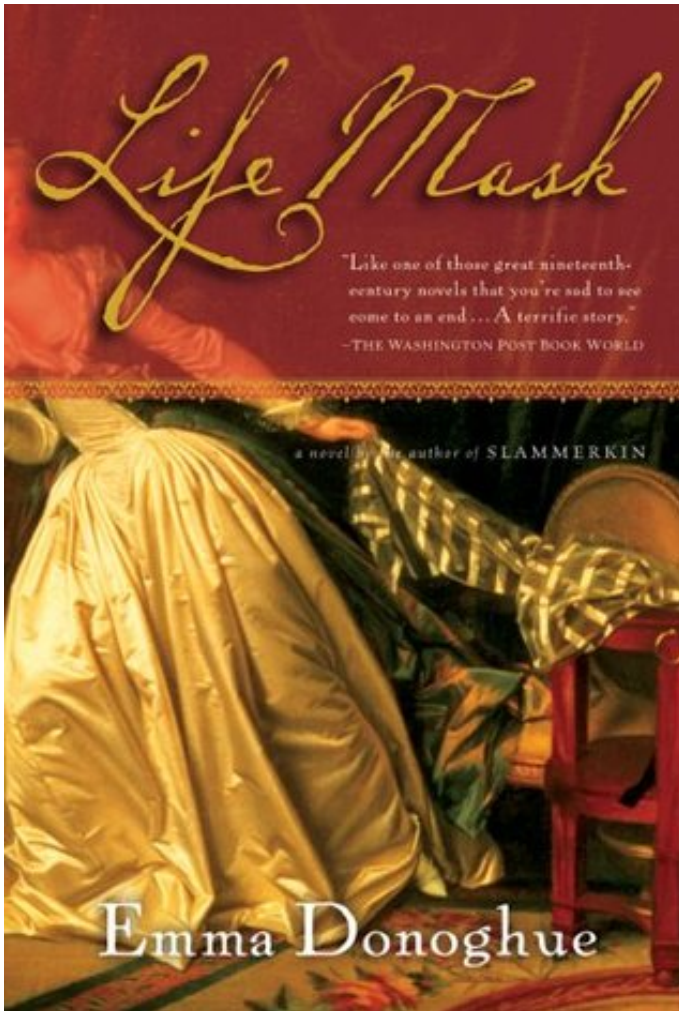

Emma Donoghue

Life Mask



Title: Life Mask

Author: Emma Donoghue

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Description

The bestselling author of *Slammerkin* vividly brings to life the Beau Monde of late eighteenth-century England, turning the private drama of three celebrated Londoners into a robust, full-bodied portrait of a world on the brink of revolution. In a time of looming war, of glittering spectacle and financial disasters, the wealthy liberals of the Whig Party work to topple a tyrannical prime minister and a lunatic king. Marriages and friendships stretch or break; political liaisons prove as dangerous as erotic ones; and everyone wears a mask. Will Eliza Farren, England's leading comedic actress, gain entry to that elite circle that calls itself the World? Can Lord Derby, the inventor of the horse race that bears his name, endure public mockery of his long, unconsummated courtship of the actress? Will Anne Damer, a sculptor and rumored Sapphist, be the cause of Eliza's fall from grace?

This is a remarkable novel in the tradition of the very best historical fiction.

Insightful reviews

Adna: The book follows the lives of Miss Eliza Farren (an esteemed actress of theatre) and Miss Anne Damer (a young widow and the only sculptress of her time). Miss Anne Damer is a talented artist with a tainted reputation because she was accused of being a Sapphist. The story revolves about these two and how their friendship hurts them both.

I think this is the book that took me the longest to read.

I didn't find the book convincing of the time period it was supposed to portray. The writer used words such as "awesome" and "stylish" to make her point. The book was too lengthy making the story dry as the result.

Surely the writer has so much praise for her previous book "*Slammerkin*" that this newer one falls too short.

Emma Donoghue writes "everyone while awake was in the same world, but that all of them, while asleep, were in worlds of their own". She certainly leaves readers out of her world with this book.

Nina: The novel suffers from Info-Dump-itis. Smart writers (and Donoghue certainly is one of these) who are well-informed on the history tend to want to stuff all the interesting tidbits they learn into the narrative. The result is scenes that do not move the plot forward, cluttered with irrelevant details. The book would have benefited from being cut to about 1/2 its length.

In her determination to cram Fun Facts into the story, we're served up with awkward moments such as when Derby discovers that his intimate friend Sheridan hasn't been boinking his wife for a dozen years for fear of her dying in childbed. The entire World knows this--but unaccountably Derby doesn't.

I like Donoghue's later work--*The Room* is nothing short of great. But give *Life Mask* a miss.

Jennifer: Oh, I love Emma Donoghue! This is historical fiction of the best kind -- actually based very closely on fact, using an impressive treasure trove of journals, letters, and biographies to flesh out historical figures with imagined details. The tale of two female friends in England in the late 1700s, rumored to have participated in a relationship barely imaginable at the time. There is a bit of drag towards the end, but overall the writing is fascinating. I have been recommending this book freely.

Chrystal Hays: What a delightful surprise. I anticipated to love this, as I beloved *Slammerkin*. I used to be examining as ancient fiction...but the extra I read, the extra I discovered heritage than fiction. How good this writer has captured a particular time and place, after large research. How interesting that every one of the key characters are according to actual people. The motion runs from Spring of 1787 via could of 1897. They have been major and fascinating times, and in lots of ways, the present occasions of this present day are basically echoing or repeating what mankind went via then. I've got foregone different kinds of leisure whereas examining this one...I strongly suggest it. specially when you have been by no means a lot on historical past in school. the main attention-grabbing bits are continuously skipped over in school, you know!

Dardenitaaa: I've identified for therefore lengthy that examining books are not any assorted from happening trips—we pack our imaginary suitcases and fly in other places based on our whims. analyzing old fiction provides us the bonus perk of time-travel so except the liberty in opting for our dream itineraries, we're additionally greatly in command of calendar and clock. lovely neat, methinks. Stunning, dramatic and memorable—*Life masks* is a Victorian journey on excessive definition grandeur. I believe every piece the vacationer with the truckload of images and thousands of news to make all my acquaintances jealous. and very now, simply how beautiful is a studying event for a souvenir? *Life Mask*, at nearly 700 pages, is perhaps one of many longest books I've got ever learn and I am now not gonna lie-- it's 200% explanation why I used to be so scared to choose it up. earlier than I had the opportunity to fowl out, I began on a bankruptcy right now so I do know there's no turning back. It's like paying for a airplane price ticket to at any place with my eyes closed—I simply desired to recover from my nerves sooner than my nerves get to me. I'd be mendacity if I stated Emma Donoghue's '*Slammerkin*' didn't elevate the bar for my expectations; that publication is extremely stable or even ended up on my best 12 top reads of 2013. There's additionally this element of comparability on account that either books are set in medieval London, at nearly intersecting sessions in that century. fortunately though, the books are set-apart from every one other, particular of their differences. While in '*Slammerkin*' we get an in-depth view of prostitution and the sufferings of the decrease class, in *existence masks* we get a first-hand account of the higher echelons of excessive society—nobles and lords and artists—and their very own percentage of hardships. It's a breath of unpolluted air to determine difficulties of a distinct kind than the usual. rather than poverty, starvation, homelessness and poor operating conditions, we've scandals and political feuds galore entire with Victorian tabloids, countesses with a starving urge for food for gossips, extramarital affairs left and correct or even a French Revolution to boot. Delicious. It's like Donoghue is telling us that whether you're dwelling in dirt or dwelling filthy rich, we're all tragedies ready to ensue simply an analogous anyway. And ain't that simply so oddly comforting? *spoilers ahead; learn at your individual risk* *Life masks* is made of different Aristocrats—a forged of characters so wide that I've been tempted greater than as soon as to snatch a section of paper and create a freaking graph only for me to recollect the entire names

and their respective titles. (For the sake of example: if I encounter 'Duchess of Devonshire' at any place within the story, I needed to do not forget that it refers to Georgiana.) on the finish of the day, now we have 3 humans on the middle of this novel: we have Lord Derby, founding father of the pioneer horse racetrack and cockfights, who's head over heels for Eliza Farren, a extensively celebrated actress considered as Queen of Comedy, who has been a detailed buddy to Mrs. Anne Damer, a widow of a noble and a truly proficient sculptress. This brings to brain one of many funniest elements of the book, in which the lords from the opposing celebration of the parliament did this hilarious albeit sexist and offensive ingesting online game referred to as 'Connections', the place they take turns interlinking names of persons who've in a technique or one other has been sexually associated. In a nutshell, it's essentially a online game of who-slept-with-whom. There's the English tongue-in-cheek humor for ya. i presumed it's a super strategy to trap the complexities and vulnerabilities of relationships in the course of that period and the way messed-up every little thing is. Lord Derby is the nature I beloved the least because, well, he's simply no longer as charismatic or magnetic as such a lot Victorian protagonists often are, and frankly, no longer guy enough, in my view to also be part as courageous because the different ladies. He's received no actual significant clash which would clarify why I'm now not as forced to him as i'd have loved to be. Eliza Farren, the actress, was once my favourite for the 1st 1/2 the book. She's likeable all right and that i understood and recognize her each response and determination to circumstances. i like that she's obtained spunk and isn't any pushover—this woman is familiar with find out how to get up for herself and areas her advantage above something else. Mrs. Anne Damer, at the different hand, stole the limelight for the second one half the tale all of the means until eventually the very end. Have you ever questioned how tough it needs to be to be a lady being affected by your sexuality at a time in historical past while women are actually caged in corset-tight confines of decorum while males can frolic in decadence to their hearts' content? how are you going to emerge a positive protagonist whilst your personal villain is yourself? Is it rather any assorted from the century we are living in? Why are we continuously on the mercy of society and its perceptions folks and why will we by no means break away from its harsh scrutiny? She heard it like a voice in her head: I am what they name me. It was once unusual how quick those revelations might strike once they got here ultimately after years, after decades, after a lifetime. just like the Greek thinker in his bath, crying out Eureka, i've got came across it. Or no, extra like Monsieur Marat in his bathtub of blood, stabbed to loss of life by means of a girl. That was once what Anne felt like now; one surprising blow and a helpless draining away... There have been phrases for girls like her, ladies who observed the entire traditional sights of a guy like Charles O'Hara and have been left cold. girls who requested for greater than were distributed to them. girls who grew to become fixated on shallow, glamorous actresses. ladies who enjoyed their girl buddies now not generously yet with a demanding, jealous ruthlessness; girls who acquired within the approach of fine marriages and thwarted nature. there have been phrases for such propensities—hidden inclinations—secret tastes—and she knew them all, had heard all of them already.... How little she'd known, idea Anne—and how little she'd recognized herself. It appeared she wasn't evidently ascetic or born to solitude. She used to be no reliable at renunciation after all. It was once as though her virgin center have been fasting all her life, build up an never-ending appetite, and now she couldn't have sufficient of pleasure. She was once glutting herself on love. She used to be unshockable; there has been not anything she didn't like, not anything she may well do without. For all it's worth, existence masks is an exceptionally well-researched and positive targeted novel in up to it's an intimate story of friendships blown out of epic

proportions. Donoghue's storytelling is guaranteed and lyrical and compelling. I agree though, that the modifying of its size may have had made it a greater story. The pacing would've been much more fluid if issues picked up in the first hundred pages yet i suppose it used to be essential to linger in developing the area and the parameters during which it exists—some issues most likely take time. Nevertheless, as a journey, it really is one i'm so satisfied i've been to, and one i would not brain revisiting back someday.

Holly: while you are interested by Whig politics in past due 18th Century England, you will love this book. if you are attracted to the intersections of theater and the aristocracy in 18th Century England, you are going to benefit from the book. if you are attracted to cockfighting, horse racing, drinking, taking mistresses, and different "gentlemanly" pursuits, you'll take pleasure in this book. while you're attracted to the explicit old those who look within the book, you'll completely love it. but when you're looking for a an emotionally and sexually charged lesbian drama set in 18th Century England, glance elsewhere. That being said, I particularly loved it, simply because it is like a persons Ph.D. dissertation, in novel form, and i am a nerd with a tremendous curiosity in 18th Century England. yet even I saved screaming, "When is anything going to occur in addition to males sitting round horse races, clubs, and events speaking concerning the Whigs and the French Revolution?"

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