

Cambridge English Readers

Level 5

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Emergency Murder

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Chapter 1 *Death in the Emergency Room*

It was midnight on a hot July Sunday in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Dr. Maxine Cassidy was still at work at Mercy Hospital Emergency Room. Most of the people she took care of in the ER lived nearby in the rough area of Milwaukee. After eight hours on her feet, Maxine was exhausted. Shirley, the emergency room nurse, handed her a cup of coffee.

“Are you sorry you left your research job at Marquette University?” asked Shirley. “You’ve only worked here six months and already you look beat.”

Shirley sat down at the reception desk and watched the ER doors for new patients. Shirley was a big woman who could handle any kind of trouble. Maxine was small and slim with short brown curly hair.

“Coffee break is over, Doctor,” said Shirley, nodding toward the woman who was coming through the doors. “Lavelle’s here again.”

Lavelle was a young woman who lived near Mercy Hospital. She often came into the ER. This evening, she had a deep cut on her arm where she had fallen on the sidewalk. Maxine sewed it up and put on a bandage.

“Come back in a few days, Lavelle, and I’ll check it,” Maxine said.

Suddenly, Shirley saw that a woman had just entered the ER. She looked very sick and as if she was about to fall. Shirley ran toward the woman. “Quick! Help!” she shouted

to Maxine as the woman fell into her arms. Maxine ran to help and together they carried the woman toward the examination table.

The woman was wearing a red wig, a black leather miniskirt, and a thin pink sweater, and was holding a large black shoulder bag.

As Maxine and Shirley helped the woman onto the examination table, her red wig fell off. She had short black hair that was wet with sweat. The woman lifted her head. “Maxine,” she whispered. “Where’s Maxine?”

Maxine gasped. “It’s Nanette Myer – Dr. Hank Myer’s wife!”

Dr. Hank Myer was a busy surgeon with many patients. He did surgery in five different hospitals, including Mercy Hospital. He was also on the Board of Marquette University, and sat on the Research Review Committee at Marquette University. His clinic was in the richest part of Milwaukee, near his home. He and his wife, Nanette, lived in an huge white brick house next to Lake Michigan.

“Nanette Myer?” asked Shirley. “Are you sure? Why is she wearing those clothes?” Shirley and Maxine helped the woman sit on the examination table.

“Help me! I feel sick,” she said. She couldn’t sit up by herself. She kept falling against Shirley.

“It *is* Nanette,” Maxine answered Shirley. “But why did she come to Mercy Hospital ER? There are hospitals nearer her home.”

“I can’t breathe!” Nanette whispered.

Maxine was looking at Nanette’s arms and legs, but couldn’t find any obvious injury. “I don’t know what’s wrong with her!”

“When did you get sick?” Shirley asked Nanette.

“About ten minutes ago. A taxi stopped for me, thank God,” she answered.

“Have you ever felt like this before?” asked Maxine.

“Never.”

“Are you taking any medicine?”

“Yes. It’s in my shoulder bag.” Nanette reached for the large black bag but it fell on the floor. Shirley picked it up. She pulled out a long red dress. She also pulled out lipstick, blue eye shadow, and two bottles of pills. Shirley read from the side of the bottles: “Carisoprodol, Ferrous Sulphate.”

Nanette leaned all her weight on Maxine, with her head on Maxine’s shoulder. Maxine shook Nanette’s arm. “Where were you tonight? What did you eat?”

“I didn’t eat anything. I took a pill,” Nanette said.

“Which pill? A pill from your purse?” Shirley asked.

Suddenly Nanette cried out, “I can’t breathe! Everything’s gone dark!”

Maxine and Shirley helped her lie down. Maxine looked into Nanette’s eyes. The black centers of the eyes were equal in size but they were moving in different directions. Maxine felt the side of Nanette’s hand.

“Her nerves and muscles are weak,” Maxine said to Shirley. Suddenly Maxine realized that Nanette had stopped breathing.

“Get the emergency medical team here!” Maxine shouted to the ER receptionist.

In less than a minute the emergency medical team ran through the door – a heart specialist, a technician to work the medical equipment, and a nurse.

For the next fifteen minutes, the medical team tried to