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SPECIAL SHEAR PREVIEW SHEAT FEE 25TH SEE SPOT BLM (PC) 200 PM ONLY Showcase
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REAT THE NAME OF THE NAME







# Local author combines mystery, romance in first published book

Murder on Rys By Shirley A. Prather (Writers Club Press, \$11.95)

BY HUGH GALLAGHER

hgallagher@oe.homecomm.net What is it about Scotland Yard

What is it about Scotland Yard detectives?
Maybe it's their suave, quiet efficiency. Maybe it's their reputation for solving crimes cerebrally rather than with a gun. Whatever it is, mystery writers from England's P.D. James to America's Elizabeth George have celebrated that special, oh-so English approach to police work. New Farmington Hills writer Shirley A. Prather adds her forthright and decent Chief Inspector Ian Marsden to the list.

Prather, 68, has always wanted to be a writer but wasn't able to reach her dream until she

to reach her dream union and retired.

"It started when my daughter was transferred to England," she said." I went to visit a couple of times and I was impressed by her elegant lifestyle. I thought this would be a great setting to wrop a mystery around."

"Murder on Ryo" is the third book Prather has written but the first to be published.

"Tamingtian"

Inspiration

Inspiration
Prather's daughter, Laura,
was the inspiration for the heroine of her novel, a young American lawyer, Lindsay Roberts,
working for an auto parts company in England.
Prather's novel is a fast-paced
combination of romance with
English mystery. For young
Lindsay, the assignment in England is her first time away from



her suburban Detroit home. She rents an upper Plat from the quiet, good-hearted chief inspector, who takes a somewhat more than fatherly interest in his young tenant.

Meanwhile, Lindsay is attracted to a soulful Irish musician with some shady acquaintances, but an eclectic talent for both music and cooking (how could any women resist a culinary Irishman).

Though the novel has some awkward dialogue and exposition, Prather tells her story economically and creates a believable and somewhat unusual suburban setting. The main action is set in three distinct areas—cosmopolitun London, the suburb where Marsden and Lindsay live and the coastal town of Rye.

Prather gives her characters enough quirks and special qualities to make them full characters, Marsden (named in tribute

to actor Roy Marsden, who plays P.D. James' celebrated Inspector Dalgloish on BBC-TV is divorced, lives with a clever cat and loves solid English food downed by a Guinness. Lindsay is a free-spirited young woman who is sexuelly attracted to the musican but emotionally drawn to the protective and somewhat inhibited inspector. Both men are a bit older than she is.

#### Successful moments

are a bit older than she is.

Successful moments

The novel's most successful moments are Prather's descriptions of everyday English life taking a train into the city, eating in a pub, antiquing on Saturday afternoon, taking a weekend trip to a coastside "caravan" (trailer). A little more about Lindsay's work environment would have added to the picture she creates.

The mystery isn't terribly complicated and relies heavily on coincidence, but Prather adds the element of jealousy that effectively draws into question her detectively draws into question her detective's motives.

Prather has done ber legwork.

I researched everything and had people to talk to. I have a friend in Yorkahire. His nephew is with the Metropolitan Police in London," she said. "A lot of the routing I got off of maps.

Prather is retirred from the contract department of John Hancock Insurance Cop. In addition to writing she does freelance work for publishers.

Next up for the rookie writer is, another Marsden mystery set in Scotland.

"Murder on Rye" is available at Mystery, Murder and Mayhem, Drake and Grand River, Farmington and all on-line bookstores.

## elaine S. events

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