



MURDER AT TEATIME

Alison Romer

Chapter 1: A Village Death

Ida McBride sits at the table with a nice cup of tea in her hands. While she drinks her tea, she looks at the lovely flowers on the table. There are some pink roses and some yellow lilies. They are a *gift* from Mavis Hammond. Mavis grows lots of flowers in her garden. She also bakes cakes and makes jam. She's a very busy woman, and very active for a 70-year-old. Normally, Ida is busy, too. Now she can't go to church or visit her friends. Sometimes she feels too sick to eat. The doctor says Ida should *rest*. He thinks it's normal for a 72-year-old woman to feel a bit tired and sick. But this is the fourth week she feels too sick to go out, and she's very unhappy about it.

Suddenly, Ida hears a siren. She slowly stands up and goes to the window. She moves the *lace curtains* and looks outside. An *ambulance* comes up the street and stops in front of her neighbours' house. Two *paramedics* jump out. They *rush* into the house. Ida's neighbours are Mark and Lydia King. They are both around forty years old and normally very quiet. Ida is worried and stands looking out of the window until she sees the *paramedics* come out. They are carrying a *stretcher* with Mark King on it. His wife, Lydia, runs out of the house. The *paramedics* put Mark in the back of the *ambulance* and Lydia gets into the *ambulance* with them. Then the sirens start again and the *ambulance* drives away.

Four days later, Detective Inspector Weyland Green is in his office at the Cambridge Police Station. He is sitting at his desk and look-



ing at an autopsy report. After fifteen minutes, he stands up and goes to make some fresh coffee. While he is waiting for the coffee to be ready, he hears a knock at the door.

“Come in,” he says.

Detective *Sergeant* Miranda Coleman opens the door.

“Hello,” she says. “You wanted to see me, Inspector?”

“Yes,” DI Green says. He gives her a *file*. “An *antiques dealer* named Mark King has died in the village of Little Barnswold. He was a bit young, only forty-six, but it looked like a *heart attack* at first. The pathologist sent me a report after the autopsy.”

“It wasn’t a *heart attack*, was it?” asks Miranda.

“No,” says the inspector. “The autopsy shows that there was too much *potassium* in his *kidneys*.”

“Did he have a history of *kidney* problems?”

“Yes, and he took medication,” DI Green answers. “But it wasn’t the medication that killed him. The pathologist *suspects* it was *poison*.”

DI Green *pours* two cups of coffee. He *pours* milk into one of the cups and gives it to Miranda.

“I’d like you to help me on this *case*, *Sergeant*.”

“Thanks. I’d be happy to,” Miranda says.

! Übung 1 Bilden Sie die richtige Kurzform!

ÜBUNG 1

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 she is not <i>she isn't</i> | 5. we are not _____ |
| 2. he is _____ | 6. I will _____ |
| 3. I am _____ | 7 we will not _____ |
| 4. you are _____ | 8. I would _____ |



“Our *forensic scientists* are trying to identify the *poison*,” Inspector Green says.

He drinks some of his coffee.

“I think we should go to Little Barnswold this afternoon and talk to Mark King’s wife. Ask the *crime scene* team to come, too, *Sergeant* Coleman. Then get the car. I’ll finish my coffee.”

“No problem, sir. I’ll call them right away. There is nothing like a nice trip to the country,” Miranda smiles.

The village of Little Barnswold is twenty-five kilometres from Cambridge. The countryside is beautiful and the inspector *enjoys* the drive. It is so different from the city, which has a lot of traffic and a lot of tourists. The village is very small. It has a church and a *vicarage*, and there are about thirty-five houses in total. There is one pub called The Rose and Crown. On the main street there is a post office, a *grocery shop* and a *chemist*. There is also Mark King’s antique shop.

Miranda uses the navigation system to find the Kings’ house on Crocus Street. It’s a lovely old cottage. There is a white Mercedes in the *driveway* and a black one parked on the street.

“Very nice,” says Miranda, as she parks the police car on the street in front of the house.

She and DI Green get out. They see the curtains in the house next door move and an old lady looking out of the window.

“The neighbour,” says DI Green. “We should talk to her. Old ladies know everything that happens in a village.”

“Yes, sir,” says Miranda. She knocks on the door of the Kings’ cottage. A thin woman with blonde hair opens it.

“Mrs King?” Miranda asks.

“Yes,” says the woman. “I’m Lydia King.”

She’s about 45 years old and is wearing jeans and a pink T-shirt.



She has lots of make-up on, but she looks very tired.

“This is Detective Inspector Green, and I’m *Sergeant* Coleman. We would like to talk to you about your husband.”

“Yes, of course,” says Mrs King. “Please come in.”

The living room of the cottage is full of antique furniture. There are old paintings on the walls and a beautiful Turkish *rug* in front of the open fireplace. It is summer so there is no fire, but a large grey cat is lying on the *rug*.

“Would you like something to drink?” Mrs King asks.

“No, thanks,” says DI Green.

He sits down on the leather sofa and Miranda sits next to him. Mrs King sits in a comfortable antique armchair. Miranda takes out her notebook.

“First, can you tell us about the day Mr King died?” asks DI Green.

“It’s important you tell us as many details as possible.”

“It was a completely normal day,” Mrs King says. “Mark got up at seven o’clock and then went to his shop as usual at around eight. It was *half-day closing*, so he came home at half past twelve and we had lunch together.”

“What did he have for lunch?” asks the inspector.

“He had egg and chips,” she replies. “He didn’t eat breakfast that day. He just had a coffee.”

“Did you eat the same thing?” DI Green asks.

“No!” *exclaims* Mrs King. “I eat healthy food. I had a salad with some fresh fruit. I cooked Mark’s food but I never ate it. The doctor said Mark should eat healthy food, but he didn’t.”

“And did he feel sick after lunch?” asks DI Green.

“Mark didn’t feel well for the last two weeks. He didn’t want to eat a lot. I told him to go back to the doctor.”

“What else happened?”

“He went upstairs and watched TV in bed. I went to the gym. I got