



*Murder on
Death's Roller Coaster*

Jessica, Mélanie, Claire

'Riiiiing, riiiiing!'

I had just arrived at my office in Manchester, when the telephone rang. It was Mike, my friend and assistant who helped me with my cases.

'Good morning detective Collins.

- Hello Mike, what is wrong?

-There has been a terrible accident in Adventure Island, the famous theme park. During the inauguration of the new attraction: Death Roller Coaster, one of the cars went off the rails.

- Are there any victims?

- Only one person died, it's the theme park's director, Edward King.

-Are you sure that it's an accident? I think it's quite strange that there was only one victim which just happened to be the director.

- I don't know yet. Can you come to investigate?

- Of course. I'll be there as soon as I can.'

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Once I arrived there, the place was very crowded. There were many journalists and TV reporters who were busy talking with witnesses. I went to the spot of the accident, but a policeman stopped me.

'My name's Kate Collins. I'm a private detective and I'm here to investigate.

- Do you think it's a murder? asked the policeman astonished.

- You never know. '

He let me pass and I went to look at the detached wagon. I couldn't believe my eyes; the metallic bars had been severed. That was strange because the bars were new and very solid. Someone must have cut them on purpose. So Edward King had in fact been murdered.

The forensic pathologists were examining the body when I went to see Mike and explained the case to him. I told him that we should investigate and interrogate suspects. After inquiring, I learnt that the assistant director was supposed to be in the wagon with Mr. King but he hadn't attended the event. I decided to interrogate him after lunch.

'Good afternoon, Mr. Robbins, why weren't you on the roller coaster?

- There was a fire in one of the restaurant's kitchen. I had to attend the matter as soon as possible.

- Can anyone confirm your alibi?

- Yes, the chef can.

- Thank you very much Mr. Robbins. '

At that moment, I knew Mr. Robbins wasn't the murderer. So I went to see Amy King, the victim's wife to get more information. She had long wavy blond hair and greenish eyes. She was wearing elegant clothes: a blouse and a pencil skirt. Around her wrist I spotted an expensive watch. When I saw her, she looked extremely sad. She was wiping her tears. I comforted her and asked her a few questions.

'Did your husband have any enemies?

-His old friend, Andrew Walter is the park's technician. He gave money to my husband years ago to help him open the amusement park, but Edward still owed him money. '

How interesting, a technician could have cut the bars easily. I should interrogate him after this.

When I was done talking with Mrs. King, Mike came to see me. He had important news for me: the forensic pathologist had found a threatening letter in his pocket, from Andrew Walter. The technician wanted his money back.

I decided to see him.

'Did you write a letter to the victim asking for money?

-What are you talking about? I never wrote a letter to Mr. King. '

I was astonished. He was either lying or else someone had written the letter to frame him. Since I didn't have much information, I decided to check the surveillance cameras, to see when the metallic bars had been cut and by whom.

I knocked on the security guard's door. Someone opened it. He was a middle-aged man named Paul Brown, wearing a grey uniform. He was bald, quite fat and extremely ugly. He looked very tired because he had dark circles under his eyes.

'Who are you?

-I'm detective Collins. I'm inquiring the case of the Death Roller Coaster. I would like to see the video tapes of the last few days.

-I didn't see anything strange or suspicious.

-I would still like to watch them myself. Thank you for your cooperation.

He showed me the tapes. We were very shocked by our discovery: At 3:11 a.m. there was a masked man who was cutting the bars with a blowpipe. Then he left the construction site and he wasn't seen on any other surveillance cameras in the theme park. It was quite strange that he avoided all of them, therefore he must have known where they were installed. He probably had a security map or it was someone who worked here.

This new clue also proved that Mr. Walters was innocent. Since he was a technician he had access to the construction site all day, so there was no reason for him to sever the bars in the middle of the night.

I asked the security guard for the tapes as evidence and asked him a few questions.

'How come you didn't see the criminal that night?

-I was with William Peterson, the gatekeeper. He was giving me the keys and left afterwards.'

I went to see Mr. Peterson to check the security guard's alibi because he seemed a little suspicious. Sure enough, when I questioned him about Mr. Brown, he said he had never given him the keys and that Mr. Brown even owned his set. Just to make sure, I checked the surveillance cameras and they were never seen talking together.

I knew something was up, so I went to question Paul Brown again.

'Mr. Brown, why did you lie and give a false alibi? Do you have anything to confess?

-I'm sorry, I should have told you. That night, I fell asleep while checking the security footage. Usually that never happens. I always take my job seriously; I even drink a lot of coffee to stay awake.'

I could tell he was being sincere by his facial expressions. Still, it was strange that he had fallen asleep specifically on that night. Maybe he had been drugged or someone had put some sleeping pills in his coffee. Just to be sure, I asked him for his mug to analyze what it contained at the laboratory. One of my friends, Victoria worked there and she always helped me out.

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It was 8:22 p.m., I was very exhausted from this long and tiring day. I had just eaten a quick dinner and I was thinking about the investigation. I couldn't figure out who the murderer was. This case was impossible. I knew I couldn't give up after all my progress even though I was discouraged. I decided to check all my suspects and any other leads again.

Suddenly I realized I hadn't been thorough enough; I hadn't interrogated most of the theme park staff, but most importantly, I had forgotten to interrogate Trevor Jones, the owner of Dream

World, another attraction park in Manchester. He was Mr. King's main competitor. He could have hired one of the employees to sabotage the ride.

I was really glad of my new discovery, and I decided to visit Mr. Jones the following morning. I also planned on seeing Mrs. King to report our progress on the case. She had asked me to inform her about everything. Then I called Mike, my assistant because I needed him to interrogate the Adventure Island's staff for I was going to be extremely busy the next day.

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As I closed my eyes, I was awoken by a loud noise. My phone was ringing. I immediately answered and I was surprised to hear Victoria's voice. She told me that the mug I had given her earlier contained coffee and traces of ramelteon which was a sleeping pill. I was right, Mr. Brown had been drugged just like I had predicted. He was innocent, but this meant that someone had purposely made him fall asleep to sabotage the attraction.

Now I had another clue. The criminal had gone past the security cameras without being caught on tape, so he had had the blueprints of the park. Then he had drugged the security guard just to be safe. Finally at 3:11 a.m. he had cut the metallic bars with a blowtorch, but somehow a security camera had filmed the entire scene. So that meant that the murderer didn't own the most recent blueprints. He probably had started planning the sabotage a while ago and had stolen the map too.

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I woke up the following morning at 6 a.m.. Since I was quite tired, I drank a strong cup of coffee and then I had breakfast. Once I had finished eating, I got dressed. After that, I went to Mr. Jones's office to ask him a few questions.

When I arrived there, I asked his secretary if I could see him. She was very polite and told me he was with a business client. Then she asked me to wait outside his office. A few minutes later, an old man exited Mr. Jones's office and his secretary let me in.

Mr. Jones was sitting at this desk. He was a very handsome young man who was wearing an expensive suit.

'Please take a seat, Mrs. Collins. I'm pleased to meet the most famous detective in Manchester.'

I was extremely flattered by his complement.

'How may I help you?

- Where were you at 3:11 a.m. on May 10th, and what were you doing?

- I was sleeping in my private jet. I boarded the plane around 10 o'clock in New York and I arrived at Manchester around 5:30 a.m..'

Once I finished speaking to Mr. Jones, I called Mike and updated him on the most recent news. I also asked him to look into Mr. Jones's alibi. Then, I went to see Mrs. King to report my progress on the case. Surprisingly, she looked happier than the day before. I told her that we didn't have any leads and that all our suspects had turned out to be innocent. She looked quite surprised.

'Did you speak to Andrew Walter, the technician?

- Yes, I did. He's innocent.

- Are you sure? There are many pieces of evidence against him! He had even written a letter to threaten my husband!

- It was a fake letter, Mrs. King.

- Really? She said as she rolled her eyes. '

At noon, Mike called me and told me he had important information and clues. We decided to talk over lunch, so we went to a delicious French restaurant. After ordering our meals, Mike said:

'This morning, I interrogated all the theme park staff and checked their alibis. They were all innocent. Then, while I was searching the crime scene, I found the blowtorch which had probably been used to cut the metallic bars. It was in a trash can near the roller coaster and it wasn't well hidden. Moreover, the name Andrew Walters was written on a tag which was glued on it. I sent it to the lab to have it analyzed it, but there weren't any fresh set of fingerprints. So the culprit was obviously wearing gloves.

- Maybe the murderer wanted to lead us on a false track, just like with the letter. Someone wants to accuse Mr. Walters.

- But who?

- Mrs. King kept insisting that Mr. Walters was the murderer, but she has no motive to kill her husband.

- Anyway, I have another important piece of information for you. When I interrogated Mr. Jones's pilot, he revealed that the plane actually took off in New York at 4:30 p.m. and landed at 2 a.m. in Manchester!

- So Mr. Jones could be the killer! I wonder why he hadn't told me the truth; I should go and talk to him later.

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Around 6 o'clock, when I was parking the car near Mr. Jones' office, I saw him with Mrs. King. They were kissing on the lips. At first I didn't understand. I was so shocked. But all of a sudden, everything became clear to me. They were having an affair! I decided to go and confront them.

When they saw me coming in their direction, they seemed confused and embarrassed to.

'This isn't what you're thinking, started Mr. Jones.

-I've already understood everything. You have some serious explaining to do. '

We went to his office and sat down. They were both very scared and pale.

'This is a misunderstanding, protested Mr. Jones

- Oh, I don't think so! You sabotaged the death roller coaster and murderer Mr. King!

- I was in my private jet, I couldn't have murdered him.

- That's a false alibi; you arrived at 2:30 a.m. not at 5:30 a.m. After that, you severed the bars and caused Mr. King's death. But how did you steal the security map and how did you get into the park?

- We never did such things.

- Stop pretending you're innocent.

- Okay fine, a few months ago Amy stole her husband's pair of keys and the map. That night, she drugged the security guard to make sure he wouldn't see anything and I stole the blowtorch to cut the metallic bars, but I had no idea there were security cameras on the construction site.

- We know this was a terrible thing to do, but I wanted a divorce so that we could get married and if he died I would inherit everything because we have no children.

- Mrs. Collins, you can't arrest us, you have no proof.

- Of course I do, you have just confessed your crimes.'

At that moment a group of police officers burst through the door and they arrested Mrs. King and Mr. Jones immediately. I had called them as soon as I had seen Mrs. King and Mr. Jones together because I could sense they were guilty. I had also recorded their confessions and now I had the evidence I needed to put them in prison for good. I was very pleased to have solved this crime and decided to go have dinner with some friends.