

# Murder, She Rhymed

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It's a rainy, gray day  
Here in Cabot Cove, Maine  
And I'm sitting here typing,  
Just racking my brain.

I'm writing my newest book  
*Caught In The Act*.  
It's not going too well,  
And that is a fact.

Should the murder take place  
By day or by night?  
Should the cook be the killer?  
Or maybe, not quite?

I still need the right weapon  
To fit to the crime.  
And what of the motive?  
The reason and rhyme?  
And the characters' names?  
And the date and the time?  
It's a pain in the neck  
Trying to meet my deadlines!

I'm just hammering keys  
With a click and a clack  
When Mort Metzger bursts in  
Through the door in the back.

"A dead body washed up  
On the beach late last night.  
God knows we can't do this  
Without your insight,

So come along with us  
And make this all right!"

"Now, Mort, that's just silly!  
You're going to be fine!  
I have to work like a horse  
To meet my deadline."

But he motions me up,  
And I march to the door.  
My innate curiosity's  
Won over once more.

"Let's get down to the beach  
And examine this death.  
We've got no time to lose!  
Move your butt, Mrs. F!"

We arrive at the seashore  
And what do I see?  
A young woman's body,  
My next mystery.

And my dearest friend Seth  
Has already arrived  
To help us determine  
How this was contrived.

"How'd she die, Dr. Hazlitt?"  
Mort calls out to Seth.  
"Have you turned up a weapon  
And right time of death?"

"Hold your horses there, Mort!  
Ask me one at a time!  
Why the heck am I talking  
In this blessed rhyme?  
It looks like she drowned,  
But look here instead:  
She suffered blunt trauma  
Smack dab in the head.

She washed up on shore  
Here in this very spot,  
With her watch stopped  
At midnight, right on the dot."

Seth then turns to me.  
"Whatcha think of this, Jess?  
You have any idea  
Who started this mess?"

"I haven't a clue, boys,  
But give me some time.  
Let me nose around town  
And I'll wrap up this crime."

Just then, the light catches  
A ring on her hand.  
The stone has been stolen  
Right out of the band.

I just found my first clue.  
Could the murder have been  
Over precious rare gems  
Or some other dark sin?

Whatever the reason,  
I have to find out.  
Cabot Cove isn't safe  
With a killer about.

Without further ado,  
I head back into town,  
Don my trench coat, and then  
I'm off asking around.

Most people are helpful  
With what they impart.  
And then there are some  
In sore need of a heart.

They all call me as nosy  
As nosy can be,  
But once I get involved,  
There is no stopping me.

Mort then calls me up.  
He's located the kin  
Of the victim, Shawn Casey -  
Her sister, Erin.

Erin's distraught,  
And she faints and I catch her.  
When she wakes, she asks me,  
"Can you help, Mrs. Fletcher?  
It was Shawn, her husband,  
And I on a boat,  
And then I saw Evan  
Grab Shawn by the throat.  
He accused her of cheating  
And choked her, you see.  
Then he threw her corpse overboard  
Far out to sea.  
And now he's made off  
With her sapphire ring!  
She'd promised me that!  
You must solve this whole thing!  
I just gave you your why  
And your when and your how!  
You must stop more murders from happening,  
Right now!"

I make sure that Erin  
Has all that she needs,  
And then turn back to Mort,  
Who has a new lead.

"We've just picked up a guy  
Who's all covered in blood.  
Claims to be Evan Casey.  
His name will be mud,  
'Cause the boys hauled him in,

Did a search and a frisk,  
And they found a sapphire  
The size of a fist.  
Real fancy-dancy,  
A nice piece of bling.  
And dollars to donuts  
It matches Shawn's ring.  
We've captured our killer.  
Let's call it a night.  
Satisfied, Mrs. Fletcher?"  
I answer, "Not quite.

"If Evan had choked Shawn  
Like Erin supplied,  
Marks would have appeared  
Long after she died,  
And Seth found no bruises  
Or marks of the sort.  
The killer's still free.  
Evan's not your man, Mort."

I then ask to see Evan,  
And Mort takes me in  
To Evan's jail cell,  
Where he sits, looking grim.  
I say to him, "Evan,  
Did you kill your wife?"  
His response is, "No, Jessica!  
Not on your life!  
Shawn and I were in bed  
When the cabin door creaked.  
I went to investigate  
And somebody sneaked  
Up behind me and knocked out my lights.  
When I woke, Shawn was gone.  
I remembered our fight."

"You didn't choke her  
During your little spat?"  
Evan frowns at me. "No!

What maroon told you that?  
She cheated at poker to beat all the band.  
I saw that she had extra cards in her hand.  
She sent all my pocket change running for cover,  
But it sure as heck wasn't worth choking her over!  
Who told you I killed her?  
Who had all that gall?"  
I reply, "It was Erin,  
Your sister-in-law."

Evan shouts, "Erin Whitney?  
You're out of your mind!  
Shawn and I haven't seen her  
For such a long time.  
The girl is a stalker!  
She kept following me  
'Cause she couldn't accept  
It was over, you see.  
She and I went out once.  
For me, that was enough.  
I said, 'Let's be friends,'  
But she was in love.  
She waited outside  
For me just to come home.  
She called and she called,  
Couldn't leave me alone.  
Then when I married Shawn,  
She went over the edge.  
She swore then and there  
That she'd get her revenge.  
Erin's your killer.  
You've gotta go catch her!  
I'm counting on you,  
Mrs. Jessica Fletcher!"

With this new information,  
I head for my house.  
It's quiet – no sound,  
No proverbial mouse.

I need a hot bath  
To relax and unwind,  
But a dozen new theories  
Pop up in my mind.

We have two major suspects  
Who pin the whole crime  
On each other. The question is,  
Who'll do the time?

There's no obvious answer,  
And there is the rub,  
I think to myself  
As I soak in the tub.  
Just like always,  
I'll have to rely on my wits.  
And no, I don't like this,  
Not one little bit.

Next morning, Mort calls  
During breakfast with Seth.  
"I've got a big break  
In this case, Mrs. F.  
The jewelry shop called.  
They want us to see  
An order for someone  
Initialed E.C."

So it's off to the jeweler's  
For Seth and for me,  
And I wonder what this clue  
Could possibly be.  
And what greets us there  
But a wonderful thing!  
It's a five-carat, flawless new sapphire ring!

"Here's your proof, Mrs. F,  
And I'm telling you why.  
E.C.? Evan Casey!  
The scumbag's our guy!"

"But why a new ring?  
If he were desperate for cash,  
He'd have pawned that sapphire  
As quick as a flash."  
So I turn to the clerk.  
"Who ordered the ring?"  
He replies, "A young lady,  
A pretty young thing.  
Said she'd lost her engagement ring  
And this one was for  
Her husband, to tell her he loved her once more."

And then a big smile  
Lights up my whole face.  
I thank him profusely,  
Then back home I race.  
I make a quick phone call  
And stay upon task.  
It's high time the killer  
Was finally unmasked.

It's nighttime when Erin  
Walks through the front door.  
"Mrs. Fletcher?" she asks.  
"What'd you call me here for?"

"I think you know why, Erin.  
Stop playing games.  
You killed Shawn  
And let Evan take all the blame."

"That's ridiculous!" she cries.  
"You're imagining things!"  
"I don't think so.  
What gave you away were the rings.

"You killed Shawn because  
She took Evan from you.  
But that wasn't enough,  
So you took the ring too,  
Stole the sapphire to make a new ring.

And why would you do this?  
Just one little thing.  
You thought that Shawn's ring  
Should have been meant for you.  
You want Evan still.  
Am I right? Is it true?"

Erin shakes her head no.  
"No, of course it's not true!  
Your imagination's getting  
The better of you.  
The order was for someone titled E.C.  
And I am E.W. – Erin Whitney."

"That's true, but you're hoping you won't be for long.  
You had this whole murder planned out all along.  
E.C. meant Erin Casey, did it not?  
Taking Evan's last name was just part of your plot.  
You snuck out to the boat,  
Knocked Evan out cold,  
And murdered your sister  
With a metal boat pole.  
How did I know that?  
Well, it's easy to say.  
They found it washed up on the beach just today."

Some regret that their actions took such a foul course,  
But Erin stood rigid, no trace of remorse.  
"All right, I confess. I killed Shawn. You got me.  
I smashed in her head, threw her corpse out to sea.  
She stole Evan from me! That ring should've been mine!  
She took my life away; I returned her in kind."

I was shocked at her bluntness.  
She just didn't care.  
And she looked up and gave me  
The filthiest glare.

"The whole plan would've worked  
If it weren't for you.  
You had to horn in

Like you constantly do.  
You're too nosy to live.  
I don't need you about!"  
Then she reached in her pocket  
And pulled a gun out.

"Hold it right there!"  
Mort's voice rang out clear.  
"Put down the weapon  
And step over here.  
We heard the whole thing,  
And you're under arrest  
For Shawn Casey's murder.  
Thanks a lot, Mrs. F."

Well, after that, things became normal again –  
Normal, that is, for our corner of Maine.  
Evan was cleared of all ties to the crime  
And thanked all of us for devoting the time  
To making sure justice was served and was swift,  
And the darling boy gave me a wonderful gift.  
"Shawn's sapphire ring! But I don't deserve this!"  
"Yes, you do," Evan said as he gave me a kiss.  
"Shawn would want you to have it."  
"What a lovely surprise!"  
"And besides, Jess, it matches your pretty blue eyes."  
I shoot Seth a glare, but start laughing instead.  
With friends such as these, I have nothing to dread.  
Now it's back to the house to hang up my trench coat  
And get back to the murder, the murder I wrote!