



## Masquerading the Marquess

*Anne Mallory*

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## **Masquerading the Marquess** Anne Mallory

Anne Mallory makes her Avon debut with this exciting new novel in which everyone has something to hide...*Masquerading the Marquess* is sure to be loved by fans of Regency-era historical romance and mysteries.

Calliope Minton is a caricaturist in disguise. For her latest role she secures the help of Stephen Chalmers, the one true gentleman she knows and trusts. Unfortunately the role also plops her right into the lap of James Trenton, Marquess of Angelford, her favourite subject of ridicule and personal enemy. With James around, keeping her clever disguise becomes harder than she anticipates, especially since she's pretending to be a courtesan.

James Trenton has enough on his mind trying to discover the identity of the caricaturist who has been humiliating him in the papers, and the last thing he needs is the additional distraction of Calliope Minton.

But when Stephen disappears and death threats begin, Calliope and James reluctantly form a partnership to find their friend – and find a traitor. Slowly distrust transforms into friendship and animosity into desire.

## **Masquerading the Marquess Details**

Date : Published September 28th 2004 by Avon (first published January 1st 2004)

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Author : Anne Mallory

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## From Reader Review *Masquerading the Marquess* for online ebook

### Genieve Ong says

Tho I don't like spies stories and avoid them as much as I can. This one isn't one of them. This is so good that it made me so puzzle and giddy at the same time. I like both the hero and heroine and they are sooo good together.

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### Catherine says

I discovered the talented Anne Mallory after reading – and loving! – *Three Nights of Sin*. Despite a misleading title, that novel had fabulous three-dimensional characters, interesting plot twists, an electric chemistry between the hero and heroine, and Mallory's writing was superb. Hoping for a repeat performance, I was quick to snatch up a copy of Mallory's *Masquerading the Marquess*.

Unfortunately, I found this novel to be a bit of a letdown. The characters of Calliope and James are both likable enough, but entirely forgettable once the book is finished. Mallory tried to paint Calliope as a woman with a cutting wit, but I only found myself smirking in appreciation of her sass twice throughout the book. In comparison to the *truly* witty leading lady in *Three Nights of Sin*, Calliope just didn't measure up. She was, however, more notable than our hero. I felt that James lacked the edge and sense of darkness that I have come to expect from spy characters in this genre, and I have serious doubts that an even younger James could have pulled off the level of spy craft and intrigue necessary for tangling with the likes of Bonaparte.

Though this plot had amazing potential, I don't think Mallory was particularly successful at executing her vision for it. The climax of the novel, where the mystery was unraveled and the murderer unveiled, was a little like one of those Russian nesting dolls (but not in a good way). Mallory seemed to be trying to prove to her audience how cleverly she can craft a plot, adding layer after layer of detail and deception. Normally, I would see this as a positive, but without the skills to back it up this approach just came across feeling clunky and – in parts – nonsensical.

One thing that I *will* acknowledge is that *Masquerading the Marquess* was Mallory's first novel, and as such was undoubtedly a learning experience for her. I won't hold this "miss" against her, but I do hope that the rest of the series improves.

Verdict: Not worth recommending to others or re-reading myself.

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### Lady Claire, Marchioness of Fancy Pants says

One of my fellow reviewers correctly said there was way too much time spent on the "mystery" and not enough time spent on the character's relationship. I say "mystery" because that wasn't even that good to be the sole focus. I finished it because I like Anne Mallory, and I didn't want to abandon her first novel.

I'm so glad her writing has matured, and she gave use *Seven Secrets*. Not sure if I will read any more of her

earlier stuff - hugely disappointing.

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### **Tanisha says**

Characters had a lot of chemistry. Romance was there although not much. Good read.

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### **Michele Lacroix says**

I had to rate this book as a three, because it didn't move me. The characters were good, but the story?

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### **Keri says**

What I loved about this book was the verbal swordplay that Cal and James were so good about. It was funny and mean at times. What I didn't like about the book was that the mystery took the book over and the romance, IMO, seem to take a backseat to it. During the times that we had romance, it was sweet and hot.

The book flowed well and showed AM's talent. Even though this wasn't my fav or hers, it certainly won't be my last and I look forward to seeing what Stephen gets up to.

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### **Rebecca (everyday reader) says**

Calliope is a woman of many faces and secrets. James is the marquess who has caught her eye, not only as a woman but as an artist, and has secrets himself. They are both involved in a world of espionage, and secrets are found out. Murder, intrigue, government plots, and unexpected love make this a great read!! Not your typical historical romance.

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### **C Joy says**

This was a fast-paced, light and easy read. If you're looking for something that doesn't drag with unpredictable events, I recommend this one.

Although I never saw myself in her shoes, Calliope was really amusing with her quick wit and sharp tongue. I found myself laughing at some scenes and how her drawings were described and I liked how ironic her love for James was manifested - by making a mockery of him with her caricatures. So I thought it would only revolve around that, and the time would ultimately come when James would unmask her disguise - yes that was to be expected but there's something more, something greater, which further drew me into the story.

There were unexpected turns of events that would satisfy the curious reader and they leaned on a side-story about Calliope's family history. It had a tangled plot that would unwind in the end. However, I gave it only a 4 because it lacked passionate love scenes for a romance novel. Anne Mallory heated things up with stolen

kisses and caresses but ended things abruptly, without much detail of the scenes.

Despite that downside, I was still entertained all through out, I love how she injected the humor through the characters' dialogue and I'll definitely read more of her work.

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### **Elis Madison says**

Calliope Minton, a/k/a Margaret Stafford, a/k/a Thomas Landes, doesn't like the nobility ~~much~~ at all. Which is why she does caricatures of them, poking holes in their bloated self-importance. She uses the "Stafford" pseudonym to gain entre among the *ton*, posing as a companion to an old gossipy society bitch. She publishes her work under the "Landes" pen name, so nobody makes the connection.

And her favorite target is the Earl of Angelford. He's a handsome devil

who has earned her disdain by making "witty" remarks at her expense.

It all comes to a head one night when Lady Simpson, fires her very publicly at a soiree. Unable to curb her tongue, Calliope lets the cat out of the bag

... by exposing Lady Simpson's nastiest, back-stabbiest private comments before she takes her leave.

Of course, Callie's days as a companion are over. She's great with disguises but after this spectacle, she'd be recognized. So she decides on a new guise, that of courtesan. All she needs is a trustworthy man to be her "keeper" in name only. Robert, a caricaturist who mentored her talent, calls on a distant relation, Stephen Chalmers.

Stephen is oddly willing to take the part and, surprisingly, shows no objection to the "in name only" part. It doesn't occur to Callie to wonder why.

Stephen, it turns out, is a spy. As is his best friend (surprise!) Angelford. Who has very sharp eyes and keen instincts. Who recognizes that "Esmeralda" (that unfortunate alias was Stephen's idea) is really "Margaret Stafford," and wonders what she's up to. Who decides to investigate.

Then Stephen disappears, and someone is threatening Callie. Callie and Angelford are thrown together, trying to find Stephen and figure out what "it" is. It all ties in, somehow, with the fire that killed her mother, and with her father (also dead).

This is a good mystery, with plenty of danger and adventure, and Mallory has a deft hand with the romance, which is pure icing on the cake. If you like your "romance" verging on erotica, this isn't for you—there's

really only one sex scene. But I personally prefer it that way. I hate it when the sex scenes substitute for solid pacing and a great plot. Here, the story has precedence, and the one sex scene was both integral to that story and pretty damned hot. Mallory's hit a five-star home run with this one.

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### **penelopewanders says**

Mini time out between the rings and rays which are here.

Apparently her first novel, this was an enjoyable tale with several levels of complications and subplots. Occasionally a bit too complicated (between the bad guys and the maybe bad guys and the spies and the illegitimate children and evil seeming brothers who never reappeared in the story...), nonetheless an entertaining read. An author to continue to follow.

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### **Farshana says**

Lighthearted and fun read with generous dose of mystery and intrigue. The heroine was a no -nonsense and sensible character which was a surprise considering most historical romances tend to weave towards dumb heroines and alpha heroes. Anne Mallory really does a good job in creating quite a light atmosphere and the playful banter between Calliope and James is very colorful and quirky.

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### **Tabetha Waite says**

A book by a debut author, this book was rather original and had a bit of humor that I found refreshing. The heroine in the novel is a caricaturist and sets her sights on the unwitting male in the story. Naturally, this causes a bit of friction, for he is getting a lot of attention about society when her scandalous cartoons begin to make their way into the papers. A definite recommendation!

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### **Catherine says**

I had so much fun reading this book! It was lighthearted and fun without being too fluffy. I had a lot of fun with the characters and can't wait to read the next book!

Calliope was such a great character. I swear, that girl wasn't afraid of anything. She was confident enough in her wits to boldly step into situations that had the potential to turn out badly for her. I never thought about it, but it would make sense that someone of her profession would need to be in close contact with members of the ton. How can you mock them if you don't even see them?

I had certain assumptions about this story when I read the summary. I thought that most of the book would revolve around Calliope trying to keep her true identity from James. Once again this author has turned my expectations on its ear! I was very pleased with how things ended up developing between them.

I also really liked the little bits that were devoted to acting. I felt that the author portrayed Calliope's roles very well with how things were phrased.

There were so many parts where I giggled to myself. The banter was fun, although it doesn't compare to her more recent offerings. I loved all the side characters we were introduced to! I wanted more of Stephen and more hints of Roth and a certain lady. Luckily I have their books on hand too.

One other thing that I really, really liked about the story: The situation with Salisbury. The resolution of it felt very realistic. Sometimes you don't get to tie everything up with a neat bow and make rainbows shoot through the sky. Sometimes people get shafted and there's no fix for them.

Now, on to the issues I had...

There were *a lot* of side characters running around. I had trouble keeping some of them straight, especially when they were only referred to by their designation. Like "Mr." or "Sir" or even a title. It was just confusing a times.

The rhythm of the events had a slightly choppy feel to it. It just felt like things needed to be tightened up here and there, and even clarified sometimes.

I thought the class difference would have a bigger significance than it did. It was brought up, and it was an issue a little, but there didn't seem to be any real depth to the very real problem it would have presented.

I felt that I didn't get to know James quite as well as I wanted to. He stayed brooding in the shadows a little bit too long for me. There was just this feel of *something* missing to both him and their relationship. I can't put my finger on it, but I could feel it nagging at me a bit as I read.

But those few problems I had didn't make the read unenjoyable for me. I plan to keep this book and reread it at a later date. Now, on to Stephen's book! Yeah!

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### **Bronwyn Rykiert says**

Calliope Minton is a caricaturist; she is masquerading as a companion to a wealthy lady so she can get some ideas for her art work. At these functions she meets James Trenton, the Marquess of Angleford and because of his arrogance he becomes Callie's favourite person to draw. James is not happy with what he sees and tries to find out who is the artist behind the pictures.

Her next position is one of a courtesan, to carry this one off she needs someone to help her, in steps Stephen Chalmers. Stephen is a good friend to James so they find themselves crossing paths rather a lot. James recognises Callie and thinks she must be up to something. When Stephen disappears James and Callie decide to work together to find him, it doesn't help with Callie keeping secrets though.

They work through their problems and unravel the mystery, which was a good one. It was a fun read.

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## **Katyana says**

What can I say about this book? \*gush gush gush\*

It was just delightful fun. I honestly don't have a criticism of it at all. The characters were all frankly perfect. Sure, they had their baggage, but they didn't irritate me. They were never *stupid* (it is sad that I have to say that, but it seems like it is becoming a rarity - there is nearly always a stupid character or two populating HR). I loved Calliope, James, Stephen, Roth, Robert, and Dierdre.

The plot was a fun twisty bit of intrigue, and watching it unfold was exciting.

It is light, fun, exciting junk food for the brain. And I am totally reading Stephen's book right this very minute, because I just feel the need to gobble up more from this series. Hurrah!

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