

# Dead Cold

## Aims

- To focus students' attention on aspects of the murder mystery genre.
- To introduce the key character of the detective.
- To stimulate students to read the book.

- 1 Give students the title of the story: *Dead Cold*. What kind of story do they think it is? Elicit murder mystery, thriller.
- 2 Tell students that they are going to read *Dead Cold*, a murder mystery set in the Rocky Mountains in the United States. What kinds of characters are associated with a murder mystery? Elicit these words, by writing the following on the board or overhead.

d \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 C \_ \_ \_ \_ of P \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 k \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 d \_ \_ \_ person  
 s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

**Answers:** detective, Chief of Police, killer, dead person, suspect

- 3 Ask students what usually happens in a murder mystery? If they have difficulty doing this, use a famous murder story that they all know as an example. Elicit the following: someone is killed, detective or police arrive and *investigate* the crime, there are suspects, clues, etc. Finally the killer, or murderer, is found.
- 4 Put these jumbled sentences from the blurb of *Dead Cold* on the board or overhead. Ask students to put the sentences in the correct order as quickly as they can.
  - a She's Janine, a 23-year-old student who wanted to write for a newspaper.
  - b But first she must find out the big story Janine was working on before her death.
  - c Detective Flick Laine has to find the killer.
  - d A dead girl is found in a swimming pool in Pine Crest, USA.

**Answer:** A dead girl is found in a swimming pool in Pine Crest, USA. She's Janine, a 23-year-old student who wanted to write for a newspaper. Detective Flick Laine has to find the killer. But first she must find out the big story Janine was working on before her death.
- 5 Focus students on the detective, Flick Laine. Establish that she's a woman. In murder mysteries, what are detectives usually like? Use examples of famous detectives that the students know from films or books, or famous detectives in literature, e.g. Miss Marple, Sam Spade, Philip Marlowe, etc. Establish that the detective is often, though not always, a *loner* or even an *outsider*. S/he is very clever, gets feelings about things and is sometimes different from other people.

- 6 Put students into small groups of three or four. Give each group just one of the four extracts (on the handout opposite). Ask groups to read the list of people in the story and their extract. Are the following statements about Flick Laine true or false?

- a Flick Laine usually works in Pine Crest.
- b Her boss is Leo Cohn.
- c Leo asks her to go to Pine Crest to investigate the death of a young man.
- d Flick's work partner, Scott, was killed two months ago.
- e Flick used to ski.
- f Flick drives a blue car.
- g Flick is very sad about Scott's death.

**Note:** Each group will have only some of the information. Ask groups to communicate with each other to get all the information.

- 7 Give all students all the extracts to check.

### Answers:

- a F (Denver)
- b T
- c F (a young woman)
- d T
- e T (used to go to Pine Crest)
- f F (it's red)
- g T ('Most days it was difficult.')

**Note:** you can just do this activity as a normal T/F without the information exchange.

### Alternative

Do this as a jigsaw reading. Put students into groups of four: A, B, C and D. Each group reads one extract and makes notes on what they learn about Flick Laine. Re-group the students AAAA, BBBB, etc. and ask them to pool their information. Take feedback and check that they have all the information.

- 8 Ask students to write a short profile of Flick Laine, using the information they now have about her. Ask them to try and make her sound as interesting as possible. When they have finished, ask them to compare their profiles with the author's on the handout opposite (you can out this on the board or overhead).
- 9 Ask students if Flick Laine is a typical detective? Compare to the profile they suggested earlier in the lesson.
- 10 Ask students to read Extract 5. This is the end of Chapter 1. Ask them the following questions: Where is Flick going? Why? Do you think she'll manage to forget about Scott?
- 11 If you have the books, hand them out and start reading.

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## People in the Story

**Flick Laine:** A detective in the Denver Police

**Leo Cohn:** Chief of Denver Police. Flick's boss

**Bill Gershon:** Chief of Pine Crest Police

**Teresa Douglas and Jeff Mason:** Students from Texas

**Susan Hunter:** A movie star

## Profile of Flick Laine

Flick Laine is a detective in the Denver Police. She's a young woman in her late twenties, early thirties. She used to ski and now she drives a red 1957 Chevrolet.

Flick's boss is Denver Chief of Police, Leo Cohn. Her partner, Scott, was killed two months ago and she feels very sad about it. He was her best friend.

## Extract 1

So that January morning my boss, Leo Cohn, Chief of the Denver Police, called me into his office.

'Girl's body in Pine Crest, Flick,' said Leo. Leo was thin and worked too much. He never sat down. Now, he was standing near his desk. 'They found her yesterday.'

'Oh?' I said.

'It looks like someone killed her,' he said. I didn't say anything. 'Murder,' he said, as if I didn't understand. I waited. He didn't look at me. Then he said: 'I want you to go to Pine Crest.'

'Ha!' I said. 'So that's what you want. But Leo, why me? It's too soon. It was just two months ago ... I can't!'

'Flick, you're the best,' he said, 'and you need to get out of Denver ... it's the best thing.'

'Listen, Leo,' I started, but I stopped.

## Extract 2

Leo looked me in the eyes.

'Come on, Flick. Bill Gershon, the Chief of Police there, is an old friend of mine. He's not happy. If it's murder, it's bad for business. No-one wants to ski when there is a killer about.'

Well, yeah, I thought, as I looked out of Leo's window at the city, a dead body was bad for business. I knew Pine Crest. I used to go skiing there on the weekends. The town made its money from the thousands of visitors who went there every year. The restaurants, cafés, hotels, ski school, all made money from the people who went to beautiful Pine Crest for their vacation.

## Extract 3

'And the girl?' I asked. 'Was she a visitor?'

Leo smiled. He could see that I was interested. 'Yes,' he said. 'She was there on a skiing vacation with some friends from college. Someone found her in the swimming pool at the hotel where she was staying.'

'She died in the swimming pool?' I asked. 'I mean ...'

'Looks like somebody drowned her,' Leo said.

I looked at him.

'She was twenty-three years old,' Leo said softly.

'And?' I asked.

'You'll get what you need from Gershon,' said Leo.

I got up to leave.

'Oh and Flick ...' said Leo. I turned at the door.

'I want you to get this one and I want you to get it fast,' he said. 'First because it'll make the Denver Police Department look good. And we need that.'

'And second because you think it's good for me to get out of the office and back to work?' I said.

Leo didn't say anything, but it was true. He was helping me in his way.

'OK, Leo,' I said, 'but remember, it was just November, just two months ago ... that Scott ...'

'Yeah, yeah, I know. But Flick, Scott's dead,' said Leo. His voice was kind, but strong. 'And you've got to live.' He turned away from me and looked out of the window. Leo was finished.

## Extract 4

I walked to my office to get the things I needed for a few days out of town: my notebook, cell phone and car keys. I thought about November, thought about Scott. Detective Scott King of the Denver Police. Then I took my gun and put it under my jacket.

I went downstairs to the parking lot. Scott and I worked together for four years. We were the best, the best the Denver Police Department had. We loved catching killers, robbers, all of Denver's criminals. But we were more than that; we were friends too. Scott was my best friend. Then one stupid, cold day in November, Eddie Lang killed Scott. And I saw my best friend die.

'Yeah,' I thought, 'Scott's dead and I've got to live.' Most days it was difficult.

I shook my head and Scott's face went away. I took my keys out of the pocket of my jacket and looked at the most beautiful car in the world, my red 1957 Chevrolet. My Chevy. I smiled. That car always made me smile. Some days it felt like it was the only good thing in my life.

## Extract 5

I drove home fast to my apartment on Alameda, went in and packed a bag. I changed into my blue suit and looked at myself in the mirror in the bathroom. I looked OK. I looked like I came from the big city. I felt my gun inside my jacket. I was ready. Ready to find a killer ... without Scott.

Fifteen minutes later I was driving on I70 to Pine Crest, Colorado. I was trying to forget about Scott. And I was trying to forget about Eddie Lang.