



# Ripper

*Amy Carol Reeves*

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## **Ripper** Amy Carol Reeves

"I felt hot breath on my neck, and, horrified, I knew that he stood behind me . . ." It's 1888, and after her mother's sudden death, Abbie is sent to live with her grandmother in a posh London neighborhood. When she begins volunteering at Whitechapel Hospital, Abbie finds she has a passion for helping the abused and sickly women there. But within days, patients begin turning up murdered at the hands of Jack the Ripper. As more women are murdered, Abbie realizes that she and the Ripper share a strange connection: she has visions showing the Ripper luring his future victims to their deaths--moments before he turns his knife upon them. Her desperation to stop the massacres leads Abbie on a perilous hunt for the killer. And her search leads to a mysterious brotherhood whose link to the Ripper threatens not just London but all of mankind.

## **Ripper Details**

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Author : Amy Carol Reeves

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## From Reader Review Ripper for online ebook

### Josephine (Jo) says

This was an interesting enough take on the Jack the Ripper murders. I did however find the plot far too 'busy'. The link between the main character Abbie and the murders being the Whitechapel Hospital hospital was fine, but then there were Abbie's visions and the secret cult. It all became a bit too convoluted for me. I don't think it is necessary to try and make the Ripper murders more interesting or gruesome, they need no help. I found the character of Max far fetched and just a bit too much.

The book is certainly for an older reader not young teens, the patients at the Hospital are mostly prostitutes and their illnesses are discussed plainly as are the surgeries and Ripper murders so not for the younger audience.

My usual whine about Americanisms: Police of this time would have been referred to not as 'cops' but as Bobbys or Peelers, after Sir Robert Peel.

London's streets were not and still are not built in 'blocks'. In 1888 the entire Whitechapel area was an absolute maze of little winding streets and alleyways and to this day it is not built with the same regularity as an American town. The city was continually being added to in different directions and the East End at that time was like a spider's web branching out in all directions, hence the ability of anyone who knew it well to disappear when pursued.

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### Aoife says

To sum it up: yes but.

There were some really good things about this book. Abby was quite kick-ass and the finale was just awesome. Like really awesome. Really really awesome. OK, I think I made my point.

Overall Abby is your typical 'I am so feminist and modern and don't care about the conventions of my time'-heroine but at least we do get a reason for it. Abby's mother was already a really independent spirit and ran away from home with a random Frenchman, as a result her conservative mother cut off all contact with her. Mother got pregnant, French guy died, had to bring up daughter on her own and of course brought her up as a "free spirit", too. Then the mother died and now Abby's grandmother has decided to take care of her. To thank her for it Abby whines constantly about her grandmother being too strict and not allowing her anything - except that she doesn't. There is no point in the book where she says "No I won't let you go there/do this." She doesn't hide her disapproval but she always lets Abby have her way. Abby even realises why it is like this: her grandmother did love her mother and regrets not making up with her before her death and now doesn't want to lose her granddaughter, too. Does Abby ever feel bad about guilt-tripping her grandmother into allowing her things? Does she try to talk to her like one adult to another? No she's all "Buhuhuuuu she frowned disapprovingly when I told her that I want to work at night in the London East-End!!! That's soooooo mean!!!" Oh grow up girl.

Then there's William her love-interest and of course he acts like a jerk at the beginning. Just once I'd love to read a romance with a couple that starts off simply co-existing for a while and then realising that they have some things in common and growing fond of each other...or anything but "Insulting you means I actually love you". There's also a badly written love-triangle but nobody believes for a second that Abby could go for anybody but William (when other guy makes advances, she straight-off tells him no...what was the point of that?). Like in many romances the author here also seems to think that it's only worth telling about the times when the main-character and the love-interest are together or she's at least thinking about him. So Abby keeps running into William and if he's not around it's suddenly "Three weeks later". Yes, I know romance...but since when does that mean that they can't have independent lives?

Apart from Abby and William the characters stay all a bit colourless, which is a shame because Mariah and

Simon could have been quite really interesting but remained mainly decorative.

The author has done some research on Jack the Ripper but overall it doesn't go very deep and especially concerning Mary Kelly there is some artistic license. Well it is a YA-romance and not a factual account so I don't mind but I am annoyed about one thing: (view spoiler)

At the end it all felt suddenly a bit rushed and I'm not quite sure how they made some connections that quickly but as mentioned: the finale was awesome.

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## **Teresa Crumpton says**

Ripper is set to be released on April 08, 2012

Ripper is another book I found while looking for books to review for Paperback Dolls. It caught my attention with its description.

A paranormal mystery involving London's most notorious killer

In 1888, following her mother's sudden death, seventeen-year-old Arabella Sharp goes to live with her grandmother in a posh London neighborhood. At her grandmother's request, Abbie volunteers at Whitechapel Hospital, where she discovers a passion for helping the unfortunate women and children there.

But within days, female patients begin turning up brutally murdered at the hands of Jack the Ripper. Even more horrifying, Abbie starts having strange visions that lead her straight to the Ripper's next massacres. As her apparent psychic connection with the twisted killer grows stronger, Abbie is drawn into a deadly mystery involving the murders, her mother's shadowed past, and a secret brotherhood of immortals-who'll stop at nothing to lure Abbie into its "humanitarian" aims.

While the description drew me in the novel kept me reading. It did keep me reading, though I did stop so for sleep (at a reasonable hour). I finished reading Ripper in a day. Ripper had everything mystery, history, the supernatural, the Romantics with the added bonus of The Pre-Raphaelites. What more could a pre-law/English major ask for?

Ripper is a young adult novel centered on a large cast of doctors. The main character is a seventeen year old female named Arabella "Abbie" Sharp. She's the granddaughter to Lady Westfield and Abbie has come to live with her after the death of her mother Caroline Westfield Sharp. She moves to London in 1888, to live with a woman she's never met. Abbie is a little rough around the edges and her grandmother wants her to become a proper lady. Abbie, has different plans. She's an adventurous young woman who isn't afraid to get her hands dirty or get into trouble. However that being said she doesn't like the continuances after she's done something grandmother deems unlady like or that would mess with way Westfield's status. As you may have guessed Abbie doesn't like the lectures her grandmother gives her, and she's always expecting to be thrown out. No she's not always in trouble but she likes to do things her way which her grandmother (and others) wants to object too.

You may wonder why, after what I've told you, that I liked Ripper. It's because it has mystery and a little magic. Both of which I love. Here's the other reason it has history which is something my dad and I loved to discuss. As I'm sure you caught the history portion has to deal with the most famous murderer of all time... Jack the Ripper. Yes, I was stoked, I have three or four Jack the Ripper books as it is. They hit on all of my "callings" (legal and English). However Ripper is on a different level than most Jack the Ripper stories, where most look at the true history of Jack and or who he might have been Ripper has a new point of view. The premise was great, Abbie is sent by her grandmother to help out down in the East End specifically

Whitechapel, at the Whitechapel Women's Hospital, for a week. Lady Westfield thought this would help make Abbie, see her evil ways and the experience would put her on the right track for becoming the "proper lady" Lady Westfield wanted her to be. It backfires. Abbie loves working at the hospital with the doctors and being able to help those less fortunate than she. The longer Abbie works at Whitechapel Hospital and with the doctors there she decides she wants to become a doctor as well. Something Lady Westfield is not going to approve of. Though Abbie does have the approval of the three doctors she's working with, Dr. Bartlett, Dr. Simon St. John and Dr. William Siddal. When the murders start it's the doctors (Abbie's friends) at Whitechapel who become the suspects. Why you may ask? It's because of the brutality and the fine carving skills of Jack the Ripper. Skills only doctors would have the training for, or so Scotland Yard thinks. At this time, almost to the day when Abbie starts working at the hospital, roughly two and an half to three months after her mother's passing, Abbie gains her mother's gift of visions. Though I don't think Abbie would call it a gift, she starts seeing the murders take place.

There are many twist and turns as Abbie tries to work her visions to save the women that she cares for. She also wants to true killer whoever that maybe to be brought to justice, so her friends will be left alone, especially Simon and William. To do that she must follow her instincts and use her visions to prove her friends aren't Jack the Ripper. The only problem, she may not be ready for the answers she seeks, or the family secrets she will learn. They may haunt her, and closure may not come. Especially since Jack wants her as well.

I would be tickled pink if Amy Carol Reeves came out with a second book. I don't think Abbie or the Whitechapel doctors have told their full story. The one thing that I wasn't sure about for this book was if the voice (language) was the correct for this time I would gladly join their journey again. Amy Carol Reeves did a wonderful job of drawling me in and keeping me with Abbie the whole time... I can't want to see what comes next.

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## **Kimberly says**

Like many strange people out there, I, too, am fascinated by Jack the Ripper. Grisly and gory true crime in its purest forms. And I'm not alone. Jack captivates an audience even to this day. So I was excited to read this debut novel about the Ripper. There is so much written about Jack, fiction and non fiction, I'm always interested in a fresh look on the old crimes.

Abbie volunteers at Whitechapel Hospital, a job her Grandmother is sure will enhance her character. But she's terrified to learn that after a few days of working there, the Ripper murders begin. And the police think the prime suspect is within the Hospital itself. At the same time, Abbie starts having these strange visions, of places and items she's never seen before. Fearful of being told she is going mad, Abbie hides this from everyone. But this new power may be the only thing keeping her alive and out of the Ripper's hands.

I enjoyed Abbie's perspective and being in the hospital. Reeves does a wonderful job of painting London at this time. All the grime, dirty, poverty and despair in the Whitechapel district is potent and heartbreaking. There are a few very descriptive scenes of surgeries and researching bodies that may make some squeamish. But I mean, you remember you are reading a story about Jack the Ripper, right? Not for the faint of heart. I liked Simon and William, who are like ice and fire--two men who are unlike in many ways, but have very strong friendships to Abbie, and a vested interest in the hospital.

The story veers into paranormal territory slowly and while I saw it coming, it didn't feel natural to me. Abbie's visions are a huge part in the book by the end, and there are some clever plot turns. But I think the

visions threw me out of the story, instead of enhancing it. And when the end is there, ready to be confronted, I felt Abbie's character shift so greatly, I wasn't sure it was the same book.

Overall, Ripper is a quick read with an interesting twist on the old crime. But it wasn't as satisfying as I hoped it would be.

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## **Dark Faerie Tales says**

Review courtesy of Dark Faerie Tales.

brotherhood whose link to the Ripper threatens not just London but all of mankind.

Quick & Dirty: Great intense story with a wonderful heroine and a great plot line.

Opening Sentence: "Damn." If the pickpocket had taken anything but that, I could have let it go.

The Review:

Arabella Sharp has just recently moved to London to live with her Grandmother. Her mother passed away suddenly and her father died when she was very young so she really had nowhere else to go. She had never met her grandmother before her mother's funeral, because her mother had eloped and her grandmother had disowned her. Abbie's mother was a governess and she grew up comfortable, but never really wealthy. Her grandmother is a very wealthy women and she would love nothing more than to see Abbie marry well and live a very comfortable easy life. But to Abbie that would be boring and a waste of her time. Her grandmother offers her a compromise by giving her the options to work at a hospital where one of her dear acquaintance works. Whitechapel Hospital is in a bad part of town but she feels that Abbie could really learn a lot and see how great her life really is.

Abbie loves the idea and can't wait to get started. She becomes a nurse and tries to help the doctors in whatever way she can. She finds the medical field fascinating and hopes to one day also attend medical school. Shortly after starting at the hospital Abbie starts to have visions. There have been some gruesome murders happening to some of the recently discharged patients from Abbie's hospital, and Abbie is seeing these murders before they happen. They are calling the murderer Jack the Ripper and Abbie needs to figure out what is going on before anyone else is killed. She doesn't know why she is getting these visions or what connection she has to the murders, but if she doesn't figure it out soon she could be next.

Abbie Sharp is a wonderful heroine. She is very strong and independent. She has the option to live a very comfortable life as a wealthy wife and mother, but instead she chooses to do something more with herself. She really loves the medical field because she can help others while learning and growing as a person. There are a couple of love interests in the book, but I really liked that Abbie was an interesting character with or without a boy. She could stand on her own and didn't need anyone else to make her likeable. She was very easy to connect with and I thought that the author did a wonderful job with her character.

William Siddal is a young physician working at Whitechapel. Abbie meets him on her first day there and she can't help but find him very handsome, but very arrogant as well. William is a complex character he was raised by a famous writer and author that had a pretty obscure lifestyle. He is closed off to most people and comes across as a jerk. But when you peel back his layers he really is a sweet guy that cares deeply about the

people he is tiring to help. When Abbie gets to know him better she breaks through some of his walls and gets to see his good vulnerable side. He really is all wrong for Abbie in so many ways, but at the same time he is perfect for her.

Simon St John is another young physician working at Whitechapel. While leaving from work Abbie trips on the stairs and he happens to catch her before she falls. He really is like a knight in shining armor. He grew up in a very wealthy family, but has tried to better himself by becoming a doctor. He is very caring and shows it by how he treats all of his patients. He is beautiful and pretty much perfect for Abbie in every way, but she just doesn't know if she could ever love him. She values his friendship very much, but she doesn't know if their relationship could ever go past that.

I really enjoyed this book. First of all, it is set in London in the 1800's which is one of my favorite settings for a book. Then you add murder, romance, suspense and a great cast of characters it really doesn't get much better. There are some pretty intense parts of the book but nothing too scary. It was fast paced and really kept me interested the whole way through. I will admit that the plot was fairly predictable, but I still enjoyed it immensely. This is the first book in the series and I can't wait to read the next installment which lucky for me I happen to have a copy. I would highly recommend this book to anyone that likes mystery or paranormal books.

Notable Scene:

Then I found myself standing in a dead-end alley at nighttime. I smelled rotting meat-some type of spoiled beef and fish from the cluttered trash piles of the alleyway. A cat leaped from one of the piles, sending an ale bottle rolling loudly across the flagstone ground.

That's when I heard the scraping noise, from high on the wall at the end of the alley. I looked upward and saw a shadow moving through the darkness. I felt rising terror; I could not move.

The figure of a man crawled down the bricked wall. His movements were unhurried, even-paced-the scraping noise I had heard was his fingernails and boots upon the bricked surface. With each crouching movement, he came closer to the ground. I tried to run, but the rotting meat smell became overwhelming. The nausea and fear overwhelmed me and I felt paralyzed.

His head was almost to the ground when he looked up at me, and though I could see very little in the darkness, I saw the flash of a smile and a knife blade clenched between his teeth. There was something serpentine about his movements as he crawled downward, defying gravity, and yet I knew that he was a real human being closing in for a kill.

FTC Advisory: Flux Publishing provided me with a copy of Ripper. No goody bags, sponsorships, "material connections," or bribes were exchanged for my review.

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## **Amber says**

After her mother's death, seventeen-year-old Arabella Sharp moves in with her lady grandmother in her Kensington home. Abbie's grandmother suggests that she perform some charity work in order to better appreciate her new life of luxury, so Abbie volunteers at Whitechapel Hospital assisting poverty-stricken women and children. Her grandmother's plan backfires; rather than volunteer for a week and then enjoy leisure activities, Abbie chooses to continue working, genuinely enjoying the work. But work at Whitechapel Hospital becomes dangerous when Jack the Ripper strikes, brutally murdering patients of the hospital.

Amy Carol Reeves wrote Ripper in the first person from Abbie's point-of-view. The beginning of each part of the book quoted appropriate lines from Jane Eyre, which endeared me to it even more.

I kept trying to guess who the Ripper was throughout the whole novel. I thought it could be William Siddal, one of the young physicians, because he seemed a little dangerous. Then I thought maybe it was Simon St. John, another young physician, because he was the least likely. Then I thought it could be Max Bartlett because he was even more dangerous. I even suspected Dr. Bartlett and Inspector Abberline from Scotland Yard. The point is, everyone was suspect in Ripper and Reeves' writing was so engrossing that I was looking for Jack the Ripper in every male character.

There were definitely some shocking parts in Ripper that just made me want to scream or shout. Also, I would advise readers to not read parts of this book at night or in the dark like I did. Although Ripper is an excellent book, it is not good for bedtime reading!

As Reeves revealed more and more, I really appreciated how cleverly she wove everything together. There was even a little Tudor reference, which always makes me giddy! What she put together here is so fascinating and the epilogue indicates that more will come.

Ripper is a big historical mystery based on a gruesome time in London history that will keep readers guessing with one big difference: the reader learns the identity of Jack the Ripper.

Recommended for young adult readers sixteen and older who enjoy historical fiction and murder mysteries. Obviously, there is some violence.

Read this review in its original format [here](#).

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## **Majanka says**

It seldom happens that a book entralls me in such a way as Ripper did. The story sucked me in from page one and kept me up until the wee hours of the night, wanting to learn more about the characters and to solve the mystery of the Ripper threatening London and especially Whitechapel Hospital and district. Ripper is Amy Carol Reeves' debut novel, but by the way she seamlessly adds words together into sentences that seem to flow right off the pages, you wouldn't think so. This novel is really a startling debut and all fans of the original Jack The Ripper story, paranormal mysteries in general, or just Victorian England should take up this book and read it.

The setting is extraordinary. The way Amy Carol Reeves portrays historical England in the nineteenth century is amazing. She makes the streets, the hospital, the houses over in Kensington, the carriages and the entire vibe of Victorian England come to life on these very pages. I felt like I had stepped straight into a Sweeney Todd musical. Not only does the author describe the setting wonderfully, she also gives us vibrant, mysterious characters who seem to crawl right out of the pages. The main protagonist, Arabella Sharp, nicknamed Abbie, is a lady born too early for her era, a tad bit rebellious, a tad bit too smart and opinionated. Although in most cases these traits in a lady would be totally unbelievable – I have seen some horribly bad-executed examples in previous books set in this era that I've read – but luckily this is definitely not the case in Ripper. With her upbringing in Dublin, joining street fights and learning plenty of skills from her mother, it's no wonder that Abbie has difficulty settling for the dull, mundane life led by the respectable ladies over at Kensington. But Abbie isn't the only character who shines right off these pages. But more about those later.

The story starts with Abbie Sharp chasing down a pickpocket down the street and having a startling and mind-dazzling vision the moment she reaches the pickpocket. Although wary of what just happens, Abbie shrugs it off thinking she must have been hallucinating. The next day, her Grandmother reports to her that she has been offered a position as a nurse at Whitechapel Hospital by the most respectable Dr. Julian Bartlett. Although her Grandmother, Lady Westfield, isn't convinced that this is a proper job for a young lady, she does agree because Dr. Bartlett has been a friend of the family for a long time. As Abbie begins working at Whitechapel Hospital, she actually begins to enjoy the job – anything is better than staying at home for yet another tea party, that's a giving, but still, her particular fondness for the physician's job is also noted by Dr. Bartlett and several other physicians. One of these other physicians is Simon, son of a wealthy family who lives in Kensington as well, and clearly a potential love interest for Abbie Sharp. The other potential love interest comes in the form of a more stubborn and more mysterious young man who goes by the name of William, and who is a relative of the notorious Ronsetti family, definitely not someone Abbie's Grandmother would approve of.

As Abbie's work in the Hospital continues, so do the murders. They are so gruesome and horrifying that they are soon dubbed the Ripper murders, based on the infamous Jack the Ripper case. Although the murderer targets prostitutes as well, he is especially inclined towards those who have been recently released from Whitechapel Hospital, making all the physicians there possible subjects, especially since the Ripper uses a surgical blade and performs procedures only a physician or butcher could do. But that's not the end of it. Everytime the Ripper is about to commit a murder, Abbie gets a vision of it. Desperate to know the connection between the Ripper, her own visions and the Whitechapel Hospital she has grown to love, Abbie, Simon and William go on a search for the truth. A search that might very well cost them their lives.

Abbie Sharp is the protagonist of this story, and she makes an interesting one at that. She has a very complex personality. She's one of those people who gives and takes back constantly. She is generous, kind and not afraid to work hard, but on the other hand she often appears as being cold and distant as well. The perfect kind of person for a physician's job really – someone who can distance themselves from the terrible things happening around them. When she interacts with Simon and William she is like that as well: she gives information about herself, but immediately closes up afterwards. She is curious and wants to know all about them, but gives little in return. Additionally, she's also very intelligent and clever enough to solve a mystery of this size, if only she puts her mind to it. On the other hand, she isn't that good at rating and understanding people, especially when we deal with the more complex emotions of love, friendship and the borders between that. The only aspect of Abbie's personality that made me cringe all throughout this novel is the fact that she gets over things too quickly. Oh hey, I have visions. Alright, I'm over. Oh hey, those visions show me the Ripper murders! Well, I'm over it. Oh look, people important to me die. I feel a pang of guilt...But oh wait, I'm over it already! You can imagine how that doesn't make sense at all.

We have a love triangle in this book, or well at least partially, since one of the possible love affairs is only one-sided. Simon is the 'appropriate' choice for Abbie to make, because he's someone her Grandmother would approve of. Additionally he's also a nice, kind-hearted guy, who doesn't have to work long hours and shifts at the Hospital but does so because he genuinely cares about the wellbeing of his patients. In fact, I probably fell in love with him from page one. It doesn't happen often that you find this type of person: the person who is willing to put everything, including his own life, aside to help take care of others. Virtually, Simon is a saint. Unfortunately, saints are hardly as attractive as saint-like bad boy versions, which is where William comes in the picture. Although William is a devoted physician as well, he isn't as eager to trust people as Simon is, nor is he as kind-hearted. He uses his wit and sarcasm to sometimes make a fool out of Abbie, to mock her and sometimes to tease her – and it's working. It's not surprising though, because if I were Abbie, I would have taken the bait a long time ago. William's behavior, the so-called not-caring is exactly what draws Abbie to him in the first place. Typical yes, but that's usually what happens in real life as well. You want what you can't have. Why choose the easy path when the difficult one could be so much more fun? Of all the possible love interests I've read about during the last year or so, William is one of my favorites. He's the kind of guy I could see myself dating. Also, the love triangle here isn't as stereotypical as

in most YA novels: good boy, bad boy. Both Simon and William are definitely the good guys – they’re saints actually, in my opinion – but William is the most bad boy like of the both of them. They’re just two very different people who both work hard for the good cause.

Next up, the mystery at hand. It kept me guessing for a while, but around halfway through the novel, the reader figures out who the Ripper actually is because he shows himself to Abbie. You would think that’s a bad move on the author’s behalf, but it isn’t. Because the mystery still isn’t solved. Sure, we now know who the Ripper is, but we still don’t know why he kills those women. And what’s up with the crawling on walls? The visions? There are still a ton of questions left to solve, and we only find answers to those in the last few chapters. Also, the Ripper...well, what can I say. He’s a complex character, that’s for sure. By the end of the book, we find him in a very strange relationship with his current number one prey, Abbie. It’s not unheard of, this kind of relationship between victim-killer (at least from the killer’s side), and if I have to admit, I find it beyond interesting, but it is weird for sure. See, it seems as if some part of him actually likes her. Not in a love-love sense, but more in the sense of “I want to rape you, or at least make you more than uncomfortable by ripping buttons of your dress” and something of the likes. It reminds me a bit of those relationships between a vampire and his victim in paranormal romance novels, and I can tell you, it’s hot. Weird, disgusting maybe considering he did kill a number of people whom Abbie loved, but hot. Of course these rather odd feelings are definitely not returned by Abbie, but that doesn’t matter. Think Buffy/Angel when Angel turned bad. Those were some of the most epic scenes in the history of Buffy The Vampire Slayer, and the scenes between Abbie and the Ripper are some of the most epic scenes in this book as well.

I can’t possibly think of anything bad to say about this book apart from the fact that it ends on a major cliffhanger, and I want to read a book two. So please, Amy Carol Reeves, start writing book two and keep me sane. I need to know what happens next. In return, I will bake you a million cookies, do a weird monkey dance or even make a shrine dedicated to your books. Your choice. But please, write. Don’t eat, don’t sleep. Write. Write. WRITE!

Of course, I’m just joking, but this only proves how much I yearn for the second book in this series. Since you have probably realized by now that I’m slowly going insane anticipating the second book, let me recap why you should read Ripper. It’s truly an extraordinary book that keeps you on the edge of your seat from page one. The characters are intriguing, original and refreshing. The love triangle is totally believable and sheds off most of the clichés. The Ripper is one of the shining characters in this book, and he makes one of the most memorable murderers out there. The mix of paranormal and thriller make for an outstanding debut that I recommend to all fans of both genres. Trust me, you will have a killer time reading Ripper.

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## **Gina (My Precious Blog) says**

Ripper  
BY AMY CAROL REEVES

GOODREADS | AMAZON

Publisher: Flux (April 1, 2012)  
Length: 362 pages  
Format: E-ARC (kindle)  
Source: Netgalley.com  
Genre: YA, Paranormal, Psychological Thriller, Mystery  
Series: Stand Alone but potential for sequel

Completed: May 2012

Challenges: 2012 YA DAC Challenge, 2012 E-book Challenge, 2012 Outdo Yourself Challenge,

## SUMMARY

When Arebella "Abbie" Sharp's mother unexpectedly passes away, she ends up in London, living with her affluent grandmother now as her custodial parent. Abbie wasn't raised as a proper young lady, in fact she's quite the opposite. Many times her antics have ended up embarrassing her wealthy grandmother. So, in order to give Abbie an appreciation for her fortunate position, her grandmother decides to have her work begin working at a community hospital serving underprivileged woman and children. Abbie enjoys her work more than anyone would have expected, finding she actually has a knack for patient care. Then, out of the blue, patients being discharged from the hospital start being brutally murdered. Strangely, Abbie seems to have some paranormal connection to the killer. Now she is being sucked into something more dark and dangerous then either she or her grandmother could ever have bargained for. How will she be successful in leading the police to The Ripper without becoming his next victim?

## BACKGROUND

From Goodreads: "Amy Carol Reeves has a PhD in nineteenth-century British literature. She published a few academic articles before deciding that it would be much more fun to write about Jack the Ripper. When she is not writing or teaching college classes, she enjoys running around her neighborhood with her giant Labrador Retriever and serial reading Jane Austen novels. She lives in Columbia, South Carolina with her husband and two children. Ripper is her debut novel."

## SETTING PACE AND STYLE

With a captivating setting, 18th century, Kensington, London, we follow Abby as she lives her life under the watchful eye of her affluent grandmother. From the opening chase scene until the last page, Ripper is enrapturing. Its a moderate to fast paced thriller. Reeves is a great story teller, who conveys the time period by adding just enough descriptive language and well constructed dialogues with true to the times word choices giving a realistic feeling of the historical 18th setting. Predominately, somber and dark, Ripper has the perfect mix of mystery, high society circle socialization, and romance, the grim mood never encroaches on becoming overbearing. The book is told in first person by the female protagonist Arabella Sharp or "Abbie".

## CHARACTERS AND PLOT

Instantly, I felt drawn to Abbie. I admired her spirit, quick thinking and her troubleshooting skills. She stands up for herself and for what is right. I appreciated how she didn't let the men walk all over her and her ambitions to become a physician in an all male world. She compassionate, caring and fierce. When she lived with her mother she was allowed to do a lot of male dominated activities, so I'd consider her a tomboy as well. Overall, these characteristics combined to form a strong heroine. However, she's not without a few flaws. Her recklessness lead her into either bad decision making or bad situations time and time again throughout the novel. It also made her feel real.

Abbie's grandmother, though very overprotective, annoying and controlling, is still a very doting parent. Its evident she cares deeply for Abbie. Secretly, she fears by being too restrictive she may push Abbie away, just like she did with her own daughter. As a result, she makes a valiant effort to grant Abby some leniency in what she likes to do outside of the home.

Dr Simon St John and Dr William Siddall are both potential love interests for Abbie. Simon is calm and level headed, with William is more irrational and wild. Both seem to have feelings for Abbie, looking out for her and keeping her under their protective grips whenever possible.

#### RECOMMENDATION

If you like strong female leads in a historical setting should pick this one up. Not for the weak at heart or readers who get squeamish about gory medical details. Those seeking something a little different who enjoy historical fantasy and psychological thrillers will love this one. Readers who enjoy a London and Scotland Yard setting will also find this one intriguing.

#### PERSONAL NOTE

This one really took me by total surprise. Its historical fiction meets psychological thriller coming together to form a mind blowing mystery with just a twist of paranormal elements tossed in. This is somewhat of a hidden gem. Even though this story is loosely based on the re-telling of Jack-the-Ripper, I might consider it more of a psychological medical thriller. The mystery is slowly developed throughout the book. It managed to keep me guessing the entire story, who the Ripper may be. Even though my suspicions proved to be correct, I didn't feel the story was predictable.

Those with a light heart and queasy stomach beware. The murders in this book are brutal, harsh and disgusting. The killer dissects victims, cannibalizes and commits other gut wrenching, unspeakable acts against his own race. Jack the Ripper was a vicious serial killer. I felt a slight connection with Silence of the Lambs and this book, totally creepy!

The ending was perfect. It wrapped up nicely, still leaving the potential lurking for a sequel. To me, this is the best kind of ending, one where you can't wait to get your hands on another book, but at the same time you never felt cheated after reading the first book. I hope there is a sequel and if there is I won't mind standing in line to get my copy if I had to!

#### RATING

Can't find any reason to deduct any rings from this one. I award it my highest rating.

Five Rings  
(LOVED IT - STAYED UP LATE TO FINISH IT!)

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**Sophie Riggsby / allthingsequilateral says**

*\*Review (and giveaway) posted on Page Turners Blog on 4/19/2012\**

Amy Carol Reeves tackles an age old, unsolved mystery -- just who was Jack the Ripper? I haven't read much Ripper lore, but I'd like to think that I'm familiar with the basic facts -- a serial killer terrified Victorian London's dark alleys and the manner in which he killed his victims led most people to believe that he may have been a doctor.

Amy takes this lore and wraps a story around it that is so dark and layered in its mysteries that it keeps that "what happens next" level of excitement in your fingers as you turn pages. And then oh, she uses her Victorian setting in such a gorgeous way. Her writing reminded me of why I love this time period so much. That society seems, more so than most others I've read about, so clever at keeping its secrets. Perhaps that's why the Ripper mystery still fascinates our modern minds.

I won't spoil your reading of *Ripper*, but most of you know that I'm a character driven reader and I am so in love with Abbie. She's perfect not only as the protagonist for a mystery but as a representative of a determined Victorian woman. A woman who wants to use her skills to break a few of society's barriers was a rarity in that society because most women tried to manipulate the norms from within not from the outside.

And then the romance. Oh my. So beautifully written. In turns, it was heart-stopping, sweet and passionate. My highest praise is reserved for Amy's antagonists. There are a few and each one is deliciously complex and thoroughly bad in their intentions. The best part is how very believable they are.

If you're looking for a paranormal mystery that will lead you to the center of London's darkest alleyways and will point the finger at one of the bloodiest, most vicious of all killers, be sure to pick up *Ripper*. I literally wanted to stand up and clap at the end of the climactic scene. I'm looking forward to more of Amy's stories.

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**Jessie (Ageless Pages Reviews) says**

**Read This Review On My Blog --> *Ripper***

**3.5 out of 5**

Is there any London figure more re-imagined, re-invented or rebooted than Jack the Ripper? I love Ripper novels, macabre as they might be. I've read several fiction and literature takes on the murders, and am always on the lookout for a creepy mystery revolving around his spree in the 1880s. Even the young-adult genre isn't free from multiple different versions of the serial killer; in addition to this soon-to-be published historical fiction, there is also another book version of the infamous monster penned by Stefan Petrucha, due out the beginning of March. The question I was most curious about during my read of *Ripper* was deciding whether or not Reeves version of the nightmare in human form succeeded on its own merit or whether it was a pale shadow of another version. While several parts of *Ripper* were quite diverting, creepy and fun, the strength of the novel rests on the mystery at the heart of it and the surprisingly strong and likeable main character of Arabella Sharpe.

Abbie is 17, newly orphaned and at the mercy of ton-loving and strict grandmother. Unlike her society grandmother, Abbie is more concerned with doing what she wants than what society expects her to do. She's easily likeable, an obviously good egg, but not the most distinguishable main character/heroine I've ever come across. As the grand-daughter and ward of a titled noble, Abbie's non-traditional and nonconformist ways lead to repeated and heated confrontations with her elderly guardian, but damaged family history keeps

the two together despite their differences. Abbie struggles throughout the book with more than just figuring out the culprit of the East End: the memory and legacy of her dead mother is an issue that Abbie fixates on, a marker by which she is constantly judging herself and finding herself wanting.

Outside of Abbie, the cast is functional if not spectacular. I didn't walk away from reading *Ripper* with a new book-boyfriend or even a book-crush. One of the problems therein is that there is, of course, a love triangle at the heart of Abbie's romantic life. Even though I failed to believe the attraction to either male party, I have to admit it wasn't as much of a focus in the novel as I had initially feared. Both William and Simon do seem a bit too perfect to be real/believable (Simon's manners and William's knowledge particularly) but, for once, they each appealed to unique and distinct aspects of Abbie's life. Simon represents the old life, the society, money and rules that Abbie has resisted for years, while William represents freedom, choices and the ability to determine her own rules. Both have their own strengths and weaknesses, and honestly, both would have clicked well with Abbie. While I will never be a fan of the love-triangle in a novel, especially YA novels, it is refreshing to read one where all parties have chemistry and a different appeal for the main character. It's not just a question of "who is hotter" or "Team [X]" but an actual decision Abbie must make with maturity, and hopefully, finality. No back-and-forth, wishywashy undecidedness between the two, thank you, please.

Victorian London is the perfect backdrop for such a murderous and mysterious tale - a society rigidly controlled and mannered while a madman flouts all civil convention right in the face of the populace. It illustrates perfectly that no matter how refined the world becomes, there is always danger lurking unseen. I admit to being someone that is fairly easily creeped out - I have a low scare threshold - and *Ripper* honestly got to me a few times. While it wasn't the bonechilling, look-over-your-shoulder-every-two-minutes experience like I had with reading the English-set *Long Lankin* (dear christ, that is a creeeepy book) *Ripper* does quite well at continually building up tension in the atmosphere as Abby races to solve the mystery. The only thing that struck a discordant with the setting and location of this novel is that none of the characters' speech patterns, slang or dialogue felt authentically 19th century London, All of which read like very modern (American?) English, and ruined any 1880's vibe the rest of the story carried.

One of the problems I had while reading this, is that the author tends to spell out emotions and character's inner feelings instead of showing them. Phrases like, "I could tell by Grandmother's demeanor that she respected Simon and seemed particularly fond of him, " abound instead of allowing Grandma Charlotte to show such herself. I also found the addition of the supernatural elements to be lacking: no reason is provided for why Abbie gets them, where they come from, or if they're just connected to the Ripper. It's odd that the fantasy element is so vague when the rest of the novel is a straight-forward historical fiction; I wish more effort had gone into explaining how the talent will relate to Abbie's life.

Though I was disappointed by areas of this historical fiction, I would read another novel by this author featuring these characters. The ending, though a bit rushed in comparison to the pace of the bulk of the book, was action-packed and thoroughly satisfying. While some of the murderer's motivations are on the thin side of things, there's more good than bad in Amy Carol Reeves novel.

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## Melli says

I loved this book.. So why 4 star. Well really for me it's 4 1/2 but it's simple it started off slow but once I got into the story it took off.. I was only about a quarter way into it when I picked it up tonight, but wow, Ms Reeves took the bones of the Ripper story and gave it a life of its own.. I love how in the end Abbie kicks butt..didn't see that one coming.. Put the next two on hold from the library, I really wanna see where this story goes.. This one will be on my recommendation list.. It's got history,murder secrecy, action love triangle.. It's all around a great story.

So what are you waiting for.. Go read it!

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## **Bookworm1858 says**

Lately I have found myself seeking out and enjoying stories involving Jack the Ripper. Due to the unresolved status of the case, there are lots of ways for the author to take the story. She can assign any murderer and motivation and bring in any details she chooses. Thus I entered this book with high expectations.

Main character Arabella lives with her grandmother in London after the death of her mother. Said grandmother is determined to provide Arabella with the "right" kind of lifestyle and encourages her to volunteer at Whitechapel Hospital for a week, taking care of prostitutes and their children. That is exactly the kind of life Arabella enjoys to her grandmother's dismay and Arabella also hopes to pursue a medical career. But her fear is heightened when several former patients of Whitechapel are discovered brutally murdered by a killer who earns the name Jack the Ripper. I really enjoyed the historical aspects especially the looks at Victorian attitudes toward sex, violence, and charitable actions.

But I had two areas of concern, which unfortunately played big roles in the story and meant that I finished dissatisfied. One aspect was the romantic plot lines. Early in the story, Arabella is introduced to two different guys who are pretty similar. They are both young doctors working at Whitechapel Hospital with interesting social connections (one upper-class, the other affiliated with the Pre-Raphaelites). I had so much trouble telling them apart so I was not invested in Arabella's struggle. She definitely prefers one over the other and I just couldn't bring myself to care.

The other main area was the introduction of some paranormal elements. I don't want to go too in-depth since this is mostly saved for the ending and would be full of spoilers for you. But I find the mystery of Jack the Ripper so intriguing that I didn't feel the paranormal elements added much. And while there are some terrifying sections, I found the pacing pretty slow especially in the beginning which made it hard to keep my attention on the story.

Overall: Some strong historical aspects but the paranormal felt unnecessary to me.

Cover: I'm not really a fan of the girl staring out at us although I like the coloring, which seems dark and mysterious befitting a story featuring Jack the Ripper.

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## **Lisa says**

Running the streets of London chasing a pickpocket is never the proper thing for a young woman living in Victorian London to do. That is precisely, however, what seventeen-year-old Abbie Sharp does. The thief, after all, took something that once belonged to Abbie's recently deceased mother. The chase also sets into motion Abbie's descent into Whitechapel, a seedier district of London that is forever linked to the grisly deeds of one Jack the Ripper. At the behest of her guardian grandmother, Abbie volunteers at Whitechapel Hospital, whose patients are destitute and downtrodden women and children. Some of these women are also prostitutes, a target of choice for the Ripper. Who is the mysterious Ripper? His grisly but precise butcherings of women lead the police to think that the murderer is also a medical professional. Is Jack the Ripper one of the doctors with whom Abbie works side by side at the hospital? Is her own life in danger? And how is it possible that Abbie all of a sudden has terrifying visions of the slayings before they've even

occurred?

Amy Carol Reeves's debut novel is engaging and, at times, terrifying. There were certain points during Abbie's encounter with the Ripper either in visions or even in the flesh (!) where the hairs on the back of my neck stood on end. Her vision of who Jack the Ripper really was and why he goes on such a sudden and brutal rampage is quite creative and rather fascinating. It also sparked an interest in clarifying the true facts of the events. The author's PhD in nineteenth century British literature serves her well in points of setting but falls short in characterization and dialogue. Abbie's words, and her gratuitous use of "alright," pull the reader out of nineteenth century London and into contemporary nuances of language. The rather anemic love triangle between Abbie, William and Simon is also too underdeveloped for this reader to really care whether or not she ends up with either of them. Setting aside dialogue issues and the lackluster romance, Ripper really is an interesting tale with enough of an open-ended conclusion to beg a sequel.

One final word of warning regarding the publisher-generated synopsis. I felt it gave away far too much. Had I read their full description before reading the story, I would have felt disappointed by the rather surprising plot twists that were in store for me. Tread more lightly next time, Flux!

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## Carrie says

\*\*Spoilers, sweetie. :)

I wasn't sure if I would like this book. I thought that since it was about Jack the Ripper that it was bound to be interesting. However, I was also afraid of a lot of things, like that it would end up being a Jack the Ripper romance (and thank God it wasn't).

The writing, for the most part, was good. At some parts it wasn't that great, but most of the time, especially in the beginning, I was quite impressed. For the first half of the novel, I kept guessing who the Ripper was. First, I was like, "It's Will!" Then, I thought "Simon!" "No, Dr. Bartlett!" "I have no idea!" As soon as we met Max Bartlett however, I nodded to myself and thought, "Yup, he's the Ripper. No doubt about it."

Things started to go downhill from there, though. Besides the two murders, it was pretty uneventful and there wasn't much excitement in the story. That was until the Chief Inspector asked Abbie to be their spy. I thought things were gonna pick up again but then she declined. I was disappointed.

But then! Oh, but then she sees the Ripper, in person, and I felt better. Finally, excitement.

There are still some things, however, that bothered me. The first half of the novel, though pretty boring and uneventful, I still read on with slight interest and no major issues. When I got to the second half, I had to let out a groan. It was all so cliché and ridiculous.

First off, the supernatural elements. The visions, I could deal with. That was cool. However, the possessing, I was like, "Come on, do we really need that?" I love the supernatural, but here, I really didn't think it was needed.

Also, we did confirm that William is in fact her half-brother, yet knowing that they still embark in a romance. I don't know if that was accepted in the Victorian era, but for me, that was gross. Come on, now. I didn't like that at all.

At the end, I did like how Abbie went a little berserk. Cool. BUT, I do think that could've been portrayed a

little better. Also, after that, shouldn't there have been some psychological affects on Abbie? She didn't seem any different at all. I mean, if after all that - watching people get murdered, almost dying, finding out the truth about her family history, your mother's death and then having to actually kill people - wouldn't you be affected somehow mentally? I know I would. Abbie didn't seem to and that didn't sit well with me.

As for Max, why don't they tell the Inspector any of this? Okay, hear me out. I know that their life would be put in danger and that Abbie "didn't want to get involved in the investigation" but seriously. Wouldn't it be smarter to tell them? Show them the letter he sent you, do something. And yes, I know very well, Jack the Ripper was never caught so she (the author) is trying to keep it accurate. But still, I just don't know, man. Abbie started off pretty bright but now not so much.

Oh yeah, and Simon (it was Simon, right?) mentions, "You obviously don't know your butler very well." This was never addressed again. I would like to know about this, thank you very much. You got me interested in Richard. He obviously must know how to fight in some form or another, right?

Finally, I see that this is a series. I don't think this should be a series. The story would have been just fine as a stand-alone. Literally, I don't think there is any need for more than one book. (And there's three??)

Well, to close this up, "Ripper" may sound cool, but I don't think it's worth it. I'll give it two stars.

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## **Tabitha says**

I love a bit of gore in my reading. – who doesn't? I was foaming at the mouth to read Ripper as soon as the book/description hit my radar. There was a great balance to this book that I'm sure paranormal fiction fans will enjoy (even those with a tender stomach may still enjoy it). In all honesty it really wasn't gorey. Ripper gives you Amy Carol Reeves' take on the story of Jack the Ripper along with all of it's mystery, an intriguing dash paranormal elements and just enough but not too much romance on the side. Perhaps even a few thriller moments.

Reeves' heroine Abby is not your typical 'lady' – and definitely not the one her Grandmother wishes her to be. She tires of endless days of embroidery, tea, sitting around reading quietly or visiting, all the while expected to be prim and proper. She longs for something more. To be active. Activity is just what she gets when her Grandmother recommends that she perform volunteer work at White Chapel, a hospital for women in a seedy part of the city. What Grandmother sees as somewhat of a punishment for Abby's rebellious nature, Abby views as blessing. She is strong willed and unused to the sedentary life of the rich.

Ripper definitely had a nice smooth pace for me, easily moving from one scene to the next. Each event no matter how small it seemed still held my interest and Reeves' did well to set the tone of the book by starting off with a chase between her and a pickpocket...where their encounter ends with just a enough of a feeling that something unusual has just happened. I felt all of the people Abby meets has a presence and implied importance that didn't make me discount any of them.

One thing I did note was each time she met a male character there seemed to be a lot of "eye action" going on between them. I have to admit this made me smirk a bit thinking, more eye oogling? (example "arrested me with his eyes, penetrating eyes," etc) – but I think it was good that it was there. It keeps you guessing. I knew there was going to be a romantic element somewhere and thought she did a very good job at keeping you guessing as to who 'the man' would be...as well as making you wonder – could he be the Ripper? I liked it that I didn't feel like I knew who was going to be important or a villain until much farther into the book.

The action definitely increases immensely at the end, though there wasn't as much "action" throughout the book the mystery is what keeps you turning the pages til you get to the action/climax. It was definitely worth the read and recommend it.

I didn't realize until the end of Ripper that another book was likely to follow. When I discovered from the author's twitter feed that there definitely is a second book – titled 'Renegade' I was super excited. I am aching to know what becomes of Abby and various other characters (I won't name names or that might give you undue hints! It will be very interesting to see how Reeves' continues the story as I'm pretty confident the 'Jack the Ripper' part of the tale is done – so what could she possibly have in store for us next?

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