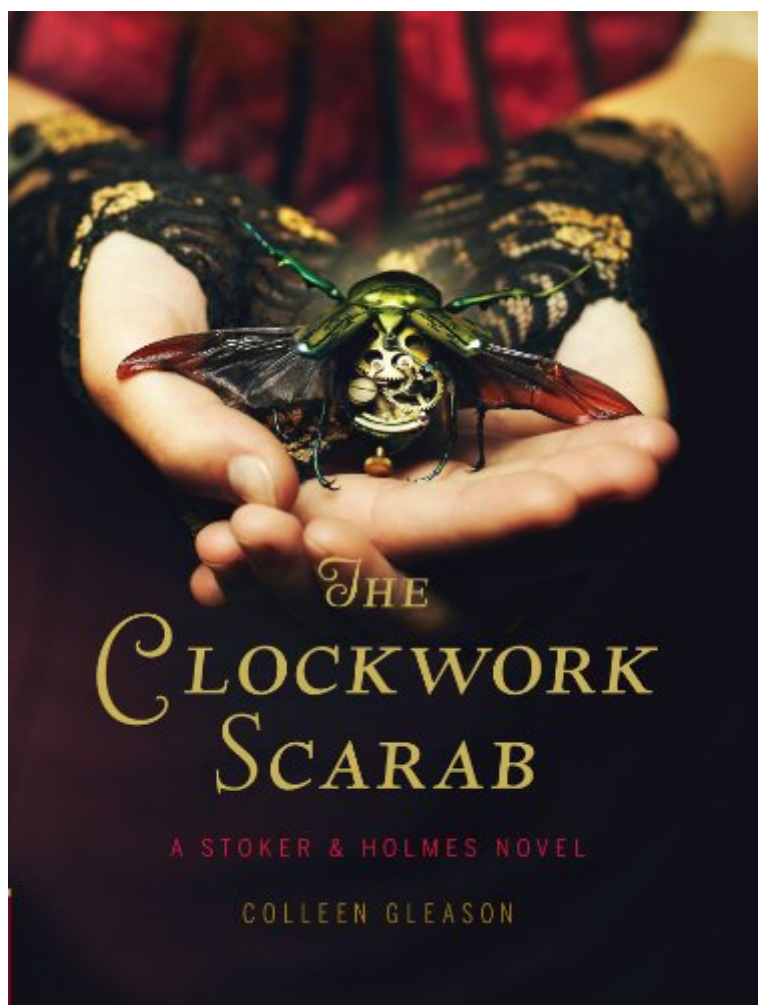


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The Clockwork Scarab: A Stoker & Holmes Novel



Synopsis

Evaline Stoker and Mina Holmes never meant to get into the family business. But when you're the sister of Bram and the niece of Sherlock, vampire hunting and mystery solving are in your blood. And when two society girls go missing, there's no one more qualified to investigate. Now fierce Evaline and logical Mina must resolve their rivalry, navigate the advances of not just one but three mysterious gentlemen, and solve murder with only one clue: a strange Egyptian scarab. The stakes are high. If Stoker and Holmes don't unravel why the belles of London society are in such danger, they'll become the next victims.

Book Information

File Size: 1615 KB

Print Length: 361 pages

Publisher: Chronicle Books LLC (September 17, 2013)

Publication Date: September 17, 2013

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00CC5VQ9A

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #64,610 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #8 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Children's eBooks > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Fiction > Europe & Russia #9 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Children's eBooks > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Europe #13 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Children's eBooks > Science Fiction, Fantasy & Scary Stories > Science Fiction > Steampunk

Customer Reviews

This is a fairly entertaining steampunk YA, set in a parallel 1889 London where a wealthy aristocrat who owns extensive steam-engine factories succeeded in getting electricity outlawed in the British Empire when it was just getting started, so technology developed rather differently in the latter part of the 19th century from how it did in our timeline. The two POV characters are Mina

Holmes "daughter of Mycroft, niece of Sherlock" and Evaline Stoker, younger sister of Bram. Both are 17. Mina has been a pupil of her uncle Sherlock and exhibits his highly developed powers of observation and deduction, but has not worked to any great extent on her skills at physical combat the way Sherlock had. Her social skills aren't the greatest, either, since her mother abandoned her when she was young and her father is much too busy with his government work to pay much attention to her. Evaline, on the other hand, is the latest embodiment of a long line of "Venators" - vampire hunters who have super-strength and quickness to let them match the abilities of the Undead. She's also lovely and popular with young men, though she isn't really interested in most of them because compared to her they're wimps. At the beginning of the book both of the girls have been summoned (separately) to the British Museum after hours, where they learn that Irene Adler has undertaken a commission for Crown Princess Alexandra to solve the mystery of several aristocratic young women who have either disappeared or been found murdered. And after she explained this to them and asked for their help, they go out into the body of the museum and find a young man, strangely dressed, standing over the body of yet another young woman, whom Evaline recognizes. Mina quickly notices that the young man's shoes are dry, although it's a beastly night out and her own boots are quite muddy. He must have been inside the museum since before the rain started, and couldn't have brought the girl there. And the story goes on, with Mina attracted both to the stranger and the Inspector from Scotland Yard who comes to investigate the murder, and Evaline to a Cockney called Pix who keeps turning up in the course of their investigation. I got a bit tired of the two girls getting all hot and bothered over those men, but otherwise the story was entertaining and I like both the characters when they aren't being lovesick along with several other characters who interact with them. There are two more books in the series available now, and a fourth that should be released soon. I've bought the Kindle editions of the two that are available, and will probably get the fourth when it's out.

When Mina Holmes and Evaline Stoker get called to the British Museum at midnight, they never could've imagined the mystery they would be asked to solve. With the help of Irene Adler, the one person ever to outsmart Mina's uncle, the two have been called to solve a case for Princess Alixandra, sister-in-law of Queen Victoria. Young girls across London are showing up dead, reportedly from suicides, but have really been murdered. All the murders can be linked to a secret society known as the Society of Sekhmet. Whoever is in charge of the society is sacrificing young women to bring back the goddess Sekhmet to life for unknown reasons. His/her only barrier

is finding four objects that are supposedly linked to the legendary goddess. Things appear hopeless until Dylan Ekhart, a time traveler from 2016, arrives with answers, or at least clues, to where the objects may be hiding. Time is running out, however, and the mysterious head of the society is elusive to say the least. Can Mina, Dylan, and Evaline figure out who the murderer is before they, too, are his/her victims? This engaging historical mystery is well-written and easily draws the reader into the imaginary world of Mina and Evaline. The characters were likable and easy to relate to. Their well-rounded personalities are complemented and brought to life by the unique narrative style of Jayne Entwistle. Her fun accent is befitting of the London setting and she easily navigates the many plot twists and turns smoothly.

This is a very creative work of steampunk mystery, which takes place in Victorian England. Fear not morality reader (like me!): there is no raunchy language, no sexual description, nothing to embarrass nor offend, merely a rollicking good adventure story with two very exciting new characters. Evaline Stoker is the sister of then struggling writer Bram Stoker (author of "Dracula.") Evaline is empowered with great strength and agility. She is a vampire stalker, and adept in martial arts. Then there is Mina Holmes, the nephew of Sherlock Holmes. We all know Sherlock is fictitious, but, to me, the author's use of "Holmes" instead of "Doyle" is ironic, since most of the readers in Victorian England thought Sherlock was, indeed, a real person. Mina has inherited her uncle's eye for detail and logical summation of a murder. Their mission: find out why young girls are murdered in London. The plot, based on Egyptian gods and woman's rights, takes them from scene-to-nail-biter-scene. The denouement is suspended a bit, because the story continues in part two. And, part two is where I am headed next!!

I loved all the characters. The switching between perspectives was well done. The overall story was good and the Holmes/Stoker conceit is wonderful. The author can write and it's well edited. So why 3 stars? The Dylan angle is ball fringe on a tuxedo- useless, superfluous, silly and distracting. And the author mishandled steam punk badly. Putting the word steam or cog in front of everything isn't enough. The machines still have to follow some laws of physics. While I can believe an ignorant public could be induced to buy helium filled balloons to hold up a building or rich people would be dumb enough to buy an automaton umbrella rack, there's no way to steam power a hand gun or something small enough to fly around a room. I almost quit in the second chapter because it was so annoying and I would have missed an otherwise decent book.

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