

# In Pursuit of Justice

By Edith Maxwell

In *A Questionable Death*, Crippen & Landru, April 2023

**Author Note:** *This story shows Rose Carroll in her first murder investigation. I loved digging into her backstory and depicting her while she was still a midwifery apprentice.*

I stared at the note from John Whittier.

*20 Twelfth Month 1886*

*My dear Rose,*

*Over the past year that thee has been worshipping with Amesbury Friends, I have taken note of thy particular abilities to listen, perceive, and discern. Kevin Donovan, the police detective in our fair town of Amesbury, has requested my assistance in yesterday's violent death of Friend Zachariah Woolman. In turn, I request thy presence when I meet with the detective this afternoon at three o'clock at my residence. I thought, in pursuit of justice, that thee might help tease out the facts of the homicide, such that we help the good officer to solve it.*

*I am truly thy friend,*

*John*

I'd heard of a murder in town, but no one had mentioned that the victim had been a member of the Religious Society of Friends.

But how could I, a midwifery apprentice, possibly help the famous Quaker poet and abolitionist, not to mention the police force? I was but twenty-four, not married nor a pillar of society, instead pursuing my dream of helping women safely birth their babies.

Still, I couldn't refuse. John Greenleaf Whittier was famed throughout the country, but we worshipped together here in Amesbury, Massachusetts. He was kindly and inquisitive, although elderly, and had taken an interest in me. The morning was young, and I had no other obligations this afternoon.

“Wait one moment, please,” I said to the boy who’d delivered the short missive. I returned with a hastily scribbled reply and a coin and pressed them into his hand. “Deliver this back to John Whittier, if thee would, with my thanks.”

The lad ran off. I closed my eyes and held Zachariah’s released soul in the Light of God, that he might go easily. My eyes flew open as I remembered I’d attended the labor of a Lucy Woolman with my teacher and mentor, Orpha Perkins, last spring. Lucy was about ten years older than I, and she’d easily birthed her fourth, a baby girl. I’d met her husband—Zachariah—only briefly after the healthy infant and her mother were clean and presentable. Now Lucy was a widow and responsible for four little ones. My heart broke for her.

During labor, women risk death to bring forth life. On certain sad occasions, babies don’t survive the ordeal, and sometimes mothers die. Not a one expects to lose the baby’s father to a premature death. Who would have killed Zachariah, and why?

Her pregnancy near its term, Emma Gauthier struggled to sit up on the bed in her father’s home at eleven o’clock that morning after Orpha had finished her antenatal examination. I hurried to support Emma, and she shot me a grateful smile. It was Orpha’s practice to conduct a visit at the prospective mother’s abode shortly before her due date to assure all was in order for the birth, which would, of course, take place at home.

“It’s a good thing I’m not supposed to be going out.” Emma gave a swipe to her wavy, honey-colored hair and a rueful glance at her swollen ankles. “I can’t stuff my feet into my shoes.”

“You have gained a goodly amount of weight.” Orpha, a seasoned midwife, gave me a quick look. “The swollen ankles and feet are a sign you’re retaining fluid. Make sure you take time to recline and elevate them above the level of your heart every day.”

“That won’t be so easy. Father expects me to be doing everything I did before I married and moved with Antoine to Quebec a year ago. I told him I can’t.” Emma let out a noisy breath.

“When my husband offered to prepare meals, Father scoffed and said that was women’s work. You must know, my darling husband loves me very much and would do anything for me. But Father was having none of it.”

“What is thy husband’s occupation?” I asked.

“He’s a lawyer from a fine family in Quebec City, up in French Canada, but he likes to tinker in his spare time, invent this and that.”

“I know your mother is deceased,” Orpha said softly.

“Yes.” Emma’s pretty face fell. “She died after giving birth to my youngest sister four years ago. Mrs. Perkins, I confess to being worried. What if I die in childbirth, too?”

“Do you know why your mother perished?” Orpha asked.

“I’m not sure anybody knew. Her color was high – rather like mine, I’m afraid – and she seemed nervous. Then something burst in her brain after the birth. The doctor we summoned couldn’t save her.”

“That must have been so hard for thee and the whole family.” I suspected it had been particularly painful for Emma and her father. “Does thee have an auntie or other older relative who might assist in thy travails?”

“Sadly, no. But my next-youngest sister, the eldest of the four who came after I was born, would like to help in any way she can.” Emma raised her voice. “Jennie?”

An angular girl who looked about sixteen hurried in, tucking a lock of red hair behind her ear. A strip of cloth was wound around her palm.

“Mrs. Perkins, Rose, this is my sister Eugenia, but we call her Jennie. Sis, this is the midwife and her apprentice. They’ll be here when the baby starts to come. You’ll help them, won’t you?”

“I guess I’ll have to. Just like all the other work you left me with.” Jennie turned on her heel and walked out.

“I apologize,” Emma murmured. “She can be prickly. But she’ll assist in any way you need her to.”

“Very well,” Orpha said. “Now, Mrs. Gauthier, I must insist you spend as much time as possible lying on your left side. In addition, drink plenty of water and avoid salt in the coming weeks.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

Orpha and I were readying our wraps when a man blustered into the room. Closer to sixty than fifty, I thought, his dark hair was streaked with white, and his spectacles repaired with wire.

“Where’s that Frenchie of yours, Emmie?” he demanded.

“Antoine went out. Mrs. Perkins and Miss Carroll, this is my father, Hiram Newcastle. Father, they’ll be the midwives for my birth.”

“Pleased, I’m sure.” His glower did not make him look pleased. “I can’t find my ring, Emmie. I’m sure that no-good husband of yours took it. He’s probably off pawning it right this minute.”

“Your Dartmouth class ring?” Emma asked.

“Of course.” He held out his right hand, palm down. The fingers were bare. “You let me know when he returns. I’ll give that Canuck what-for, like he’s never seen.”

“Antoine would never steal from you, Father.” Emma stood, her color even higher than it had been before. “I fail to understand what you have against him. He’s kind, he’s intelligent, he’s a

good provider, and he loves me.” She looked as if she had more to say, but she shut her mouth instead.

“We’ll just be going,” Orpha said softly. “Good day, sir. Mrs. Gauthier, be sure to contact me if regular pains commence before next week’s visit.”

A few minutes later, my mentor and I trudged homeward along Market Street.

“Emma’s father is an unpleasant man, isn’t he?” I asked.

“Mr. Newcastle isn’t a happy person, certainly.” Orpha took my arm.

“True, he suffered the loss of his wife. Does thee know his occupation?”

“I don’t.” Her gait faltered at a rough spot in the paving stones. “You know, I’m not sure how much longer I can keep working, my dear Rose. I’ve lived eighty years now and have lost count of how many labors I’ve attended.”

“Thy experience is part of why thee is such a good teacher and midwife.” I made sure she didn’t slip as we walked, even as I hoped she wouldn’t retire from the work for a good long time.

“Remind me why Emma’s ankles would be so swollen.”

“It’s likely from the weight gain and not staying off her feet. She also seems to have a condition where the blood quickens. It can be dangerous.”

“Does thee mean the pulse?”

“Not precisely. But it can include a nervousness, and high color in the face – higher than normal in pregnancy, I mean – and can present a threat to the mother’s life.”

“That sounds like the problem that her own mother had, one that led to apoplexy,” I mused.

“Indeed. Thus my encouragement about the water and the salt, in particular.”

Where else would I learn such valuable practices? I was grateful beyond measure Orpha had agreed to take me on as her apprentice. Six years ago, I’d helped my older sister Harriet give

birth to her youngest of five, my niece Betsy, with Orpha as her midwife. It was then I knew doing that work would be my life's vocation. I'd waited several years while finishing my schooling. And I'd prayed and waited for discernment that it was the right course for me to take.

When I'd finally approached Orpha, she'd taken both my hands in hers and gazed into my eyes. "You have both the gift and the will. I shall teach you all I know."

John steeped his fingers and regarded the detective as we three sat in the parlor of the poet's home on Friend Street. He'd introduced me to Kevin after I arrived promptly at three o'clock. The detective was a round-headed Irishman with a flush to his cheeks and a sturdy build.

"Please lay out the facts of this tragic case, Kevin," John began, "so we may discern the way forward."

Kevin didn't seem taken aback by John's use of his Christian name, after the manner of Friends. Perhaps John had explained our faith's strong belief in equality at a prior meeting.

"Very well." Kevin bobbed his head. "Mr. Zachariah Woolman, a family man of forty, was found dead in his workshop on West Winkley Street last evening."

"How did he die?" I asked.

"My answer is not for the faint of heart, Miss Carroll. Shall I proceed?"

"I am not faint of heart, nor do I have a weak stomach. Please go on."

"She's a midwife's apprentice," John murmured.

"Very well. The man is a tinkerer, an inventor. He had all manner of scraps of metal and wood lying about his workshop." The detective cleared his throat. "A sharp sliver of metal to the throat was the method of death."

I swallowed. "And who discovered his body?"

“His poor wife,” Kevin said. “He’d gone out to the workshop behind the house after supper while Mrs. Woolman was busy with the passel of little ones. By the time she went to check on him, he was stone cold.”

It was dark by a quarter past four at this time of year, and temperatures had been frigid. In the absence of snow, young and old alike had been ice skating on Clark’s and Patton’s ponds, as well as on Lake Gardner. Zachariah would have gone cold quickly after death unless his workshop was well heated.

John closed his eyes. Kevin gave him a quizzical glance. I suspected John was praying for Zachariah’s soul. He opened them again after a moment.

Kevin went on. “I thought it might have been a common robbery gone bad, but nothing was missing except a few papers, according to the man’s wife.”

“I suppose she didn’t see the intruder,” I said.

“No, more’s the pity. I have a man out in the neighborhood asking if anyone spied the scoundrel, and you can be sure I’ll be talking to the victim’s employer, too.”

“Where did he work?” I asked.

“At the Briggs Carriage Company. Being an inventor by avocation, he worked with another innovative man at the company to create improved parts for the carriages. Springs, hinges, axles, all whatnot. I don’t know the first thing about building a carriage. I do recognize a comfortable ride when I’m in one.”

“Don’t we all?” John stroked his snowy chinstrap beard. “Particularly those of us in the winter of our lives.”

“Now, then, I don’t want to be taking up your whole afternoon.” Kevin stood. “What I ask of you Quakers, should you be willing, is to find out what you can among the members of your

church. I don't mean to imply in any way, let me assure you, that one of yours murdered the fellow. But someone might have heard a bit of gossip, a snatch of conversation, a piece of information that could shed light on who in tarnation might want to kill a peace-loving family man like Woolman."

"Very well, Kevin," John said.

The detective gave his head a shake. "I don't know what this world is coming to, when a gentleman is brutally killed only days before our blessed Lord's birth." The Irishman crossed himself and clapped his hat on his head. "Good day to yeh, now."

After I left John's, I thought a visit to new widow Lucy Woolman would be in order. The poor woman had to be reeling from the shock. I hoped her mother, or someone, was with her providing support, both emotional and practical.

A few minutes later, an older lady with Lucy's baby on her hip opened the door of the Woolman home on West Winkley Street.

"Good afternoon, ma'am. I'm Rose Carroll, midwife, and I assisted with the birth of this sweet child. I've just heard of Zachariah's passing and wondered if I might pay Lucy a visit."

"Of course, except she's asleep, finally. I'm Eliza, Lucy's mother." She made a *tsking* noise. "Who would want to kill poor Zachariah? He was a gentle soul in this cruel world of ours. Please come in, if thee'd like."

"If thee doesn't mind, could I possibly take a look at his workshop?"

"But that's where the wretch, whoever he was, ended my son-in-law's life."

"I know."

She peered at me. "Is thee a detective? One of those Pinkerton girls?"



“Not at all. I’m a midwife’s apprentice. But the local police detective has asked John Whittier and me to assist him.” Kevin hadn’t exactly requested that we do actual police work. Still, I felt drawn to uncovering the facts and seeking justice for Lucy’s beloved husband.

“Very well. It’s around the back. Do return at a later time and see my daughter. I’m sure thee would bring her comfort.”

I thanked her. I smiled at the baby and laid my hand on her soft, innocent cheek, then made my way to the workshop.

It was as Kevin had described: a tinkerer’s workplace. The weak afternoon light from a west-facing window lit the room, but the illumination wouldn’t last long.

I stood without touching anything, taking it in. In a corner lay a small heap of wood shavings and odd bits of metal, the latter with angry-looking sharp edges. Next to a workbench, a stool had been toppled. A dark patch on the floor was likely Zachariah’s blood, a sight that made me shiver. On the bench next to a rough model of a wheeled conveyance lay a messy pile of drawings. A rack on the wall above the table was filled with neatly hung woodworking tools, metal snips, screwdrivers, saws, and other work implements.

With so many sharp tools, why had the killer chosen a scrap from the floor? He must have worn heavy gloves so as not to cut his hand. I girded myself, trying to picture what had happened. Kevin had said the only things missing were some papers. From that pile of drawings? Perhaps they’d been plans for an invention. Zachariah could have surprised the murderer when he came out here after supper.

If they’d known each other, would they have argued? What had moved the killer to take Zachariah’s life? I’d heard, over the years, more than one person in a fit of anger say, “I’d like to

kill him.” My own brother-in-law was given to moods and had uttered those words. But he would never cross that line and actually do the deed.

The sunlight glinted off a small object on the rough wood floor. I stepped nearer with care not to disturb anything and squatted to examine it. My eyes widened at the sight of a gold signet ring. I drew out my handkerchief and picked it up. The words engraved on the flattened top read “Dartmouth College.”

This might be Emma’s father’s ring. If so, he could be Zachariah’s murderer. But why?

After pondering what I should do, I approached the police station the next morning, the Dartmouth ring carefully secured in my handkerchief inside a small reticule. Before I could mount the granite steps, the door opened and Hiram Newcastle strode out onto the landing, pulling on his gloves against the cold.

“Good morning, Hiram.”

He scowled. “Do I know you?”

“I’m Rose Carroll, one of the midwives who will be attending thy daughter’s birth. We met yesterday.”

“Yes, yes. You’d better take good care of my girl and make sure my grandson has a safe passage.”

“That is certainly our plan.”

“Very well. Good day, then.” He touched his bowler and hurried away.

Of course, we had no way of knowing whether Emma would produce a boy or a girl. This man had fathered five daughters. He probably longed for a grandson.

Several moments later I sat across from Kevin in his cramped office, a battered desk between us.

“Do you already have a few tidbits for me, Miss Carroll?” he asked

“Please call me Rose,” I said.

“Oh, no, I couldn’t possibly. What would me sainted mother say?”

“I would prefer it.”

“It’ll be Miss Rose, then. That’ll have to do.”

I smiled. “Very well. I think I might have found something useful. It, in fact, relates to a man I just saw leaving the station.”

“Hiram Newcastle?” Kevin’s voice rose.

“Yes. You see, my teacher and I are the midwives for his eldest daughter, who is due to give birth within the next few weeks. I was there yesterday morning, and he accused her husband, Antoine Gauthier, of stealing his Dartmouth College ring.”

“Did he, then?”

“Yes. After our meeting at John’s yesterday, I went to pay a visit to Lucy Woolman. I helped deliver her baby last spring. She was asleep, though, so I asked her mother if I could view Zachariah’s workshop.”

Kevin blinked. “We did search the place, you realize.”

“As is rightly thy job to do, but I wanted to see for myself. I appear to have found an item thee and thy officers missed.” I drew out the ring and unwrapped it. “It seems Mr. Newcastle might have paid Zachariah a visit.”

“Well, I’ll be gobswoggled.” He took the proffered ring and held it up to the light, turning it this way and that, squinting at the inside. “Looks like it might have something etched in there. I’ll take it to my jeweler friend for an inspection.”

“I also spied papers with drawings on them. Are they plans for inventions?”

“You do have a keen eye, Miss Ca—Miss Rose. Plans, they are. The Woolman missus said her husband had been working hard on some new contraption he hoped to sell to Mr. Briggs. She said those particular drawings are missing.” He ran a hand over his round head. “Funny thing. Our Mr. Newcastle came in this morning to insist his French-Canadian son-in-law stole the plans, that he wants to take them back to Canada and sell them there.”

“Did he have any evidence to back up his claim?”

“Not one speck,” Kevin replied. “And no plausible reason, either.”

“I wonder how Hiram even knew about the plans.”

“I asked him that selfsame question. He claims he’s also a tinkerer and had spoken with the victim about the invention last week.” He tapped his temple. “Believe you me, Miss Rose, I’ll be calling him back for another little chat before too long.”

I perched next to Lucy Woolman on her settee. She held her sleeping baby. A corner of the sitting room was devoted to tin toys and wooden blocks, with a rag doll sitting astride a stuffed horse.

Investigating aside, I still wanted to see how Lucy was faring. I’d made my way here after leaving the police station.

“Thank thee for coming, Rose.” Her face was tear-stained and drawn, her eyes haunted. “I don’t know how I shall go on. Four mouths to feed and no husband. I miss him so, and I only want to be in heaven with him.”

“I know. I also know thy children need thee, Lucy.”

She gazed at her baby’s face, smoothing the infant’s fine hair. “And they shall have me. But my heart is truly broken.”

“Zachariah wasn’t a frequent attender at Friends worship, was he?”

“No.” Her smile was wan but fond. “He preferred to do his tinkering when the children and I were out on a First Day morning. He said he could visit with God on his own. I didn’t try to stop him.”

Thus the reason I wasn’t acquainted with Zachariah beyond the birth last spring. “Lucy, stop me if this is too painful, but I wondered if thee saw anything that night. Did anyone come by to see thy husband?”

“The police asked me the same question, but at the time I was too distraught to think clearly. I know I was busy with the little ones after supper. Once the others were asleep, I sat at the window nursing this sweet child.” She gazed into the distance as if thinking. “I’m rather certain I saw a person round the corner of the house to the back.”

My pulse increased. “What could thee see about this person? Tall or short? Slender or robust? Any facial features at all?”

“I’m sorry, Rose. It was dark, I was distracted, and I caught only a glimpse. I can say he seemed tall and had a narrow profile.”

“Thee knows it was a man.”

“Actually, I don’t. The person wore a long coat. It could have been covering skirts, I suppose.”

Or a tall woman disguising herself in a man’s trousers. But who?

I sat knitting after supper at six-thirty that evening in the ladies’ boardinghouse where I resided. Orpha and I hadn’t had any antenatal appointments during the day, and I’d spent the afternoon perusing Leishman’s *A Study of Midwifery* for details about Emma’s quickened blood, color, and nervousness, not to mention the swollen ankles.

When a knock now came at the front door, one of other boarders fetched me.

“Yes?” I asked at the door. I caught my breath at a biting wind blowing in. The temperature had dropped sharply since I’d returned home at midday.

Once again, a lad pushed a note at me. I read the message from Orpha and my heart sank.

*Received word from Emma Gauthier that her labor has begun in earnest. I am poorly this evening. Please attend her and I’ll be along as I’m able. She’s only two weeks before her due date, so the baby should be mature enough to thrive.*

*Don’t worry, Rose. You are well capable to handle any complications that might arise. Have faith in yourself.*

I dug a coin out of my pocket and handed it to the boy. I supposed there was nothing for it but to pack up my birthing satchel, don my wraps, and head out into the cold.

Despite Orpha’s confidence in me, I was worried. I’d never handled a birth entirely on my own. First babies could come quickly, but more often took their time prompting their mother’s body to open sufficiently for the birth. Well, I would do what needed to be done.

I paused before knocking at the house. Despite the frigid breeze, I closed my eyes to hold Emma and her infant in God's Light. And myself, as well, that I might be able to guide them both to safety.

The door opened. Hiram Newcastle barreled out, nearly knocking me over. He stopped and stared.

"You the midwife?"

"Yes."

"Well, get in there! What in blazes are you waiting for?" He rushed off, to where I couldn't guess.

Emma was doing reasonably well so far. It was her husband who wasn't faring well, hovering like a helpless hen. She finally convinced poor Antoine to take himself off to her uncle's home for the evening. Perhaps that was where her father had disappeared to, as well.

Emma and I were able to converse a bit between contractions. She asked how I found my way to my calling, and I explained about attending Betsy's birth. At one point I asked what Hiram did for a living.

"He fancies himself an inventor. Jennie likes to tinker with him. After Mother died, he left a perfectly good position as an accountant. He'd hoped to sell his invention to one of the carriage companies, but no one wanted it. So now he's a lowly clerk, and he's not a bit happy about it."

"Was he friendly with a man named Zachariah Woolman? He was also a tinkerer."

"I think he mentioned him once." She let out a moan and went into herself during the contraction.

Maybe her father murdered Zachariah to steal his plans, dropping his ring in the process. I immediately scolded myself for thinking about homicide during the labor of a woman under my care. I glanced at the open door to see a shadow on the hallway wall.

Emma's sister Jennie popped her head in at nine o'clock to say she was going to bed. She didn't offer any help.

"Wait," I said. "I will need two basins, one filled with clean water, plus a pitcher of clean water and a stack of clean cloths, please, before thee retires."

Jennie pulled a face but did as I asked.

Emma's face contorted. "Here comes another one."

Jennie began backing away, a horrified look on her face. "Is that all, Miss Carroll?"

"Yes, thank thee."

By ten o'clock, Emma's pains were more intense but not exceedingly close together. I counseled her to change positions, and I wiped her brow with a damp cloth. She tried to be stoical but couldn't avoid a goodly measure of both groans and cries.

Orpha never appeared. I didn't know what ailed her except that she was increasingly frail with age. But I didn't have more than a moment to worry about my mentor's wellbeing, or about murder, for that matter. Emma needed all my attention.

By the wee hours of the morning, the poor thing was exhausted. I encouraged her to cat-nap between contractions. I sat in a chair by her bed and snoozed when she did. With her weight gain and her swollen feet, I wasn't surprised the labor was long-lasting. First-time mothers rarely had it easy.



The pains picked up shortly before dawn. After a full hour of pushing, Emma birthed a hearty baby boy at eight forty-five. At the cry of the infant, Jennie finally made an appearance.

“Thee has a nephew,” I told her.

“That’s fine. You’re all right, Emmie?” She stayed in the doorway.

Seeing her there brought to mind that shadow I’d noticed last evening. Had that been her listening to Emma telling me about Hiram’s dashed dreams?

“I am. Can you please fetch Antoine at Uncle’s and tell him he’s a father?” Emma gazed at the baby in her arms.

Jennie pressed her lips together. She turned away, muttering something about “beck and call.”

I finished cleaning up Emma. I tidied everything else, washed my hands, and helped her nurse the baby. I hesitated to leave until her husband or Jennie had returned, although I thought he would be more of a help than her sister. Still, I was eager to pay Kevin Donovan a visit and share a few thoughts.

Finally the new little family was happily united. Hiram never reappeared. I told Emma I’d be back the following day to check on her and asked her husband to send for me if Emma began bleeding in excess or had severe pains. I said good-bye to Jennie. She barely acknowledged me. The younger children must have been off with a neighbor, as there had been no evidence of them during my stay.

I walked out into a sunny but bitterly cold winter’s day. I wanted to see how Orpha fared, but the detective came first. I’d given my word to both him and John.

After I delivered my thoughts to Kevin, I visited Orpha, who sat in her usual rocking chair.

“I’m feeling better now, Rose, but I was dizzy last evening,” she said. “It wouldn’t have been prudent for me to venture out. And I have great confidence in you. Tell me, did Mrs. Gauthier suffer any complications?”

“No. Her labor lasted more than twelve hours, but that’s not so long for a first-time mother. She pushed for an hour, but she produced a healthy baby boy, and a big one. Nine pounds, twelve ounces, Orpha.”

“Big babies usually survive with the most success. They have fat stores and nicely developed lungs that stand them well in case they fall ill. Did the sister we met assist you?”

“Only in the most minimal of ways. I’d have awoken her if need be, but I didn’t have to.” Speaking of Jennie, I wondered if Kevin was at this moment doing what I’d suggested.

Orpha tilted her head. “A penny for your thoughts?”

“Oh, it’s nothing.” I didn’t want to burden her with my ideas about Zachariah’s death. But the woman did have an uncanny ability to see into my soul.

I once again sat in John Whittier’s parlor that afternoon. I’d been restless at home after I’d left Orpha’s. The note summoning me to John’s at two o’clock was most welcome. It had said only that Kevin wished to speak with both of us.

“Shall we pray while we await the good detective?” The poet folded his hands and closed his eyes.

I did likewise. I tried to hold Hiram and Jennie in the Light. Lucy and her children. Emma and Antoine and their newborn son. But my thoughts weren’t peaceful, and I shifted in my chair, restless with wanting to know what Kevin would say.

At last John's housekeeper ushered in the detective, now red-cheeked from the cold. "Well, Miss Rose, your tip was most useful, " he said.

John raised a single white eyebrow.

I cleared my throat. "I told thee, Kevin, that I spoke with Lucy Woolman. She said she couldn't be sure if the tall person with the narrow profile she'd seen the night of her husband's murder was a man or a woman wearing a long coat. Last evening, as I attended Emma Gauthier in her labor, she mentioned that her sister Jennie loved tinkering with their father. He had tried to sell his invention to the carriage companies, but none would take it. Emma also thought her father had visited Zachariah."

"It was Hiram Newcastle we suspected all along," Kevin added. "Despite his claims that Antoine Gauthier was the thief and killer. And you'd found his ring in the victim's workshop."

John gazed at me. "But thee thought differently."

"As of this morning, I did. Jennie, who is sixteen, deeply resented having to do all the housework and care of the younger children after Emma married and moved to Quebec. Jennie still does. I thought perhaps she was the one who killed Zachariah and stole his plans for a new carriage invention. She was also an inventor and would have been able to see the value in the idea. I think she hoped she could sell it elsewhere and enable her father to hire a maid or a housekeeper to relieve her of her burden. The final bit was seeing her right hand with a bandage across the palm."

"As you relayed to me this morning," Kevin said. "I obtained a search warrant for the house, and we went straight away there. Sure enough, Miss Newcastle had secreted the plans under the mattress of her bed."

"Did she confess her crimes?" John asked.

“That, and then some. She sang like a canary gleeful to finally unload all the ways she felt downtrodden and burdened.” Kevin shook his head in wonder. “She even called out her own father for being heartless and impractical. She’s now behind bars and under the care of a police matron.”

“The poor girl didn’t feel loved nor cared for,” I murmured. “She was hurting.”

“I shall pray for the ease of her soul,” John said.

Kevin made a small *harrumph* as he stood. “That’s all well and good, Mr. Whittier. Right now I’m off to tell a grieving wife we’ve made an arrest not only in the theft of her husband’s property but in the case of his homicide.”

“Will Jennie receive a measure of leniency for her youth?” I asked.

“Perhaps.” Kevin clapped his police hat on his head. “Good day to you both. Miss Rose, I know I asked you to keep your eyes and ears out about this case, and I’m relieved you weren’t put at risk. But please do avoid further close encounters with murderers.”

To my surprise, I’d found acting the sleuth satisfying, especially as I hadn’t encountered danger to my person. I’d helped accomplish the pursuit of justice, despite the pain of discovering that a girl was the killer. Still, I had every intention of complying with Kevin’s advice. I planned to avoid any and all homicides – and their instigators – in the future.