



## A Highland Christmas

*M.C. Beaton*

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In dark, wintry Lochdubh, Christmas Cheer is about as welcome as a flat tyre on a deserted road. The Calvinist element in town has always resisted what they view as secular frivolity, so for most of the townsfolk there will be no carols, feasting, gifts or even whisky on Christmas Day! And for PC Hamish Macbeth there's no holiday from crime he finds himself hunting for a missing cat belonging to a lonely spinster. Curt and unfriendly, the woman is convinced her pet has been stolen but once behind her heavily-bolted door, Hamish can spot her true problem is she lives in fear, though of who or what he cannot guess. Then someone steals a Christmas tree and lights from the nearby village of Cnothan. So it is up to Hamish to sort all these problems out and he had better do it quickly, for the church bells will soon be tolling on the eve of Christmas. **Praise for the Hamish Macbeth series:** First rate deft social comedy and wonderfully realized atmosphere. *Booklist's* always a treat to return to Lochdubh. *New York Times* Readers will enjoy the quirks and unique qualities of the cast Beaton catches the beauty of the area's natural geography and succinctly describes its distinct flavour. *Library Journal* Befuddled, earnest and utterly endearing, Hamish makes his triumphs sweetly satisfying. *Publishers Weekly*

## A Highland Christmas Details

Date : Published (first published 1999)

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Author : M.C. Beaton

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## **From Reader Review A Highland Christmas for online ebook**

### **Fiona MacDonald says**

I know Christmas is over but it didn't stop me relishing in the festive feel of Lochdubh (or rather, the lack of it!). Hamish is roused from his relaxing break to search for a missing cat, missing Christmas lights and a missing Christmas tree - does someone have a grudge against Christmas?

It's always a joy returning to Hamish Macbeth's side, and we are introduced in this story to one of his very favourite characters which I was over the moon about!

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### **Suzy says**

As cozy as a book can get! Perfect for a Christmas holiday read. Hamish Macbeth, police constable in the Scottish Highlands is up to his ears in crime. The beloved cat of the local crabby woman crofter has gone missing as have a Christmas tree and lights intended to be put in the town center. Not everyone in the town is unhappy about the missing tree and lights because many of these strict Calvinists believe that Christmas is a pagan holiday. Not to worry, Hamish to the rescue. Christmas comes after all and everything ends with sweetness and light. I'm feeling the glow all the way over here in Minnesota. :)

I have not read any of these books before but see there are 33 of them! This was one of the .5 editions - only a little over 2 hours of listening. I might have to check out others. A shout out to the narrator, Graeme Malcolm, who demonstrated his great versatility. He's the narrator of the grim and gritty Dept Q books about as far away from cozy as one can get!

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### **writer... says**

Loved this Re-read for the Christmas Spirit Readathon 2016

December 20th 2012 first reading

A great introduction to this author's writing. Enjoyed the well described atmospheric Scottish Highland settings. Familiarity with locations mentioned added to my enjoyment and the reality of the story. Definitely could picture the Christmas attitudes resisting celebration due to religious heritage and loved the actions of our protagonist in bringing that feared celebration into so many lives. A fun, quick reading addition to my Christmas shelf !

Looking forward to exploring more by this author...

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### **Bobby Underwood says**

Filled with charm, laced with dark but hilarious social comedy, and sprinkled with Christmas warmth, A Highland Christmas is one of the most endearing entries in the Hamish Macbeth series. Having already firmly established with readers the tall, redheaded constable of Lochdubh with little ambition, and the quirky

villagers he must contend with in the remote highlands, Beaton focuses on giving fans of the series a magical novella as a Christmas gift. Reading this is like listening to a breezy Dave Koz Christmas offering on the stereo while trimming the tree.

It's dark and wintery in Lochdubh as Christmas approaches and the Calvinist element is sucking the spirit right out of the holiday for Hamish. His mother has won a soap slogan contest, and a free Christmas holiday, but Hamish can't join his folks because he has to take over Constable McGregor's patch in Cnothon as well as his own. McGregor has come down with a bad appendix, putting the kibosh on any Christmas plans for Hamish. And with no lights, no trees, no carols, no secular trimmings at all — except behind closed doors, so as not to get an earful from the pious — it isn't feeling much like Christmas to our favorite Highland constable.

When a Christmas tree and lights slated for the nearby village is stolen, Hamish is in no mood to be trifled with. It does seem trifling, however, when an old biddy named Mrs. Gallager reports her cat missing and insists Hamish find it. Intuitive as ever, Hamish senses there's more to her being frightened than she's telling. He also senses she's lonely. When a young schoolgirl named Morag, with parents so dogmatic she hasn't any friends, may be the culprit in one of the cases, what's Hamish to do but put two lonely people together for a very special Christmas.

There's a lot more here, including Hamish's romance with a local school teacher, a busload of carolers, and a big Christmas dinner that restores the holiday spirit. Hamish is still grieving over Towser in this one, but the ending offers more surprises in this charming and breezy Christmas in the Highlands with Hamish and all the regulars we've come to enjoy over the years. This novella is a wonderful Christmas bauble for fans of the series. If you're not a fan already, this might make you one. Great fun, and highly recommended!

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### **Leslie says**

My first experience with the Hamish Macbeth series. This novella is a good holiday read, with the rural Scottish policeman Hamish Macbeth not just solving some (minor) mysteries but also involved in his community. I think that I might have to add this series to my TBR...

Graeme Malcolm was a fine narrator for the audiobook. The Scottish accent heightened the experience.

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### **Shiloah says**

Now this was a cozy Christmas mystery. Loved it! I will add it to my personal Christmas advent reads list now.

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### **Tracie says**

Nice, easy read with all of your favorite characters. Hamish is investigating a theft this go round instead of a murder but it was the perfect Christmas in the Loch with Hamish at the helm ensuring his small town has the perfect holiday.

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## **RebeccaS says**

[ When he arranges for a concert for the old folks home and then invites everyone to come, it was so sweet. And then the way he handles Morag's situation with her family and the cat. BUT then he is totally oblivious to the school teacher's affectio

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## **Gary Sundell says**

This was Just the sort of Christmas mystery shorter work I was looking for. I read the first of the Hamish Macbeth mysteries not long ago. Normally I would not jump this far into a series, glad I did. Missing cat and a stolen town Christmas tree and it's lights make up the crimes being investigated.

Hamish who seems to have his heart in the right place mist of the time helps spread Christmas cheer and along the way solves the crimes. Hope the characters Hamish helps out make appearances in the series.

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## **Ellie says**

Christmas lights are being stolen and cats are going missing. Christmas in Lochdubh is fighting bitter gray winter cold and parents who don't believe in Santa. Can police officer Hamish Macbeth make it all come out right?

And what about the pretty new schoolteacher? Can she make Hamish forget about his old flame Priscilla?

It's one of the lightest in the series but a perfect holiday treat.

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## **Lynn says**

A Christmas novella that has Hamish Macbeth solving mysteries of a missing cat and stolen lights. He brings Christmas cheer to some residents in the area. Some local people do not want Christmas celebrated with lights and gifts. Hope several of the people introduced in this book will be in future books. It was a feel good read and Hamish shows himself to be special to the people who are in his policing district. Plus there was a new addition to his household.

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## **Pam Baddeley says**

This really is cosy crime, with nothing more threatening than a lost cat and some nicked christmas lights and a tree. The hero, PC MacBeth, has more to worry about from his unreasonable and nasty boss than any criminals, apart from one near mishap when apparently his spectral dog comes to the rescue. Having dropped into this, not realising it was so late in the series and just a novella, I found it rather light though it was easy enough to pick up on the situation - the PC unlucky in love and stuck on duty over Christmas in a community

where the Calvinist spirit lingers and it is considered unseemly to celebrate in what is viewed a pagan manner. He manages to do some good on that front, helping both a little girl and a frightened and isolated old lady.

It was a light pre-Christmas read and at least didn't have the ghastly Agatha Raisin of the author's other series who screams instead of speaking. So an OK 2-star read for me.

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### **Zoey says**

Its Christmas time in the Scottish Highlands & Hamish Macbeth is all about making sure everyone enjoys this time of year in this Christmas instalment of The Hamish Macbeth series. Lovely very light Cosy mystery, with a missing cat, stolen Christmas lights & a new school teacher who takes a bit of a shine to our Hamish.

I really like Hamish & really must get around to reading more of this series.

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### **Jessica says**

So darling! Not a murder, but just a cute, cute Christmas story with our favorite Highland detective. Of course, there is a mystery here: who has stolen the Knothan city Christmas lights? And there's the matter of a missing cat, a bitter old biddy, and a flirtatious new schoolteacher.

Reread, 2012: Love it when Hamish loses his temper with the Andersons! So great!

Reread, 2013: Such a fun way to kick off the Christmas reading!

Reread, 2014: Never fails to put me in the Christmas mood!

Reread 2015: Even though I'm not reading all my Christmas books this year, I had to read this one!

Reread 2016: I basically have this memorized at this point.

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### **Florence (Lefty) MacIntosh says**

I got this book in my stocking, along with a lump of coal. The coal was the highlight... Sorry, sorry, let me start over. In the spirit of the generosity in which it was given, a proper review:

**+1 + 1 + 1 + 1 ½ + 1 - 1 - ½ - ½ = 3 ½ stars**

**+1 SNAPPY DIALOG:** *"What's up with you, Constable? Standing about like a great loon. Shouldn't you be about your duties?"* I got a kick out of how all the locals take it upon themselves to bully Hamish, almost like it's their civic duty. I believe this is healthy behavior. In fact I plan to adopt it in all my future dealings with the police.

**-1 HUMBUG:** To the question *"What will you be doing for Christmas?"* the response *"Sitting getting drunk & trying not to put my foot through the telly. Do you know they're showing The Sound of Music again? It's*

*enough to drive a man mad*” Almost changed this to a plus.

+1 NO PLOT: (view spoiler) Sometimes my brain needs a rest, I need a book about nothing.

+1 CULTURAL REFERENCE: great recipe included for cloutie dumpling – throw ingredients into a large pillowcase along with suet & boil. Helpful if you have a washhouse (I know, I know) with a large copper basin (to boil the cloutie in) Slice & fry up with bacon - lasts for weeks.

-1/2 NO DEAD PEOPLE: I feel cheated without a murder, not a corpse in sight. Several characters (in fact the majority) could easily have been done away with. Mrs. Gallagher comes to mind. *“She had a genius for sniffing out the vulnerable points in anyone’s character and going in for the kill”*

+1 ½ AMBIANCE: *“A ragged cloud of crows rose up from the field and scattered over the loch. On such a day it seemed the grass would never grow again or the sun shine.”* I find this appealing.

+1 CHARACTERIZATION: Ah, the main protagonist, the dour and downtrodden local constable Hamish Macbeth. I think I’m in love.

-1/2 VALUE: 160 pages? Maybe the author is charging by the word.

I’ll stop now. I’m a firm believer that a review should never be longer than the actual book. In fairness, **I really liked it**. I’ll even read more of the series (my 1st) As long as they’re on clearance. I’m no daft.

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