

A New Lease of Death

Ruth Rendell

A Before Reading

- 1 a Ruth Rendell is often known as the 'Queen of Crime'. What do you know about her? Write any ideas.

| | |
|--|--|
| Nationality: | |
| Born: | |
| Number of books she has written: | |
| Names of any of her books: | |
| Name of the detective in many of her books: | |

- b Now read pages 4 and 5 to check your ideas.
- c Write the names of any other famous crime writers you know, British or of other nationalities.

- 2 a The picture shows a murder which is at the centre of the story. From the picture, can you guess:
- the relationship between the old woman and the man with the axe?

- _____
- why the man has murdered her? _____
 - who the other two men are and what their connection to the murder is? _____



- b As you read the story, check your ideas.

3 Find the following words connected with crime in the puzzle below (the words go horizontally, vertically and diagonally, forwards and backwards).

alibi arrest clue commit evidence Inspector murder trial witness

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R | Y | A | N | E | A | L | S | E | Q |
| B | O | H | R | L | U | S | Y | C | A |
| T | A | T | I | R | E | L | P | N | U |
| N | B | B | C | N | E | V | C | E | C |
| V | I | S | T | E | L | S | V | D | M |
| L | A | I | R | T | P | B | T | I | U |
| P | W | D | H | Q | K | S | D | V | R |
| C | O | M | M | I | T | W | N | E | D |
| E | D | I | M | D | C | F | T | I | E |
| S | O | P | S | W | L | D | R | P | R |

B While Reading

4 “Do you have the trial transcript with you?” asked Wexford.’ (page 15) Write an extract from Painter’s trial transcript. Imagine his answers in court to the following questions:

What was your relationship with Mrs Primero?

Why did you argue with Mrs Primero the morning before she was murdered?

Where were you on the Sunday evening when she was murdered?

Why was there so much blood on you when the police interviewed you that evening?

Did you murder Mrs Primero for £200?

- 5 Wexford is surprised that Tess went to Oxford University: 'Usually, children who have such a bad start in life continue to have problems. He would have thought Painter's daughter would be lucky if she had become a simple manual worker and avoided too much contact with the police.' (page 18) What do you think of Wexford's opinion? Can we predict the future of a child from their parents' life and behaviour?

C After Reading

- 6 Write a newspaper article from 1950 giving details of the murder of Rose Primero. Include details of who she was, where she lived, how and why she was murdered, by whom and what happened to the murderer.

Man hanged for the murder of Rose Primero

- 7 'In the past in the UK, murderers were often killed for their crimes. However, capital punishment had been suspended in 1965, and was finally stopped completely in 1969. Murderers now faced life in prison instead of death.' (page 6) Imagine that an online blog has invited readers to contribute to a discussion forum on capital punishment. Write your contribution giving your opinion.

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Topic: Capital punishment

Was it right to stop capital punishment in 1969? Should capital punishment be suspended in all countries of the world? Join the discussion with your opinion and reasons.

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- 8 Imagine that you are a director making a TV adaptation of *A New Lease of Death*. Choose three characters and say which famous actor or actress you think should play each character and why.

| Character | Actor/Actress | Why you chose this actor/actress |
|-----------|---------------|----------------------------------|
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