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In the respectable seaside town of Flaxborough, the equally respectable councillor Harold Carobleat is laid to rest. Cause of death: pneumonia. But he is scarcely cold in his coffin before Detective Inspector Purbright, affable and annoyingly polite, must turn out again to examine the death of Carobleat's neighbour, Marcus Gwill, former prop. of the local rag, the Citizen. This time it looks like foul play, unless a surfeit of marshmallows had led the late and rather unlamented Mr Gwill to commit suicide by electrocution. (Power without responsibility, murmurs Purbright.) How were the dead men connected, both to each other and to a small but select band of other town worthies? Purbright becomes intrigued by a stream of advertisements Gwill was putting in the Citizen, for some very oddly named antique items Witty and a little wicked, Colin Watson's tales offer a mordantly entertaining cast of characters and laugh-out-loud wordplay. Colin Watson wrote the best English detective stories ever. They work beautifully as whodunnits but it's really the world he creates and populates ... and the quality of the writing which makes these stories utterly superior. The Flaxborough Chronicles are satires on the underbelly of English provincial life, very well observed, very funny and witty, written with an apt turn of phrase ... A complete delight. If you have never read Colin Watson - start now. And savour the whole series. Light-hearted, well written, wickedly observed and very funny - the Flaxborough books are a joy. Highly recommended. How English can you get? Watson's wry humour, dotty characters, baddies who are never too bad, plots that make a sort of sense. Should I end up on a desert island Colin Watson's books are the ones I'd want with me. A classic of English fiction... Yes, it is a crime novel, but it is so much more. Wonderful use of language, wry yet sharp humour and a delight from beginning to end. Colin Watson threads some serious commentary and not a little sadness and tragedy within his usual excellent satire on small town morality and eccentricities. Re-reading it now, I am struck by just how many laugh-out-loud moments it contains. A beautifully written book. As always, hypocrisy and skulduggery are rife, and the good do not necessarily emerge triumphant. Set aside plenty of time to read this book - you won't want to put it down once you've started it! Colin Watson writes in such an understated, humorous way that I follow Inspector Purbright's investigation with a smile on my face from start to finish. If you enjoy classic mysteries with no graphic violence and marvellously well drawn characters then give the Flaxborough series a try - you will not be disappointed. Watson has an unforgivably sharp eye for the ridiculous. New York Times Flaxborough is Colin Watson's quiet English town whose outward respectability masks a seething pottage of greed, crime and vice ... Mr Watson wields a delightfully witty pen dripped in acid. Daily Telegraph Arguably the best of comic crime writers, delicately treading the line between wit and farce ... Funny, stylish and good mysteries to boot. Time Out A great lark, full of preposterous situations and pokerfaced wit. Cecil Day-Lewis One of the best. As always with Watson, the writing is sharp and stylish and wickedly funny! Literary Review "The rarest of comic crime writers, one with the gift of originality." Julian Symonds Flaxborough, that olde-worlde town with Dada trimmings. Sunday Times

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