At that point, Mary Maloney simply walked up behind him and without any pause she swung the big frozen leg of lamb high in the air and brought it down as hard as she could on the back of his head.

“I’ll get the supper,” she managed to whisper [...] she walked across the room she couldn’t feel her feet touching the floor [...] Everything was automatic now—down the steps to the cellar, the light switch, the deep freeze, the hand inside the cabinet taking hold of the first object it met. [...] It was wrapped in paper. [...] they would have lamb for supper.

The violence of the crash, the noise, the small table overturning, helped bring her out of the shock. She came out slowly, feeling cold and surprised, and she stood for a while blinking at the body, still holding the ridiculous piece of meat tight with both hands.

She carried the meat into the kitchen, placed it in a pan, turned the oven on high, and shoved it inside. [...] Then she ran [...] took her coat, went out the back door, down the garden, into the street. It wasn’t six o’clock yet and the lights were still on in the grocery shop.

Mary Maloney was waiting for her husband to come home from work. [...] For her, this was always a blissful time of day. [...] She was content to sit quietly, enjoying his company after the long hours alone in the house.

“This is going to be a bit of a shock to you, I’m afraid,” he said. “But I’ve thought about it a good deal and I’ve decided the only thing to do is tell you right away. I hope you won’t blame me too much.” [...] she stayed very still through it all, watching him with a kind of dazed horror as he went further and further away from her with each word.

Do everything right and natural. [...] she entered the kitchen by the back door, [...] when she saw him lying there on the floor with his legs doubled up and one arm twisted back underneath his body, it really was rather a shock [...] she ran over to him, knelt down beside him, and began to cry her heart out. It was easy. No acting was necessary.
“Would you do me a small favor—you and these others?” […] “Here you all are, and good friends of dear Patrick’s too, and helping to catch the man who killed him. You must be terrible hungry […] and I know Patrick would never forgive me, God bless his soul, if I allowed you to remain in his house without offering you decent hospitality. Why don’t you eat up that lamb that’s in the oven.

A few minutes later she got up and went to the phone. She knew the number of the police station, and when the man at the other end answered, she cried to him, “Quick! Come quick! Patrick’s dead!”

There was a great deal of whispering and muttering beside the corpse, and the detectives kept asking her a lot of questions. But they always treated her kindly. She told her story again, this time right from the beginning. when Patrick had come in […] tired […] how she’d slopped out to the grocer for vegetables, and come back to find him lying on the floor.

There was a good deal of hesitating among the four policemen, but they were clearly hungry, and in the end they were persuaded to go into the kitchen and help themselves. […] their voices thick and sloppy because their mouths were full of meat.

The woman stayed where she was, listening to them speaking among themselves, […] And in the other room, Mary Maloney began to giggle.