



My Clockwork Muse (The Poe Files Mysteries)

D.R. Erickson

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New York City, 1847: A madman is on the loose. Someone is committing murders in the manner of Edgar Allan Poe's tales of terror. The police are stymied. When a corpse is found interred in a masonry wall in a subterranean chamber, they call on Poe himself to help solve the crime.

Edgar Allan Poe's fictional detective, C. Auguste Dupin, has made the author famous as the master of deductive reasoning. But when "the father of the detective story" applies his powers of discovery to the "Poe Murders", he finds that the clues lead in only one direction: to Poe himself.

Poe soon becomes the prime suspect, and he begins to doubt his own sanity as the evidence piles up against him. What of his somnambulistic trances that often find him at the graveside of his late wife, Virginia? Or the bizarre raven that visits him in his Fordham cottage? The strange mark on his neck? The odd behavior of his one-eyed cat, Pluto? And what of his doctor, Coppelius — he of the bulging pale blue eye — and his beautiful, other-worldly daughter, Olympia? Nothing is as it seems.

As the police tighten their noose around Poe's neck, he races against time to solve the crimes and clear his name. But he soon finds himself confronting horrors that not even his macabre fiction could have envisioned — and a conspiracy that threatens the very fabric of reality itself.

Prepare yourself for a wild ride. This is not your father's Edgar Allan Poe. This Poe's packin' heat...

My Clockwork Muse (The Poe Files Mysteries) Details

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From Reader Review My Clockwork Muse (The Poe Files Mysteries) for online ebook

J.A. Beard says

My Clockwork Muse (A Poe Files Mystery)

Author: D.R. Erickson

Genre: Historical Mystery/Speculative Fiction

Rating: 4 Stars

My Clockwork Muse is a fun take on historical mystery that spices things up with both the presence of Edgar Allan Poe and speculative fiction elements.

Summary:

When someone starts murdering people in ways apparently inspired by Edgar Allan Poe stories, who better than the author himself to solve the crimes? When the evidence and his own behavior begin to point at the man himself, he'll have to take on a murderer, his own questionable mind, and the police to find the truth.

Review:

It's only fitting that Edgar Allan Poe, the father of English language detective fiction, should get his shot at solving crimes in the occasional story. As My Clockwork Muse begins, he's called upon by the authorities to help look into some murders that appear to be based on his own stories. Poe himself is resistant to the idea, fully aware that his own mystery skills are enhanced considerably by him knowing who committed the crime in his stories in advance. As bodies begin piling up and strange events keep occurring though, poor Poe finds himself drawn deeper into the investigation.

There's also the unfortunate possibility that's he quite insane and may be involved himself. Indeed, the story raises rather quickly the question of how much we can trust the perceptions of Poe. Insane men do not make for the most reliable of narrators, after all. The ambiguity does a lot in enhancing the mystery and the related dramatic tension.

The story is rather fixated on Poe's point of view and psychological state. Though Mr. Erickson doesn't seek to emulate Poe's prose style, his use of such elements does provide a nice homage to his main character's writing style and subjects of concern. Admittedly, it was probably to Mr. Erickson's benefit that he did not attempt to emulate Mr. Poe's style and instead used a comfortably accessible style that plausibly presents us a first-person narrative that still feels like it could come from Poe.

While I'm no Poe biographer and I think it'd be a stretch to insist that Mr. Poe would have reacted exactly the way his fictional counterpart does in this story, I never felt either that any of the in-story Poe's actions seemed bizarre or particularly out of character for the man. A colorful assortment of side characters both help and hinder Poe in seeking out the truth. While not every character gets the same attention as Mr. Poe, they all are distinct and memorable.

Also, as benefiting a man who contributed to horror and speculative fiction, those elements are a part of this narrative. So, anyone seeking a straight-forward historical mystery should take that into account. That said, I personally enjoyed the speculative fiction elements.

There are anachronisms in the setting, but it seems a minor quibble to complain about curiously advanced immunology knowledge when you already have speculative fiction elements in the story line. Plus, for the most part, the anachronistic elements only add to the fun of the whole affair.

Sift Book Reviews says

I liked the idea behind *My Clockwork Muse*, particularly the police calling on Poe to help with their investigations because of his experience writing mystery novels and the copycat nature of the crimes. It began well and was one of the books I was most looking forward to reading in my queue.

In the novel, Poe suffers from somnambulism, a crazy cat and a talking raven, and soon finds evidence that he himself committed the crimes. He is even more confused when one of the victims turns up alive then undead, and another crime is based on a story yet to be published. Soon even the police can't be trusted.

Despite the flaws, it was an interesting read and once I began it I finished in two days, staying up much later than I had intended to. Now the story and characters are set up, the sequel shouldn't suffer from the same problem

See the in-depth review at Sift: <http://www.siftreviews.com/2012/05/my...>

Review by: Edward of Sift Book Reviews

Sift Book Reviews received a free copy for review from the author. This has, in no way, affected the reviewer's opinion.

Tom Walsh says

A murder has been committed. A man, in a jester's hat, has been buried behind a wall. Sound familiar? It's the plot of Poe's "Cask of Amontillado." The murdered person is Billy Burton, owner/editor of "Gentleman's Magazine", where Poe wrote some of his most famous work. The local police want a sleuth to solve the crime. So, who else to call but the creator of Dupin, the most famous detective of literary America, "Eddy" Poe? This wonderful "steampunk" story is told from the perspective of the famous author. Along with Tip, a talking raven, a doctor/mechanic and his lovely daughter, the plot gets more and more interesting as one reads. But, there is one problem: Poe thinks he is losing his sanity. He has just lost his beloved Virginia and thinks that is the reason for his temporary madness. I started the book with doubts, but finished it with a smile. Recommended, esp if you're a Poe fan.

Todd says

I liked the book, even though I found some things a little far fetched. I liked the characters and the setting. I also liked the fact that there was very little swearing in the book. I would read this again and would recommend it to others

Ron Voigts says

The style reminds me of Poe's works, but still reads well. The story takes more twists and turns than a coiling boa. The characters are wild, whacky and captivating. Most important, *My Clockwork Muse* is entertaining and hard to put down.

Kathy says

This intriguing book fascinated me from page one. I could not put it down. There is a lunatic on the loose who is murdering by Poe's books. Naturally he is highly suspected as he is reclusive and dislikes most company. He does, however, have a pet raven who assists him throughout the book. The author made Poe come alive with spirit and voracity that makes his much more appealing. I also like the fact there is not a load of characters to keep up with. Had that occurred, this book would be a bummer. It's an intense mystery with a crazy raven and of course a beautiful girl -or is she. No spoilers from me. I highly recommend the book. A very interesting start of a series.

Johnny says

I totally loved this book. So much even, that once finished I immediately bought the sequel, "A Midnight Dreary". I just HAVE to know what happens next!

This book, "My Clockwork Muse" by D.R. Erickson, reads like a new Johnny Depp/Tim Burton movie. While reading, I was constantly so picturing Depp as the framed for murder 19th century writer Edgar Allan Poe. But who could do the voice of his feathery friend, the raven Tap?

Erickson struck all my right chords with this book. There's absolutely no negative thing I can say about it, and of all the free ebooks I ever downloaded when I got my Kindle, this is without a doubt my favorite.

To all my reading buddies: if you usually like what I read, then pick this one up because you certainly won't regret it!

Michael J. Toro says

I would more than *suspect* that literary purists will find the Poe of *My Clockwork Muse* as incredible as finding a Tasmanian devil in the Antarctic. Erickson's characterization of Poe is so unlike the great writer we've come to know and love (through fact and fiction at least) that I believe he had someone else in mind when he wrote this novel. In fact, the entire setting for the story (New York, circa 1847) appears to be one big anachronism strewn with rambling people, ill-defined places and disproportionate things.

Having said that, I found myself enjoying if not loving this book. Erickson writes with a breezy style that makes the unbelievable appear somehow believable; before long, disbelief isn't only suspended, it's revoked.

I loved Tap, the novel's fantastic talking raven, who flew from "nevermore" to new heights of urbane repartee; it was this wise oftentimes wisecracking bird that, for me, allowed everything to fall into place.

Carl says

In "My Clockwork Muse" by D. R. Erickson, Poe himself as the central character is an intriguing idea; additionally, murders are being committed which seem to imitate those from Poe's stories. This literary premise is one which quickly peaked my interest and caused me to buy this novel for my Kindle. As I read, I realized that not only was this a mystery, but it was a "steampunk" novel as well. The story did start a little slowly and a bit disjointed; however, as I began to realize the nature of this "mystery" novel, the "weirdness" began to make more sense as Sci-fi and steam punk elements emerged in the plot.

"My Clockwork Muse" is told from the point of view of the famous author himself. Allusions abound in this story which alludes to many of Poe's better known short stories. A man in a jester's hat has been bricked up behind a wall; an impossible murder in an upper room that no human could possibly get into; a Black Cat that is missing one eye seems to hate the character of Poe; a Raven, which talks, befriends Poe; and a mysterious female figure seems to glide over the ground by "... her tomb by the sounding sea." The setting is in New York City, 1847; the plot reveals a madman is on the loose, and the madman is committing murders a la Edgar Allan Poe's stories. Also, as the story unfolds, the police enlist Poe's help in solving the crimes; however, the clues lead in only one direction: to Poe himself. Slowly, Poe begins to think he is losing his sanity. (Of course, we have already accepted the character of Tip, a talking raven, who almost seems to represent Poe's alter-ego at times.)

If you are one who enjoys a mystery, steampunk, or even Poe, by all means give this book a try. The story is enjoyable, especially if you know Poe's works and recognize many of the allusions. It will keep you guessing, although some of the clues are a bit too obvious. Regardless, it was an enjoyable read, not great, but certainly enjoyable.

Anna says

This book just kept getting more and more ridiculous. Poe as a detective seemed like a sound premise for an enjoyable mystery selection but then lifelike automatons and zombies appeared. Then a time machine materialized at the end. It just seemed like we were aiming for the most far fetched resolution to the murder mystery. Not my cup of tea and not something I will return to.

J says

Was not liking it too much at the beginning. Story is set at the times of Poe, so the language / writing style is set to that time period which really does not appeal to me, but I fought through it. Story picked 2/3 of the way, some additional details were added which to me made it more interesting.

Jenelle says

When I was younger, both high school and college, I had a bit of an obsession with Edgar Allen Poe. I read everything he wrote countless times, and wrote several different papers. I love horror, I love short stories, and I love detective stories. Dupin was ALWAYS my favorite Poe stuff...

And I have a thing for steam punk. So I was pretty pumped to stumble across this story.

And I liked it a lot. Poe has got to be one of the most unreliable narrators ever. HE doesn't even believe half of what he thinks he sees and half of what he tells me. I'm pretty sure he wasn't sure his bird was even actually there until the very end of the book. So how am I supposed to judge anything he is saying? I assumed he was mad and/or sleepwalking.

Also, I'm not sure why I'm shelving this as horror, other than it's Poe and several of his stories were replicated. That sounds horrific right? :D

Tim says

This publication is more *jeu d'esprit* than tour de force. The trip—more mechanical than macabre—is like overdosing on Edgar Allan Poe fiction. But the ride is enjoyable.

Set in 1847 New York, the tale is told by Poe as he channels his detective alter-ego, C. Auguste Dupin, in solving the local murders that replicate those proposed in Poe's writings. Chasing throughout the boroughs, Poe is as hot to capture the culprit as he is to avoid the police pursuit since he remains the chief suspect. Historically, Poe's wife Virginia died in January 1847. We're not told exactly at what time in 1847 the story happens. Regardless, it might be more poignant for the narrator to be more morose and depressed at her loss than we have evidence here.

The narrator is helped as well as harangued by a raven named Tap that isn't "rapping at my chamber," but actually rapping inside the room. Initially, Tap's patter might seem out of place and time until we discover later what Tap does during his night flights. At that point, we can appreciate the charm of this talking bird device.

The insertion of the character names Coppelius and Olimpia should signal a snicker to E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Sandman." Coppelius was a menacing alchemist and Olimpia—well, please refer to this novel's title.

There are proofing glitches in this printing, and publisher's quotation marks would smooth any eye-strain. Accuracy is the bane in writing historical fiction. Although Dickerson acknowledges some glaring anachronisms in his Afterword, he overlooks several others. Trains, for instance, were not in vogue in New York until the mid-1850s, and Grand Central Station (nee Terminal) wasn't erected until 1871. Eyedroppers came into use in the 1930s; pipettes were normally used in laboratories. "Zombie" is a late 19th Century concept. And the golden age of automata is generally acknowledged to run from the 1860s to about 1910. Although attempting to imitate Poe's prosody, Erickson's narrative style doesn't quite consistently capture Poe's. Dismiss his literary inaccuracies or flawed biographical references and we can enjoy the many Poe-tic elements from panic and psychosis, to spectres and doppelgangers, and macbre scenes plus splashes of automatons and time travel.

Misterg says

A good story with many twists and turns. A lot of the humour is more evident if you have read "The Raven"

- I did after about 1/3 of the book. It has also inspired me to read some of the Genuine Article; I have just bought a collection of Poe's short stories, several of which are alluded to in the story.

Saisha Sandoz says

the book was a slow starter, but picked up pretty good. i enjoyed reading the book up until the last 25%, at that point it gets weird. it takes a turn towards the end that i would like to not have seen. the first 50% of the book at me gasping and exclaiming "what!?" just when i thought i had it figured out, wham! i am thrown in a differnt direction! i would love for the last part of the book to be written the same way as the first, would have been an incredibly good book then
