



Death Wears a Mask

Ashley Weaver

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Amory Ames is looking forward to a tranquil period of reconnecting with reformed playboy husband Milo after an unexpected reconciliation following the murderous events at the Brightwell Hotel. Amory hopes a quiet stay at their London flat will help mend their dysfunctional relationship. However, she soon finds herself drawn into another investigation when Serena Barrington asks her to look into the disappearance of valuable jewelry snatched at a dinner party.

Unable to say no to an old family friend, Amory agrees to help lay a trap to catch the culprit at a lavish masked ball hosted by the notorious Viscount Dunmore. But when one of the illustrious party guests is murdered, Amory is pulled back into the world of detection, enlisted by old ally Detective Inspector Jones. As she works through the suspect list, she struggles to fend off the advances of the very persistent viscount even as rumors swirl about Milo and a French film star. Once again, Amory and Milo must work together to solve a mystery where nothing is as it seems, set in the heart of 1930s society London.

"Death Wears a Mask" is the second novel in Ashley Weaver's witty and stylish Amory and Milo Ames mystery series.

Death Wears a Mask Details

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From Reader Review Death Wears a Mask for online ebook

Sarah says

I cannot for the life of me figure out why Amory hasn't fired Winnelda or sent Milo packing.

Lisa says

I enjoyed this light-hearted mystery with a major amount of glamour!

Set in London in 1932 Amory and Milo Ames become involved in another high-class murder which is carried out during a masked ball no less.

This is written from Amory's POV and she is a naive but charming and intelligent high society lady.

Don't think too hard about this one, if you can allow yourself to enjoy it it is very rewarding - fast-paced, funny and intriguing.

I will certainly be reading more in this series.

Veronica says

I listened to the audiobook for this reread. Overall, I found the narrator's voice for Amory didn't match what I had in my head. This voice was too high and pinched. She did better with some of the other female character voices.

Original review - read in January 2016: This was a fitting follow-up to the first book in the series, *Murder at the Brightwell*. While the mystery aspect of it isn't the strongest, the charged dynamics between amateur sleuth Amory and her rakish husband, Milo, are what intrigued me the most.

Jaclyn says

Death Wears a Mask is the utterly charming follow-up to Ashley Weaver *Murder at the Brightwell* (which I also loved). This second installment continues the momentum of the first, throwing it's amateur lady detective, Amory Ames into another investigation and into more relationship drama with her husband, Milo.

Asked by a family friend, Serena Barrington, to look into the apparent theft of her jewels during a dinner party, Amory finds herself looking at the motives of the dinner guests. Amory's reputation from the events at the Brightwell have preceded her arrival in London, and Serena is sure that Amory can put her investigative skills to use and catch the culprit. Amory is not really given a chance to refuse, and so begins her investigation, which leads to murder, mayhem and disguises (okay, well, just one).

In addition to Amory's investigation she also has to contend with more trouble in her marriage to Milo. While they had reconnected during the events of *Murder at the Brightwell*, Milo appears to back to his old habits when he's photographed with a popular actress. It seems that Amory has to make a decision about what to do about her husband, does she let him get away with his apparent infidelities or does she seek out a

divorce and make a clean break.

Now, I have to admit I have my own pet theory about Milo's apparent playboy behaviour. I am 95% certain that Milo is a spy or some sort of government agent. There are just too many red flags that seem to indicate that this might be the case. Something is just not right with his convenient explanations or his sudden appearances at certain events. At any rate, the conflict between Amory and Milo makes for good reading and it complements the mystery really well. That said, I do hope that book three brings these two together on a more common ground; the waffling about their relationship and the deep-seated problems never seem to totally get resolved. Is Amory ever going to be able to trust her husband who clearly does not share everything with his wife? But, hey, it will bring me back for book three, so the author clearly knows what she's doing.

In addition to the Amory's relationship turmoil, the setting and it's heroine continue to charm. 1930s London was a lot of fun. While *Death Wears a Mask* isn't high on historical detail, the atmosphere of the 1930s, and it's opulence, at least for the rich, gives this series a wonderful sense of place. Amory and Milo do not represent the masses. Amory has no commitments and no career; her social life is her entire life it seems. In a lot of ways Amory could have become a boring character, instead I find her appealing, having an earnestness that one wouldn't expect of a woman of her class. I also like the fact that crime solving is an outlet for Amory, a career of sorts. I would really like to see how this idea of Amory as an independent investigator will change through the series.

Death Wears a Mask is another wonderful adventure with the intrepid Amory Ames. The setting and its light mystery continues to charm as does its heroine and her relationship woes. This is the perfect read for those who like a more character-driven mystery, as well as much less focus on the procedure of solving the crime. Fans of the first book, you won't be disappointed.

Originally reviewed at The Book Adventures.

*Review copy provided by the publisher via NetGalley.

Linda Baker says

Death Wears a Mask begins about two months after the events of *Murder at the Brightwell*. Milo and Amory Ames have retired to their country estate, mostly to avoid the press, but also to try to repair their faltering marriage. Things on the relationship front seem to be proceeding well and they hope the tabloid furor has died down. However, when you are young, rich and beautiful in 1930s London, the press is always on hounding you. Milo's well-deserved reputation as a playboy doesn't help.

Upon their return to London, one of the first invitations they receive is from Lady Serena Barrington, an old friend of Amory's mother. Their presence is requested at a dinner party. Upon arrival, they encounter a group that is only somewhat familiar. The group includes a woman of mystery, a voluble nephew of the Barrington's, two sisters, a tennis star, a highly placed foreign office official and his American wife, and the very dodgy Lord Dunmore. Lord Dunmore delights in scandalizing Society at every opportunity. Serena Barrington has a personal agenda, however; there have been a series of jewel thefts occurring at her dinner parties. All the guests at the dinner party were also guests at the parties in question. She asks Amory to investigate the thefts, based upon her success at the Brightwell Hotel. When her old acquaintance, Inspector Jones, now of Scotland Yard, also asks for her help she accedes. After all, Amory can go places in Society

where Inspector Jones cannot. When a murder occurs at a masquerade ball hosted by the dodgy Lord Dunmore, Amory is committed to the investigation fully. Everyone at this particular ball seems to be wearing a mask, both literally and figuratively. Things are not good on the homefront, though; Milo appears to be embroiled in more playboy behavior with a French actress.

The fact that I enjoy this series so much is quite a tribute to Ashley Weaver's writing chops. Everyone in Amory's world seems to be living useless lives of shopping, lunching and partying. No one even seems to be aware that there is a world depression, not to mention events in the rest of Europe at the time. In spite of that, I like Amory quite a lot. She is reckless at times but dogged in her search for answers. I can't find the same liking for Milo who seems to be determined to hurt Amory with his seeming philandering and poor excuses. I have my pet theories about Milo and while he redeems himself somewhat at the end of *Death Wears a Mask*, I am not convinced! The relationship tension is a plus, though; will she kick him to the curb or will he come clean at last?

Death Wears a Mask is a very enjoyable look at an era long gone; one in which there were idle aristocrats who lived lives of complete leisure. No wonder they got up to so much hanky-panky! I also have to give Minotaur kudos for the beautiful, evocative covers on both books in the series.

Jessi says

Oof. I am loving this series as much for the exploration of Amory and Milo's marriage as the mysteries that Amory keeps tripping into. After the reconciliation of the last book, Milo (seemingly?) continues his amorous ways after only a couple of months.

But the book doesn't start out that way. It begins with a dinner party. One where the hostess, knowing of Amory's involvement in solving a murder, pulls her aside and asks for help discovering who is stealing her jewels. The group that is gathered at her party is comprised of the same people who have been in the house for each theft. An injudicious statement by the hostess' nephew sets Amory and Milo back onto a bumpy road and it's not helped when Amory insists on investigating the death of that same nephew.

While the enjoyment I had for this book makes me desperately ready to read the next book, I truly hope that the push-pull of this marriage and Amory's feelings don't continue past that tome. It's nice now, but it's getting repetitious fast. We either need to see more of Milo's feelings or have Amory actually stick with her resolution at the end of this book.

Bryn says

After enjoying the first book in the series, this was a big disappointment, mainly because of the continuing dysfunctional relationship between Amory and Milo. They are both such potentially likeable characters, but I got so, so tired of Milo's cluelessness about the effect of his behavior on his wife and Amory's unwillingness to discuss it.

I just don't understand why he thinks he can just come and go with no explanation and dine with women who aren't his wife, and then he is surprised that Amory is upset about it. "But it didn't mean anything." "Nothing happened." Yeah, whatever.

But it is even harder to understand that Amory doesn't just say, "If you're going somewhere, you have to tell me. Better yet, bring me with you. That's what loving couples do. And don't you ever, ever go out for dinner alone with another woman. That is just insulting." But after spending most of the book refusing to discuss it, she excuses him with the realization that he's just "not at her beck and call" as if that explains it and everything's ok. My husband isn't at my beck and call either, but he would never treat me with the same cavalier indifference Milo shows her.

I'll believe "spunky heroine" when she starts acting like it, in her marriage as elsewhere. One more book in this series, and if they're still doing this stupid dance, I'm done.

QNPoohBear says

Amory Ames is looking forward to rekindling her romance with her rakish husband Milo but agrees to attend a dinner party at the home of her mother's friend Mrs. Barrington. Mrs. Barrington has an ulterior motive for inviting Amory; Mrs. Barrington wants Amory to discover what has happened to her missing jewels. Amory isn't sure the jewels were stolen in the first place but agrees to help. The suspect list includes the Barrington's nephew, James Harker; a famous tennis player, Mr. Foster; the handsome and very roguish Viscount Dumore; Dumore's rumored mistress Mrs. Garmond; a Mr. Garmond; a pair of spinster sisters, Marjorie and Felicity Eccles; and a newly wed couple from different social classes. Amory has her work cut out for her but when Mrs. Barrington suggests they lay a trap for the thief at a masquerade ball hosted by Lord Dumore, Amory goes along with the plan. Then one of the suspects dies and Detective Inspector Jones enlists Amory's help to find out who the murderer was. Amory has her hands full dealing with her husband's routine disappearances, his appearances in the gossip rags on the arm of a lovely French actress and fending off the advances of Viscount Dunmore. She's determined to solve the mystery herself to keep occupied until she decides what to do about Milo.

I enjoyed this book much more than *Murder at the Brightwell*. The mystery grabbed me right away and I had a very hard time putting the book down until I knew everything. Though I guessed half the mystery, I never guessed who did it. There were so many suspects and so many motives that it could have been any of them. I didn't feel the story was overpopulated with characters though since most of the story focuses on Amory. There's a lot more Amory and Milo and their relationship. All love scenes are hinted at as Amory and Milo attempt to kiss and make up. I liked Amory a lot more in this story. I felt bad for her and agreed that Milo was not being a very good husband. He's selfish and doesn't consider how his actions, no matter how innocent he claims them, reflect on Amory and how much she cares what others think of her. He should have more respect for her feelings. They seem to love one another but as Amory says sometimes love just isn't enough.

There are a ton of new characters here. Mrs. Barrington seems nice if a little forceful and maybe forgetful. Her husband seems to love her which is unusual in an upper-class marriage of that time. I liked Mr. Barrington until his secrets were revealed. (Not a spoiler everyone has secrets). I also really liked Amory's new friend, Mrs. Douglas-Hughes. She's refreshingly open and kind, a result of her American upbringing and time spent on the stage. Her husband is not particularly appealing. He has secrets and he's a bit stuffy. I also liked sweet Felicity Eccles and wanted to know more about her. I disliked her sister Marjorie right away and was convinced that Marjorie was bullying her sister about something. They don't have much of a story but one may be a thief or murderer or both. Amory's maid Winnelda is cute and a more toned down version of Queenie in the "*Her Royal Spyness*" mysteries.

The male characters don't fare as well as the women. The remaining men don't have many redeeming qualities and one should be arrested. I had bad vibes about that person right away and knew they were up to no good. The revelations about him surprised me though I disliked him immensely.

I recommend this series to fans of 1920s and 30s set mysteries. Downton Abbey fans may enjoy the high society aspect.

Sherry says

If you'd like to escape real life and enter into a world filled with intrigue and colourful characters, this series is for you. Set in England during the 1930s, this mystery series stars a spunky amateur sleuth and her charming husband. Plenty of red herrings to keep you guessing and a stylish atmosphere add up to a most satisfying read.

Melanie (Mel's Bookland Adventures) says

Level of obsession: high to very high

Lorraine says

Mr. & Mrs. Ames are successful again! In *Death Wears a Mask* (Amory Ames Mystery, #2), by Ashley Weaver, Amory is requested by a friend of her mother's to assist in finding a criminal who is taunting her in a very particular way. Amory agrees, but has her doubts. After spending a couple of months in the country with her husband, Milo, the move back to London & the social scene has Amory questioning her marriage again. What did Amory see that has shaken her confidence in her marriage? Of course, it is not long before Amory is at a Masked Ball given by a notorious lord, and a shot is heard - then a dead body is discovered. The author gives great detailed descriptions of fashion in 1930s London accompanied with sparkling jewels, and gossip! Amory is in the thick of it again, but this time Milo is with her. Now what does Milo do at the end that has Amory questioning her lack of confidence in her marriage? Very enjoyable! The characters prove quite interesting & believable! Ms. Weaver does a super job once again. I definitely like this series. Onto #3!

Alyssa Maxwell says

Ashley Weaver has made me fall in love with 1930s England! Through her narrative and dialogue, she captures the sophistication of British society and even the debauchery that often went along with it. I felt completely immersed in the period and enjoyed the references to the clothing, jewelry, slang, and pastimes that marked the era. But mostly I adore the characters of Amory and her husband Milo. We're often kept guessing whether Milo can be trusted, but even when he appears to be at his worst he is unerringly charming. And Amory is the epitome of a British woman with a stiff upper lip even though she might be crying inside. Their relationship, as well as the larger mystery thread, is an intricate dance that keeps the reader on their toes!

Amy says

[That said, I soooo thought he was being set up as a love interest! Were his wife and kiddies supposed to come out of nowhere like that? And if it isn

Beth says

I'm a little amazed at how much I'm enjoying what's a fairly thin series. The atmosphere is the selling point here: it's a unique look at the 1930s upper class. (It's not a Sayers sort of atmosphere, though - I can't see fitting Lord Peter into this scene.) Which might mean that part of the appeal of this series is its rarified air, that it plays on wish fulfillment, that there's something escapist about someone who wears beautiful dresses and goes to parties and doesn't need to work. Or maybe there's something touching about that same person - who seems not to have a care in the world - being really cut up over her husband's carelessness.

This works because it's historical. I think a modern-day equivalent would make me roll my eyes over the first-world problems of it all. But here's Amory, who grows up knowing nothing but the life she has, with limited contact to the very different world half a city away; her world doesn't provide her with tools to bridge the gap, or even to understand it.

All of which is to say that the central mystery, which is thin, feels more substantial because of the characters - and the characters feel more substantial, even though their conflict isn't new, because of the way they play off each other and the setting. This book really does rehash the previous book's dilemma, but it is more specific - photographic evidence! - and Amory is finally able to express just how drastic of an option she's considering. (How times have changed.) This specific historical interplay elevates the characters and the mystery, and somehow these thin disparate elements combine to form something pretty great.

Ivonne Rovira says

Pity poor Amory Ames, a bright, young thing who has just reconciled with her devilishly handsome and charming (but philandering) Milo. Even in August 1932, the couple doesn't want for money, and they've been working on their five-year-old marriage since it almost died along with two murder victims in the series' debut, *Murder at the Brightwell*.

Amory believes that the bad times are finally over, but no such luck! Now that they're back in London, Milo Ames appears once again, to be straying, and yet another corpse turns up on during a masquerade ball thrown by an aristocratic lady's man with his eye on Amory. Needless to say, the endlessly curious Amory, urged on by an old family friend, Serena Barrington, takes it upon herself to discover what the police cannot from the members of her social set and uncover the culprit.

I did not think that I would like *Murder Wears a Mask* as well as *Murder at the Brightwell* — and, at first, I didn't. But the jewel heist that opens the novel and the splendidly drawn characters soon had me glued to the novel. The charming Amory, the period touches, and the clever dialogue put me in the mind of a less dour Harriet Vane or another Tuppence Beresford. What a delight! Even though I sort of guessed the perpetrator

before the big reveal, I never stumbled onto his motive. Yet, even if I had, the novel was so charming and riveting, that I wouldn't have cared a fig!

Now, if I could only figure out how I will be able to wait until the third novel in the series, *A Most Novel Revenge*, is released in October! Too bad I don't have the option to flee to Monte Carlo or Paris in the company of Milo and Amory.

Caveat emptor: I listened Audible edition of *Murder at the Brightwell*, in which narrator Billie Fulford-Brown did a charming job narrating; however, Fulford-Brown was replaced with Alison Larkin, who sounds like Billie Burke in film *The Wizard of Oz*. The voice narration was so annoyingly screechy that I had to return the Audible edition and read the book in the Kindle format.
