

# Impatience: A Nova Scotia Murder Mystery (Nova Scotia Murder Mysteries Book 2)

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[Impatience](#) Â [Laura Stapleton](#) Â Â [Table of Contents](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Description](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Excerpt from Pleasures: A Nova Scotia Murder Mystery](#)

[Chapter 1](#) [Other Books in the Nova Scotia Murder Mysteries](#) [Other Works](#) [About the Author](#)

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**Acknowledgements** I need to thank both Rhonda Stapleton and Mandie Stevens for helping to keep my focus on the current work in progress. It's so easy for me to follow the next shiny object. Their nudges help keep me on track. **Dedication** To my erotica writing friends. I hope this makes you proud at all the Words I used. **Description** In the second full novel in an Atlantic Maritime series, an assumed loyal son is the first suspect after his invalid mother's surprise death. Was the suspect impatient for his inheritance? Or did old age catch up to the dear elderly lady? Can Aaron and Mandy teaming up again help explain his patient's death before the wrong man is arrested? **Chapter 1** "She has to, sir. I can't let myself imagine any other option." Aaron Nicholson's words sounded more confident to himself than his mind felt. He looked from Mandy Hays' father, Shawn, to her mother, Karen, and at last to her brother, Marty. "She has the best team operating on her now. Mandy has no choice but to come out of this okay." Shawn gave him a weak smile. "You're the doctor." He turned to his wife. "I don't suppose you or Aaron could sneak into surgery and be a fly on the wall for us?" She took and squeezed his hand. "We can't. You know both of us would." Aaron sat back in his chair. Mandy and Marty's parents leaned

together, drawing strength from each other. He glanced around the emergency room here at Dartmouth General. Sleet tapped the windows before melting into drops and sliding down. The sudden cold front left him glad they'd rescued Mandy on the Nova Scotia beach before precipitation had set in. He shivered. The bitter chill from the damp night air stayed with him even now, a few hours later. He glanced away from the window to the family seated opposite him. None of them looked at him, all wrapped in their own cocoon of worry. Ken Cole and Craig Walker co-owned a pest control company, Bug-Off and had been family friends of the Hays. When Craig turned up dead in a secluded cove during a solitary fishing trip, no one had suspected Ken of anything. He and Craig had been like brothers. After police had learned Craig had taken Ken's prescription medicine and called him in for questioning, he'd panicked. Shawn said, "Ken kidnapping Mandy, I just can't believe it. Both he and Craig used my company for their business and personal taxes. We've all been friends for years." He looked down at his shaking hands. "I never thought he'd hurt my girl." He nodded and liked how Karen hugged her husband to comfort him. Aaron absentmindedly rubbed his bad knee. The joint ached from running in the cold while he carried Mandy. "One bullet grazed her arm, another went through her upper leg, and both were on her left side. He shoved her down hard based on the abrasions on her right side." Her face, deathly pale in the moonlight was burned into his mind like a flash from a camera. He shook his head, wanting to delete the image. "He did so before shooting her, I'd guess, hoping she'd be less of a moving target. She should recover completely." Karen buried her face in Shawn's shoulder, saying, "Why would he do such a horrible thing?" "Did he actually expect the entire force to drop everything if Mandy died?" Marty asked. "Sure I would, and Evan. You would too, Doc. You'd probably be leading the gang." A coldness settled in his mind at the thought of Mandy's death. Marty was right. Aaron would have stopped everything to hunt down Mandy's killer. "Like I said, he was panicked and not thinking about the consequences." Marty opened his mouth to say something when an ambulance pulling up caught everyone's attention. Paramedics unloaded a gurney, clanking and banging as they did so. A man from visitor parking's direction ran up to the group, wringing his hands. Aaron squinted to see better through the glass. The guy seemed familiar, like someone he'd treated before now. He recognized the toque on him as hand-knitted by one of the women brought in last month. One of his favorite patients had knitted him a hat just like it but in blue instead of red. He smiled a little, wondering if it were a popular pattern or if Dorie Graham had intended on outfitting the whole town with her hats. The man outside also wore a red plaid overshirt like the fleece lined ones Aaron's dad used to wear. "That looks like Paul, and I suspect that's Dorie," Karen said. Aaron squinted, trying to see through the rainy window. "I thought so. Are they patients of yours, too?" She nodded, still staring at the drama outside. "Yes. Paul brings in his mother whenever she's due for a routine checkup. He's such a good son to her, putting his whole life on hold when she had her accident." "Her accident?" He leaned forward a little to keep their voices low so no one overheard. "I knew about his falling off a ladder." "Were you the one who saw him here?" She asked and at his nod, Karen went to sit beside him. She leaned against Aaron in a hug. "You did excellent work patching him up, dear. I helped Dr. Raymond pull out his stitches." Her praise left him a little flustered. "Thank you, Mrs. Hays." He'd heard nice things from other medical professionals before now but from her? Aaron liked impressing Mandy's mom. Doors leading into the ER opened and a middle-aged man walked out, led by a hospital employee into the general area. The protesting guy turned around, trying to get past the nurse and saying, "I need to be in there with my mother. She needs me." "I'm sorry, Mr. Graham. We've done everything we can for now." The head nurse on duty didn't flinch and directed Paul into the waiting area. "She's stable for now and if her condition changes, I'll come get you." Paul nodded and kept walking into the large room, his eyes glazed. Aaron stood, recognizing shock in the man's expression. He walked up, saying, "Paul? Here, have a seat." He let Aaron lead him to a chair without a protest but didn't sit. "Dr. Nicholson? Can you go back there for me? Mom needs you." "I'm not on duty today." He glanced at the Hays. Each one of them had interested while pretending not to be expressions on their faces. "I also have a good friend in surgery right now. In fact, we ought to be waiting in that room, instead." Aaron rubbed his forehead, irritated the idea just now occurred to him. "Oh." Paul took off his hat and sank

down opposite him. "I'm sorry, I didn't know." "I didn't think of that, either." Karen stood. "We'll go wait there for Mandy." She gave a glance to Paul then back at him. "You'll join us later?" Aaron nodded. "As soon as I can." "Very well." Mandy's mother stood, patting Aaron on the shoulder. "Guys, let's go. We'll want to be there when she goes to Recovery." The Hays men got up, stretching, and followed her. Aaron resisted the urge to tag along. He adored the sweet and elderly Mrs. Graham, but Mandy? His pulse jumped when the word *love* sprang to mind. Later. When she was safe at home in her apartment across from him, he'd panic about his feelings for her being too much too soon. Right now, one of his patients needed him to be professional. Aaron turned to Paul. "You do realize I'm serious about not being on duty. Otherwise, I'd be back there helping your mother." Paul leaned forward to put his elbows on his knees, burying his face in his hands. "You're right. Of course, you're right. This time scared me, doc," he said through his fingers. "I've never seen her turn blue before now." The symptom alarmed him, too. "Did you notice anything else?" Concerned for Dorie, he had to know more. He sat up, staring blankly at the wall. "That was the worst until she fainted. I saw her color first. She was at the kitchen table, wheezing. Mom stood up like she was dizzy and tried to tell me something." The symptoms belonged to dozens of reasons. Aaron needed to narrow it down a little. "Did you hear anything specific?" "No, just a mumble and down she went. I called 911 right off." He leaned back and looked at the double doors. "Should I go back there? Maybe she needs me." A panicked son peering over their shoulders asking questions was the last thing the staff needed right now in critical care. "They're doing everything possible and are some of the best I've worked with." Paul squinted, looking him up and down. "You're kind of young, so I'm not sure how many others you know. Been out of medical school what, one or two years?" Aaron grinned. The guy had him there, being older than him by a couple of decades. "Thanks, but it's been longer than that. Close to ten years." "Sorry, no offense," he said, holding up his hands with a slight grin. He felt bad for the guy. Paul's smile didn't reach his eyes, and Aaron didn't blame him. "None was taken. You want the best for Mrs. Graham." "Yeah. Mom will be all right. She has to be." He didn't comment. Nothing was worse than dishing out false hope, except telling someone they had none. He checked the time, wondering how Mandy was doing in surgery. Aaron fidgeted in his chair, slumping down some. If Dorie weren't such a dear, reminding him of his grandmother, he'd be with the Hays right now. Not that they needed him, but he needed them. He sighed, sitting upright again, wanting to help Paul. The man's mother had been a heart patient with what Aaron suspected were dodgy kidneys for years. He'd seen in her chart the various tests and her slow decline. He's also dreaded this day for both mother and son's sake. "I'm glad you were there when she became critical." Paul took off his hat and stuffed it in his pocket. "Me, too. I'd just gotten home from the gym, showered, and went in to see if Mom wanted any dinner." He shook his head. "She'd had a snack and wasn't hungry. I went in to ask something, I can't remember what, and saw her gasping for breath." Nothing about Dorie and allergies came to his mind. "Do you know what she'd eaten? Is she allergic to anything?" After a moment's thought, he replied, "No, to both. The only thing new was I'd brought home bread my girlfriend made. Put it on the counter but didn't check to see if Mom had any." Nothing came to mind that might cause Dorie's decline. "I don't think that's important unless she was choking on it." "No, she wasn't." Given Dorie's age, Aaron could only guess at what biological system might be failing her. The homemade bread had what? Yeast, wheat flour, water, a little sugar, shredded cheddar if Aaron's mom had made it. He sighed, wanting to check Dorie's lab results for himself instead of relying on Paul's account of her intake. More to himself than anyone else, Aaron said, "I'd be in the way if I went back there now." Paul stared at him with pleading eyes. "If you do, it'll give me a chance to call Belinda and let her know about mom." In prior visits, neither Graham had mentioned having any other family nearby. Aaron's curiosity piqued, he asked, "Your sister?" "My girlfriend." He pulled out his phone and began tapping. "She'd want to be here for mom, too. They love each other." Paul hesitated before saying, "Hello, Bel? It's me." Aaron stood to leave and give him some privacy. "Ah. Okay, I'll see what's going on for you," he said in case the guy was accidentally listening. Paul nodded at him while talking to someone else. He looked around the waiting room, wishing he'd grabbed one of the Hays' numbers before they went upstairs. After a few minutes to get Dorie's status, he could

join them in the surgery waiting area. Aaron went to the information desk. "Hello, Jenny." The middle-aged woman glanced up from the computer with a smile. "Hello, Dr. Nicholson. I'm sorry about your friend. Hope she pulls through okay." He tried to return her smile. "Thank you. I'd like to go on back and check on someone before going up to see my, um," Aaron said before stopping himself. Were they ready to call each other girlfriend and boyfriend? He was, but wanted to make sure she was, too, so he finished with, "Mandy. She's my friend." "Of course, doctor." She smiled, and the door's magnets released with a click. "You're ready to go." "Thanks." He pushed through and almost into Dr. Shaw. Her shortish blonde hair was pulled back in its usual low ponytail. He didn't blame her for the flash of irritation in her light blue eyes. "Sorry about that. Those doors are a menace, eh?" "Oh, yeah. You know my speech about how we need some sort of frosted windows for them." She shook her head. "Anyway. What's up? It's way too early for your shift." Geri gave him a follow me motion with her head. "Are you all right?" "I'm fine. It's everyone else I know who's in here that worries me." She laughed. "Thanks, I think. But also see what you mean. I saw Mrs. Graham just now. Let's get out of the way so we can talk." As she led him to a quieter area, he trailed behind, adding, "I have a friend being operated on right now, too. If I can get a status on Dorie Graham for her son, I can see how my friend is doing." She leaned against the wall, crossing her arms. "I have a call out to the grief counselor right now. Does Paul know his mother is dead?" "Damn." Informing family members of death was not on his list of fun things to do. He wanted anyone else to break the news to Paul. "No, he thinks you all are saving her life right now." "I wish we could, but no. Not a chance." Geri pulled her phone from a pocket and looked at it. "She was gone before she got here. The EMTs did a great job, but we couldn't even get her on life support. Her heart had stopped for too long, and we couldn't bring her back." She glanced up at him and gave a tight smile. "Some lab results are waiting for me. Hate to run out on you, but duty calls." "I understand." She paused and turned to him. "Oh! Something odd I noticed was her petechial hemorrhages. They're kind of significant. If Mrs. Graham were any younger and I hadn't known Paul since grade one, I'd be calling the authorities right now for elder abuse." **Chapter 2** Geri took a step before halting and putting a hand on Aaron's arm. "The counselor should be here soon. He'll let Paul see Mrs. Graham again before we take her to the morgue. Could you hang out with him until then?" "I could." He hedged, wanting to refuse and hurry up to stay with the Hays. He tried to ignore that nagging little worry in the pit of his stomach. Mandy didn't need him there. She would be all right and had a herd of people to greet her when she woke up. Paul, however, only had his girlfriend here for him. Aaron didn't have to stay but didn't feel right just leaving the guy alone to deal with Dorie's death. He lifted his chin a little. "Yes, I'll be outside with him until the counselor gets here." Shaw hadn't looked up from her phone at all. He resisted the urge to wave and get her attention while she texted. "Any idea how long that'll be?" She tapped her phone a few more times before slipping it back into her pocket. "No idea. Excuse me, please." "Sure." He frowned, not wanting to take her abrupt dismissal personally. He turned to talk with Paul when one of the Emergency personnel, Robert, saw him. The nurse waved so Aaron went over to him and said, "Keeping busy, I see." Robert nodded before going back to sort files. "Too much. I like it better when no one needs us." "Me too," he said. "I'd feel better about not being here if there weren't emergencies arriving all the time." "Pesky patients." Robert paused for a moment before resuming work. "You might be interested to know that Mandy's out of surgery. I'm glad Neil is asleep. He'd be here if he knew where his Boss Lady was." Aaron chuckled at the nickname Robert had picked up while dating the stylist. "No kidding. Everyone at her hair salon would be here, too." Neil and the others at Mandy's salon loved her. They'd all fight to see who had to stay back at the store for the customers instead of hanging out in their boss's hospital room. "You still see him, then?" "Yeah. He's adorable." He wore a goofy grin. "We've not met the parents, yet, but I can feel it happening." Aaron had seen the two together once when first meeting Neil here after an injury. The stylist and nurse had had an instant attraction, and each man's personality gave something to the other. He'd like to think he and Mandy would be the same way in their relationship. "Terrific. Catch ya later. I have something to take care of before I go see if Mandy's awake." Robert nodded, gathering up the files for storage. "Give her a hug for me. I'm here until the morning shift." "Will do." He went back to the waiting area. The quiet hum of

late night television blanketed the large room. The personnel had put a sizeable dent in the number of waiting patients. Paul was looking at him, halfway out of his seat. The guy had probably been twitchy toward every movement of the door, and Aaron didn't blame him. Experiencing his own parent's deaths had given him insight on breaking the news to others. He noticed the woman beside Paul as he approached. Must be the girlfriend he'd mentioned earlier. She seemed ok, close to Graham's age. Her blonde hair shone in the fluorescent light, the darker roots not detracting from her looks. Her perfect style told him she'd not been in bed yet. Aaron wanted to yawn at the thought of sleep. He'd been up since four in the morning, and it was already midnight. When she turned to him, he noticed she wore full makeup. The couple stood as he walked up to them. Before they could say anything, Aaron said, "Let's find a quieter place to talk." "No, here is fine," the girlfriend said over Paul's agreeing answer. "We need to know now. How is she?" Aaron gave the woman a thin smile. "You're Belinda?" She nodded. He kept his voice low and even. "We can talk here, but I'm sure you'd be more comfortable somewhere else." Belinda crossed her arms. "I don't want to go anywhere until you tell us what happened to Dorie." She shifted from one foot to the other, gripping her purse strap slung over her arm. "You need to tell us about Mom." His eyebrows rose despite the effort to stay calm. She called Mrs. Graham mom? A little too familiar to him personally unless there had been a wedding in the ten minutes since Aaron had left and returned. Looking from one to the other, Paul said, "He'll tell us everything, Bel. He's always one Mom's doctors when she comes here, and he's her favorite. You know that. She calls ahead to make sure Dr. Nicholson is on duty before I drive her here." Aaron's nose stung and he turned away. He loved the grandmotherly woman as well and looked forward to seeing her. Clearing his throat, he said, "I'm glad to hear that, she's one of my favorites, too." Her boyfriend's words seemed to soften her attitude. "All right, sweetie." She put an arm around her boyfriend and leaned against him as if holding him up. "You poor man. If Mom's doctor is the top person here, we'll go wherever he tells us to." Paul caressed her cheek. "Thank you. You're the best." "I have to be so I can keep a guy like you," she said and kissed his hand. The hugging and sweetness seemed a bit much to Aaron, but then they didn't know what he did. "Um, so if you'll come with me?" "I'm sorry, Dr. Nicholson." Paul gave Belinda's hand a squeeze before letting it go. "We'll follow you, and thank you." He stopped just short of saying, "My pleasure," because it wasn't ever enjoyable to do this. He led them back and past the information desk. Jenny didn't meet his eyes as she buzzed them through. Of course, she'd heard about Dorie. It wasn't called the Information Desk for nothing. This late on a weeknight, no one was waiting for help in triage. He glanced back to make sure the couple was still there before going to an empty office. Aaron held open the door and followed them inside. Paul looked around, his face white. "Wait, this isn't where Mom is." "Well? Aren't we going to see her?" Belinda chimed in. He didn't say anything, just left the door ajar in case the counselor or Shaw wanted to drop by during this and rescue him. He waited for a couple of seconds before sitting on the edge of the desk. The couple found chairs. "Dr. Shaw wanted me to let you know about Mrs. Graham." "Oh, no...." Paul began. The man let out a wail before burying his face in his hands. Aaron hated this, but then no one enjoyed informing the family of a patient's death. Dorie being one of the sweetest little ladies he'd ever met didn't help keep his eyes dry, either. "I'm afraid there was nothing anyone could do. I'm sorry." "God. Not Mom." Paul buried his head in his hands. Belinda put her arms around him, keeping Aaron from comforting the grieving man. He blinked a few times to keep his eyes from stinging. Dorie had promised him a scarf to match his new hat. Aaron hadn't cared about the neck warmer as much as he'd enjoyed her thinking of him. He cleared his throat. "We'll all miss her here. She brightened the department whenever she came in." Belinda moved to the edge of her seat. "How do you know she's really gone? She might be in a coma." She shook Paul's shoulder. "Come on, baby, don't cry. Mom can't really be dead." Shaw gave a brief knock as a courtesy before walking in. Aaron noticed the sadness in her eyes matched his own sorrow and he said, "Paul, Belinda, this is Mrs. Graham's attending physician, Dr. Shaw." Geri hugged her tablet. "We all knew and loved Mrs. Graham and are terribly sorry for your loss." "I appreciate that." Paul glanced from one doctor to the other. "Will I get to see her? Say a proper goodbye?" "It's being arranged right now." She put a hand on his shoulder. "Did you two want to wait in here or out in the main lobby

for the counselor to take you to her?" Paul leaned against Belinda. "I like it here. It's private like Dr. Nicholson said. I'd like us to be alone for a while." Aaron stood, trying to not show relief at the chance to leave. "I understand completely." Going over to Geri, he added, "I'm needed elsewhere, but Dr. Shaw, Robert, and the others will be here until four this morning." "That's fine," Paul said, and Belinda nodded. Dr. Shaw reached over and patted him on the shoulder, "Sure. I'll check on you two from time to time." "Thank you." They left the room, silent. Aaron glanced back over his shoulder. Paul was hunched over, his body shaking and his girlfriend's arms around him. He shook his head, murmuring so only Geri could hear, "How long until Dr. Khan is here?" "Not soon enough." She stopped at the furthest patient admittance desk from the office. "I'm sad to lose Dorie." Geri turned her back to most of the other staff. Her voice broke a little when she said, "She was one of the good ones." This wasn't normal. Dr. Shaw's calm professionalism had always impressed him. He put a hand on her shoulder. "Are you okay?" She looked at him her eyes swimming in tears. "Sure. I'll cry later." She sniffed and coughed a little. "Did you happen to ask about any strangulation possibilities, or did grief keep you off center?" He rubbed the back of his neck, frustrated. Geri was right. He'd meant to and forgot to ask about any choking Dori might have had during her episode. "Belinda had me too distracted calling Mrs. Graham *mom*. I'd never heard of or met her before now, so this whole mom thing was pretty quick." "I see," Geri said. Robert walking by with a patient distracted her for a moment before she opened a laptop to wake it up. "The Grahams have a lot of money, so I know what she loves about him." She paused. "I mean, there's more to him than that. He's a decent man. She's pretty and seems nice so I can see why Paul likes her." Aaron shrugged. Geri was right about Belinda, but he preferred Mandy's looks. "She takes good care of herself. A bit of a night owl to be up at midnight and she appears like she's ready to party." Geri gave him a sharp glance. "Really? That's interesting." He squirmed a little under her relentless green stare. "What?" "You find her attractive." "No, not anymore." She arched an eyebrow at him, and he continued, "I mean, she's ok." Aaron stopped at Geri's laugh, adding, "Seriously. She's closer to Paul's age than mine. Not bad, but I want to be a partner to someone, not a boy toy" He shifted from one foot to the other under her steady stare. "What?" "Nothing. I'm just seeing how far you're willing to dig that hole." "Never mind, here's my shovel." Aaron held out his hand as if holding an imaginary garden tool. She grinned and went back to her typing. "Good idea." His phone's tone interrupted him, and he said, "Excuse me for a moment." She nodded, and he checked the text. Hey, its Evan. Where r u and M? M is in recovery, I'm in ER. Don't see u? Was he here? Aaron wanted to know more about Ken's confession and what had happened to Mandy on the rocky shore before he had found her there. *In the back.* K Sliding the phone into his pocket, he said, "Hey, Geri, I need to run." "Sure, go. I'm checking on Paul in a minute, and Robert has brought someone I need to examine." He nodded and reached the double doors just as Evan was buzzed through. "Hey, I was on my way to get you," Aaron said. Mandy's childhood friend still wore his police uniform from earlier. Nice looking man, tall, blonde, and handsome. Aaron envied him almost as much as he liked and respected the guy. The jealousy felt odd in his chest, like a jigsaw piece from a different puzzle. He glanced over at Geri to see her staring at the new arrival. "Hi, Evan, nice to see you again." She stood and shook his hand. Aaron looked from one to the other. "You two know each other?" "I've been here a few times," he replied first. "Mostly business, a few times for accidents." She smiled at him. "Rock climbing has its hazards. You must have gotten better. It's been several months since I've seen you here." "I have. Safety helps. Who knew?" He gave her one more grin before turning to Aaron. "How is she?" "Fine as far as I know. I haven't had a chance to see for myself, yet." Evan frowned. "I guess there's a good reason for that?" The implication irritated him. "An excellent one, in fact. One of our best patients passed away this evening. I was on my way up there when you texted me." The door buzzing and Khan arriving distracted Aaron for a second or two. Geri got up without a word to take him to Paul. Watching them, Evan sighed. "Sorry, buddy." "No problem. Now that the counselor is here let's go see how Mandy's doing." "Who's Mandy?" Dr. Shaw stepped up behind Aaron and went to her laptop. The two men exchanged glances. Aaron wanted to claim Mandy as his girlfriend and in front of Evan, but still wanted her approval before doing so. "A friend of ours. She lives across from me." "She's neighbor you'd mentioned last week?" Geri asked. "Yep." He

smirked at Evan. "She and I get to hang out a lot together." "Ah." She took out her phone and then picked up her laptop. "Robert's had to message me again. Dr. Nicholson, you know you're free to go anytime. Dr. Khan is with Paul, and it may be a while. See you later." "See you." He took the suggestion and turned to Evan. "Let's check out how Mandy's doing. I know a short cut to Recovery." "Sure." They exited the urgent care area, Evan trailing behind. "Did I see Paul Graham back there? How's his mom?" "She passed away this evening." "Oh man, that's who Geri was talking about. Shit." "I know." Aaron punched the service elevator button. "You missed his girlfriend, Belinda." "Didn't know Paul was seeing anyone." The elevator doors opened, and he went in first. "Wait. Belinda Morgan is the only one I know with that name and near Paul's age. It wasn't her, was it? Couldn't be." "I don't know what her last name is." Evan held up a hand to his upper chest. "She's this tall, bottle blonde hair, angry green eyes, kind of nice looking?" He chuckled, glad he wasn't the only guy with that opinion. "That's her." "Man. That's messed up. She's married." Evan snickered. "And no, not to Paul." **Chapter 3** Aaron shook his head, surprised that the flannel shirt wearing guy had been sneaking around with a married woman. "I had him pegged as more honest than that." "He is. She isn't." Evan shook his head. "She's lying, and he's getting laid." He smirked at the other guy's retort. "Cold, man." "Whatever. You know it's true." The younger man leaned against the wall before biting on a cuticle. "I do feel sorry for him losing his mom like that. Here one minute, gone the next." He agreed. Losing a sweetheart patient like Dorie was tough. She brightened the day every time she rolled into the room. That whole cheating aspect put the younger Graham in a bad light. He knew people ran around on each other. Some people made a second job of it. Still, Paul had seemed like a decent man until now. "You think he needs to watch his back? Unless Belinda's husband won't care who she's sleeping with." Evan followed him out of the elevator. "He'll care. Jim loves her. I saw them out together a few weeks ago." "Maybe they've separated in the meantime. She was here late with Paul, hugging on him, and calling Mrs. Graham Mom." They turned the corner to an empty waiting area. Aaron pushed through the door to a dark and quiet Recovery. She must have a room by now, so he stepped back to Evan. "No one's here and I can't guess where they took her. Let me call the front desk right quick." He dialed the main number, pressing the number for doctors only. "Hello, this is Dr. Aaron Nicholson. I'm here in the hospital and need a patient's location." "Yes, Dr. Nicholson? Who's the patient?" The ethics barometer in his head nudged at him for using his professional to gain personal information. He licked his dry lips. "Mandy Hays." "She's in room 320." "Thank you." He clicked off the phone. "320." The men went back to the elevator, Evan speaking first. "Have you heard anything specific about how she did in surgery? I wouldn't mind getting more details about her injuries."

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## **Death by unnatural causes.**

**In the second full novel in an Atlantic Maritime series, an assumed loyal son is the first suspect after his invalid mother's surprise death.**

When one of Dr. Aaron Nicholson's favorite patients dies on the way to the ER, not everyone is convinced natural causes killed her. The invalid woman's loyal son is the first suspect after his mother's surprise death. Was the suspect impatient for his inheritance? Or did old age catch up to the dear elderly lady?

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