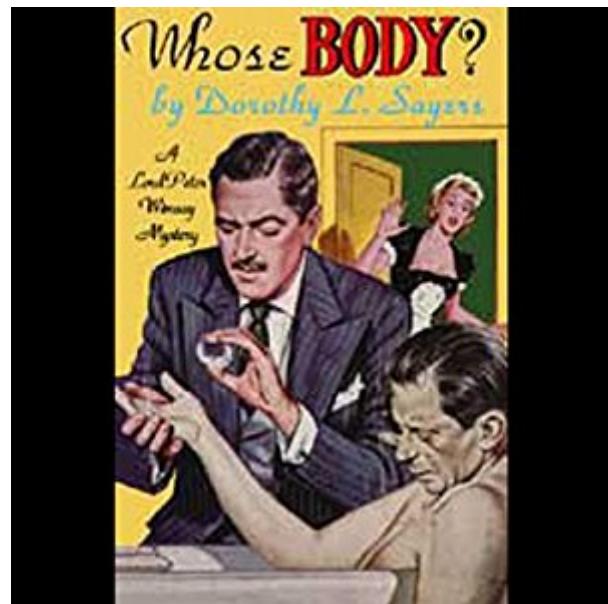


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Whose Body?



Synopsis

There's a corpse in the bathtub, wearing nothing but a pair of pince-nez spectacles. Enter Lord Peter Wimsey, the original gentleman sleuth. Urged to investigate by his mother, the Dowager Duchess of Denver, Lord Peter quickly ascertains that the sudden disappearance of a well-known financier is in some way connected to the body in the bathroom. But discovering exactly which way they're related leads the amateur detective on a merry chase. Written by a master of the detective story, this atmospheric tale abounds in the cozy delights of an English murder mystery. Dorothy L. Sayers ranks with Agatha Christie as a defining author of the genre. A novelist, essayist, and medieval scholar, Sayers was among the first women to receive an Oxford degree, and her translations of Dante remain in wide circulation. This novel marks the debut of her most popular creation, Lord Peter Wimsey, whose continuing adventures unfold amid the lively world of upper-crust British society in the 1920s. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 5 hours and 51 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Blackstone Audio, Inc.

Audible.com Release Date: August 19, 2008

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B001EPO4WA

Best Sellers Rank: #177 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > British Detectives #1178 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > British Detectives #9828 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature

Customer Reviews

I found this series because I was looking for something new after mostly exhausting Agatha Christie. I'm not sure I like these as much as Mrs. Marple or Poirot, but I definitely like Lord Peter. He's a complex character, and I enjoyed getting to see some of his character. The mystery was pretty good, and I enjoyed the different aspects of it, as well as the solving of the case. I felt like the reader had access to all of the facts that Lord Peter did so it doesn't lead up to the big reveal (like a Christie book) where the detective has facts that the reader was never exposed to. My biggest issue

was this weird scene where all the sudden a conversation occurred that was mostly in French... I don't speak French and I could kind of guess the conversation, but I had no idea what was actually being said. I will definitely be reading the next book in the series!

I was a huge fan of the 'Lord Peter Whimsey' series on Masterpiece Theatre, PBS, back in the 70's and read this first story out of nostalgia. Wasn't disappointed. Don't believe these books are for everyone. I like reading the style of language used from that era and marvel at how verbose everyday dialogue was at that time. It is insightful into how the British upper class lived (probably still do) compared to regular (common) folk. The books are light reading compared to today's crime novels but refreshing in their of Gore and vulgarity.

First book in the Lord Peter Wimsey series. Mr. Thipps wakes up one morning to find a dead body in his bathtub. Neither he nor the other occupants recognize the man, but Inspector Suggs is convinced that Mr. Thipps is the murderer and quickly carts him off to jail. Tipped off to the incident by his mother, Lord Peter pops in to see for himself and soon get involved in the investigation. I have a soft spot for Lord Peter that keeps me coming back to him, but at the same time I find his character to be a bit ridiculous. He reminds me of an uncle who is very showy but he makes you laugh and smile so you can't help enjoying his company. This is a bit of a locked room mystery and the story itself always captures my imagination because of its intricacy and the care the author takes in unraveling it. Finally, it is the character of Bunter, valet to Lord Peter, who provides a steady foundation from which Lord Peter can engage his curiosity. Overall, in my opinion, you can't go wrong with Lord Peter Wimsey.

Dorothy L. Sayers' 1923 mystery novel *Whose Body?* is the debut adventure of Lord Peter Wimsey, one of the great gentleman sleuths of the Golden Age of Detective Fiction. Lord Peter is the second son of the Duke of Denver (England, not Colorado). As an unemployed member of the idle rich, he chooses to spend his free time solving mysteries. He is encouraged in this hobby by his friend Charles Parker, a Scotland Yard detective who consults him on tricky cases. *Whose Body?* finds Lord Peter with not one but two baffling puzzles on his hands. His mother, the Dowager Duchess of Denver, comes to him on behalf of a Mr. Thipps, who has inexplicably discovered the dead body of an unknown man in his bathtub. As if to add insult to injury, the corpse is completely naked except for a pair of pince-nez spectacles. Meanwhile, Parker is also working on a case that demands Lord Peter's attention. Sir Reuben Levy, a prominent financier, has disappeared.

Could the stiff in Thipps' tub be Parker's missing man? Comparisons between Wimsey and Sherlock Holmes are inevitable; so inevitable, in fact, that Lord Peter himself makes them. He is an enthusiast of detective fiction, yet a critic of it as well, often pointing out how the killers in mystery novels don't behave the way real-life murderers would. Though such meta-commentary pokes fun at the classic detective, it's clear that Lord Peter admires Holmes and likes to consider himself very much in the same league with the fictional detective. As a literary character, however, he doesn't quite measure up, yet Lord Peter is likely one of the best post-Holmes British investigators, ranking up there with Agatha Christie's recurring sleuths. Even less so than Holmes, Lord Peter is not the sort of man I would take a liking to in real life. He has a rather frivolous attitude toward just about everything, including his cases. Often the main concern on his mind is the wearing of proper trousers. He readily admits that his interest in solving mysteries is driven by intellectual exercise; he has little moral interest in punishing wrong-doers. When it comes to crime, he displays a computer-like intelligence, but in all other matters he seems rather air-headed and flighty. If anything the reader identifies with Parker, who fights crime for a living and takes his role as a lawman seriously. One gets the impression that putting up with Lord Peter's shallow flippancy is a necessity he willingly endures in order to get his man and set things right. On the other hand, two qualities I do enjoy about Lord Peter are his interest in collecting rare books and the fact that he enlists the help of his mother "by all measures a charming character" in solving his cases. As for the mystery itself: "Very pretty," Parker remarks, "a bit intricate, though." For the most part, Sayers' writing is quite smart and engaging. The solution to the mystery is revealed a little too early, however, and is not surprising enough. Towards the end of the book, a couple passages written in the second person seem like ostentatious stylistic diversions that distract from the story rather than help it. Overall, however, Sayers tells her story very well. Her prose recalls the solid, traditional storytelling of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle or Maurice Leblanc sprinkled with risqué suggestions of sex and violence more suited to the modern reader. Though published over 90 years ago, today's audience will still find *Whose Body?* fresh and exciting. Despite my few misgivings mentioned above, I enjoyed this book very much and will certainly seek out the further escapades of Lord Peter.

I recently reread "Whose Body?," Book 1 in the Lord Peter Wimsey series, and it's obvious why this author became so popular. The characters are highly developed, interesting and likable; and the scene descriptions are very detailed. And the stories are not your average murders. In this book,

one man has gone missing, and one is found naked and dead who resembles the missing man, but it isn't him. Is the missing man alive or dead? The dead man does not appear to have been murdered, but he has been newly shaven, his hair cut and placed naked where he would be easily found. Looks like someone wanted people to think the missing man is dead. So confusing. Many suspects are explored, but things just don't make sense. You have to pay close attention to this one if you want to get ahead of Lord Peter Wimsey. He's quite brilliant in a Sherlock Holmes kind of way. I plan on binge reading a few more of this wonderful author.

Dorothy Sayers ranks among the best of classic British crime writers. This book is the first of many featuring the aristocratic amateur sleuth, Lord Peter Wimsey, and other interesting characters. Readers should take into consideration that this was written in the early 1920's, and some of the terms/descriptions used for people then are derogatory.

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