

Karen came in to our 157 sessions with a very good grasp of how she writes and how she wants to write. When I discovered that she had a very clear-cut comfort zone that she was inclined to stay in, we decided she ought to take some risks with her writing and step outside the box. Karen had a good start on this story, but then she got stuck and became frustrated with it. Although the process was sometimes difficult for Karen, she has ended up with a fine piece of work.

~ Amanda Petersen, Tutor

## **Captured by Fashion**

By Karen Weatherwax

“That’s it, George. If you want to sleep with everything in a skirt, and I know you do, then we are over,” screamed Amy as she ran around the apartment shoving things into a black garbage bag. George’s protests fell on deaf ears, as Amy had heard them all before. She didn’t care if it was a one time thing, and if he still loved her, she would not be one of those women who stayed with a cheater because she remembered the good times. She had better things to do than try to fix a broken relationship. “I’ll send my sister to get the rest of my things tomorrow at lunch. Be sure not to be here, because if you are, I’m sure Melissa would be more than happy to break something of yours,” said Amy, slightly calmer now. “I hope you find what you are looking for, George.” Glancing out the window at the view of the red rocks that had attracted her to this apartment in the first place, Amy felt a surge of regret at leaving her perfect Sedona apartment in the hands of a cheater like George. Shooting George a look of disgust, she stormed away and knew she’d never return.

When she reached her car, she threw the garbage bag in the back seat and started driving. She had no destination in mind; she just wanted to drive away from her life and she was grateful that her job as a freelance fashion designer allowed her that freedom. Turning on the radio, Amy just followed the road, with no concern about where she was, or where she was going. Contemplating the road, Amy realized that her freedom was a blessing and a curse. She could pick up and leave whenever she felt, but she never managed to put down roots. That bothered her, but she was not willing to give up her freedom. As Amy passed cities and towns, she began to wonder where she’d end up. She stopped at hotels and ate at gas stations, knowing that when she found where she was supposed to be, a light would go on in her head, letting her know that this was where she belonged. It had always worked that way in the past, and she trusted her inner voice to guide her true once again.

Two days later, she found herself entering California. She was going to keep driving through, until she saw the sign for San Francisco. The light went on in her head, and she knew that this was where her next adventure lay. After getting herself a cheap hotel room, she began exploring the city. Amy decided that she’d aim for a cheap apartment, and keep her savings account full. After all, she always needed to have a stash in case she felt the need to flee.

Soon Amy found the perfect little place. She’d visited it on her first day in town, and loved it, but thought there might be something better. Amy called the super and made an appointment to meet with him about the apartment. When she got there, Amy knocked on the super’s door, and called out. Getting no answer, she opened the door, and felt it get stuck. Shoving harder, she finally got the door open enough to look in. At first her brain couldn’t believe what she was seeing, but quickly, she realized that it was the super: dead on the floor of his apartment. Screaming, Amy ran out and dialed 911.

“Oh my God, oh my God, there’s a dead body, there’s a dead body. I found a dead body,” Amy shrieked at the dispatcher. Rattling off the address, Amy began shaking. She’d never been that close to a dead body, and she’d almost touched one. The police arrived quickly and Amy calmed down long enough to explain that she had an appointment about the open apartment. The police took her statement and Amy was allowed to return to her hotel.

All the way back, Amy’s mind was consumed with thoughts about the death of the super. Who would want to kill him? He seemed like such a nice man. Irrationally, Amy wondered who

she'd have to talk to get the open apartment. As soon as the thought crossed her mind, she knew that she wouldn't live there. She'd always be afraid that she would be the next victim.

Amy wasn't prone to irrational fears, but for the next few weeks, she saw evil around every corner. She stopped looking for apartments and began to think that maybe she should return to Sedona and ask George to take her back. Amy packed up her stuff and was preparing to do just that when the police knocked on her hotel door and asked her to come to the station.

When she got to the station, a detective began questioning her about the day she found the super's body. At first Amy thought that he wanted to see if she remembered anything new, but as the questioning continued, she wondered if Detective Baldwin thought she murdered the super. Suddenly Detective Baldwin asked her why she killed him.

"I realize that this may be hard to believe, but I didn't kill him. Hell, I don't even know his first name. When I called about the apartment, he told me to call him Mr. Vail," insisted Amy.

"Your fingerprints are a dead match to the ones we found on the door, and tenants say that you were the only guest he had all day. The ME's report proves that he was murdered only two hours before you called 911," replied Detective Baldwin. "You are now the prime suspect in Peter Vail's murder, and I am placing you under arrest for the murder of Peter Vail." Detective Baldwin cuffed Amy and read her rights. She was thrown into a holding cell awaiting arraignment. Amy was baffled. The police thought that she had murdered a man. She would have to prove them wrong, but she had no idea how to.

Amy was in a state of shock. How could she prove that she hadn't killed Mr. Vail from jail? She had to trust that her new lawyer could get her out of jail so she could prove her innocence. When she returned to the holding cell, there was another woman in the cell. Amy wasn't quite sure if she should talk to the woman, but the decision was taken out of her hands when the woman spoke to her.

"What'd you do to end up in here?" asked the woman.

"I'm being charged with murder, but I didn't kill him. The police just aren't looking at it logically. I mean, honestly, if you had just killed a man, would you call the cops to tell them that there was a dead man at your feet? No, you wouldn't," challenged Amy. "What did you do to end up here?"

"I pulled a knife on a cop."

"No offense, but that seems pretty stupid," said Amy.

"I didn't like his face, and the more you talk, the less I like yours, so if you want to keep that face of yours pretty, you might want to shut up," calmly suggested the woman. Amy barely had time to open her mouth when Detective Baldwin opened the cell door.

"It's time for some interrogation, Ms. Craven. Follow me, please," Detective Baldwin requested. Once in the room, Detective Baldwin began playing good cop. "Amy, I can't help you if you don't help me. I've spoken to the DA, and he's willing to go easy on you because you are a first time offender, but you've got to tell me the truth," cajoled Detective Baldwin.

Sweetly, Amy replied, "Detective Baldwin, I may seem rather simple minded to you, but I know my rights, and I didn't kill anyone, so I have no concern over the DA's leniency, because I will never be brought up on charges. My fingerprints are not enough evidence to arraign me, much less convict me, so I'm just patiently waiting for 24 hours to pass and you to let me out. Then, I will go about solving this crime for you, how does that sound?" At this point Detective Baldwin's face began to turn a lovely shade of purple, and he bellowed at a uniform to return her to the holding cell.

On the way back to the cell, Amy called her lawyer in Sedona and he suggested Gregory Wheeler, a friend of his from law school. He said that he'd call Wheeler and get him on her case. Now all she had to do was trust that her new lawyer could get her out of jail so she could convince the cops that she hadn't killed anyone.

In the cell, Amy patiently waited for her lawyer to show up, or the 24 hours to elapse. Finally Detective Baldwin released her, with the promise that he'd show she did it. Having left the station, Amy called her new lawyer, Mr. Wheeler. "Ah yes, Ms. Craven, I was just reading your file now.

The police don't have enough to arraign you, so you can leave anytime," he explained in a voice full of laughter.

"I've already left, Mr. Wheeler. I'm going to go to the scene of the crime and see if I can prove my innocence. I just know there has got to be some evidence there that shows I didn't kill the man," Amy informed him. He told her it was a bad idea, but Amy was very stubborn, and after hanging up the phone, she walked to the crime scene. She expected to find an officer at the door, and had concocted a brilliant story, but was surprised to see no one. Amy glanced around to see if there was a security camera, and seeing none, she moved the police do not cross line and entered the apartment.

Amy had prepared herself to see blood stains on the carpet, and signs of a struggle, but the apartment looked like it had been slept in the night before. Amy did a cursory search, just to see if anything looked out of place in this clean as a whistle apartment. When that turned up nothing, she began moving things around to find anything that could lead to clearing her name. After two hours, Amy was about to give up when she stumbled across a purple button in the bathroom. The button had a designed rim that looked like wood grain. Amy recognized it as a signature Valentino button, so knew it couldn't be the super's. The cheapest thing that button came on was \$3000 and based on the clothes she had seen in his closet, he was not a designer man. The thread that connected the button to its apparel had simply been stretched to the breaking point, and it broke. At a closer look, Amy discovered a hair trapped in the thread. Excited, Amy took a picture of it with her cell phone, and left the apartment.

On her way out, she bumped into a tall man, who was running into the building. Amy was about to apologize, when her eyes fell upon his blazer, and saw that a button was missing from it. Studying his face, she was sure she was looking upon the face of a cold hearted killer. He apologized for hitting her, and continued up the stairs. Amy bolted out of the apartment complex as quick as she could manage.

Amy knew what she had to do, she had to return to the police station and turn in the evidence she had uncovered. Detective Baldwin was more than happy to speak to her once she got there. He believed that she had decided to turn herself in, and said as much.

"No," she insisted, "I have come to give you the evidence that will help you catch the real murderer. I returned to Mr. Vail's apartment, in the hopes of finding something to convince you that I'm innocent, and I did. I found a purple button, with a hair caught in the thread. I also saw the blazer that the button belongs to. The man who was wearing it ran up the stairs of the complex, so I'm assuming he lives there. I believe he is the killer you are looking for. If you retrieve the button, and test the hair for DNA, you will see that I didn't kill Mr. Vail," finished Amy quite smugly.

"You'll give us a DNA sample to compare with?" questioned Detective Baldwin. Amy nodded, and promised to return when he had gotten the button from the apartment.

Three hours later, Amy was back in the station, and detective Baldwin was congratulating her on finding the button, and noticing that the man who bumped her was wearing a blazer with identical buttons.

"It's all because of my training as a fashion designer. We are trained to notice the smallest details," Amy said, confidently. "So, why did that man kill Mr. Vail?"

"His water had been coming out of the spout brown for the past six months, and he wanted it fixed. Mr. Vail said that he'd fix it the next day, and that wasn't fast enough for him, so he bashed Vail's head in with a wrench. Then he cleaned up in the bathroom, and left," explained Baldwin. "I got him in for questioning, and didn't even have to tell him we had his DNA, he wanted me to know that he had killed Vail. He seemed proud of it. Anyway, I want to apologize for arresting you and thank you for catching the real murder."

"Don't worry about it, just don't do it again," joked Amy. Amy filled out some paperwork, and left the station, pleased that she had caught a criminal. She hadn't had this much fun in a long time. Wondering how she could top catching a murderer, she considered leaving, but quickly reconsidered. All in all, she decided that San Francisco would be a perfect fit for her.