

GINGERBREAD DEAD by Lori L. Robinett

EXCERPT

The officers finished their interrogations and huddled together on the front porch, comparing notes. Jess studied her neighbor, who had black streaks down her face where her mascara had run. The woman stared at nothing, her lower lip pooched out a bit and the corners of her mouth turned down.

The two officers motioned for the husband to join them, and they helped the woman to her feet. She still swayed slightly and her head bobbed. Though she resisted weakly, her husband took her arm and led her inside, thanking the officers before closing the door.

Jess couldn't believe her eyes. Stunned, she rushed forward. "Wait! You're just going to leave her there?" She stood in their way, feet planted wide.

The older cop studied her for a beat, then sighed heavily. "Seems they had a bit of an argument earlier this evening and the missus had a bit too much to drink." He spoke slowly, like he was explaining something to a child. He held out his arms and moved forward, herding Jess and Mrs. Miller away from the front porch.

Taking a step back, Jess settled her fists on her hips. "Listen, this is serious."

The younger officer elbowed his partner, leaned in close and whispered something. He hooked his thumb toward Jess.

Snodgrass leaned forward, eyes narrowed as he examined her face as if just meeting her. "You're that true crime reporter, aren't you?"