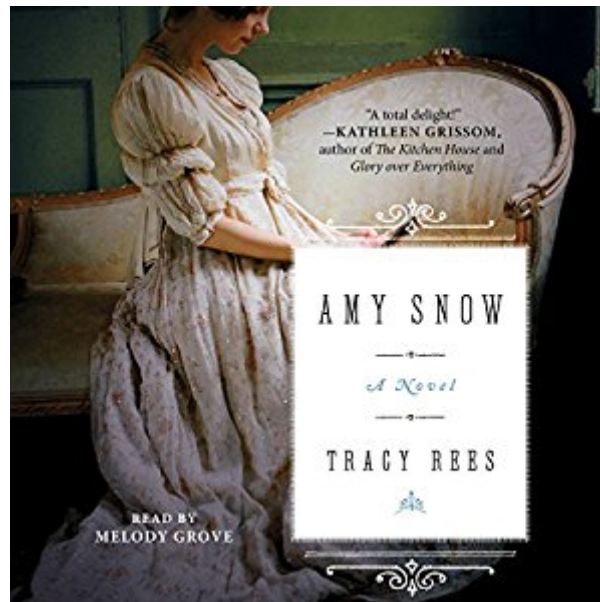


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Amy Snow: A Novel



Synopsis

Winner of the UK's Richard & Judy Search for a Bestseller Competition, this pause-resistant debut novel follows an orphan whose late, beloved best friend bequeaths her a treasure hunt that leads her all over Victorian England and finally to the one secret her friend never shared. It is 1831 when eight-year-old Aurelia Vennaway finds a naked baby girl abandoned in the snow on the grounds of her aristocratic family's magnificent mansion. Her parents are horrified that she has brought a bastard foundling into the house, but Aurelia convinces them to keep the baby, whom she names Amy Snow. Amy is brought up as a second-class citizen, despised by the Vennaways, but she and Aurelia are as close as sisters. When Aurelia dies at the age of 23, she leaves Amy 10 pounds, and the Vennaways immediately banish Amy from their home. But Aurelia left her much more. Amy soon receives a packet that contains a rich inheritance and a letter from Aurelia revealing she had kept secrets from Amy, secrets that she wants Amy to know. From the grave she sends Amy on a treasure hunt from one end of England to the other - a treasure hunt that only Amy can follow. Ultimately, a life-changing discovery awaits...if only Amy can unlock the secret. In the end Amy escapes the Vennaways, finds true love, and learns her dearest friend's secret - a secret that she will protect for the rest of her life. An abandoned baby, a treasure hunt, a secret. As Amy sets forth on her quest, listeners will be swept away by this engrossing gem of a novel - the wonderful debut by newcomer Tracy Rees.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Amy Snow by Tracy Rees is a debut novel that enthralled me from start to finish. It is set in England

in early Victorian times, and while in one sense it merely covers a matter of months, it also goes back in time, so that we the reader are slowly fed all the details. This allows the mystery of the story to unfurl. Aurelia Vennaway when she is a young girl of eight, discovers a baby blue with cold in the snow, yet still alive. And so begins the life of Amy Snow. Where she came from, who she is nobody seems to know - or at any rate are not prepared to reveal. Apart from the prologue and epilogue the story is recounted by Amy. She grew up in the Vennaway home, cared for by the cook and young gardener, despised by Lady Vennaway and forbidden to be seen anywhere by the family. Amy's life is cold and lonely. However Aurelia befriends her and as they both grow they bond and grow in friendship and love. When Aurelia dies Amy is cast out, a young woman of about seventeen years thrust out into a world she is unprepared for. Yet Amy is not totally abandoned, even in death Aurelia reaches out to Amy through letters that are to guide her along a journey of self discovery and the revelation of secrets that surprise. The letters are not straight forward, some of them are like a cryptic crossword that Amy must break the code of so that she can take the next step in the quest. At times this aggravates her, she almost gives up annoyed with Aurelia, yet she perseveres to the end. Along the way she meets all kinds of characters, mostly kind and compassionate and a few not so much. All are colourful and add vitality and interesting detail to the story. As Amy meets each one, her heart is warmed with what has been so lacking in her life so far, she is also challenged by some of those she meets and learns to stand on her own two feet and speak her mind. All the while she struggles with who she is, who controls her and what are her own choices along the way. I really enjoyed this book, I liked Amy and felt for her in so many ways. I was delighted with her spirit of loyalty and willingness to go on an adventure that she did not know where it would finally end and how. I loved how the book underlined certain values that the main characters were insistent about and that they based their choices on. Tracy Rees has written a well crafted and intriguing mystery, with characters that will long endure in my memory. A big thumbs up for her first published book - I certainly hope she has another as equally readable in the wings.

This review contains spoilers! It started with the air of a true Victorian book. There was intrigue & mystery, there were manners, a little bit of snobbery, but it didn't matter 'cause we knew who the good characters are, there were the sumptuous and the poor, there was the language of the late 19th century. There were some good elements, but then all these seemed to leave the book at once and throw it in a 21st century melodramatic moment, with language that lost its Victorianism, and all I had left was my curiosity that compelled me to finish the book. I love a good treasure hunt (in books, not in real life), and I love letters, therefore I was sold from the get go. The plot intrigued me,

the reading went fast, the language reminded me of all those classics I read in my school years, and I fell for this book early on. The idea of a secret that is closely guarded was appealing, but what the secret is easily guessed. I was a bit disappointed, to tell the truth, but it was expected. The first moment when I raised my eyebrow and shook my head in disapproval was Amy Snow's first attempt to defend herself. I can try to see what the author was trying to do: make Amy Snow get out of her oyster and let her become an independent person. However, it felt fake. The transition was too brutal. Here she is, just a few weeks on the road, claiming she's scared and pep-talking herself into being a person ungoverned by others trying to live her life whichever way she sees fit, but all the while still being shy and reserved in interactions, when bam! she yells at a lady and thus makes a scene at a ball. It was uncalled for; I wish there were a better way to prove Amy Snow could defend herself. What is more, after this moment she doesn't become the strong young woman one would expect; this was just an unnecessary outburst that left me surprised and thrown in the world of a contemporary soap opera. Overlooking this (in my humble opinion) unfortunate moment, I carried on reading. Enter Henry Meade. Yes, I liked him in the beginning. Of course I guessed that he's "the one". Sure, he's a bit unstable in his decisions, but we'll not keep this against him. However, I didn't like how he developed. Amy Snow, of course, fell in love with him, and decided he's the one she wants to marry (with a little bit of help from coincidence, for were it not for that eavesdropping at the bridge, she wouldn't have heard about and seen Mr. Garland). Henry Meade decided (over night, mind you, literally overnight) that he shall be a teacher. A teacher he becomes, but still, it seemed a bit exaggerated. What popped the wonderful Victorian bubble I was in while reading this novel (on the bus and in waiting rooms), was the melodrama that was unnecessary between Amy Snow and Henry. Goodness. The last quarter of the book read nothing like the previous part. I understand all their feelings, and the opposite sides they were pulled in, but this, too, felt exaggerated. It seemed as if he wanted to tell Amy what to do, tried to make himself a part of every aspect of her life. Don't give me the "he loved her" idea; girl wanted to do things on her own. He didn't seem sincere in his declarations and his claims of equality between Amy and him. I liked how there was an ending from Mrs. Vennaway's perspective. Although she was meant to be the bad character, she was well constructed, she seemed authentic in her role of a mean woman who rejects the illegitimate child found on the family's property. She is a true upper-class representative, welcoming life with a stiff upper lip attitude; a true Victorian woman, enduring the cards life gives her and sitting still in the boundaries her class imposes. Mrs. Riverthorpe is quite a character, but the kind of character who wants to appear tough and unshakable, but has a heart of gold. Classic. Despite all these, I did enjoy reading this novel. It's something that would appeal to those who like historical fiction. A nice read

all in all.3.5/5 starsI received an advanced free ebook copy of the book from the publisher via Net Galley. All thoughts expressed here are my own.

Loved this book! From the language to the vivid characters and of course the journey and trail, this was a stunning debut from the author who Richard and Judy picked as their winner for the Pick a bestseller competition. Amy is like your friend “quirky and downtrodden and you root for her every step of the way. I wanted to hit out at Mrs Vennaway and scream at Mrs Riverthroe and when she tried to find the bookshop in London and ran into problems, I wanted to get the first carriage out there and help her. A very friendly and determined girl” reminded me of a young Jane Eyre just finding her way in the world and I was right behind her. The various stops on her journey lead to more characters and more insights into Victorian society at that time. Amy’s impression of the places she visits is fun to visualise and the modes of transportation seem so tricky to navigate! From the rustling of the skirts, the hats and canes of the men and the noise of the cobbled streets, this is a vivid and stunningly evoked journey. And the secret and final reveal? Even though this is guessable early on, no way does it detract from the final part of the story. For Aurelia had a reason for it all and Amy had to meet and discover what she did along the way. Loved the journey and loved the charming way it was told. That Amy Snow has grown into quite the young lady!

i really enjoyed the story and I would like to read more by this author. it had a great beginning that got me hooked on the story and then continues with a mystery to solve. I enjoyed the different characters in the story and I think she is an excellent writer

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