



A Presumption of Death (Lord Peter Wimsey and Harriet Vane)

Jill Paton Walsh

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Sixty years after Dorothy L. Sayers began her unfinished Lord Peter Wimsey novel, *Thrones Dominations*, Booker Prize finalist Jill Paton Walsh took on the challenge of completing the manuscript?with extraordinary success. "The transition is seamless," said the *San Francisco Chronicle*; "you cannot tell where Sayers leaves off and Walsh begins."

"Will Paton Walsh do it again?" wondered Ruth Rendell in London's *Sunday Times*. "We must hope so."

Jill Paton Walsh fulfills those hopes in *A Presumption of Death*. Although Sayers never began another Wimsey novel, she did leave clues. Drawing on "The Wimsey Papers," in which Sayers showed various members of the family coping with wartime conditions, Walsh has devised an irresistible story set in 1940, at the start of the Blitz in London.

Lord Peter is abroad on secret business for the Foreign Office, while Harriet Vane, now Lady Peter Wimsey, has taken their children to safety in the country. But war has followed them there---glamorous RAF pilots and even more glamorous land-girls scandalize the villagers, and the blackout makes the nighttime lanes as sinister as the back alleys of London. Daily life reminds them of the war so constantly that, when the village's first air-raid practice ends with a real body on the ground, it's almost a shock to hear the doctor declare that it was not enemy action, but plain, old-fashioned murder. Or was it?

At the request of the overstretched local police, Harriet reluctantly agrees to investigate. The mystery that unfolds is every bit as literate, ingenious, and compelling as the best of original Lord Peter Wimsey novels.

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