



Death of a Scriptwriter

M.C. Beaton

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From the author of the Agatha Raisin television series...DEATH OF A SCRIPTWRITER: A Hamish Macbeth Mystery HOLLYWOOD IN THE HIGHLANDS

With the lovely Priscilla Halburton-Smythe away in London, Lochdubh Constable Hamish Macbeth pines for company during the long Scottish winter. He gets his wish -- and more -- when a troupe of flashy, urbane filmmakers clamors into the nearby town of Drim. Before long bedlam erupts around their make-believe mystery ...and culminates in the sudden appearance of one very real corpse.

The initial suspect in the killing is one Patricia Martyn-Broyd, the aging mystery writer furious that her musty old cozies are getting a risque face-lift in their TV reincarnation. Yet, going behind the scenes, Hamish soon finds a town full of locals bitten by the movie bug and a cast of quarreling show business types, all harboring their own secrets, lies, and hidden agendas. And as the culprit strikes again, Hamish must quickly find the right killer -- or script the wrong finale to a show gone murderously awry.

Death of a Scriptwriter Details

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From Reader Review Death of a Scriptwriter for online ebook

Bobby Underwood says

Death of a Scriptwriter proved a very nice surprise even for a Hamish Macbeth fan such as myself. I've come to relish time spent in the Highlands with the quirky villagers of Lochdubh. I was a late-comer to this fun mystery series, and ended up reading them in quite haphazard fashion, completely out of order. I'm delighted to say it did not lessen my enjoyment of the series whatsoever. It has given me an appreciation for how charming the series truly is.

This older Hamish mystery has poignancy and depth, augmenting the well-plotted mystery. The trademark humor fans have come to enjoy is rife throughout, but this one has that special something which makes it stand out as one of the finest in the long-running series from M.C. Beaton. I would even say the character of Patricia Martyn-Broyd, a mystery writer whose better days are behind her, is actually quite memorable.

But before you begin to get the idea that Death of a Scriptwriter is too serious in tone, be reassured that everything we love about our favorite constable and those quirky Lochdubh villagers whom Hamish mooches food from while solving the mystery is here in abundance. When a television crew wants to film a local mystery writer's book, everyone wants to be a star. But Lady Harriet Vere has been changed in ways which doesn't please everyone. There are so many despicable souls running around the Highlands, in fact, the reader isn't sure who will be murdered, much less who will do the dirty deed.

As usual, Hamish has his nasty boss Blair with which to contend in the initial stages. But when Blair finds himself in hot water, Hamish discovers his replacement is even worse! Attempting to get over his breakup with Priscilla by catching the eye of a lovely lass who happens to be a suspect, Hamish will be confronted by quite a bit of violence before the case is solved.

Dark comedy and a good village mystery, supplemented by characters who've grown on us, make Death of a Scriptwriter a deceptively complex and poignant mystery. While this series is always entertaining, often grandly so, this one has some bite to it. I highly recommend picking this one up if you somehow missed it. Hamish's wild cat, Sonsie, and his dog Lugs are not around yet, but you'll have so much fun in Lochdubh, you'll barely notice. A terrific read.

Anne says

I was lucky enough to be given another Hamish Macbeth novel, the next in the sequence, every one has been a joy to read. This novel, is about the author, Patricia Martyn Broyd, who sells the rights to her book to a television company, who then turn it into something very different from Patricia's novel. The screenwriter has taken liberties with her work.

Before long a murder has taken place and Patricia looks to Hamish Macbeth to help her. Hamish, meantime, has fallen in love again (no not with Patricia!) He's an enjoyable character, not a typical village policeman, (if there is any such thing) and he manages to solve the case, whilst enjoying and enduring adventures along the way.

I am an M C Beaton and Hamish Macbeth fan. I can recommend this book as a very good read, entertaining,

enjoyable, with interest added, trying to guess who committed the dastardly deed. As always, I could never have guessed who the culprit/culprits was/were.

Cheryl says

What better way to start the new year than by spending a little time with a man who knows what he wants out of life and is content with what he has? Hamish Macbeth once again has a mystery on his hands in the village of Drim when a scriptwriter who has made a sexy drug romp out of a stodgy period cozy winds up dead. He finds that there is a worse detective to work with than Blair. And he is once again disappointed in love.

Gary Black says

Another good story in the series. Comforting and fun!

Jerry B says

We've now read a dozen of these formulaic stories about a low profile village constable, Hamish Macbeth, set in the north Scotland highlands. We know the characters and what to expect, and Beaton consistently meets those expectations with a light-hearted, but frequently intriguing, low-violence mystery.

"Scriptwriter" indeed follows the pattern – when a TV company decides to film a new series, based on the now mostly obscure novels of author Patricia Martyn-Broyd, they give the new scriptwriter too much control. He not only grossly alters the plot, changing the leading lady from an older aristocrat to a sometimes naked starlet (!), but also tries to tell everybody else how to do their jobs. When he and the starlet both turn up murdered, and another dead body is found, the police superiors decide it's a murder-suicide – case solved. Hamish thinks all that is a little too pat; and we readers know more is at hand when only part-way through the book. Eventually, Hamish worms more information out of various parties and comes up with his own solution. Adding to the entertainment is his romantic interest in one of the assistant producers, who proceeds to stand him up for dinner at a fancy restaurant on like four different occasions.

So – another typical entry in this typically charming set of tales.

Lynn says

Whenever I want to read a light entertaining humorous cozy mystery, I select a M.C. Beaton book. There are many synopsis of this book so I will say what I enjoyed. First of all, there is Hamish a constable in the Scottish Highlands. He is perfectly happy with his position and the town he lives in. He is very good at solving crimes and he often gives credit to others as he does not want to be promoted. Of course, his boss has it out for Hamish but Hamish always prevails at the end. He has his quirks which the reader comes to know and they endear him to me as a reader.

His love life is always up and down. He has had many short relationships but his love relationship with Priscilla who he was engaged to is no longer active. Hamish does care for her but she tried to change his life and habits. I thought the mystery was quite good. There were many suspects and I did not have the mystery solved until the author chose to let the reader in on "who" was the murderer.

I like this series because it is fun and relaxing. It is always good to go back and revisit Hamish.

Ivonne Rovira says

The titular character of *Death of a Screenwriter*, the 14th Hamish Macbeth mystery, is Jamie Gallagher, a boozy, incompetent whose ego is only exceeded by the dreadfulness of his prose. To no one's surprise — especially not his fellow co-workers — Jamie ends up with his head bashed on Constable Hamish Macbeth's patch while filming a mystery series on location. The novel is amusing without getting too cynical or preachy — both pitfalls that can beset the author M.C. Beaton — and it's a pleasure to try to determine who from amongst the crew of Strathclyde Television or the villagers from dreadful Drim loathed Jamie Gallagher enough to bash his head in with a rock. Needless to say, Hamish will discover who did it — and much more.

Hamish is finding himself rekindling his love of the beautiful but cold Priscilla Halburton-Smythe, but, luckily for us, they never seem to get together in this novel. Whenever Hamish and Priscilla are together, the novel suffers from all their immature longings and bickering, which really takes away from the mystery. While we dodged the bullet in *Death of a Scriptwriter*, I fear she may be back in the next novel, *Death of an Addict*. I can only hope that the course of true love — or, more likely, misbegotten lust — keeps not running smoothly. The mystery novel will be better for it.

Miriam Smith says

The Hamish Macbeth series are set in the Highlands of Scotland and are traditional police stories about the village policeman, the locals and their life. This one was about a film crew filming a tv show in the village when 2 murders happen and Hamish goes about finding the murderer even though he has been taken off the case. This was an enjoyable story, easy to read but very basic. Probably not suited to everyone's taste as they are very tame - but myself, loving everything Scottish find them very entertaining.

Badseedgirl says

In this episode, a television company comes to Drimm, causing hostility and back-biting among the residents, and two murders.

At this point I think I should say something about Shaun Grindell who has been the narrator for this series of audiobooks. He makes the novels and the characters in it come alive. When I listen to the novels Mr. Grindell's narration adds to the enjoyment.

Julie Durnell says

Not my favorite in the Hamish series, actually found it a bit boring.

The Badger says

I have an affinity for cozy mysteries. They generally aren't written in pursuit of a spot on the bestseller list; rather, cozies are written to give the reader a sense of comfort and calm (ironically, by way of murder).

My mom read cozies to escape her three eccentric young daughters and grumpy husband: one daughter, the artist, painted five-foot tall green flowers on the side of the freshly painted rental when she was four; the adventurous daughter asked which way north was, and was found by neighbors five hours later walking up the beach, wearing a backpack, in pursuit of Santa in the North Pole (we lived on an island--she wasn't the brightest of the three of us); and the oldest daughter (that would be I) caused her first-year kindergarten teacher to quit by demanding that all classroom toy soldiers and toy weapons be removed from the classroom so that her classmates would not become violent adults, and that the teacher immediately stop smoking on her breaks because she would surely die of lung cancer. As to my mother's husband, he had some strange notion that feeding 40 stray cats, a stray goat, a duck, and 4 turtles (not stray) out of a 2-bedroom apartment was odd. He also became irrationally upset when the cat gave birth in his shoe. So you see, for my mother, it was either read a cozy or drink (or possibly dispose of the children and husband).

Years later, when my grandmother came to live with us (bigger house, different country, revolving pet door, dad retired and usually lost in Best Buy, girls now goth, theater geek, and raver) we slowly replaced her true crime books with cozies in order to keep her from roaming the house at night after taking her pain pills, looking for the Son of Sam whilst armed with a shoe horn.

And all this is how I came to read cozies myself, because they were always there to help me escape my crazy family, you could carry on a screaming match with a sibling and not miss much in the book, and thanks to grandma's Dahmer intervention, there were always a shitload in the house. (Serious reading was done away from the insane people.)

Jayne Catherine pinkett says

A very interesting plot. Set in Drim a nearby village to where Hamish is based. A motley set of village characters who love a good murder. Usual cosyness but something extra to elevate it to a 4* for me

Mary K. says

Poor Hamish, a great detective but unlucky in love

Donna Radcliff says

I have to chuckle over this one....it would have been written during the time that Beaton's own Hamish Macbeth was made into a tv series for BBC Scotland (1995-1998). That real life series, as with the one in the mystery, bore no resemblance to the stories they were based on, except for the name of the title characters. I have a feeling the scriptwriter in the book got exactly what Beaton would have liked to have done to the scriptwriter on her series. She poked fun at directors, producers, actors, and herself.

Anne Hawn Smith says

This is another in the Hamish Macbeth books. The Scottish constable is left to sort out the deaths of an obnoxious scriptwriter and another member of the TV crew while trying to keep out of Inspector Blair's reach. Part of the plot centers around the TV production of a mystery book. The TV program so distorts the original book as to create many potential suspects. Since this is one of my pet peeves, it was a vicarious pleasure to read about someone wrecking havoc on the kind of people who perpetrate these abominations.
