



Mrs. Malory and a Necessary End

Hazel Holt

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When Sheila Malory fills in for a friend at a local charity shop in the quiet English town of Taviscombe, she's happy for the change of scene. It will give her a chance to deal with interesting books, meet new people, and above all, work for a good cause! Still, not everything at the shop is so appealing. The ill-tempered, officious store supervisor, Desmond Barlow, runs the shop as a tyrant.

That is, until Desmond is found stabbed to death in the shop, and Mrs. Malory puts her impeccable sleuthing skills into play. Unfortunately, it seems that Desmond was disliked by pretty much everyone. In a town full of suspects, Mrs. Malory must go behind closed doors and delve into a slew of small-town secrets if she wants to discover a killer who is far from charitable...

Mrs. Malory and a Necessary End Details

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Author : Hazel Holt

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From Reader Review Mrs. Malory and a Necessary End for online ebook

Sherry says

I had a withdrawn library copy of this book and took it on holiday. It was an easy read beside the pool. I understand it is the last in the series. I've enjoyed many titles in this cozy series.

Suspense Magazine says

Mrs. Malory and a Necessary End

By Hazel Holt

Sheila Malory, where have you been all my life? "Mrs. Malory and a Necessary End" is the eighteenth in this delightful series by British author Hazel Holt. And yes, I admit it. This is the first one I've ever read. Sheila Malory is a woman of a certain age, widowed, and living in the English town of Taviscombe, which appears to be a quiet, peaceful place. When Mrs. Malory is asked to fill in at a local charity shop for a friend, she's glad to do it. A chance to make new friends, broaden her horizons, and get first dibs on all those bargains. Volunteering at the shop doesn't turn out to be quite as much fun as Mrs. Malory expects, however, since the store supervisor, Desmond Barlow, runs the place like a tyrant, and often crosses swords with the other volunteers, one of whom is his long-suffering wife. When Desmond is found stabbed to death in the shop, it's impossible to narrow down the list of suspects since he was universally disliked by the entire town. When his widow quickly puts their house on the market and leaves town, she jumps to the top of the police suspect list. But Mrs. Malory has a few other ideas.

"Mrs. Malory and a Necessary End" may be my first read in this series, but the other seventeen are now at the top of my list!

Tasula says

Cozy British village mystery featuring amateur sleuth Mrs. Malory. Sort of a gentle comforting old fashioned read.

Damaskcat says

Sheila Malory allows herself to be persuaded to stand in for a friend for a few weeks at a local charity shop. Here she meets the unpleasant Desmond Barlow and his downtrodden wife, Wendy. Desmond, among his many community activities manages the charity shop and is forever criticising everyone else. His wife and son are completely dominated by him and everyone else is either slightly scared of him or permanently angry at him. When Desmond is found dead in the shop one morning there are plenty of suspects.

Sheila is puzzled by the reactions of several of her co-workers to the death and finds herself acting as unofficial helper to the Inspector investigating the case. Many people have means, motive and opportunity

not least the victim's own family and there are times when many people involved think the murderer did the community a service by eliminating Desmond.

I enjoy Hazel Holt's low key writing and the interesting characters she creates for her cosy mysteries. Sheila herself is well drawn and she doesn't always behave how she should or how she is expected to behave. She has an advantage in that people will talk to her where they might not talk to the police. I particularly like the two animals in the story - the dog Triss who is always in the wars and the Siamese cat with attitude called Foss. If you like your crime stories without graphic violence then give this series a try. They can be read in any order.

Shannon says

Good, solid British cozy mystery...you can count on Hazel Holt to deliver! Sheila Malory (a sort of Typhoid Mary of murder) subs for a friend in a local charity shop when the unlikable manager is killed. Several suspects, but I caught the connecting link the first time it was mentioned long before the murder even occurred! In fact, the realization of who the murderer really is a long-drawn-out business, by which time, the reader begins to wonder if it might actually be someone else instead! So, not much in the suspense category, but Hazel gets her settings, people, language and "English" details pitch perfect, making for a relaxing and satisfactory read.

Jeanette says

So we come to the end of the Mrs. Malory's series with the final line in this novel being a wife's put-down re her husband's failed suicide attempt. Repeated in gossip by a policeman friend. Village style. This particular plot is not up to the usual par, but Mrs. Dudley has tea so it is forgiven.

Looking back on these little books that entertain us with Taviscombe by the sea, I have a singular thought beyond the characters and the sleuthing gossip. And that is that I can not remember any other such realistic fare of thoughts upon keeping a "house". For instance, how you eventually have to spend an hour or two cleaning out a medicine cabinet or a back closet, or even the kitchen cabinet that holds all the old and misused pots and pans. Or perhaps to find that odd clipper or screw jar lid for the jam set. That kind of thing. Wondering why the lint in the dryer is usually dark or grey! The mundane of housework arts and every day maintenance- prime and precious, to me, in these Hazel Holt Sheila Malory novels. Joy in small tasks and in the serenity of physical comfort and structure in snug home. Vastly overlooked in printed material of any length, for sure.

Brenda at MyShelf says

In this mystery best friend Rosemary takes a back seat. Rosemary resents Sheila joining Monica at a charity shop and tells Sheila she'll regret it. Sheila actually finds a sense of purpose in working with the other ladies. But Desmond, the charity tyrant, is another matter. It's through the gossip mill Sheila discovers what an abrasive, controlling man Desmond can be. Most tolerate him and go about their business until one day Desmond is found stabbed to death in the charity closet.

This is Amateur sleuth Sheila Malory's twentieth mystery. I have to put the longevity of it down to a strong

lead character and the author's ability to make a reader feel he/she is taking part in solving a crime. A very good mystery

Val says

Mrs Mallory helps out in a local charity shop for a friend and, although she is looking fwd to this, finds things not as straightforward as they first seem. The bad tempered, officious store supervisor is found stabbed to death and, as everybody seemed to dislike this man it means a lot of suspects are involved.

Susan says

Sheila Malory can't say no to people, which is how she finds herself filling in for a friend at the charity resale shop. Actually, it is pleasant work--except for two bossy newcomers, Norma and her bete noir Desmond. When there's a murder, a number of people are suspects, but nobody would kill just because of someone's minor personality flaws! Sheila doesn't detect, exactly, but she knows the people in her little town, she talks, she offers and drinks cups of tea, and somehow things gradually become more clear. For cozy fans.

Shakira says

Such a slow read. Is it common for a cozy British mystery to go at this pace?

Debbie says

"Mrs. Malory and a Necessary End" is a cozy mystery. This book is the 20th in the series. You don't need to read the previous novels to enjoy this one, and the answers to previous mysteries were not discussed in this one. However, the author did assume that the readers already knew the reoccurring characters and how they were related to Mrs. Malory. This information usually wasn't given when the characters were introduced, yet it became more clear as the story went on.

The story was very fast paced. Each scene focused on adding more clues about the mystery and was mainly dialogue. The descriptions (setting, job, characters, etc.) were brief unless more description was needed to understand and solve the mystery.

The whodunit in this puzzle-mystery was guessable but not obvious. I liked how Mrs. Malory picked up important information simply by her willingness to listen to people talk, that she encouraged them to give this information to the police, and the mutual respect between her and the detective on the case.

There was no sex. There was a very minor amount of explicit bad language. Overall, I'd recommend this novel to those who enjoy puzzle-mystery whodunits.

I received this book as a review copy from the publisher.

Tanya says

Mrs. Malory helps out in a charity shop for a month and the boss ends up dead in the back room one night. Another good mystery filled with suspicious characters and funny remarks. The last page!! Too funny.

Marty says

I enjoy Mrs. Malory. This is the 13th book in the series I've read so far. They do not have to be read in order so I pick one up as I can. Mrs. Malory, a middle-aged widow is very active in her little English town of Taviscombe. Now she is helping out at a charity shop while a friend is away. The Manager of the shop, Desmond Barlow, runs things in a very dictatorial way. This does not sit well with the ladies who volunteer their time there, – that is until he is found dead in the backroom with a knife in his back. --- One good thing about Mrs. Malory – she does not see herself as a detective. She thinks about things and looks for information, but then passes everything along to the police – who usually appreciate her help.

Clare O'Beara says

This is a British cosy mystery set in a seaside town. I've read a couple from this series previously and been underwhelmed, mainly because of the writing style and obsession with short-sighted minutiae. This may be typical of the narrator and other people may of course enjoy it more than I did. Some of the minutiae of daily life is good to include, and brings a female viewpoint, such as decluttering a kitchen. Too much just feels like padding.

The story revolves around a charity shop. No descriptive passages whatsoever are given to us. The author just decides that we can each make up our own minds about what the shop looks like. I would want to know if it was next to a supermarket and crowded café, or among a clutter of derelict shop fronts, or something in between. I'd like to see some colours and smell some scents, but just about everything occurs in black and white, even a bunch of freesias. I'd wonder why the town population is so homogenous, no Polish plumbers or Italian chippers or Chinese or African restaurateurs.

I'd be amazed at the apparent total lack of street cameras, bus cameras and shop closed-circuit cameras, which mean that even in 2012 the local police have to rely on an elderly lady who sits at her window (how is her sight?) to know who came and went. Especially since Britain is the country most densely covered in cameras in the world.

The actual mystery is fine, and it's quite fun that a few people came and went from the shop despite the victim being dead in the place. But the story does drag in the middle as apparently nothing happens except a few conversations to work in more suspects. Once it picks up in the final quarter the life returns and we can have fun picking our own favourite motive.

I would like more description and action instead of a book composed of conversation, but the writer is happy with her style and of course that is up to her.

Lorraine Shaw says

Another great read.
