



Mysteries reviewed by Hidden Staircase Mystery Books

Monday, May 25, 2009

Mystery Book Review:

Mission: Murder by Betty Kerr Orlemann – A Hattie Farwell Mystery

ShadowDance Press (Trade Paperback)

ISBN-10: 0-9771329-1-9 (0977132919)

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Review:

Betty Kerr Orlemann introduces retired schoolteacher Hattie Farwell, living on her family farm in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and investigating the suspicious death of a dear, old friend in *Mission: Murder*, the first in a proposed series to feature the octogenarian amateur sleuth.

Hattie had known Annie Turner most of her life. Annie's daughters, Anna and Brooke, referred to her as Aunt Hattie, one of the family. Just before Thanksgiving, Annie is struck down and killed by a hit-and-run driver. The police treat her death as an unfortunate accident, but Hattie isn't so sure. Then Anna, on her way to Hattie's house, is chased by a car and forced off the road, badly injuring her. This was no accident; someone deliberately tried to kill Anna. Though there is nothing to link the incidents, Hattie is sure there must be a common thread between the death of Anna's mother and the attempt on her life.

Hattie Farwell is a delightful woman and *Mission: Murder* is a pleasure to read. Hattie's back story adds depth and interest to her character and provides an understanding as to her motivation in pursuing this case. For example, Hattie prefers to wear what she finds comfortable, and what Hattie finds comfortable are “long skirts – usually black – immaculate white blouses and black lace-up boots.” If she were pressed to explain her choice, she would say it was her way of paying homage to a strong woman whom she loved, admired and respected, her grandmother. The underlying message here: family and respect, and respect of family, are everything.

The plot of *Mission: Murder* is well-thought-out and there are many twists and turns that keep the briskly paced story fresh and exciting. In short, this debut is a fine cozy and readers will be eagerly looking forward to Hattie's next outing.

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*Special thanks to guest reviewer Betty of The Betz Review for contributing her review of Mission: Murder.
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