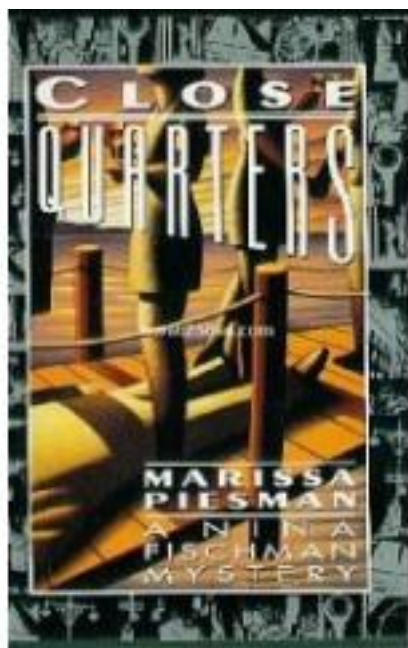


Close Quarters



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著者:Thirkell, Angela

出版者:Midpoint Trade Books Inc

出版时间:2001-12

装帧:Pap

isbn:9781559212908

Margot Macfayden, nee Phelps, spends the months following her husband's death visiting friends in Greshambury, Southbridge and Harefield as she ponders relocating while hoping to avoid again being pre-empted by her aged parents (who, to be fair, share her feelings). At Harefield we become reacquainted with the Beltons; Mr Belton, previously an inconspicuous figure, comes into his own as he delivers masterful performances ranging from 'Old English Squire' to 'King Lear' meriting the admiration and amusement of his friends and relatives. We also are fortunate to make the acquaintance of Admiral Prsvb of the Mixo-Lydian Navy, which consists of 'one very out-of-date English gunboat on a lake', as he comes to dinner at the Fairweathers with our old friend Gradka, the Ambassadors (formerly the Feeling's cook). Fortunately, in the commonsense view of almost everyone, Admiral Phelps and Mrs Phelps follow

each other in rapid succession to peaceful and timely ends, freeing Margot to accept the long-delayed marriage proposal of Canon (Tubby) Fewling.

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