilities, she doesn't have time to run her own household correctly, let alone the town. Vera is a middle aged dance instructor, DeeAnn is a bakery owner and Sheila sells scrapbook supplies out of her basement. None of these ring true as being

the backbone of this community. I'm sorry, if the town has grown so much you don't recognize anyone when you walk down the street or even attend your own church, you're not exactly a pillar of the community. I'm just saying.

Another thing I don't like about this book, is it's need to throw every mainstream issue into one book. Sometimes less is more. If you are going to make the victim an adulterous, erotica writer who is into BDSM, maybe save Vera's botched abortion sob story until the next book. Or maybe the gay son story... Not everything has to go into the first story. In fact, I'd much rather an author show restraint. Especially when it's so obvious they are writing about something they don't understand. In this case, BDSM. Basically the story wants you to believe the reason you may enjoy a little bondage from time to time is because your daddy touched you inappropriately as a child and you liked it. You may think I'm kidding, but the example I just described was almost dead on. Only it was Maggie Rae's stepfather, not her father. I would like to point out, there's no real correlation between someone who truly enjoys any fetish like BDSM and abuse. In fact, there's a distinct difference between the two. Also, there's no need to psychoanalyze in it, especially in a book that's trying to be a cozy mystery. Annie's research into the lifestyle and complete knowledge of how Maggie Rae could only enjoy something like that if she had been abused was preposterous and down right offensive. You can't fit one of the most common fetishes into a label like that and think it's okay. It's not.

And maybe it's time to cut my ranting... Here's the story in a nutshell, a group of busybodies, who enjoy gossiping, being nosy and scrapbooking set forth to uncover what happened to poor Maggie Rae. Of course, they are so pious, that they are completely horrified to find out she's the town whore, who was sexually abused by her stepfather and into sexual practices that are completely unacceptable by their small town mentality. Nevermind the fact, one of their husbands was Maggie's lover. But it's not right to have sympathy or even empathy for whore. But when it's one of the main characters, who chose to have an abortion and then struggled to have children for decades... well by all means, that's a forgivable offense. Oh and don't forget those damn Mennonites. They're just so darn creepy, they must have something (or everything) to do with this suicide murder. But who knows. Maybe I'm being too gosh darn critical about this book. But seeing as I enjoyed the other one, I don't think I am. I got the answers to the questions I had while reading that book and a whole mess of crap as well. So please, read the series, it's actually not a bad series. But SKIP THIS BOOK.

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### **Nancy Bradford says**

At first I was thinking that this was not a true mystery but rather a novel about the intertwining lives of a group of women in a small town. But then I realized this was a very soft Cozy. I enjoyed reading and had a hard time puttin git down.

I look forward to reading more in this series.

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### **Jackie says**

Where, oh, where to start?

1. I'm so glad I didn't spend any money on this. I started reading, then speedreading, then skimming just to get to the end.
2. I thought the characters were indistinguishable from each other. I could detect no character development at all, just a bunch of names representing people that were all the same.

3. A more critical, negative bunch of women would be hard to find. This book was negative from the get-go and stayed that way to the end.

4. Was there any cliché not included here? Let me see - there was religious prejudice, ghosts, quantum physics, extramarital affairs (yes, multiple ones), the KKK, abortion, late-in-life pregnancy, S & M, security cameras that don't catch what they're meant to, stereotypical husbands that don't help out around the house...and some things I've probably left out. Probably some things the author should have left out - it was just a muddy mess.

Remember, this is just my opinion. Clearly Ms. Bryan has a following. I prefer books with a little more substance, with better grammar (and editing); ones that will engage my mind more and demand a little more attention; and ones that I finish with a sense of something other than relief. I'm off to find something like that to read....

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### **Jane Reads says**

I was hooked from the first sentence: *For Vera, all of the day's madness began when she saw the knife handle poking out of her mother's neck.* This is Mollie Cox Bryan's debut novel, an enjoyable cozy mystery that's a very good read. I look forward to reading *Scrapped*, and to the release of Book 3 in the Cumberland Creek series.

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### **Linda says**

Okay first book in the series. It seemed to jump around a lot and it would take me a minute to figure it out. Overall the story and characters were okay but I don't see this becoming a favorite series.

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