

EXCERPT FROM

Trick or Treachery

A MURDER, SHE WROTE MYSTERY

It's late October in Cabot Cove and as Halloween approaches, something strange is in the air. The arrival of a self-righteous, fire-and-brimstone spiritual medium has some townspeople on the lookout for curses and evil omens, a reclusive, eccentric woman has others whispering that she's a real-life witch, and the upcoming annual Halloween party has Jessica Fletcher frantically searching for the perfect costume.

PROLOGUE

October 27

Dear Matt:

First, thank you for the kind words about my latest novel. There was a point during early September that I doubted whether I'd meet the deadline. But then things opened up and the final third of the book seemed to write itself.

As for starting the next one, I think I need a month or two of decompression, a time to do some serious thinking and to plan my research.

In the meantime, I've been enjoying my leisure this fall. I think I've mentioned before how people in Cabot Cove seem to take Halloween more seriously than others I've met. It makes for fun actually, lots of parties and pageants and inventive costumes. Strange, though, how the days leading up to

this particular Halloween seem different. There's an aura in the air that's unsettling at times. Sounds silly, of course, to hear me speaking this way. You know that I tend to believe only in what I can touch and see, although I've never been so arrogant as to summarily dismiss phenomena beyond my ability to personally interact with it. But this Halloween is – I'm sounding silly, and I know it. Ghosts and goblins live only in the wonderful imaginations of children.

Thanks again, Matt, for the words of praise. I'll be in touch.

Fondly,

Jessica

As I dropped the letter to my agent, Matt Miller, in the mail slot, I laughed and shook my head. Imagine me actually admitting there might be something to Halloween's mysterious aspects, the ghosts and goblins, witches and cauldrons, and broomsticks that fly. "Silly," I said aloud as I stepped outside and got on with my day.