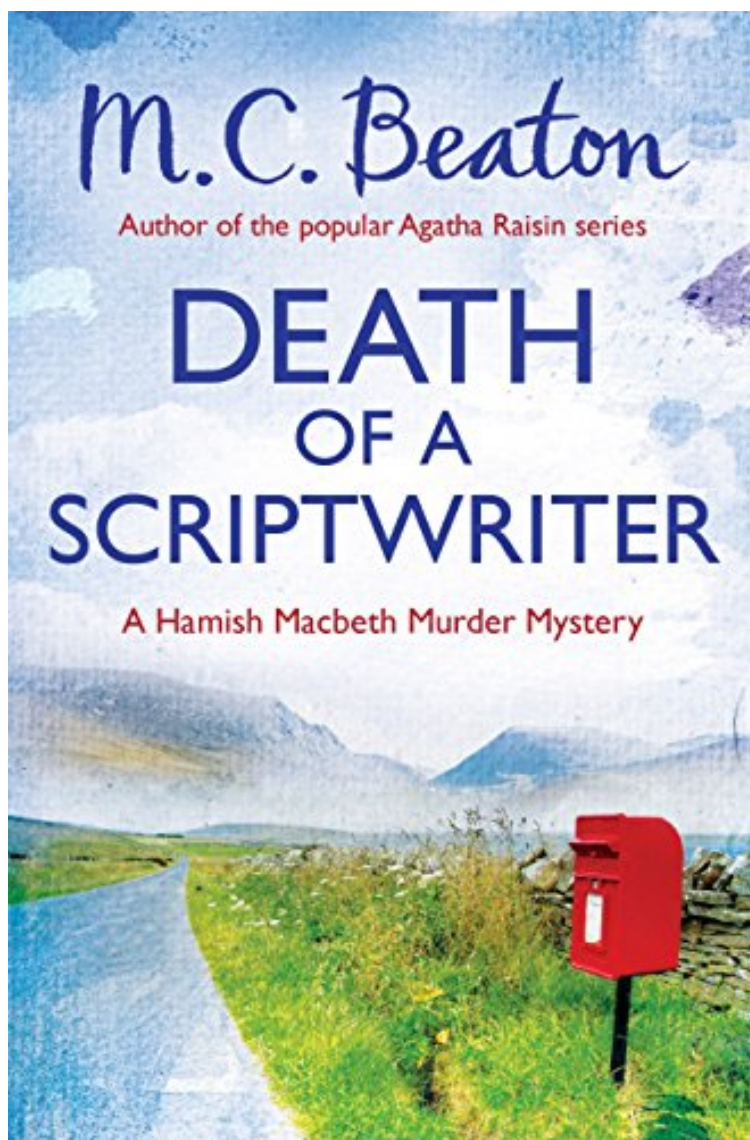


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Death of a Scriptwriter



Par M.C. Beaton
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur Patricia Martyn-Broyd, now in her seventies, has retired to the Highlands. She hasn't written a word in years and her books are out of print. But now a television company is about to film her last detective story, featuring the aristocratic Scottish detective Lady Harriet Vare. Even better, a London publisher is bringing the book into print. Even though the snobbish Miss Martyn-Broyd doesn't care to mix with the locals she can't help but share her excitement with local policeman Hamish Macbeth. Imagine her horror when Miss Martyn-Broyd discovers that Lady Harriet Vare is portrayed as a pot-smoking hippy, that the screenwriter is known for his violent and scurrilous scripts and that Lady Harriet is going to be played by the scene-stealing trollop Penelope Gates. But a contract is a contract, Ms Martyn-Broyd quickly learns and when she is accused of murdering the scriptwriter and the leading lady, she turns to her one friend in

Lochdubh, Hamish Macbeth, to help her..comM.C. Beaton's 14th adventure featuring Hamish Macbeth, lovable local bobby of Lochdubh, Scotland, is a similar treat to her previous efforts. Macbeth feels a dismal foreboding when television film crews descend into his neighborhood to film a local author's out-of-print mysteries. Not only are they led by an overbearing and egotistical scriptwriter, but they have completely stood the original manuscript on its head. The producers have determined that a sexy, pot-smoking heroine will bring in more viewers than the genteel and circumspect detective true to the original. The author herself and the local Calvinist minister are not amused. Before too long, the scriptwriter, the shapely actress playing the lead, and her jealous husband all end up dead, confirming Macbeth's suspicions that the gloomy village of Drim and glamorous media types were a dangerously combustible mix. The mystery itself seems straightforward enough, but Beaton has provided more than the usual number of suspects and subplots. All of these spike the reader's interest while her wicked characterizations of both the locals and the inhabitants of TV-land are hilarious, and very occasionally thought-provoking. The real strength of the book, and indeed Beaton's work in general, is the way in which she evokes the genuine isolation of Macbeth's rural Highlands and blends it with breezy renderings of murder, mayhem, and cozy cups of tea. In some ways it's a bit of an incongruous mix, but Beaton successfully keeps the tone on the lighter side. *Death of a Scriptwriter* will certainly intrigue mystery fans as well as those who have wondered about the creations of the PBS/BBC series *Mystery!* --K.A. Crouch
From Publishers Weekly
In his 14th bracing appearance, Scottish Highland police constable Hamish Macbeth (*Death of a Dentist*, 1997, etc.) investigates crimes visited upon those who tinker too much with a mystery series. Anxious to be back in print, elderly mystery writer Patricia Martyn-Broyd signs an options contract that cavalierly gives a television company all rights to her books. Poor Patricia should have read the small print. Her aristocratic heroine and staid story line are soon transformed into a wild 1960s romp, featuring buxom blonde actress Penelope Gates. Patricia is mad enough to murder the scriptwriter, Jamie Gallagher. She isn't alone. Penelope's jealous, often inebriated husband, Josh, is tired of his wife's clothes coming off in every part she plays. Jamie, Josh and Penelope all die in quick succession during location filming in the weird Scottish village of Drim, which is a mere stone's throw from lanky, laconic Hamish's hometown of Lochdubh. A good man cursed with a blustery, jealous superior and poor judgment in affairs of the heart, Hamish has a motley crew of actors and producers for suspects, in addition to the snooty yet vulnerable Patricia. There's a little less of Hamish himself this time out, and his romantic misfires feel cursory, but the environs are brooding and Beaton's affectionate wit remains dry and delightful. *Mystery Guild* featured alternate; author tour. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.