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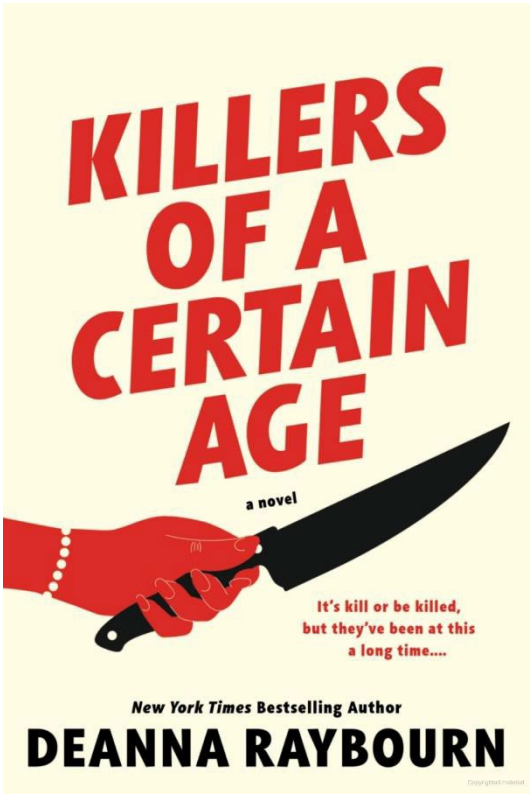
Killers of a Certain Age by Deanna Raybourn

Martin County Library System Book Discussion Kit:

Killers of a Certain Age by Deanna Raybourn

Included in the Kit:

- Book summary
- Author biography
- Discussion questions
- Recipe suggestions



Book Summary:

Older women often feel invisible, but sometimes that's their secret weapon.

They've spent their lives as the deadliest assassins in a clandestine international organization, but now that they're sixty years old, four women friends can't just retire – it's kill or be killed in this action-packed thriller by *New York Times* bestselling and Edgar Award-nominated author Deanna Raybourn.

Billie, Mary Alice, Helen, and Natalie have worked for the Museum, an elite network of assassins, for forty years. Now their talents are considered old-school and no one appreciates what they have to offer in an age that relies more on technology than people skills.

When the foursome is sent on an all-expenses paid vacation to mark their retirement, they are targeted by one of their own. Only the Board, the top-level members of the Museum, can order the termination of field agents, and the women realize they've been

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marked for death.

Now to get out alive they have to turn against their own organization, relying on experience and each other to get the job done, knowing that working together is the secret to their survival. They're about to teach the Board what it really means to be a woman—and a killer—of a certain age.

(Source: https://www.deannaraybourn.com/)

Meet the Author:



New York Times and *USA Today* bestselling novelist Deanna Raybourn is a 6th-generation Texan. She graduated with a double major in English and history from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Married to her college sweetheart and the mother of one, Raybourn makes her home in Virginia. Her novels have been nominated for numerous awards including the Edgar, two RT Reviewers' Choice awards, the Agatha, two Dilys Winns, and a Last Laugh. She launched a new Victorian mystery series with the 2015 release of *A CURIOUS BEGINNING*, featuring intrepid butterfly-hunter and amateur sleuth, Veronica Speedwell. Books in the Veronica series are contracted through 2024. Deanna's first contemporary novel featuring four female assassins who must band together to take out their nemesis as they prepare for retirement, *KILLERS OF A CERTAIN AGE*, was a September 2022 release. It debuted at #9 on the *New York Times* bestseller list.

(Source: https://www.deannaraybourn.com/)

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Discussion Questions:

1. The Museum is founded with the intention of bringing justice to those who have never been held accountable for their atrocities. Is this mission statement fulfilled?
2. How would you characterize the relationship among the four assassins? How do they each fulfill their roles with regard to their respective talents?
3. Each of the four is recruited very young, at a vulnerable point in her life. How does this make them susceptible to recruitment? Is this ethical?
4. The foursome have spent their entire adult lives in the service of the Museum only to be betrayed by the organization to which they have given so much. How does this betrayal drive their actions?
5. How do each of the flashback missions relate to the current kills?
6. Naomi Ndiaye is a character who performs a critical role in the plot. How would you describe her? She allows circumstances to play out in order to secure the future of the Museum even though this puts the four assassins at greater risk. Was she right to do so?
7. Billie, Mary Alice, Helen, and Natalie each bring something unique to their missions. How would you describe them? Which do you relate to more? Which talents would you bring to a mission?
8. Minka and Akiko are strong supporting characters. How does this network of women hold one another up? How does Constance fit into the idea of women who support other women?
9. Billie keeps a secret safe house in New Orleans. Does this make her wise or paranoid?
10. The four assassins have to “burn” their real identities and start over. Could you do this?
11. Much of the team’s success comes from being older and therefore overlooked and underestimated. How do they use this to their advantage? What advantages did they have as younger women working in a traditionally masculine trade?
12. How would Billie’s life have been different if she had pursued a relationship with Taverner? Was he right to follow his dreams of marriage and fatherhood even though it meant giving up the love of his life?
13. How would you characterize the relationships the four assassins have with the significant people in their lives? Does keeping their occupations secret protect these relationships? Or does it prevent real intimacy?
14. What do you think is next for the four assassins?

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(Source: https://bookbrowse.com/reading_guides/detail/index.cfm/book_number/4517/killers-of-a-certain-age)

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Recipes:

Spaghetti all'Assassina (Assassin's Spaghetti)



Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 cups tomato puree
- 3 cups water
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste Assassin's Spaghetti
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 teaspoons red chili flakes, or to taste
- 6 ounces dry spaghetti
- salt to taste
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley, for garnish

Directions:

Heat olive oil in a pot over medium heat. Add garlic and sizzle until it starts to turn golden and fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in tomato puree, water, and salt. Bring to a simmer on medium-high. Once simmering, reduce to low heat and keep warm. Pour olive oil into a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat, season with chili flakes and heat until chili flakes start to sizzle, for 1 minute. Add raw spaghetti and toss until well coated with chili oil. Pour in about 3 cups of tomato broth and, using tongs, move pasta from side to side to evenly distribute tomato broth. Cook, occasionally moving pasta from side to side with tongs, all facing the same direction, until most of the broth has been absorbed or evaporated, and the spaghetti starts frying in the pan. Turn spaghetti over with tongs, and evenly arrange in the pan. Keep cooking until the pasta starts to brown, and even lightly chars. Add about 2 more cups of tomato broth and repeat the process. Continue cooking until the spaghetti is as charred as you like and cooked to your desired doneness. More broth can be added at the end of the process for a saucier version, as shown in the video, or it can be served relatively dry. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil and more chili flakes if desired.

(Source: https://allrecipes.com/recipe/8534000/spaghetti-allassassina-assassins-spaghetti/)

Pink Lady Mocktail

Ingredients:



- Apple juice
- Lemon juice
- Grenadine
- Egg white
- Club soda (optional)

Directions:

A pink lady mocktail is ready before your girlfriends arrive, giving you plenty of time to make a bunch for a crowd. Here's how to do it:

Shake: Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add in apple juice, lemon juice, grenadine, and the egg white. Shake vigorously for 20-30 seconds. Top with club soda if desired.

Garnish: Strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with a cherry.

(Source: https://thecollegehousewife.com/pink-lady-mocktail)