ForeWord Reviews

MYSTERY

Death at the Alma Mater: A St. Just Mystery
G.M. Malliet
Midnight Ink
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Lexy Durant was drop-dead gorgeous, ambitious, and successful. She inspired envy in those she met, making the fortunate person who stood next to her feel woefully inadequate. Her sense of style was the epitome of perfection, and those who knew her found she had intelligence behind her empty-headed façade. Lexy had dates, privileges, and perks. Lexy had sex appeal and money…and an unstable acquaintance who wanted her to drop dead.

At a prestigious Cambridge fundraiser to raise money for dilapidated St. Michael's College, this beautiful woman met her worst enemy and took her last breath. Lexy's body is found brutally strangled; her demise generates an intimidating list of rich and not-so-rich suspects. Ensnared in a dangerous, wealthy domain where competitive jealousy rules, Detective Chief Inspector St. Just will need to determine who would *not* want Lexy dead before he can solve his mystery. A titled ex-husband with his suspicious second wife; a new boyfriend wallowing in debt; a secretive oil tycoon from Texas; or an unknown, opportunistic rival may have found the right moment and acted on impulse.

St. Just follows his leads with painstaking precision, cross-examining even the most upright individuals with cynical awareness of the baser human instincts. No one is immune to this astute inspector's scrutiny, and no one will succeed in hiding a heinous act of murder. Skeptical and careful, St. Just takes the reader on a fascinating investigation of the college-educated social elite, exposing their sordid transactions and behind-the-scenes maneuvers. Filled with unexpected disclosures and shocking discoveries, each chapter takes an original turn.

As St. Just determines who would want Lexy Durant dead, he must look beyond impetus and confront every individual's potential ability to implement a gruesome fantasy. Some cases go beyond mere motivation and explore the recesses of an egotistical person's mind. In the end, it's not a matter of who may have wanted to kill Lexy, but who actually had the audacity to follow through with this deranged crime.

In the classic tradition of Sherlock Holmes and other British mysteries, G.M. Malliet presents a meticulous novel with sophistication and uncomplicated restraint. Malliet keeps

mystery fans guessing without thrusting overwhelming or unnecessary detail into her well-researched scenes. Rather than taunting with false, hammy escapades, she stays realistic and believable from the viewpoint of a methodical inspector on the job. *Death at the Alma Mater* is book three in her Agatha Award-winning St. Just series.

Julia Ann Charpentier