



**THE JILLIAN KNIGHT OSBORNE**



# **FASHIONISTA DIARIES**



**A Flower Shop Mystery**

**Short Story**

**Kate Collins**

Follow Kate Collins Online

[katecollinsbooks.com](https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/)<sup>1</sup>

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/authorkatecollins)<sup>2</sup>

---

1. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/>

2. <https://www.facebook.com/authorkatecollins>



THE JILLIAN KNIGHT OSBORNE  
FASHIONISTA DIARIES  
A Flower Shop Short Story  
Copyright © 2025 Linda Tsoutsouris



This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.



**Dear readers,**



*I hope you will enjoy Jillian's week-long diary, which is all about fashion, fitness, and health. You might even find that she's gotten herself involved in a mini-mystery as well. I take no credit or blame for her entries - or her grammar, for that matter. Jillian is her own woman, and far be it for me to attempt to rein her in. Abby has certainly been unable to do so.*

*It's up to you whether to accept or disregard Jillian's fashionista advice, but she does make some good points. Also, beware of her slightly acerbic tongue. Fans of the Flower Shop Mysteries know that Jillian is quite tactless. But I love her because she makes me laugh. I hope you will, too.*

*Enjoy!*

*Kate Collins*

THE JILLIAN KNIGHT OSBORNE FASHIONISTA DIARIES 5

MOMMYNISTA DIARIES

**By Jillian Knight Osborne**



## MONDAY



It came to me in the middle of the night – my purposes for being on this planet. To raise my infant daughter, Harper Abigail Lynne Osborne, (HALO) to be as savvy as I am about clothing design and life in general; To share my savviability with women of the world, most of whom would kill for one of my fashion makeovers.

*Savviability is too a word, Abby. Yes, it is.*

*Yes, it is!*

To that end, I am forthwith – henceforth? hencewith? –publishing a daily blog for the period of one week, Monday to Sunday, which should be ample time to bring all my friends, acquaintances, and envious others up to fashion speed.

On the off chance that you haven't noticed me here in my little hamlet of New Chapel, Indiana, which I have to say, is highly unlikely, I am Jillian Ophelia Knight Osborne, of the Irish Knight clan, recently wed to Claymore Osborne who hails from the elite and extremely rich Osborne family. Hence the envious others.

I'm also the cousin of Abby Knight, now Mrs. Marco Salvare, owner of Bloomers Flower Shop, who somehow manages to get her photo in the newspaper more often than I do. But I'll let it pass because Abby has been my best friend and mentor since I was a precocious little girl. I know it sounds a little out there that a cousin who is only one year older could be a mentor, but Abby has an old soul.

*No, I did not say you were old, Abs. I said your soul was old. Stop reading over my shoulder.*

Right now, I'm sitting at the big slate table in the workroom of my cousin's flower shop ignoring her digs about my habit of making up words. Why can't savviability be a word? I just used it, didn't I? And how is it possible for Merriam Webster to know everything about modern language? She's dead!

*No way, Abby. Merriam is not a man's name. Would you go away and let me write in peace? Okay, so what if it's your shop? Fine. I'll move to your desk.*

I'm working out of her flower shop because I need quiet to concentrate. Two items to note: 1. Babies are not quiet. 2. Nannies are a godsend. Now back to my second purpose, your fashion enlightenment. Notebooks ready?

### **Fashion tip 1:**

Cork is the new leather.

Everyone wants to be *au courant*, and right now cork is HOT. Cork watch bands, for instance, are unbelievably chic. They're not only stylish but also pliable, tough, and water-resistant. You can find them in colors, but IMHO, natural is better because it stands out. And please put this in bold: **You want to stand out!**

So be on the lookout for cork fashion items – key fobs, trim on handbags, shoes (even flipflops!) jackets – and I wouldn't blame you if you wore a cork skirt. It's that friendly.

### **Fashion tip 2:**

Use a hand mirror to check the back of your hair.

Is there anything worse than sitting behind someone who didn't know she'd slept on her hair funny and now she's either got a tangled mess that in no way matches the sleek sides, or a horrendously crooked line through the back of her short hairdo that exposes different colored roots? I don't think so. A hand mirror is a must-have for any fashionista's makeup counter. If you can find one trimmed in cork, you're so ahead of the pack, I can't even see you.

And get a silk pillowcase while you're at it.

*Wait, Grace! I'll have one of those!*

Sorry. Grace Bingham just buzzed by with a tray of scones for Abby and Lottie's afternoon tea break. If you haven't been to Bloomers yet, Grace runs Abby's coffee-and-tea parlor, and Lottie is Abby's assistant florist. Grace claims to be from the UK, but her accent sounds more like she's from London.

*Abby, honestly, stop reading over my shoulder! My mistake, okay? So London is in the UK. And why can't we just say England anymore? Do they say we're from the USA? No, they say we're from the states.*

Hmm. Maybe we should say they are from the islands. But I can take that up in another blog.

For now, put on your cork accessories, grab your hand mirror, and take a good look at yourself. And then have a great day confident in the understandingment that I won't judge you—if you're following my advice.

*Wait, what? Abby, come back here! What do you mean there's a dead woman in the display case? What is she wearing? Those wouldn't happen to be cork heels, would they?*

Till tomorrow,

**Jillian**



## Tuesday



It's hard to concentrate today, what with police all over the flower shop, dusting for fingerprints, putting yellow tape in a huge circle around the display case, taking photographs of the body, and other annoyances, but for the sake of all of you who are desperate to hear my fashion advice, (heretofore you shall be known as my *Desperistas*) I am determined to prevaricate.

*Okay, Abs. Sorr-eee! I meant prevail. It just came out wrong. And why do I have to move? I'm not in the detectives' way.*

Sorry, *Desperistas*. I'll be right back. It seems one of the detectives wants to interview me. I am hoping to have my photo taken, as I'm wearing a darling purple summer dress that brings out my green eyes and displays my model's physique to a T.

*Yes, Officer Brown, I was the first to arrive this morning, which is highly unusual for me, by the way. I am not normally out so early, but since my baby came along, mornings are not my own. So as soon as the nanny gets to my house —What do you mean just answer the question? Isn't that what I'm doing?*

*How did I get in? I have a key. Duh. But let's not mention that to Abby. I think she forgot she gave one to me. No, I did not see anything unusual, except that my cousin actually wore something other than khakis today. If you know Abby, you'd know why I'd mention this. And again, I am answering the question. I don't see your problem.*

*No, I did not notice the broken pane in the front door — or the woman's face staring out of the glass case. I'm not in the habit of scanning my surroundings for minor details. I have a nanny-cam for that. I did notice that*

*you're sweating through your navy shirt, however. Have you considered using underarm pads?*

Okay, I'm back, dear *Desperistas*. I seriously don't know why Abby finds murder cases so intriguing. Now, take out those notebooks and pens and get ready to write.

### **Fashion Tip 3:**

Put a lid on it.

Eyelids need color – not a lot, but enough to distinguish them from the rest of your face and make your pretty irises stand out. For instance, I have green eyes, so I like to make them pop with a dusty pink on the lids and a darker plum above the crease sweeping outward and up.

Easy does it, though. You don't want batwings on each side of your face. If pinks and purples aren't your thing, use a soft brown with a red undertone. Copper and bronze are also colors that make green eyes snap.

Blue-eyed women, whatever you do, don't distract people from those gorgeous eyes! Create a canvas for them with a champagne, cream, or copper color frame, or a soft taupey gray, just don't use the same color blue. Can you spell OVERLOAD?

Hazel eyes have several colors in them, so pick one to highlight. If you want to play up the green, go with lavender, burgundy, plum, or dusty pink shadow. If you want to bring out the gold or brown, use gray, taupe, soft gold, or tan, with a darker shade in the crease.

Brown eyed girls – go for it! You can do just about anything with your lids—bronze, peach, purple, navy, teal, green. I'd stay away from the same shade of brown, however. From a distance, you don't want to look like you have two holes in your head.

### **Fashion Tip 4:**

The eyes have it.

That means the entire eye area, ladies. You want people to gaze into your eyes, not stare at woolly caterpillars crossing your face. Consider an eyebrow as the roof over a house. Do you want a thatched roof or an elegant Roman arch? All it takes is a pair of tweezers, a steady hand, and a

magnifying mirror. Or in my case, an aesthetician with a pair of tweezers and a steady hand. Also, some people enjoy threading. I'm not one of them.

On the other hand, if your eyebrows are sparse, buy a fine-tipped eyebrow pencil one shade lighter and draw in more hair.

### **Fashion Tip 5:**

The nose should *not* have it.

Hair, that is. Yes, we do have nostril hair. It helps filter out particles that shouldn't get into our lungs. No, we should not see the nostril hair outside the nasal area.

*Nasal is too a word, Abby. Yes, it is. . . .*

*Oh, fine.*

My cousin insists I inform you it's a nasal area. In any event, once again, dear *Desperistas*, all it takes is a pair of tweezers, a steady hand, and a magnifying mirror. You might want a shot of whiskey beforehand, because plucking those suckers will bring tears to your eyes, and now that you have a gorgeous shadow on them, you don't want to ruin the look. No pain, no gain, right?

*Wait, Ms. Photographer? If you're going to put Abby's photo in the paper, would you get a shot of the two of us? Please? Abby, how's my hair?*

Oh, wonderful. Marco just arrived on the scene. Now there's no way I'll get in that photo. The man is just too hunky for that female photog to ignore. How my freckle-faced, redheaded cousin ever snagged him . . .

*Okay, fine, Marco. I'll take that last part out. Yes, I know you think Abby is the greatest thing since Dolce met Gabbana, but do you mind? I'm working here.*

Tomorrow, dear *Desperistas*, I'll go into the basics of dressing like a true fashionista. Don't miss it.

*Excuse me, officer? What do you mean there's a bloody floral pick in my purse? First of all, you didn't ask if you could look through my belongings. Second, you can't possibly think I had anything to do with the murder. Wait! Why do I have to go to the police station? I want my lawyer. Abby, help!*

Until tomorrow, I hope,  
**Jillian**



## Wednesday



**T**oday, dear *Desperistas*, you are going to learn how the highly stylicious women like myself dress, so take out your pens and get ready to write.

*Excuse me, Officer Brown, but I believe stylicious is a word. It means 'of a delicious style.' Why are you reading over my shoulder? Can't you see I'm in the middle of something important?*

It's a bit hectic here in the police station, but there's nothing I can do to unstick myself from it until Abby gets her attorney friend Dave Hammond down here to clear me. And why do I even need to be cleared? Apparently, the dead woman Abby found in her glass display case at Bloomers Monday morning was stabbed with a long floral pick that happened to end up in my designer tote bag. Can you imagine what it did to the lining?

*What now, Officer? You Googled my word? Fine. I'll change it to stylish. Happy now? What? Are you kidding me? I will absolutely not press these manicured fingertips into your gross inkpad. Do you know how much a manicure costs? I don't understand why I'm even down here. Why would I put a bloody anything in my Louis Vuitton bag? Do you know how much that costs?*

Sorry for the interruption, *Desperistas*. It took a good ten minutes to scrub the ink off my fingers. Now Abby and I are being forced to sit in a room that could not be any drabbier.

*And I don't care if drabbier's not a real word, Abby Knight! What else would you call a room that is painted battleship gray and has a horrible brown metal table in it with mismatched folding chairs? Fine. I'll take out*

*the i. What is your hang-up with my vocabulary? Officer, may I have a bottle of spring water, please?*

Unbelievable. They won't let me have anything but tap water. Is this a torture tactic? Truly, I feel sorry for the dead woman, but would she have wanted me to suffer like this? I don't think so.

But finally, a little peace! Abby went outside to talk to her friend, Sgt. Sean Reilly, to see what he found out about the murder. Now I can concentrate. And seeing the women cops here has inspired my first tip of the day.

### **Fashion Tip 6:**

Mix up your color palette

Solid navy blouse with solid navy slacks? A big no-no. And yes, belts can be stylish, but a black one that is two inches wide and loaded with accessories? No, no, no! If you want to wear navy on the bottom, then go bold on top. Try a pretty melon or a spring green.

Yes, you can mix blue and green. With the right green, they're gorgeous together. All you need to do is add a navy scarf, or better yet, a scarf with navy and green in it, some kicking green flats, a patent leather purse in navy with cork trim, and you are going to rock it.

*Excuse me, Ms. Officer. You might want to read this when I'm finished. And just so you know, I am available to be the wardrobe consultant for the police department.*

*One more thing. Do handcuffs come in colors?*

### **Fashion Tip 7:**

Navy jeans are a different story.

You can use just about any color on top (except I'm not a fan of royal blue with them. They clash.) But this season, a big white shirt over skinny jeans is HOT, HOT, HOT.

Wear your cork accessories to add the finishing touch.

(What cork? Please refer back to Monday's diary entry.)

The thing you must understand about a true fashionista is that she styles herself according to her own tastes. She may own a plain white but-

ton-down shirt from any retailer anywhere (Sh-h-h! Not necessarily expensive) because it's how she styles it that makes her stand out. She might tuck it into great-fitting jeans, tie it at the waist, leave it long and roll up the sleeves, unbutton one extra button, and add an awesome necklace or several chains—and heads turn everywhere she goes. The trick is to go with your personal style and then blend in the quick in-and-out trends via your accessories.

How do you find your style? You can hire me, of course, or you can take a trusted friend with you to a shop and have her pick out clothing that reminds her of you. Oh, yes, you'll see a pattern. Then ask a salesperson to help you kick up your style with on-trend accessories.

And by the way, you know that old saying that before you leave the house, take off one piece of jewelry? Not this season, my DDs. More is better. Pile it on, girls. Stack those bangles. Hang those pendants. Then in ten years, you can look back at photos of yourself and say—

*Abby, I'm right in the middle of a sentence. Would you give me a minute? Oh, hi, Dave. I just need about ten more . . . Of course, I know how serious this is. Wait. Are you talking about my diary entry or what?*

I have to call it a day, *Desperistas*. Apparently, my fingerprints were found on the murder weapon, so Dave is going to sit with me in this room while a detective shines a mega-watt bright light in my eyes and grills me into admitting to something I didn't do.

*Well, isn't that what happens on TV shows? Fine. I'll take that out. But seriously, do you know how many times I've dug through my purse looking for my tube of lipstick? My fingerprints are on everything in that bag. Of course they'd be on the murder weapon.*

Dave assures me that no one will coerce a phony confession from me while he's here, and Abby has the utmost faith in him. So, no worries, my DDs. I shall write tomorrow's entry come hell or high wattage.

*Fine. Water.*

Until tomorrow,

**Jillian**



## Thursday



Good news/bad news today, my dear *Desperistas*.

Good news: The detectives let me go without having to post a bond. I'm free on my own reconnaissance.

*Fine. Recognizance. Do you always have to correct me, Abby Knight?*

*Okay, geez! Abby Knight...Salvare. You know what I meant.*

See what I mean?

Bad news: The police department doesn't have a budget for a wardrobe consultant. I tried to volunteer my services, but they "claim" it's against their rules. Whatever. It's their loss. Also, suddenly I'm a "person of interest." Excuse me. Haven't I always been?

Meanwhile, Abby and Marco are conducting their own investigation into the murder case to make sure I'm not a suspect.

Yes, the murder weapon was in my purse, and yes, my fingerprints were on it, but I didn't even know the woman. What would be my motive?

*Very funny, Abs. I didn't even see what she was wearing.*

At the moment, Abby and I are sitting in a booth at Down the Hatch Bar and Grill having lunch so I can recuperate from my grueling ordeal of being raked over the coals by the detectives. Abby says I'm exaggerating, but she wasn't in there. They wouldn't even let me have spring water. It was tap or nothing. So I chose nothing in protest. If I died from thirst, it would be on their heads.

*Yes, I know it takes more than an hour to die of thirst. I went to Harvard, remember?*

While I sit here sipping actual spring water and waiting for my burger (which is taking a long time, I might add) I'm also noticing what some of the women in the bar are wearing. Tragically, I see many like them who believe they have to follow every trend. Every. Trend. All at once. Which leads me to my fashion tips for the day. Notebooks ready?

**Fashion Tip 8:**

Find your style.

Be a fashionista by choosing from among the various trends to find what fits your style as well as your body type.

Should you wear jeggings? Should you layer tank tops? Should you belt your dress? Yes to all of them – *IF* they look good on you. But how do you find out?

Don't ask your friends. They won't want to hurt your feelings by saying the jeggings give you thunder thighs. Don't ask your mom. She'll say you look good in everything. Don't ask the saleslady who is trying to get you to buy that expensive pair of Lucky jeans either. She needs the commission. Instead, ask a close friend to take a photo of you in the outfit in question but be sure to cut off your head.

*In the photo, Abby. You are so not funny.*

Make sure you get a photo taken from front, side, and back. With your head cut off, you can study the images objectively. Do the jeggings improve the look of that stranger's legs or magnify her derriere? Does the belt add a touch of class to the dress or make her look like a wine barrel? Be honest, ladies. You want to look your best, and I promise you that no matter what your body type is, you can look fantastic!

*Yes, you, too, Abby. You're short and busty. I can work with that. Well, if you'd put yourself in my hands, that is.*

Anyone can be stylish, dear *Desperistas*, if she wears clothes that flatter her shape and coloring. And here's THE MOST IMPORTANT item in your wardrobe:

**Fashion Tip 9:**

Your confidence.

That's not a mistake, *DDs*. Confidence is your most important accessory. You know I'm right. The most expensive outfit in the world doesn't look good if your head is down and your shoulders are hunched.

Think about how a movie star walks into a room. She pauses at the door so everyone can see her, then she glides in, head high, shoulders back, a slight smile on her face. You notice what she's wearing because you notice HER. Now erase that picture and imagine her slinking into the room, head bowed, eyes casting nervously about, shoulders rounded, fingers clenched into balls at her side, praying no one notices her.

They won't. Trust me.

Here's the thing. Men are attracted to confident women – the good men, at least. Bosses *hire* confident women. People *trust* confident women. Why do so many come to Abby when they're in trouble? Because she inspires their trust. You see, my short little cousin has confidence in spades. She was kicked out of law school and dumped by her high society fiancé. You'd think that would have destroyed her. But not our Abs. She's a Knight in Shining Garments, too.

And what if you're not feeling confident? What if you have absolutely zero self-esteem?

Seriously, do you think every actress is born with confidence? No way. It's a trick, *DDs*. Right before they step through that doorway, they give themselves a pep talk. "I can ACT confident!" Then they lift their chins, throw back their shoulders, and *stride* into that room. Heads turn. People whisper, "Wow. Look at her gorgeous outfit." Believe me, what they're actually saying is, "Look at the way she wears that gorgeous outfit."

And the best part is, when you pretend to have confidence – YOU START TO FEEL CONFIDENT. Would I joke about this?

Everyone assumes I've always had tons of confidence. Well, have Abby tell you sometime about how I suffered from scoliosis as a child. Do you think a child can get through school with a crooked back and not be ridiculed?

So now you know my secret. I wasn't always the daring person I am today. But years of pretending made it happen. Remember, *DDs*, our thoughts create our realities. Grace Bingham taught me that, and I believe it. I think confidently, therefore I am confident.

Yay! More good news: Marco just arrived and he has already found three suspects in the murder investigation: the woman's ex-boyfriend; the ex-boyfriend's girlfriend; and the woman's –

*What? Seriously? The woman's cousin? Don't look at me like that, Abby. You know I love you.*

But also, more bad news: I cracked a fingernail trying to scratch a message into the paint on the interview room wall.

*Because I didn't know whether I'd make it out alive, Abby, that's why.*

You'd think she'd be a little more sympathetic.

Until tomorrow, dear *Desperistas*,

**Jillian**

*(Free at Last)*



## Friday



It hasn't been a good day, my dear *Desperistas*, but never fear. Your fashion tips are here.

I had been hoping to stop at *Windows on the Square*, a women's boutique here in New Chapel, Indiana, to see what new items have come in since last Friday, but someone – *yes, you Abby Knight Salvare* – insisted I keep a low profile while she and Marco investigate the suspects on their list so they can get me off the *police's* list.

As a wardrobe consultant, I'm usually in the boutique quite often, but because of the body found in my cousin's flower shop, Bloomers, and my subsequent involvement in it (the murder weapon, a bloody floral pick, was found in my *tres chic* bag), I have been labeled a suspect.

Can you imagine? Me, Jillian Ophelia Knight Osborne, a suspect? Do these fingernails look like they could grasp a floral pick and stab someone without chipping?

Nevertheless, I shall press onward so that you, too, may become a true fashionista like me. To start, answer this question:

Do you watch shows like *E!*, scan fashion magazines, and browse clothing websites for ideas, and then rush out to buy the latest trends, no matter what the cost or whether they look good on you? Be truthful now. I may come to check your closet. Because I know people who do just that, and then in six months those trendy pieces are obsolete, and they're out a month's rent. What do they do next? Go out and buy the *next* hot items. It's an endless cycle, *DDs*. Don't fall into it. Your wallet will thank you.

So how do you stay current? That's where I come in.

**Fashion Tip #10:**

It's not about price.

Here's a secret. True fashionistas will see a look they like and hunt out lesser-priced pieces that have the same vibe. You know which stores sell imitations of the higher-priced items, and you know where to find the higher priced items at a discount. Don't be ashamed to shop at those places. Should you feel bad about saving money? Do you even need to ask that?

Take my word for it, the truly stylish aren't afraid to be seen in any store and can find something almost anywhere. And they never copy item-for-item a look they see in a photo or on the web. That is simply not cool. Pick one item – a fabulous top, an awesome pant, an amazing shoe – get it for a good price, and wear it with something you already have. When people see you in one trendy item, they will assume everything you have on is *in the moment*.

**Fashion Tip #11:**

It's not about your height, either.

Despite the old myth about height dictating skirt length, skirts that fall between the knee and ankle are absolutely fine for women like my cousin Abby who—

*I wasn't going to say you were short and busty, Abs, okay? Maybe you could wait until I'm done writing before you start editing!*

Anyway . . . women like my cousin who aren't long and lean. A-line mid-length skirts can be super-flattering on smaller women as long as they're paired with a graceful pair of heels and a fitted top or jacket (so they don't get swallowed up by fabric.)

And petite girls CAN wear ankle-length skirts, as well. In fact, a well-cut maxi skirt can actually make you seem taller. Just pick solid versions that skim the length of your body, creating a long vertical line. (No pleats, please.) Keep your top fitted, not blousy—a T-shirt and a cropped leather jacket, for example. Also, make sure the skirt's hemline is as long as you can make it without tripping, then add a pair of wedges or heels underneath. Voila! You're taller!

**Another myth:** No short skirts after 40? Seriously?

To be honest, I can't stand the thought of having to change my style of clothing just because I wake up one morning and turn the calendar page. And then what? I throw out my wardrobe?

I don't think so.

Okay, so you don't want to see your grandmother in a skirt so minuscule that all you can focus on are the wrinkled thighs. But to say across the board that after 40 a woman shouldn't wear a miniskirt is abdiculous.

*It means absolutely ridiculous, Abby. I swear I didn't just make that up. I read it in some fashion mag. No, don't Google it. I'll change the word. Happy now?*

Of course, I made it up. Just let it be understood I find it sad that Abby has no imagination when it comes to vocabulation.

*I know you heard me, Abigail Catherine Knight Salvare. Don't pretend you didn't.*

What I was saying was that if you've got the legs for it, wear that mini-skirt. Just make sure your pair it with a classy looking top (and tights in the winter.)

Some rocking boots would really make it hot. (But probably too hot in the summer.)

If you don't have the legs for it, and by that I mean you have ugly knees, always, always cover your knees. I mean, seriously, if you wear short skirts or short shorts, where do you think people's focus will be? That's why God invented capris and ankle-length skirts. You're welcome.

*No, Abby, I'm not being shallow. It's how I feel. Yes, I would tell my mom that.*

*In fact, I did. Okay, yes, she stopped talking to me for a while, but after I showed her a photo of her knees, she actually thanked me. (Not.) Anyway, I have a right to express my feelings, don't I? Isn't that one of the amendments? Fifth, maybe? Okay, then I'm taking the fifth.*

I don't know why Abby is laughing. However, I do hope you are smiling, my dear *Desperistas*, safe in the knowledge that you are becoming a true fashionista.

*Wait. You're telling me I really do need to take the fifth? What do you mean only if I have to go to court? You're supposed to find the killer, Abby. Why are you here bothering me instead of out hunting down the real perp?*

Don't worry, *DDs*. Marco is interviewing suspects as I write. Abby thinks he's narrowed it down to either the dead woman's ex-boyfriend's ex-girlfriend (I can't even begin to follow that thread) or the dead woman's cousin, whom she thought was her friend but instead may have stabbed her in the back. At least that's the word from *my* cousin.

*I don't see why that's funny either, Abs.*

Until tomorrow,

**Jillian**



## Saturday



Who doesn't love to see a makeover? Raise your hand. See? No one. Would you really be able to resist watching Kathie Lee Gifford pull a woman out of the crowd for a head-to-toe transformation, if given the opportunity? Not likely. And where does the biggest improvement to the woman happen?

To her head.

Sure, clothes are important, but what we really want to see is how a drab face and 20-year-old hairstyle become WOWzing.

*No, I am not changing it to amazing, Abby. Wowzing is a bonafide Jillianized term that needs no explanation. Yeah, you only wish you were wowzing.*

Tell me the truth, DDs, after witnessing an on-air transformation, don't you secretly wish the woman would have figured out years ago that she needed a new hairstyle? And some blush, perhaps? And sometimes in your heart of hearts don't you also secretly wish you were the one pulled from the audience?

If that's you, take a look in your mirror, my dear *Desperistas*, and answer honestly. Is your hairstyle dated? If you can look back at photos taken a decade or two ago and you are still wearing the same do, why? Are you afraid it's the only style in the entire universe that works for you?

You're stuck, aren't you? You simply don't know what else to do. I'm not a hair expert, so I can't help you there, but I'm advising you to splurge on one visit to a top-notch hair salon, one you might think is too expensive to go to regularly, to get help from their best stylist. (Ask the recep-

tionist who their number one stylist is, and tell her you are counting on her to be honest.)

Once you get a new cut and see how everyone gushes, in a month or so you can go back to your own hair salon and ask for a repeat.

### **Fashion Tip #12:**

Take a photo of your new haircut immediately after you get it cut. Don't wait until it grows out.

I didn't mean to get off-topic, *DDs*, but I just saw a middle-aged woman walk into the flower shop with long, drab hair that was so flat, it appeared glued to her skull. She also had on the baggiest camouflage sweatshirt ever with pea-green tights that emphasized her enormous trunk and ultra-skinny legs. She wore old gray sneakers with them (I can barely make myself write this) *and* she had no makeup on, exposing dull, flaky skin. She looked like a frog.

I was going to take her photo and ask her what she was thinking, but Abby yanked my cell phone out of my hand before I could click the button. That was followed by a lecture about being insensitive.

*Who's really insensitive here, Abby? Who? Me or the woman who inflicted that vision upon the world? Don't shake your head at me. You know I'm right. Someone needs to show her what she looks like. She's dressing up-side down! I was going to help her!*

Anyway, let's focus on what I am an expert on and that is your face. Because all good fashionistas know that what's above your collar is really more important than what's below. I know. You never thought you'd hear me say that. But it's true. Your face reveals what you think about yourself. Trust me when I say that your skin won't lie. It will tell the world whether you love and respect your body or not. And not in a whisper, either.

You must, must, must eat greens. *Daily!*

I don't care if you're sick of hearing that! Greens make skin glow because they are jammed with nutrients that skin loves. And top those fresh greens with olive oil because skin loves moisture from healthy fat sources.

Olives, avocados, nuts – skin loves them. Oily skin needs them, too.

And don't worry about the calories. When you eat healthy fats, you don't get as hungry between meals as you do when you stuff yourself with simple carbs like pasta, bread, and other white foodstuffs that I shall not name. They turn to sugar, *DDs*. You might as well dip a spoon in the sugar bowl. Is that what you want to give your skin?

You can actually cut down on the amount of food you eat when your diet contains healthy fats. (Seriously. Healthy fats will *not* raise your cholesterol. That's a myth. Think about it. If you pour gasoline through the window of your car, will it make the amount in the tank rise?)

*Thanks, Abs. I like that visual, too. But there you go again, reading over my shoulder.*

Second of all, unless you have very oily skin, you must moisturize your face from the inside and outside. (If your skin is super oily, you're definitely in need of more greens and less of those nasty white carbs.)

Skin needs to drink just like the rest of you. And just as when you swallow water, and it goes down into your body, through the intestines, and into the bloodstream to nourish you, so does anything you put on your skin.

Did you get that?

*Anything* you put on your skin you should be able to eat because it ends up in the same place – your blood. Scary thought, isn't it?

Go to your bathroom right now and pull out your face cream. Read the ingredients, then imagine dipping a spoon into the jar and taking a bite. Yum! No? Then why are you putting it on your skin?

I saw a French fashion editor on TV talking about what French women like to use on their skin:

**Moroccan argan oil.**

It's made from the nut of the argan tree. So basically, it's nut oil. I'm not saying it would taste good (but it might). I'm saying you **COULD** eat it, and it wouldn't hurt you.

The French femmes use it as their day cream, eye cream, night cream, throat cream, hand cream, and even on the ends of their hair to make it

sleek and shiny. Don't worry about being oily. It soaks in. No need for a drawer full of products with this little gem either. One bottle costs about \$12 and lasts a long time. And btw, this beautiful Parisian, who was in her upper 50s, looked amazing. I want to be her when I grow up. You have to love the French. *Elles sont tres pratique.*

*I am not trying to show off my French, Abby. Okay, fine. I'll translate for you. They're so practical. Seriously, you couldn't get that?*

Even closer to home, have you heard this new buzzword for skin? It's almond oil! Yes, yes, yes, to almond anything. Almond oil is hydrating and won't clog pores. It works great as makeup remover, and the monounsaturated fats in the oil keep cell membranes healthy (and reduce the appearance of aging.) Even better, it's also a rich source of magnesium—and who can't use some extra magnesium for healthy bones and nails? (Remember that it soaks into your body.)

You can also buy an organic skin cream that is free from all those yucky (and toxic) chemicals. Think you can't afford to go organic? Think again, my DDs. I've compiled a list of some brands that won't break the bank:

*Avalon Organics, Aubrey Organics, DeVita, EO, Everyday Minerals, Hemp Organics, John Masters, Jurlique, Just Skin Food, and Kiss My Face.*

Trust me, there are more out there. Start looking. And also look for products that say "sulfate-free" on them. An increasing number of brands are producing shampoos and soaps without those harmful chemicals in them, as well as oil-based face and body cleansers, which are gentler on your skin.

Love your skin, my dear DDs, and it will love you back.

Respect your body, too, and love it no matter what shape it is.

It's *you*, and you are a unique woman just like I am.

*Abby Knight, did you just say, 'Thank God?'*

*You did, too! I heard you! Well, I take exception to that.*

*This world could use more Jillians.*

*Wait, what? You weren't talking to me; you were talking to Marco? And he found the murderer?*

Stay tuned, my *DDs*. Tomorrow may just be the grand finale.

**Jillian**



## Sunday



I'm a little sad today, my *Desperistas*.

No, not because of the murder that happened in my cousin's flower shop on Monday. (She had to get rid of the display case, btw.) Not because I was a "person of interest" to the detectives investigating the case, either. It's because I've enjoyed our week together, my *DDs*. I'll miss you! I've loved reading your comments, too, knowing you appreciate my help in making your life just a little more beautiful by making YOU just a little more beautiful.

Because you already are beautiful, my new friends. I'm talking about your inner beauty, of course. You understand that by improving your outer beauty, you feel more confident, and when you feel confident, your inner beauty shines. That's what I'm going for. That's what any good wardrobe consultant goes for. We dress you to make you feel confident and wait for the trickle-down effect.

So, let's see. I've covered hair, eyes, skin, personal style, ugly body parts (thank God Abby isn't reading over my shoulder. She'd make me take out that last item) confidence, and more. What's left? Your total well-being.

Imagine a woman walking into a room. She's coughing and sneezing, carrying wadded tissues in her hand, her nose is red, her skin is pasty, her eyes are watery, and you just know she's throwing off a toxic virus.

Do you really care at that moment what she's wearing? I don't think so.

So, with all these improvements you've made since last Monday, now you need to give off a glow of good health, too. And what's the best way to be healthy? Not get sick. Duh!

*It's a joke, Abs. I'm not being impudent. I'm saying they have to build up their immune systems so they can fight off the nasties, okay? And when did you get here? I didn't hear you come in.*

Anyway, people are always asking, "Jillian, how do you keep from getting a cold? I never see you sick. What is your secret?"

And my answer is—

*Excuse me, Abby, but I don't count the time I thought I was turning into a vampire. It's Sunday. Shouldn't you be home resting? What do you mean, why am I at the flower shop? It's the only place I can write in peace and quiet. Your desk has become my new happy place actually.*

Pardon the interruption, DDs. I had to produce my key. Seems my cousin doesn't think I should be here when the shop is closed. Seems my cousin thinks I wouldn't have been a "person of interest" if I hadn't been the first one in the shop last Monday. Seems my cousin is a little touchy today.

As I was about to say, my answer is, "I have a strong immune system, and it can fight off anything. Well, anything except for small-minded, short redheads who—"

*You heard me. I called you short and small-minded. Really, Abs, it's not like I'm bothering you when I'm here. Those rose petals? Oh, I made myself a little bouquet to take home.*

Where was I? Oh, yes. Remember what I said yesterday about feeding your skin all those greens? They work for the whole body, DDs, building your up immunity. And in my humble opinion, nothing boosts your immune system—

*Stop laughing, Abby. I can be humble.*

Ahem.

Nothing boosts your immune system like Vitamin D3. And what's the best source? *Drum roll, please.*

**A little sun!**

I can hear you gasping now. Not the sun! It will ruin my skin. It will give me cancer. It will cause my toes to curl and my eyeballs to fall out. Anything but the *sun*!

Repeat after me: **The sun is our friend.**

The sun gives everything on this planet life. We must have sun, no matter what the sunscreen manufacturers pay the dermatologists to say. We just don't need hours of it.

How do you think people got their Vitamin D before it came out in pill form? FROM THE SUN. Also, from food grown in the sun, but that's not a big enough dose.

Do you know that there are children out there who've only read about the sun?

*Obviously, I'm kidding, Abby.*

Don't listen to her. She can't take a joke.

What I mean is that their skin has never been sun-kissed, they've never actually come face-to-face with it because their well-meaning (and gullible) moms believe that stepping outside their homes without wearing sunscreen slathered on an inch thick, sunglasses, and a wide-brimmed hat will damage them?

Speaking of sun-kissed, can you believe this natural tan I have going on right now? Just a few minutes in the mid-day sun every day and you, too, can attain a natural glow.

Where was I?

Oh, yeah. Sunshine.

My mom thinks that's hilarious when people shame the sun. She says, "It's a miracle I made it through childhood, Jill. I played outside in the summer and wouldn't have been caught dead in sunglasses and a hat."

She heard that now they're even finding out that children who don't get some sun can develop medical issues.

Just to be sure, I did a little research. (Avoiding those sites that are funded by sunscreen lotion companies). What I found boggled my mind.

Try a gazillion studies that show the importance of getting your Vitamin D from the sun. Well, okay, more like 60,000, but still, all those studies clearly show that vitamin D is absolutely critical for disease prevention. It could prevent chronic diseases that claim nearly one million lives throughout the world each year.

One million!

Even better, incidences of several types of cancer could be slashed in half. From the sun!

See why it's our friend? If you doubt me, (and why would I lie to you, my *DDs*?) do your research! Don't tell me it's wrong because you have skin cancer. I know people who got skin cancer in places the sun doesn't shine. I know people who got skin cancer who work *indoors* all day and never spend even an hour in the sun. I know people who got skin cancer who had used so much sunscreen they slid off lounge chairs!

I'm no doctor, but something doesn't seem to add up there.

Repeat please: The sun is not our enemy. Plants need it and so do we. Just not too much. Of course, this doesn't apply to diseases like lupus, where the sun is a detriment to treatment.

And speaking of sunscreens, here's a little tidbit my research turned up. Remember in yesterday's diary entry when I said you should be able to eat anything you put on your skin? Well, guess what? Many sunscreens contain toxic and hormone-disrupting ingredients. And guess where they go? Through your skin directly into your bloodstream.

Ew, right?

Here's the App you want: EWG's SKIN DEEP. You can check out the safety of any skin/hair care product there.

But back to those healthy greens, guess what again? Those veggies help protect you *against*

skin cancer, especially carotenoids.

I know! Unbelievable, right?

*Not funny. I can spell carotenoids, Abs. I'm a whole lot more scholarly than you give me credit for.*

Scientists are still trying to figure out exactly how the carotenoids works (maybe the same way they keep plants from getting leaf cancer?)

Seriously, who doesn't look good with a little glow?

All you need to get your daily D is for your skin to turn the lightest shade of pink. This can happen in as little as 10-20 minutes, depending on your skin tone and other factors, such as cloud cover. You can create as much as 20,000 units of vitamin D per day this way, more than enough for a healthy immune system. But for darkly pigmented skin, it can take three to six times longer to reach that level, just so you know.

Then you have to stop sunning and cover yourself. Because sunburns *can* damage skin and *can* cause bad things to happen. Derm docs have that right. And – hold on. Abby is whispering something.

*Always follow the money*, she says.

Of course, you're going to be told that you must, must, must use sunscreens 24/7 even in the winter when your skin isn't even visible, if the information is coming from the lotion industry – or from well-meaning doctors who are fed the information from their pharma reps. It's like those annoying ads for pharmaceuticals on TV telling you what meds you need to take. Well, duh! They want to make money from you.

Wait, again. Abby is talking to Marco on the phone, and he has news.

*What was that, Abs? I'm in the clear? It took you long enough. So who's the killer? No way. Seriously? But why would anyone murder her own cousin? Oh, before you go, would you mind making me a cup of espresso? Yes, I know Grace runs the machine. She's never taught you? And you're not able to pick this skill up on your own, apparently. Okay, then, will you run down to the Daily Grind and buy me some? What do you mean you understand the killer's motive? What are you saying, Abby Knight?*

*Oh, and while you're out, pick up a blueberry yogurt for me.*

Pay no attention to Abby's muttering, DDs. She does that a lot. At least when I'm near her.

Here's what I leave you with, my darling *Desperistas*.

Be sensible. Be confident. Be authentic to your style. Be bold. Make your eyes come alive (but kill the caterpillar eyebrows). Don't run out and get every fashion trend that comes along, and please don't buy into the belief that a little sunshine is bad for you.

I hereby declare you *Graduates Con Leche!*

Go forth, my fashionistas, and prosper.

*It was a mistake, Abby! Fine. Cum Laude. Happy now?*

Sheesh. Cousins.

Blowing you kisses,

**Jillian**



## DEDICATION



I would like to thank everyone who has supported the flower shop mystery series. As long as there are readers, the story of Abby and Marco will never fade away. Thank you.



## Flower Shop Mysteries



**M** UM'S THE WORD<sup>1</sup>  
SLAY IT WITH FLOWERS<sup>2</sup>  
DEARLY DEPOTTED<sup>3</sup>  
SNIPPED IN THE BUD<sup>4</sup>  
ACTS OF VIOLETS<sup>5</sup>  
A ROSE FROM THE DEAD<sup>6</sup>  
SHOOTS TO KILL<sup>7</sup>  
EVIL IN CARNATIONS<sup>8</sup>  
SLEEPING WITH ANEMONE<sup>9</sup>  
DIRTY ROTTEN TENDRILS<sup>10</sup>  
NIGHT OF THE LIVING DANDELION<sup>11</sup>  
TO CATCH A LEAF<sup>12</sup>  
NIGHTSHADE ON ELM STREET<sup>13</sup>

- 
1. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/mum-s-the-word>
  2. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/slay-it-with-flowers>
  3. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/dearly-depotted>
  4. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/snipped-in-the-bud>
  5. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/acts-of-violets>
  6. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/a-rose-from-the-dead>
  7. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/shoots-to-kill>
  8. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/evil-in-carnations>
  9. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/sleeping-with-anemone>
  10. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/dirty-rotten-tendrils>
  11. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/night-of-the-living-dandelion>
  12. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/to-catch-a-leaf>

SEED NO EVIL<sup>14</sup>

THROW IN THE TROWEL<sup>15</sup>

A ROOT AWAKENING<sup>16</sup>

FLORIST GRUMP<sup>17</sup>

MOSS HYSTERIA<sup>18</sup>

YEWS WITH CAUTION<sup>19</sup>

MISSING UNDER THE MISTLETOE – Christmas Novella<sup>20</sup>

TULIPS TOO LATE – Spring Novella

A FROND IN NEED – Summer Novella

TILL DEATH DO US POT – Fall Novella

KICK THE BOUQUET<sup>21</sup>

ROSES ARE DEAD, VIOLETS ARE BLUE<sup>22</sup>

A VASE IN THE WINDOW<sup>23</sup>

---

13. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/nightshade-on-elm-street>

14. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/seed-no-evil>

15. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/throw-in-the-trowel>

16. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/a-root-awakening>

17. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/florist-grump>

18. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/moss-hysteria>

19. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/yews-with-caution>

20. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/missing-under-the-mistletoe>

21. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/kick-the-bouquet>

22. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/roses-are-dead-violets-are-blue>

23. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/a-vase-in-the-window>



## Audiobooks



MUM'S THE WORD<sup>1</sup>  
SLAY IT WITH FLOWERS<sup>2</sup>  
DEARLY DEPOTTED<sup>3</sup>

---

1. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/audiobooks>

2. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/audiobooks>

3. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/audiobooks>



# HALLMARK MOVIE COLLECTION<sup>1</sup>



F lower Shop Mysteries<sup>2</sup>

Goddess of Greene St. Mysteries

STATUE OF LIMITATIONS<sup>3</sup>

Read Chapter One<sup>4</sup>

A BIG FAT GREEK MURDER<sup>5</sup>

BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE GREEKTOWN<sup>6</sup>

GONE BUT NOT FOR GARDEN<sup>7</sup>

---

**1. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/hallmark-movies>**

2. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/hallmark-movies>

3. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/sol-chapter-one>

4. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/sol-chapter-one>

5. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/a-big-fat-greek-murder>

6. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/big-trouble-in-little-greektown>

7. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/gone-but-not-for-garden>



**Continue reading for a sneak peek—**



A Vase in the Window  
by Kate Collins

A Vase in the Window

Kate Collins

*Prologue**DEAR GOD. WHAT HAVE I done?*

I swallowed a lump of fear in my throat and gazed down at the gun in my trembling hands. There was blood splattered everywhere – on my fingers, my clothes, my shoes . . .

But it wasn't my fault. He pulled the gun on *me*. He *forced* me to do it.

I just wanted to talk to him, really. Reason with him. But there was no reasoning with that man. I only picked up the bat for self-defense. He was a loose cannon, a maniac, always ready to snap. And I knew he'd be carrying that gun. He always carried that *stupid* gun.

He pulled it on me so fast, I didn't have time to think. He yelled at me to drop the bat. He aimed the gun at my head. I could still see the dark, hollow barrel pointing directly at me. I could feel the cold chill ripple up my spine as the reality sunk in. He could've killed me. With one pull of the trigger, it would've been me on the floor instead of him.

I don't remember what happened after that. I must've lunged at him, attacked him, because the next thing I knew he was down on the ground. And then . . . then *I* had the gun. I was the one pointing the gun at *him*. But he wasn't scared. He wasn't even angry. He was laughing. He was taunting me.

The last thing I remember was his body crumpling to the ground . . . and then the blood. Blood on my face and my hands. Blood on the gun. I blinked a few times and realized I was still standing there, arms extended, gun drawn, hands shaking, the smell of gun powder lingering in the air. My ears were ringing. The gunshot had been so loud that, although the garage was now silent, the splintering, high-pitched tone was still screaming inside my head.

A loud boom from somewhere outside jolted me out of my trance. I took a deep breath and tried to get my bearings as the fireworks exploded

in the sky above me, fraying my nerves even more. I peered out the open garage door, expecting to see the red and blue flashing lights of cop cars, or hear their blaring sirens echoing down the street, but all I heard was the continuous booms and accompanying flashes that lit up the backyard and the homes across the street.

Maybe it would be okay. Maybe there was still time to call the police, or an ambulance. Maybe he was still alive. I dropped to my knees and checked for a pulse. But there was none.

*Dear God. I killed him.*

## CHAPTER ONE



MAY 27<sup>th</sup>

*Memorial Day*



“DON’T FORGET,” I REMINDED my handsome hubby, Marco. “We’re going to the fireworks show tonight at the high school.” I pecked his cheek, then bent to pet my little three-legged rescue dog and my big Russian Blue cat, before stepping into the garage.

In front of me were Marco’s silver Prius and next to that my banana-yellow Corvette convertible. I ran my finger across the sleek, shiny hood as I walked around to the driver’s side. The ‘Vette had been a rare find, stored in a farmer’s barn for decades. The interior had been preserved to near perfection, but the exterior had been in bad shape when I bought it. A new paint job had brought it back to life, and a good mechanic had fixed it up to purr like a kitten.

It was my pride and joy. My baby.

I put the top down on the convertible, backed out of the driveway, and headed off to work singing along with a Billy Joel song on the radio. It was a beautiful morning. The sun was shining, the birds were chirping, and I was on my way to Bloomers, my very own flower shop in my charming hometown of New Chapel, Indiana.

Once upon a time, Bloomers had rescued me. After a disastrous nine-month stint of intensive study, I had flunked out of law school and felt utterly lost. Then I remembered working at Bloomers during my summers in college. It had been a delightful, rewarding experience. So, I’d returned to Bloomers to see Lottie, the owner, only to discover she’d put the business up for sale. In that moment, I decided to use the remainder of my

college fund to make a down payment on the building, and the rest was history.

Or hysteria.

I parked the 'Vette in the public parking lot one block over from Franklin Street, then hoofed it over to the flower shop, pausing in front of the building to admire the wooden sign above the door: *Bloomers Flower Shop, Abby Knight, Prop.*

I still hadn't had the sign changed to reflect my married name. It was Abby Knight Salvare now. I had married the man of my dreams, Marco Salvare, more than two years ago, and I kicked myself every time I saw the sign. *One of these days*, I told myself, *I'll get it changed*. I paused to check my reflection in the glass pane of the yellow-framed door. Being a five-foot-two, busty, pale-skinned Irish redhead, my clothing choices were severely limited. While I looked best in greens, browns, and some shades of red, I was most fond of wearing yellow, which was my absolute favorite color.

That day, I wore a citrus-yellow polo shirt, knee-length khaki shorts, and cream-colored flats. I thought I looked good, but then I did a double take and ran my fingers through my shoulder-length bob, trying to tame my untamable mane of red hair.

Bloomers occupied the entire first floor of the deep, three-story, red brick structure, and had a coffee parlor on one side of the entrance and our showroom on the other. I opened the yellow-framed door and stepped inside, instantly greeted by the sight and scent of brightly colored flowers mixed with the distinct aroma of coffee.

The bell above the door chimed brightly as I closed it behind me. My assistant Lottie came out of the back room carrying an armload of red roses for the glass display case. Lottie Dombowski was a big-boned, big-hearted, forty-five-year-old Kentuckian, with brassy curls, a laugh that could be heard across town, a feisty personality, and more common sense than anyone I knew.

Before I could lock the door, a dark-haired man stormed in, jabbing a finger at Lottie and bellowing, 'You!' – his eyes wild with rage.

The outburst jolted me, and I stumbled back into the window display as he shoved past.

"Your boys have a lot of nerve threatening *me*!"

"Easy now, Garth," Lottie said, setting the roses onto the counter. "Let's sort this out."

I reached inside my purse for my phone.

"No more talk," the man said between deep breaths. His round face flushed red with anger, dark eyes glaring beneath bushy black brows. He was practically foaming at the mouth as he continued, "*No one threatens me.*"

I pulled up my contacts list where I had the local police number stored. My finger hovered over the send button, ready to call.

"Someone needs to teach those delinquents a lesson in respect, and if you won't do it, I'll give them a lesson they'll never forget."

"That's *enough*," I ordered. "You need to leave right now."

"Stay out of this," he spat at me.

The dark-haired man was stocky, medium height, with big shoulders and thick, hairy arms. His dark blue work polo expanded around his wide waist. His collar was unbuttoned and there was a company logo on the left chest. He stomped into the shop like a ravenous animal. "Your boys want to destroy my property, then I'll return the favor." He stepped up to the round, antique oak table in the middle of the sales floor and swept a glass vase onto the ground. The vase smashed, sending flowers, water, and shards of glass across the shop floor.

Lottie jerked at the noise and stepped quickly behind the counter to distance herself. "My boys respect your property. They would never destroy it."

"Oh yeah?" He reached for another vase, picked it up, and raised it as though he was going to throw it.

“Stop it!” I shouted forcefully. “Get out of my shop or I’m calling the police.”

He dropped the vase sideways onto the table with a sharp clatter. More flowers and water flooded out onto the floor. He shook his finger at Lottie. “Be warned. I will retaliate.” And with that, he stormed to the door, flung it open – gave me a menacing glance – and walked out.

For a moment, Lottie and I stood frozen, staring at each other with mouths open. Then Lottie said, “I’ll get the mop.”



A Vase in the Window – Read Chapter One in Full<sup>1</sup>

[Click Here](#)<sup>2</sup>

---

1. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/a-vase-in-the-window-sneak-peek>

2. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/a-vase-in-the-window-sneak-peek>



## About the Author<sup>1</sup>



2



KATE COLLINS IS THE author of the best-selling Flower Shop Mystery series. Her books have made the New York Times Bestseller list, the Barnes & Noble mass market mystery best-sellers' lists, the Independent Booksellers' best-seller's lists, as well as booksellers' lists in the U.K. and Australia. The first three books in the FSM series are now available on audiobook. Kate's new series, GODDESS OF GREENE MYSTERIES, arrived in 2019. Statue of Limitations is the first book in the series, with the second book available in December 2020, and a third book in the works.

---

**1. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/about>**

2. <https://www.katecollinsbooks.com/about>

In January of 2016, Hallmark Movies & Mysteries channel aired the first Flower Shop Mystery series movie, MUM'S THE WORD, followed by SLAY IT WITH FLOWERS and DEARLY DEPOTTED. The movies star Brooke Shields, Brennan Elliott, Beau Bridges and Kate Drummond.

Kate started her career writing children's stories for magazines and eventually published historical romantic suspense novels under the pen name Linda Eberhardt and Linda O'Brien. Seven romance novels later, she switched to her true love, mysteries.



## **Don't miss out!**

Visit the website below and you can sign up to receive emails whenever Kate Collins publishes a new book. There's no charge and no obligation.

<https://books2read.com/r/B-A-JBYMB-ZPRFG>



Connecting independent readers to independent writers.

