

Logan's Choice

Aims

- To introduce students to the key characters in the story, and the start of the plot.
- To discuss police work in general and Inspector Jenny Logan in particular.

1 Ask students to read People in the Story and Extract 1, which is the opening of Chapter 1. Ask them to decide what kind of a story it is, what might have happened, and why the story might be called *Logan's Choice*. Ask them to discuss these questions in a group of four, then call back ideas from the whole class.

Answers: murder mystery; students' own answers.

2 Ask students to read Extract 2 and say what they think happened to Alex MacLennan.

Answer: Students can decide whether they think MacLennan's death was an accident or murder.

In pairs, ask them to make a list of things they think the police will do next. Ask them to use their knowledge of real investigations, ones from books (e.g. Agatha Christie), TV programmes and films they have seen. Get each pair to compare their list with another pair's; call back their ideas and make a class list on the board.

Possible answers: They will question Alice MacLennan and Donald Johnstone; they will question other people (e.g. Ian Ross and others at the restaurant); they will get the forensic scientists to examine the room and the body; they will gather information about MacLennan.

3 Tell students that Logan questions Ian Ross and Donald Johnstone. Ask them to read Extracts 3 and decide if they can find any reasons for them to want to kill Alex MacLennan. Ask them if they think one man seems more likely to have done it and why.

Possible answers: Ross might have killed him because he was jealous of Alex's wealth and celebrity friends and angry because he did all the work. Also he was in the army. Perhaps he had a relationship with Alex's wife. Johnstone might have killed him because he needs the money to pay back the bank; he also seems an angry kind of person.

4 Ask students what Inspector Logan needs to find out next, and what they think she will do. Ask them to work in pairs to decide whom she will talk to and make a list of the questions she will ask them.

Possible answers: Alice: What was your relationship with your husband like? Did he have any enemies? Did he have any business problems? Ross/Johnstone: Where were you at the time of the murder? Ross: What kind of friendship did you have with Alex? What kind of business relationship did you have with him? How well do you know Alice and her brother Johnstone?

Once you have called back suggestions from the whole class, and maybe listed them on the board, ask students to work in pairs to invent the interview between Logan and one of the characters. They should write out the dialogue of the interview, making up Logan's questions and inventing suitable answers. They can then perform the interview for others.

5 One of the characters is a journalist called Tam MacDonald; another is called Major Innes, a soldier. Ask students to decide what part they think these men play in the story.

Possible answers: The journalist might have additional information about MacLennan and therefore be able to help Logan; he will probably also want to interview Logan about the circumstances surrounding MacLennan's death so that he can write his article. Major Innes may have some useful information about Ross that no one else knows.

6 Imagine you are Tam MacDonald. Write a headline and the opening paragraph about Alex MacLennan's murder – he was a rich and famous person. For example:

“MACLENNAN MURDER MYSTERY
Famous restaurant owner Alex MacLennan was found dead in the bathroom of his house last night. Doctors say he died of a broken neck. At the moment we don't know if he died accidentally by falling over in the wet bathroom, or if he was killed. Inspector Jenny Logan of the Edinburgh Police is leading the investigation.”

7 Ask students what qualities they think a good police inspector needs. Call back their ideas and make a list on the board.

Possible answers: They need to think clearly, to be thorough and careful when looking for clues; they must understand people's reactions and their reasons for doing and saying things; they must be prepared to work hard and long, unsociable hours; they must know where to find information.

8 Ask students to look at Extracts 4 and find out what they can about Jenny Logan as a person and as a police inspector. Think of some adjectives to describe her. Ask them to compare their ideas with the list on the board. Ask students to think about the fact that Jenny Logan is a woman, and whether this might make her job as a police inspector more easy or more difficult. Once they have some ideas, start a whole-class discussion about the issue of women in the police force.

Optional activity

Ask students to write a paragraph about Jenny Logan based on what they find out about her in the extracts.

Logan's Choice

People in the Story

- Inspector Jenny Logan:** a police officer in Edinburgh
Sergeant Grant: an officer helping Inspector Logan
Alex Maclennan: the rich owner of Charlotte's restaurant
Alice Maclennan: the wife of Alex Maclennan
Donald Johnstone: Alice Maclennan's brother
Ian Ross: the manager of Charlotte's restaurant
Tam MacDonald: a journalist
Major Innes: someone who knew Ian Ross when he was a soldier

Extract 1

It was the middle of the night when Jenny Logan's phone woke her. She was tired and answered the phone sleepily.

'Logan.'

'Grant here, madam.'

'It's three o'clock in the morning, Grant. I hope this is important.'

'I'm at the home of Alex Maclennan. He's dead.'

'Give me the address, Grant. I'll be there in twenty-five minutes.'

Extract 2

'Mrs Maclennan was already in bed,' Grant said. '... she woke up at one thirty and he wasn't in bed ... She couldn't find him but the bathroom door was locked ... she tried to break the door open but she couldn't, so she called her brother. He came round, broke open the door and they found Mr Maclennan dead, on the bathroom floor,' finished Grant.

Grant and Logan arrived at the bathroom ... Alex Maclennan's body was on the floor ...

'You say someone locked the door on the inside?' asked Logan.

'That's right, madam,' Grant answered.

'So, how did he die, then?' asked Logan ...

'A broken neck, the doctor says. Looks like the floor was wet, he fell, hit the side of the bath ...'

... The floor was wet, but not very wet. The bath was empty. Alex Maclennan's body was dry ...

'What about the window?' asked Logan.

'I thought about that,' said Grant, 'It's closed but not locked.'

Logan ... opened the window ... and looked down. It was about six metres to the ground – not far.'

Extracts 3

- a 'I left the army and came back here. I didn't have a job. Alex was back from the States. We spent a lot of time together and decided to start Charlotte's. He had the money and the famous friends. I did the work!' Ross laughed, but Logan saw that his eyes were not smiling ...
'How well do you know Alice Maclennan?'
'Now wait a minute, Inspector. If you think Alice and I ...'
He stopped ...
'I don't think anything, Mr Ross ... I just ask questions.'
- b 'You have a very nice house, Mr Johnstone. I'm sure you don't want the bank to take it from you because you can't pay them back.'
'That's not going to happen,' said Johnstone angrily. His face was going red.
'Why not? Because your brother-in-law is dead and so your sister now has enough money to help you,' said Logan quietly.
'What are you saying, Inspector? That I wanted Alex dead? That I had something to do with it?'
Johnstone's face was now dark red with anger.
'Get out!' he shouted. 'Get out of my house and don't come back.'

Extracts 4

- a Logan was only twenty-eight but she did not feel young this morning. When she thought about murder, she always felt old.
- b She told Grant to take any black or dark blue clothes and ask the scientists to have a look at them.
- c She could make a phone call but it was more interesting to talk to people face to face.
- d 'Well, Jenny Logan,' said the man. 'How nice to see you! You're just in time to buy me a Christmas drink.'
'OK, Tam,' said Logan. 'But you'll have to work for it. I want some information from you.'
- e Logan's dark brown eyes studied Alice Maclennan's face carefully.
- f 'You've got a choice, Mr Johnstone. We can talk now and it will take about ten minutes. Or, I can take you to the police station and ask you some questions there.'
She let different ideas run through her head. After a time one idea stayed there and she thought about it very carefully.