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The Agency 3: The Traitor In The Tunnel



Synopsis

Get steeped in suspense, romance, and high Victorian intrigue as Mary goes undercover at Buckingham Palace and learns a startling secret at the Tower of London. Queen Victoria has a little problem: there's a petty thief at work in Buckingham Palace. Charged with discretion, the Agency puts quickwitted Mary Quinn on the case, where she must pose as a domestic while fending off the attentions of a feckless Prince of Wales. But when the prince witnesses the murder of one of his friends in an opium den, the potential for scandal looms large. And Mary faces an even more unsettling possibility: the accused killer, a Chinese sailor imprisoned in the Tower of London, shares a name with her long-lost father. Meanwhile, engineer James Easton, Mary's onetime paramour, is at work shoring up the sewers beneath the palace, where an unexpected tunnel seems to be very much in use. Can Mary and James trust each other (and put their simmering feelings aside) long enough to solve the mystery and protect the Royal Family? Hoist on your waders for Mary's most personal case yet, where the stakes couldn't be higher and she has everything to lose.

Book Information

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Series: The Agency (Book 3)

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Victorian England comes alive again with Y.S Lee's third novel in THE AGENCY series. Lee has a terrific knack of combining intrigue, romance, and mystery with the strong female character, Mary

Quinn... Girls of all ages will enjoy the fast pace, the twisting plot, and most of all, the romance that awaits them.â VOYA Lee, as ever, paints an evocative picture of London life... Mary makes for a bold heroine (sometimes too bold for her own good), and her fans will want to find out how it all ends.â Booklist

Y. S. Lee was born in Singapore but brought up in Canada. She has also lived briefly in the United Kingdom. An academic with a PhD in Victorian literature and culture, she wrote *Masculinity and the English Working Class in Victorian Autobiography and Fiction*. She lives in Ontario, Canada.

I am an immense fan of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes mysteries and all the many derivatives in its many formats. Recently I discovered Y.S. Lee's series, "Mary Quinn Mystery: The Agency". This review covers all three books. At age 12, Mary Quinn is rescued from the gallows by the head teacher at Miss Scrimshaw's Academy for Girls, an "unusual institution" that offers special training to certain chosen girls. Mary is clever, fierce and ambitious--not the sort of girl held in high regard in Victorian England, but exactly the kind recruited by the Academy. The Academy, it turns out, is headquarters for The Agency, a secret organization devoted to training female detectives. Here, girls are trained in the Holmes' tradition, to "think rationally, to carry themselves with confidence, and to stand by their opinions." The characters are complex and compelling, especially Mary Quinn. Unlike typical characters in many series where main characters remain static, Mary evolves over the course of the three novels, as is expected as she grows and excels in her profession, and as she struggles to come to terms with her personal history. Equally enticing is her simmering relationship, defined by the snappy repartee, with the handsome James Easton. This is particularly true of Book Three. But the secondary characters are also vividly realized. And my favorites include Alfred Quigley (Book One), the appealing poverty stricken imp; the observant and humorous Octavius Jones (Book Two); and the "feckless" Prince of Wales (Book Three). The gritty landscape of Victorian London is as realized a character as Mary Quinn: the lush surroundings of the privileged; the Thames River oozing with waste, roiling in the sweltering heat; the dark alleys infested with gut-wrenching poverty. In Book One (*A Spy in the House*), Mary works her first undercover mission as a lady's companion, investigating the mysterious disappearance of cargo ships. In Book Two (*The Body At the Tower*), Mary disguises herself as a young boy to investigate a death at the clock tower of the Houses of Parliament. In Book Three (*The Traitor in the Tunnel*), Mary poses as a domestic working in the royal household at Buckingham Palace, investigating a petty thief that turns quickly into a murder. As with many detective stories, plot movements seem rather convenient at

times, but this takes nothing away from the adventure. The three books are action-packed and riveting.

Me Lee has crafted another well-written adventure in her Victorian series *The Agency*, with this entry that sheds some light on Mary Quinn's background while furthering the developing relationship between James and Mary. Still a lot left to explore in the next book *The Agency: Rivals in the City* which I'm off to devour.

It was educational without being dull. Incorporated in the everyday life of this female investigator were historic attitudes of the era as well as the little side lines associated with the common medications for ailments like colds, headaches and bad air surrounding the river Thames. The mystery itself was fast moving and full of unique characters I enjoyed, getting to know each of her special friends. The three mysteries were quick reading and light with a serial followup. They were perfect for the romantic female mystery reader of the "Sherlock Holmes" age.

I fell in love with Mary in *A Spy in the House*, and I have fallen in love with her again. On this mission, while trying to find out who has been stealing things from the Blue Room in the Buckingham Palace, she uncovers something else; and its way bigger than a few thefts. One disaster after another keeps heading Mary's way as she tries to figure things out and put puzzle pieces together. The ending was the better than I could have ever imagined it and it made me very happy. The only thing I didn't like about this book was that James Easton didn't make as many appearances as I would have liked, but all in all it was a wonderful story. Anybody who loves historical fiction or mysteries will love this book. (Reviewed by Rachel R. 14)

Y.S. Lee succeeds again in telling a tightly woven and compelling story. The characters are consistent and well-crafted in their development and relationships. I only wish the story was longer so that we could spend more time with these lovable characters. The book overall continues the reader's appetite for the next novel in the series. There are some scenes that are fairly adult (i.e. sexual assault with threat of rape, solicitation, prisoner abuse and death), but are dealt with realistically and adeptly. As with Ms. Lee's other books in this series, this book reaches a very good balance between story, character and themes to appeal to readers of EVERY age.

A real page turner that has kept me up way past my bedtime. secrets, personal, and political, are

revealed, relationships,are unravelled in unexpected ways, and Mary and James meet again. Anything more than that would be telling..

I loved all of the characters in this book. This tale was very twisted in a lovely way. It was filled with love, spellbinding escapes, and a hint of mystery. This is the sort of book you'll never forget. Read it! You don't know what you're missing out

on!
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The only thing wrong with this series is that is finished and that two years have gone by with no new works from this incredibly talented author. The unique perspective she gives her readers about Victorian England from the point of view of the middle and lower classes is quite remarkable. Her characters are marvelous and it would be great to continue following them. I recommend these novels to all adults-young and not young. Please let us have more!

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