

# I Knew You Were Trouble

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*We all know that Jessica constantly gets herself into trouble, but only Seth can tell her just how much trouble she really is! This Murder, She Wrote Slice of Life was inspired by Taylor Swift's song "I Knew You Were Trouble." Bear in mind, I'm not saying that Jessica is nothing but trouble, but this is a tongue-in-cheek look at the trouble she always seems to attract - as well as another sweet and funny moment between her and Seth. And honestly, who else other than him could tell her she's trouble and get away with it?*

"I always knew you were too twisted for color TV, but this takes the cake."

"I'm a colorful person, Seth; what can I say?"

"How about *I was wrong*?"

"I will not say that, because I wasn't wrong. I found out who the killer was, didn't I?"

"Ayuh, and got yourself shot the second you exposed him."

"Well, how was I to know he had that gun?"

"Jessica, I could have guessed he had a gun with him, even *that* kind of gun."

"Who on Earth carries *that* kind of – *ouch!* Easy, Seth!"

"Oh, don't be such a baby. If these were actual gunshot wounds, you'd really have something to cry about."

"I know, but that doesn't make them hurt any less."

"Or look any worse. It's a darn shame to see skin as pretty as yours all welted up like this."

"At least you're here to help heal them."

"What else are friends for?"

Jessica Fletcher gave her best friend a smile as he treated her latest set of war wounds. Earlier that evening, she had unmasked a killer who, upon being exposed as a murderer, had pulled a gun on her and pulled the trigger before she could move. Fortunately for her, it was a paintball gun. Unfortunately, it was loaded, and she took three paintballs straight to the stomach. The upshot of the whole thing was that her pantsuit wound up splattered with lime-green paint and Jessica now had three round, smarting welts on her midriff, which Dr. Seth Hazlitt was now treating with some soothing aloe. "You keep me grounded, that's for sure." She giggled as his fingers massaged the aloe into her skin. "And laughing. Seth, that tickles!"

"Does it? I hadn't noticed," Seth teased, tickling her belly button and sending her into a giggle fit. When the laughter died down, he applied the aloe to the last welt and then gave her a mischievous smile. "Done. Would you like me to kiss them and make them better?"

"And get aloe all over your lips? I wouldn't chance it."

"I'm only kidding. I do know one thing I can kiss, though." He bent over her belly again and blew a raspberry into her navel.

Jessica laughed. "Good thing you can still do that. With these welts, you won't be tickling me for a while." She shook her head and, pulling her blouse back down, sat up. "Darn that paintball gun."

"Hey, it could've been worse. Coulda been a totally different weapon."

"Such as?"

"A knife, pepper spray, heck, a rubber chicken for all I know. With you, it could be anything."

"You make it sound like I do nothing but attract trouble."

"Attract trouble? Woman, you are a *magnet* for trouble! I've never seen anybody constantly get bogged down in murder, espionage, and Lord-knows-what-else like you do, and I guarantee that you don't ask for it."

"I don't. I never go looking for trouble. Trouble always seems to find me."

"Ayuh, in the form of death, blood, bodies, and tall, dark, and handsome strangers who are also dogged by trouble."

Jessica folded her arms beneath her breasts. "Would you care to explain that last part to me, Seth?"

"With pleasure." Seth locked eyes with her, hazel into sapphire. "Based on what you've told me in various stories over the years, you have come into contact with a few fellas whose pasts are more checkered than diner linoleum and who seem to attract trouble like flies to honey. And what's even stranger, they all seem to have a certain fondness for you."

"You say that like you're surprised," Jessica said, looking slightly offended. "I may not be twenty years old anymore, but for goodness' sake, I'm not dead yet!"

Seth waved a hand impatiently. "I didn't mean it like that! I mean that you're kind, you don't judge, and you're smart as a whip, and that's why these men are so attracted to you. You don't worry about their pasts or judge them for it, and you can hold your own against them." His mouth turned up slightly at the corners. "And it doesn't hurt that you're beautiful, either."

Jessica blushed. "Oh, Seth, now you're just exaggerating."

"Like heck I am. Any guy'd have to be nuts to look in those pretty blue eyes and not fall in love with you."

"Like who?"

"Like that, what's-his-face, Michael Haggerty. From what you've said, he's been after you since the second he clapped eyes on you."

"Michael? He just adores to flirt, that's all. In his line of work, there isn't a lot of room for romantic relationships."

"Sounds to me like he thinks he's James Bond. Work for MI6, jet around the world playing spy, knock back a few drinks, flirt with beautiful women, and then skip off to the next location to repeat the process. He's trouble, Jess. James Bond was trouble and so is Michael Haggerty. He doesn't need a down-to-earth, cozy-up-at-home woman like you; he needs someone with a mouth and knuckles made of brass."

Jessica began to laugh. "You know, I've been toying with the idea of introducing Michael to my cousin Emma. Now that you've mentioned that, I think they'd make a good match. I don't think Michael will know what hit him!"

"Good. Maybe it'll get him off your back for a while. Though you've still got that other guy, the jewel thief... Stanton, isn't that his name?"

"Dennis Stanton, yes."

"Former jewel thief turned insurance agent and investigator. Any former thief is trouble no matter what. And haven't you mentioned that he's an informant of sorts? Jeez, if he's in the gossip mill, why don't you introduce him to Eve Simpson? Talk about a match made in heaven."

Jessica hooted. "You ought to be the town matchmaker instead of the doctor, the way you're talking."

"I am not a matchmaker, Jess. I just know BS when I see it or hear it. And speaking of bull, that brings me to that other friend of yours, the PI from Boston. You know, the one who's always got a black eye."

"Harry McGraw? Oh, Seth, there's nothing between us but a strong friendship. Harry and I respect each other very much and we work well together on certain cases when we meet up, but he's not interested in me that way, nor do I have any similar interest in him. We're just good friends."

"Maybe so, but he's still a troublemaker, too. That perpetual black eye of his proves it."

"All right, you've made your point," Jessica said, giving her friend a look. "I attract troublemakers. Next thing, you'll be saying that *I'm* trouble."

"That's exactly what I was going to say." When her cobalt blues shot up to his eyes, Seth gave her a cynical grin. "Yes, you are trouble."

"Because I'm a mystery writer who has a knack for stumbling upon real-life murder?"

"Not just because of that. You're trouble for me."

"How am I trouble for you? Because I'm the only one who can whip your fanny at chess?"

"Yes, but that's not the only reason. You're also the only one who can give me a smack when I'm getting too big for my britches, and your smart-alecky side only ever comes out around me. And you drag me along on shopping trips. If *that's* not trouble, I don't know what is."

"Oh, really?" Jessica chortled. "Well, Seth Hazlitt, let me tell you just how much trouble *you* are!"

"Me? How am I trouble?"

"How are you trouble? Let me count the ways. You're stubborn, grouchy, irascible, and thoroughly convinced that you are never wrong. You are unafraid of expressing your opinion to anybody and everybody. And you have the uncanny ability to annoy me and get away with it."

"Only because you let me," Seth replied, totally unperturbed by her description of him.

"Oh, and one more thing: you tickle me until I'm helpless. That's always trouble!"

"Ayuh, but it always makes you laugh. And you love it. I know you do."

"Yes, I do. Just as I know you love me because I'm trouble."

Seth laughed. "Trouble One and Trouble Two, that's us. Fine pair we are."

Jessica snuggled up next to him on the couch and slipped an arm around his shoulder. "If you're trouble too, then where do I stand among my friends? You said it yourself, I always seem to attract men who are nothing but trouble."

"Hey now, wait a minute, Jess. I may be trouble in my own way, but I'm nothing like those guys. And if you want my opinion, you don't need a guy who's even more trouble than you are. You need someone who's the down-home kind of trouble, someone who can keep you grounded and make you laugh when you need to the most."

Jessica's blue eyes were warm as she gazed at her friend. "Someone like you?"

Seth went silent, but he could feel himself warming within. "Ayuh. Someone like me."

"I already have someone like you. I have *you*." Jessica kissed his cheek. "And I wouldn't have anyone else... except possibly Cary Grant."

Laughing, Seth pulled her fully into his arms and cuddled her close to his heart. "Troublemaker." He planted a kiss among the soft golden curls of her hair. "I love you, Jess."

"I love you too, Seth." She rested her head against his shoulder, resting in his arms and in the bond of love between them that no amount of trouble could ever break.