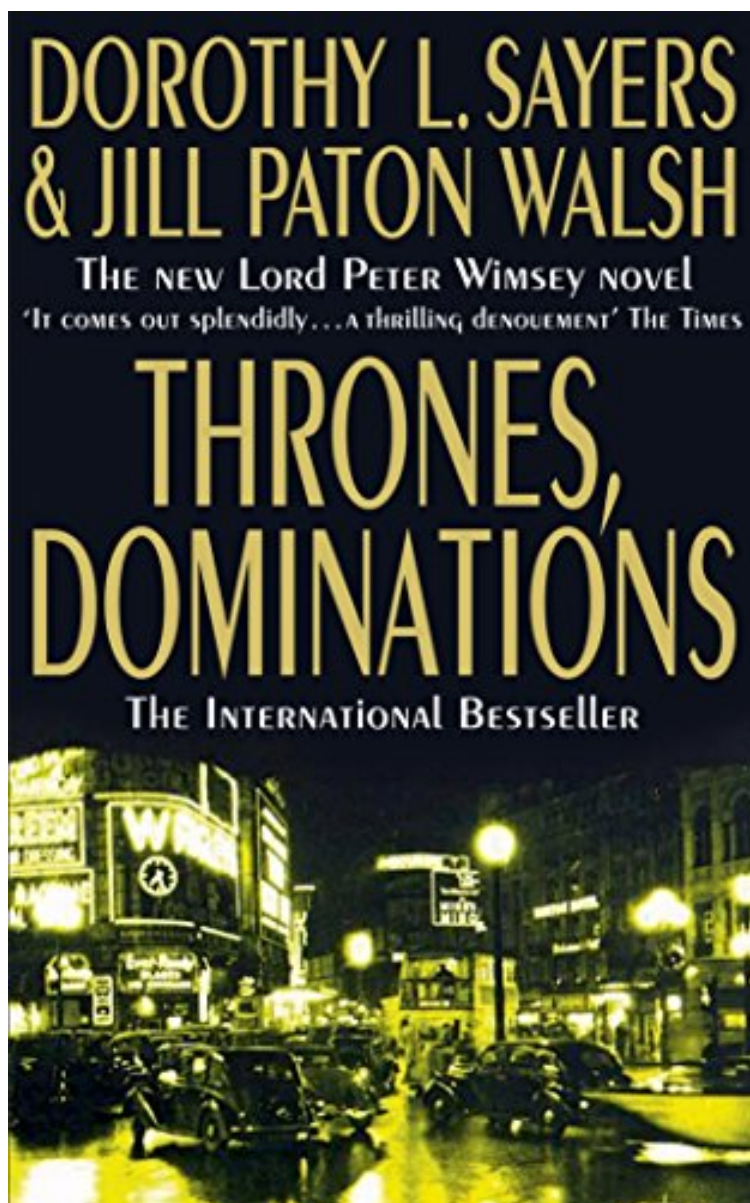


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# Thrones, Dominations



*Par Jill Paton Walsh, Dorothy L. Sayers*

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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurIt is 1936 and Lord Peter Wimsey has returned from his honeymoon to set up home with his cherished new wife, the novelist Harriet Vane. As they become part of fashionable London society they encounter the glamorous socialite Rosamund Harwell and her wealthy impressario husband Laurence.

Unlike the Wimseys, they are not in love - and all too soon, one of them is dead. A murder case that only Lord Peter Wimsey can solve..comAsked by her new husband, the gentleman detective Lord Peter Wimsey, why she is having trouble writing her latest mystery novel, Harriet Vane explains, "When I needed the money, it justified itself. It was a job of work, and I did it as well as I could, and that was that. But now, you

see, it has no necessity except itself. And, of course, it's hard; it's always been hard, and it's getting harder. So when I'm stuck I think, this isn't my livelihood, and it isn't great art, it's only detective stories. You read them and write them for fun." Is this a clue to the mystery of why Dorothy L. Sayers put aside her 13th full-length Lord Peter novel in 1938 and never finished it? She had made lots of money, and was much more interested in translating Dante and writing about religion. Or is it another excellent novelist, Jill Paton Walsh, speculating--in a perfect imitation of Sayers's voice--on what might have happened? Walsh was invited by the estate of Sayers's illegitimate son, Anthony Fleming, to finish *Thrones, Dominations*. She has done a splendid job, certain to please Sayers loyalists on the "dorothy" listserv as well as those new to the Wimsey canon. Lord Peter has been made much more human and interesting by marriage; Harriet is a wise and acerbic companion; and the story, about the murders of two beautiful young women involved with a theatrical producer, is full of twists and connivance. There's also a fascinating subplot involving the soon-to-abdicate King Edward VII and a country on the brink of World War II. Earlier Wimseys in paperback include *The Five Red Herrings*, *Gaudy Night*, *Murder Must Advertise*, and *Unnatural Death*. Books in print by Walsh include a mystery called *A Piece of Justice* and a novel, *The Serpentine Cave*. From Publishers Weekly After Sayers married off Lord Peter Wimsey and Harriet Vane in *Busman's Honeymoon* (1937), she devoted herself to translating Dante's *Divine Comedy*. A few short stories later appeared, noting the arrival of three Wimsey sons, and there was a rumor that suggested Sayers had another Wimsey novel in the works. Forty years after Sayers's death, that book has been triumphantly completed by British novelist Walsh (a 1994 Booker Prize finalist for *Knowledge of Angels*), following the original outline. If it is true that Sayers wrote the beginning, Walsh has done her predecessor a great service. Once the cast and context are established through some long exposition, the pace picks up, particularly after theatrical producer Laurence Harwell, an acquaintance of the Wimseys, discovers his cherished wife Rosamund strangled. As the nation mourns the death of King George V, upper-class women purchase black wardrobes, some of which are augmented with stylish white collars, an element which later figures as a clue. Germany invades the Rhineland. Uncrowned, Edward VIII continues to socialize with Nazis and to rendezvous with Mrs. Simpson. Lord Peter is recruited to persuade Edward to accept his responsibilities, but abdication is inevitable. The mystery involves two cases of blackmail as well as a second murder. Despite a large cast of suspects, ranging from two inept felons to a society portrait painter, every lead seems to come to a dead end. Typical of Sayers's novels, the solution derives from coincidences and some awkward plot devices. But readers have always turned to her mysteries for other reasons, such as the way Peter and Harriet settle the tumult four months of marriage has visited upon them. Harriet uncomfortably accepts her position as Lady Peter, with money and servants, while maintaining her independent identity as a mystery writer. In fact, her discussion of a plot problem with Peter helps him break a suspect's alibi. Sayers fans will relish the cooperative sleuthing of Peter, Harriet and the self-effacing Bunter as Walsh deftly captures and subtly updates the spirit of the series, endowing the iconic characters with additional depth and complexity.

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