



The Necklace Affair

Ashley Gardner

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Captain Lacey agrees to track down the missing necklace of a society matron and prove the innocence of her maid, who has been arrested for the theft. Lady Clifford declares that the rival for her husband's affections has stolen the necklace, but Lacey soon realizes that the problem is not so simple. He recruits Lady Breckenridge to infiltrate the Clifford household, while Lacey and his friend Lucius Grenville follow other leads. The investigation digs up scandal and past secrets, and Lacey finds himself competing with the underworld criminal, James Denis, for the necklace's retrieval.

This is a 25,000-word (ten-chapter) novella. The events occur between the end of *The Sudbury School Murders* (Book 4) and the beginning of *A Body in Berkeley Square* (Book 5).

The Necklace Affair Details

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Author : Ashley Gardner

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From Reader Review The Necklace Affair for online ebook

Julie Bates says

I enjoy this series. Captain Lacey is damaged physically & emotionally yet he soldiers on through life finding purpose in solving crimes no one else will. In this novella, he uses his friends to penetrate secrets kept in high society to save a maid accused of stealing her mistress' diamond necklace. Lacey stubbornly keeps going after the truth even when warned to cease. I really like the character and how well drawn the setting is. A thoroughly enjoyable read.

Susan says

London 1817 and Captain Lacey is asked by Lady Clifford to find her stolen necklace. While her maid has been arrested for the theft she believes that her companion is the guilty party. Lacey aims to unravel the problem.

Sheila Melo says

A Novella Almost As Good as Full Length Novel

"You are quite romantic, Captain Lacey, ever one to assist a lady in distress."

THE STORY: This novella involves the mystery of a missing necklace and the twisted personal relationships involving the people surrounding it. Captain Lacey once again gets involved in a mystery because he cannot resist a woman in distress. The mystery takes him to interact with all the women in his life including Lady Breckenridge who Lacey asks to act as his proxy in parts of the investigation.

OPINION: As the overarching personal stories of Lacey and his friends begin to take shape, the books become more interesting. There are dual mysteries involved: the obvious mystery that Lacey is investigating and the mystery of the motivations of those around Lacey. Because the books are told in the first person, the motivations of others are not clear and Lacey and the reader are involved in the puzzle of figuring them out. This novella has an adequate mystery but the best part is the continuing exploration of Lacey's life.

WORTH MENTIONING: For fans of romance, there clearly is something going on between Lacey and Lady Breckenridge but the books remain mysteries and not romances.

FINAL DECISION: The mystery of this one was mildly interesting, but I really enjoyed the continuing personal story of Lacey.

CONNECTED BOOKS: THE NECKLACE AFFAIR is the 4.5 book in the Captain Lacey Regency Mysteries.

STAR RATING: I give this novella 4 stars.

Laura says

An unexpected outcome

While attending a party at his friend, Grenville's, house, Captain Lacey is asked to find a lady's stolen necklace. What looks like a fairly straightforward case, turns out to be anything but, with way more plot twists than one would expect from a short novella. This story is notable for the fact that it details the first time that Captain Lacey enlists the help of Lady Breckenridge in one of his investigations.

LJ says

First Sentence: On an evening in late March 1917, I climbed to the third floor of Lucius Grenville's Grosvenor Street house in search of peace, and found a lady weeping instead.

A society matron implores Captain Lacey to locate her missing necklace in order to provide the innocence of her maid. With the help of his friends, Lady Breckenridge, Lucius Grenville and two of his staff, the path leads them to scandals and secrets from the past, as well as in competition with the dangerous criminal, James Denis.

Followers of this wonderful series will appreciate this ten-chapter novella, set between "The Sudbury School Murders" and "A Body in Berkeley Square. However, this story is also an excellent introduction for new readers.

Gardner absolutely knows how to capture the reader's attention from the very beginning. She does an excellent job of capturing the flavor of speech from the period, without it being overdone, and the wry humor is delightful. The descriptions of meals are nearly painful to read due to their lusciousness and ability to leave one nearly desperate to partake.

Gardner is particularly adept at providing background details of each character, almost without seeming to. We even learn the particulars of Lacey's past injuries. The characters are fascinating, particularly with the contrast of light—Granville—and dark—Denis. One can't help but enjoy the relationship between Lacy and Lady Breckenridge. Marianne is a treat and adds a wonderful twist to the plot

"The Necklace Affair" is so well done with a very good plot twist and justice being served in a most satisfactory manner.

THE NECKLACE AFFAIR (Hist Myst – Captain Lacey – London - 1817/Regency) - Ex
Gardner, Ashley – Early in the series yet only recently published
Amazon Digital Services, Inc. – January 2014

Jayne dArcy says

This one got rather ridiculous with how many people wanted the necklace once it was found. Capt. Lacey thought the same and that made me feel good that we were of the same thinking. The ending was a bit of a surprise but somehow I think Capt. Lacey was also taken off guard.

Michele says

Really enjoyed the mystery, and what's going on with Grenville and Marianne. A solid novella every bit as rich as the rest of the novels in the series.

Barb says

This was perfect for my first foray into the land of the e-book.

I got to spend some time hanging out with old friends (Captain Lacey, Lucius Grenville, Donata Breckenridge and Marianne Simmons) while reading in a new format.

The story wasn't nearly long enough for my tastes but I did enjoy the brief glimpse into these character's lives.

I'm looking forward to the next installment of the Captain Lacey series 'A Disappearance in Drury Lane'.

Jean says

Another complex investigation.

This short story forms an excellent bridge between two full length books.

It is well worth reading and we should feel glad that the author decided to retrieve it, dust it down and include it in the series.

William Ryan says

Another winner

I love this author. Her characters are very believable and likable. She makes you want to keep reading. Her plots are reasonable. You know the hero is going to survive, but it's interesting to see the characters interacting.

Avid Series Reader says

The Necklace Affair by Ashley Gardner is book 4.5 of the Captain Lacey mystery series, set in Regency London. When a society matron's family heirloom necklace is stolen, and her personal maid is accused of the theft, Captain Lacey is asked to discreetly investigate. Lady Clifford is certain that her erstwhile friend Mrs. Dale, now (regrettably) permanent resident in her household, and Lord Clifford's mistress, is guilty of the theft.

For a short novella, this packs a punch: all familiar characters in the series take part: Bow Runner Pomeroy, Lord Grenville, Lady Breckenridge, Bartholomew and Matthias, and Marianne. What fun!

Brit says

4.5 stars I really enjoied all the female characters in this novella, which none of the novels have done yet. And I really liked how it wrapped up. It wasn't in a perfect bow like most of the novels, and itwas heart warming at the same time. I wish this had been a full length novel which is why it losses a half star rating for me. But a fabulous novella I love in this series.

Cindie says

Nice short stories, although might have been helpful to have a brief introduction to each with the time frame of the story. I can see how they could not be full novels, however, the last two could have just been added onto another novel.

Lori McD says

This Captain Lacey mystery seemed more like a short story than a book! And the mystery doesn't involve murder this time, but rather the theft of a diamond necklace. Lady Clifford approaches Captain Lacey in Grenville's private drawing room at a Grenville fete. Lady Clifford is in tears, because her maid (Waters) has been arrested for the theft of Lady Clifford's valuable diamond necklace. Lady Clifford insists that Waters is innocent, and that her companion, Mrs. Dale is to blame.

What a tangled web! When Mrs. Dale's husband died, Lady Clifford invited her good friend and school chum to live with her as her companion. But it seems that the overbearing, pompous ass of her husband Lord Clifford decided that to keep his wife in hand, he'd take Mrs. Dale as his mistress -- while the two ladies live under the same roof! It's all the scandal of the "ton". Lacey, ever a softie where a lady is concerned, assures Lady Clifford he'll look into it. It just so happens that his old sergeant, Pomeroy, is the Bow Street Runner who arrested the maid Waters, and Lacey knows what a bull dog Pomeroy can be. Besides, Pomeroy doesn't get his fee unless there's a conviction. The necklace is gone, no doubt, and a maid is an easy target. The fact that she was arrested might be enough for the jury to convict her.

Lacey asks for assistance from his friend Grenville, who loves adventure, and Grenville's two footmen, brothers Matthias and Bartholomew. Bartholomew has been training as a valet, lent by Grenville to Lacey. The brothers have been instrumental in assisting with inquiries in past cases, including "The Sudbury School Murders", when they guarded the injured Grenville with their lives. The brothers are also good at getting the scoop from the downstairs crowd. So all four set off to the various pawn shops around the city, to see if they can discover the missing necklace and determine who might have stolen it. Lacey finds a much smaller and lesser quality necklace, and on a hunch, talks the pawn shop owner down to a price that he can afford and purchases it. While Grenville and Bartholomew strike out, Matthias excitedly relates a tale of a pawn shop owner who showed him the "special" merchandise kept in a back room -- and one of the necklaces seems to match the description. Grenville gives Lacey the money to purchase the necklace, and Grenville and Lacey show it to Lord Clifford. Clifford insists that the necklace is NOT his wife's missing diamonds; but he does recognize the smaller, inferior necklace as having belonged to his wife before their marriage.

Lacey now enlists the help of his friend Lady Breckenridge. Lady Breckenridge is a widow, and her husband was part of a notorious murder scheme in book #2 of the series. Lacey and the lady started with a most uneasy relationship, but they seem to be developing a friendship and perhaps more. Lady Breckenridge assures Lacey that she will go where he cannot - become part of Lady Clifford's boon friends to uncover what she can about the missing necklace and try to ascertain if Mrs. Dale is involved. But in return, she demands a favor from Lacey: meet her young son, Peter. Lacey is honored, and he realizes that Lady Breckenridge is showing a bent towards a much more serious relationship between them.

Lacey muses over Lady B's findings with his friend, Marianne, who is back in Grenville's house in London. Marianne still hasn't confided her secret to Grenville, which is still a sticking point between Lacey and Grenville, because G knows that Lacey does know. But Grenville has allowed Marianne to come and go as she pleases, which has lessened the tension between G and M. Marianne brings new eyes to the situation, however, telling Lacey that in her opinion, Lady Clifford and Mrs. Dale aren't jealous over the situation with Lord Clifford, but rather that perhaps Lady C and Mrs. D have their own "relationship" and the jealousy is over the maid, Waters.

As Lacey puts all of this together, he's summoned to James Denis' home, where he meets a former French Comte, who claims that the missing necklace belongs to him and was taken from him by Lord Clifford.

What interest does Denis have in all of this? And will Lacey put himself deeper into Denis' web to get more information about his missing wife and daughter? If Lacey is to pursue any further relationship with Lady B, he must be free, which he is not -- his wife, Carlotta, ran off with a French officer taking his daughter, Gabriella, (2 years old at the time) with her. There was no divorce. And what is really going on in the Clifford household? Where is the missing necklace?

I took away a star from this book, even though it was one of my favorites. While I've been cynical about Lady B and what she wants from Lacey, it seems as if it's possible for the two to be happy. That is, if Lacey can get free of his wife. I want to see Lacey happy.

The mystery seems to meander, too. Perhaps it's not as compelling as murder? I think I was also disappointed, because at the end of the last book there were 2 exciting possibilities, neither of which came to pass: 1) Grenville mentioned traveling and taking Lacey along, which promises all sorts of adventures. 2) Louisa Brandon told Lacey that if he decided to go to France in search of his wife and daughter that she'd go with him. I'm hoping that we see this happen in a future book.

Barbara Literski says

Mystery

Another mystery that I enjoyed reading with Captain Lacey. This was about a necklace that caused more problems when it was reported stolen.
