

*Burning Lamp* by Amanda Quick

(G. P. Putnam's Sons; Penguin Books, April 2010)

*Burning Lamp*, Book Two of the Dreamlight Trilogy, is an Arcane Society novel familiar to many readers of science fiction and fantasy. The setting in Victorian London befits the tale of the naïve social reformer, Adelaide Pyne, who possesses certain psychical talents needed by Griffin Winters, a reclusive London crime lord, to mediate and subdue the curse placed on male descendants of the notorious alchemist Nicholas Winters.

The Winters' curse states that only a woman who can read "Dreamlight" will be able to manipulate the perilous lamp light and remove the curse. Adelaide, a gifted psychic, is a Dreamlight reader of the highest order—and much to Griffin's surprise, she has the lamp, stolen from his family home years earlier, stashed away in her attic. He is convinced that she is his only salvation from the frightful array of nightmares and pending insanity that has started to overtake him. His efforts to save her from a bullet dispensed by his biggest rival, a crime lord Adelaide has angered during her sweeping mission to take down the London whorehouses and rescue the enslaved prostitutes, cost Griffin a bullet to his shoulder. The race is on, and the sexual energy ignites, as the couple creates an electrifying storm of psychic energy that, once out of control, will threaten them both.

The well-structured, yet simplistic plot of *Burning Lamp* takes the reader on an inter-generational journey from the reasoning behind the lamp's creation and the Winters' family feud with descendants of a rival alchemist, Sylvester Jones, until the families unite to defeat a common enemy. Interjection of tidbits of information from Adelaide's previous years spent in the American West bring an unusual bent to what could be a mundane tale between crime lords in the foggiest sections of London.

There's something for everyone in this sometimes fast paced, sometimes slow and predictable novel that sizzles with romantic tension between two avowed loners from opposites poles of the social spectrum. Believers of psychic magic will love the way nothing escapes the keen eye of Mrs. Pyne as she reads the prints left behind by killers and evil-doers, whether they are newly formed or from years past. Her quick wit and precise dialogue at times appear to be at odds with each other but as any good modern day female detective, she always gets her man.

*Burning Lamp* is a fun read, a book readers can breeze through for the sheer joy of it even if fantasy and folklore are not their genres of choice. While non-believers see the psychic aspect as a spoof, others may well see it as creative imagination, taking them a few steps farther into the realm of the unknown. The list of books written by Amanda Quick under a variety of pseudonyms is extensive and crosses an array of genres. Her followers will not be disappointed in this one.

*Reviewer Lois Bennett, Ph.D. is a former psychologist turned editor and writer, author of Beyond Forever: Experiences from Past Lives, written under the pseudonym of Taylor Shaye (Fireside Publications). Her second book, Living with Alzheimer's Disease: The First Twelve Months is due for release in June 2010.*