



Armed and Glamorous

Ellen Byerrum

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Trench coats? hot or not?

The author of *Grave Apparel* proves you can solve mysteries without sacrificing style...

Unchallenged and unappreciated, fashion reporter Lacey Smithsonian slips on her trench coat and high-heeled gumshoes to pursue a course in private investigation and a shot at a better job.

When a wealthy and erratic D.C. socialite is discovered quite dead outside the classroom, Lacey gets to test those sleuthing skills. Was the victim on her way to share a dangerous secret with Smithsonian? And what does it have to do with a missing Louis Vuitton vintage custom makeup case?

Lacey must mix style with substance to unravel these tangled threads before she, or one of her best friends, gets caught in the sights of a cold-blooded killer?

Armed and Glamorous Details

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From Reader Review Armed and Glamorous for online ebook

Kasi says

This episode of the series was just "OK!" The subject of the mystery was fun, but the clues were way too obvious. I had the killer identified by the end of the first act. I didn't like how the author summed up all her wacky characters for the final romp through to catch the killer. It was hokey. These books are silly fun, but not until now have they dipped into cheesy-bad. I'm a bit disappointed, but not enough to NOT read the next one that gets published!

Aparna says

Stars: 3.5 / 5

Recommendation: An easy mystery read that is weaved through the world of fashion, style and dressing from the view point of a fashion stylist.

Armed and Glamorous is the sixth installment in the Crime of Fashion series by Ellen Byerrum published in July of 2008. This time Lacey Smithsonian is taking a PI class so she can hone her sleuthing skills. Why not, she keeps running into murdered victims, killers and eventually capturing them. :)

The plot opens with Lacey's first class at the PI school run by Bud Hunt - an ex-cop and a close friend of Vic Donovan. With her are other characters in the class - Snake Goldstein, a bounty hunter; Edwina Plimpton, who won the class over a bet with her friend; Willow Raynor, a very shy woman; Martin Hadley, who believes the US Government had put him in an experiment of mind control and finally Damon Newhouse - perhaps Brooke leaked Lacey's idea of taking the class or Vic ordered Damon to be her bodyguard but he was there to annoy her further.

But the biggest surprise for Lacey was Bud's guest speaker, Greg - a surveillance expert. He was no ordinary person but in fact was Gregor Kepelov, an ex-KGB spy and a jewel thief, whom she had tangled with when she was in Russia looking for the lost corset in the book The Raiders of the Lost Corset. Now what was he doing in Washington, D.C. thought Lacey.

As the class concludes for a lunch break and everyone heads out, they come across a very dead Cecily Ashton in her silver-blue S-Type Jaguar just outside the building where the class was. Cecily was one of the notorious Washingtonian socialites, the former trophy wife of an aging billionaire, Philip Clark Ashton, who once owned a baseball team in D.C. She often tended to get the wrong kind of publicity in press causing the inevitable divorce. Lacey had interviewed her for her fashion article not just a week ago.

Now this makes it more mysterious for Lacey's sharp mind. Was there a connection between Gregor and Cecily? What was Cecily doing outside the class in Falls Church, Virginia - a place Cecily would never be found visiting? Was she trying to contact someone here? Gregor? Bud? Lacey? Was the break-in at Cecily's home had to do anything with her murder? Why would a robber steal just one item - a one-of-a-kind makeup case, piece designed by Louis Vuitton for Rita Hayworth in the 1940s and contained a hidden compartment that housed a very expensive pearl necklace belonging to the movie star? Why did he steal just that one? Why not her expensive clothes that probably costed more than the makeup case? And Lacey's mind spins further pushing her deeper into the investigation much to the chagrin of Vic and the danger that posed to her

and her friends.

Another good murder-mystery by Ellen with fashion clues. It was thrilling to visit Aunt Mimi's magical bottomless trunk again, filled with fabulous vintage clothes, fabrics, patterns and fashion memorabilia. My taste for vintage clothing had increased page by page as I read these books. One day perhaps I will wear a vintage clothing too. :P We also get to hear the story behind Lacey's last name "Smithsonian" - definitely not related to the museum. :P I recommend that you pick this book for an easy read of murder and crime in the world of fashion. And here's another snippet from Lacey's Fashion Bites.

Lacey Smithsonian's Fashion Bites: Shopping Safari: Hunting for the Elusive Little Black Dress

The first rule of hunting and gathering the right little black dress is commitment. Commitment to trying on as many black dresses as it takes until you find the one that fits, whether that means two dresses or twenty dresses.

Sonja says

What fun! Now to get my hands on the rest of the series...

Jenger says

Not my favorite in the Crime of Fashion series but it was still a good read and had an interesting story line - not as fun as Raiders of the Lost Corset but still worth the time.

Darla Stokes says

You wouldn't think I'd enjoy this series, because I know zip about fashion, and care even less. But the fashion in this series is less than in a lot of chick lit, and the mysteries are well-crafted and enjoyable.

Renee says

I'm hooked on Lacey Smithsonian, even when she's not at her best. I enjoyed Armed but, honestly, not as much as I liked Grave Apparel. Keep in mind, though, that that's not exactly a put down -- when I'm not wild about one of Byerrum's books, it still means I like it more than most of what's out there. It's just not stellar.

I can't help wondering whether Byerrum was fighting page limits on this one. The main plot -- involving a now-divorced socialite with a legendary collection of new and vintage designer clothes -- gave Byerrum plenty of room to talk about the dresses, the colors, the styling details that made Designer Knockoff such a fantastic read. (Those same details add wonderful color to Nancy Martin's books, too.) While they got some play, I don't think they got enough. I know that this is a mystery not a book about fashion, but for me the style and fashion details are part of what makes this series unique. I hope Byerrum is able to work with them more in her next book.

Shannon says

this was the fourth or fifth book in this series. It was a bit slow going at first but it picked up pretty fast. It was a lot of fun and the author made it so it wasn't totally predictable and she could write another one or she could be done. If you want some fun easy reads I would totally recommend this series.

Christine Zibas says

It's hard to believe that fashion and murder would make a good mix, but in "Armed and Glamorous," it's a winning combination. Add to that the fashion-challenged setting of Washington, DC, and this is a book (and series) that is sure to please fans of "cozy" mysteries, and women readers generally.

The fashion columnist sleuth of the story is Lacy Smithsonian, who covers the Washington fashion beat for the local newspaper but longs for more challenging stories. She usually finds them, too, as she is becoming known as a "murder magnet" around the office. In this case, it's the murder of a well-dressed Washington socialite she's just interviewed, who is found dead right outside her night school classroom. (Lacey is taking classes to become a private investigator in the hope of improving her journalism skills and move herself into more serious reporting.)

When Cecily Ashton turns up dead in her Jaguar in the parking lot, not only do the instructors and students become prime suspects, there are a host of other possibilities as well. Ashton has an obnoxious ex-husband, a spurned love interest, and plenty of other people who might have reason to do her harm. Add to that a recent burglary and a missing vintage Louis Vuitton makeup case that once belonged to a famous movie star, and the leads point in all directions.

Leave it to Lacey and her Pink Collar Club girlfriends (the "armed and glamorous" of the title) to sort out the clues and bring down the killer. Readers will have great fun reading Lacey's columns (sprinkled throughout the book) and trying to figure out who the real killer is among so many with motive.

This latest offering from mystery writer Ellen Byerrum is sure to result in more Lacey Smithsonian fans. Byerrum brings to her writing a great knack for spinning a story, whether it's about fashion, human foibles, or the Washington scene. She combines that ability with an astute talent for laying a great trail of clues to make for an engaging mystery. Whether readers are fashion divas or hopelessly fashion challenged, there's a lot to like about being "Armed and Glamorous."

Dez Nemec says

OH MY GOD. I tried. I really did. Just because I'm not into fashion, doesn't mean I can't like this book. But I knew after the ENTIRE chapter flashback of hanging out in a closet this was not going to be for me. I still hung in there, but when the girls met at the shooting range and we got descriptions of the outfits, I was done. Seriously, who the hell cares what is being worn at the range? The most important thing at the range is being dressed properly, not being a fashionista. Good grief. The other 2 in this series are coming off my shelf. No more. A big fat DNF.

Michelle says

I liked this book, but I would have liked it more without Hadley and the subplot about hearing voices. that was just ridiculous and unnecessary. Luckily, Newhouse didn't annoy me as much in this one, and the conspiracy stuff was at a level I could handle. All in all, a good book in the series.

Moana Beinhorn says

Fun read

Never slow . Silly, light story. Easy to follow...lots of imagination. Three friends sharing suspense, a little romance and a lot of fun.

Erika says

Always a fun author to read, light and hilarious

Aisling says

Much to like; a heroine with a great moniker (Lacey Smithsonian), lots of local DC (DMV really) color, really interesting stuff on taking a PI class. The mystery was good, too. A famous DC socialite loses her priceless, previously owned by Rita Hayworth and specially designed by Louis Vuitton, jewelry case and then two weeks later she is murdered. But (and this is an almost universal problem with cozies) the heroine is rescued....UGH. Nevermind that she was fearless and shot the suspect moments before, when her boyfriend arrives she falls into his arms and he says "No rescue choppers for you, darling, you're coming home with me. I'm your rescue team." PuhLEASE. That and "extra fashionary perception" almost reached 'flinging across the room' status. But I can't let those two things ruin an otherwise good little mystery.

Annice22 says

The mystery was really easy to figure out and I felt like the author was trying to include too much in one story. And for a fashion mystery book, the fashion was sort of lacking. This wasn't a bad read just a rather predictable easy to solve mystery that didn't have enough fashion in it.

Terry says

Great opening line: "No loaded weapons in the classroom." I enjoyed meeting Lacey Smithsonian (that's right) in the 6th entry in Byerrum's Crime of Fashion mystery series. Lots of typical elements in the amateur sleuth category including a PI boyfriend, a wacky sidekick (in this case, two), and plenty of red herrings. But the heroine's likeable, the journalism angle always works for me, and the Washington DC/environs settings took me away for a few hours. Easy to recommend to cozy readers looking for an easy escape. I learned a LOT about retro fashion!
