



On Night's Shore

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Step into the dark alleys of 1840 New York City...

Standing on the grimy banks of the Hudson River, street urchin Augie Dubbins spots a young woman toss her baby into the water, then jump in herself. As the only witness to the tragedy, Augie sees an opportunity to make a few pennies recounting the events, and in doing so encounters a struggling young journalist named Edgar Allan Poe, a poet and newspaper hack whose penchant for saying the wrong thing at the wrong time has earned him more than a few enemies.

When the unlikely duo discover the body of yet another young woman shortly after, they become entrapped in a mire of murder, greed, and power that stretches from the Five Points slums to the gleaming heights of Fifth Avenue.

On Night's Shore Details

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Ardesia says

Anche se il giallo che fa da perno alla trama del romanzo non mi ha coinvolto un granché, mi è comunque piaciuta la descrizione della New York di quasi due secoli fa - un enorme paesone pseudo-rurale che in pratica aveva gli stessi problemi sociali della metropoli in cui si è trasformata oggi - e mi ha affascinato il tentativo di riportare alla luce la complessa personalità di E. A. Poe uomo e scrittore.

Mi incuriosiscono molto i romanzi che prendono spunto da opere di altri e in cui viene tessuto un continuo gioco di riferimenti e richiami al testo a cui si rifanno e a chi lo scrisse.

Quando un autore diventa personaggio, il gioco di specchi, se ben fatto, va a creare quell'unica dimensione in cui è possibile carpire la vera essenza di quello scrittore. D'altronde chi ha passato la propria esistenza a creare personaggi e a tesserne le trame come potrebbe essere compreso se non diventando in qualche misura personaggio della trama delle proprie creazioni?

Magda says

Una splendida ambientazione per questo romanzo che unisce vari stili: giallo, romanzo storico, romanzo vittoriano. In una New York di metà 1800 si muove un inaspettato detective, free lance presso il Mirror e novello romanziere e cioè Edgar Allan Poe. Deve indagare a proposito della strana morte di Mary Rogers, ritrovata nelle fredde acque del fiume Hudson. Ad accompagnarlo un piccolo amico, Augie, sveglio abbastanza da salvare la vita a quasi tutti i personaggi della storia.

Non mancheranno i colpi di scena, gli intrighi politici del tempo e sopra a tutto la miseria e il sudiciume di una New York lontanissima dalle luci della ribalta di oggi.

Kay says

Definitely for the Poe lovers or literary types!

Enjoyed Edgar Allen Poe as a detective. Found his reaction to drink interesting. Well-written and quite descriptive, but at least 1/3rd of the description could be cut without hurting the story or the writing. I am looking forward to the next book in the series and watching the narrator mature.

Melle says

A historical fiction mystery involving a then-ten year-old narrator who uses vocabulary well outside the range of ten year-olds and well-suited for people who like mysteries or people who might be a little prudish about sex (which is briefly alluded to) but who are okay with some extreme and graphic violence (a category of folk that always baffles me).

This incorporates interesting little details and not-so-little figures from 1840's era United States, the story is engaging enough, and references to Poe and his works are pleasantly understated and subtle.

Pam says

Edgar Allan Poe as a fictional character? OK! I enjoyed the setting of New York City in the 1800's. I loved his street urchin protégée. The two work together to solve a murder. The story was interesting and beautifully written. If you pay attention, you will find "inspirations" for Poe's literary works. I just learned there is a second book in the series. Yes, please.

Suzze Tiernan says

This was a very well-written mystery, set in the 1840's with Edgar Allan Poe as a main character. I liked it enough that I ordered the next in the series right away. Not for anyone that has trouble figuring out what an unusual word means by the context. I have never seen so many words in one book that I had never seen before! LOL

Aimee says

I enjoyed the book - it was interesting to see the author's perspective on Poe's early days. In the beginning of the book there was a pretty high vocabulary level. I enjoy a good SAT word now and then, but made the story a bit cumbersome for me. As the story progressed, I noticed it less and less.

Dani says

As the first book in "The Poe Series," "On Night's Shore" is a fun bit of historical fiction that taught me much that I didn't previously know about Edgar Allen Poe. The series had been recommended to me a couple of years ago, but I hadn't gotten around to it yet. I thought it might be related to the recent John Cusack film, "The Raven," so I figured it was about time to check it out. Now that I have read it, however, I don't actually think there is a connection between the film and the books other than Poe being the central character. It's a fun murder mystery narrated by a young street urchin/fictional companion of Poe's. Poe, in the time period of the book, is living in NYC with his young wife and her mother, and working as a literary critic/freelance newspaper writer... very near poverty. I liked it... enough that I'll probably read the next in the series, but was not left in a rush to do so.

Deborah says

I loved that the author used E.A. Poe as the hero of this story. It certainly inspired me to re-read my Poe! The who-done-it was great, but I kept wishing that there weren't quite so many well-placed references that would supposedly be the impetus for the further writings of Poe.

This is a series and I didn't rush out to get the 2nd; however, it could be a future pick just to see how the author's story-telling grows.

Deanna Lack says

I very much enjoyed this one, and I've had it on my shelves for ages. It's a murder mystery set in 1849 New York. Augie is a " gutter rat" and all but an orphan when he finds a body in the Hudson, and on that same day meets one Mr E A Poe, a reporter working for the Daily Mirror. The writer takes young Augie under his wing and together they attempt to solve the mystery of the murder.

I'm not generally a murder mystery fan, but the historical fiction and literary context I enjoyed very much, as well as Mr Silvis's flowery writing style that seemed very appropriate for a book set in the Victorian era. The plot has plenty of twists and turns to keep you interested, and both Augie and Poe are absolutely engaging as co-protagonists. Definitely recommended.

Amy Sturgis says

Beautifully written, with a delicious sense of place, *On Night's Shore* is a fictional account of Edgar Allan Poe's investigation of the murder of Mary Rogers. This real-life murder was the inspiration for Poe's second mystery featuring C. Auguste Dupin, "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," and I'd recommend reading both that story and a book about its inspiration and conception, *The Beautiful Cigar Girl: Mary Rogers, Edgar Allan Poe, and the Invention of Murder* , first in order to get the most out of this novel.

I expected to enjoy the sense of mystery/detection Randall Silvis provides, and I did, but I was especially taken with the sensitive and subtle characterization Silvis provides Poe, his terminally ill wife Virginia, and his aunt/mother-in-law (or "Muddy"). The point of view character, Augie Dubbins, a street urchin who becomes Poe's assistant and sometimes caretaker, is also a remarkably compelling character in his own right, and his poignant glimpses into the Poe family's dynamic comprise some of the most moving aspects of the book.

There is a second novel in this duology, *Disquiet Heart*, and I definitely plan to read it.

Lorrie says

I don't think I'm going to finish this book. It's written in a way that's about half Dickens half Poe, and I'm not a big fan of either one. Poe is alright but only when he's doing horror, and this book is just a fictional 1800s murder mystery. And not a particularly good one, you just have to follow people here and there learning things either as they learn them or after, with it explained or over-explained, giving the reader very little free rein to think about whodunit yourself. And maybe it seems like someone did it but then it turns out they obviously didn't because of something someone's been keeping under their hat rather than something the reader could pick up on and be in suspense about.

Angela says

This historical fiction mystery recreates Edgar Allan Poe as an investigative journalist who is attempting to solve the mystery of Mary Rogers's murder. Historically, Rogers's case inspired Poe's detective tale "The Mystery of Marie Roget," which is a sequel to "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." Joining Poe on this adventure is ten-year-old Auggie Dubbins, who narrates the story as an adult reflecting upon this past adventure.

The story began rather slowly for me with an isolated incident which leads Auggie to the discovery of Mary's body. It's some time later that he meets Poe and builds up the trust necessary to show him the body and then get the action started. Once things got going, though, I became engaged in the story and appreciated the various nods to Poe's works and the insight offered into his personal life.

The book is well-researched with rich details from the time period and the personal lives of the historical figures. The language is advanced, as Auggie's vocabulary improved as he matured, thanks to his respect and admiration for Poe's use of precise language.

I enjoyed the mystery as Poe's more privileged background and Auggie's gutter-rat insight work different angles to move them toward the truth. These two characters complement each other well and it was enjoyable to watch them play off of each other. They run into some dead ends and eventually find themselves in no small amount of danger as they get closer. The mystery aspect was well plotted and kept me guessing.

The book veers off course a bit from time to time, mostly to explore Auggie's personal life and what the future holds for him. Though they were historically interesting, I felt that these tangents slowed the pace quite a bit.

I would recommend this book to people who enjoy historical fiction or leisurely mysteries.

- Extreme language, infrequent
- Sexual situations are referenced, including prostitution and abortions
- Violence is somewhat explicit—strangling, cutting, suffocation, abuse, etc.
- Characters smoke and drink, and there is reference to addiction to drugs and alcohol.

Diabolika says

Penso sia più facile apprezzare questo libro se non lo si pensa come un giallo, ma come un romanzo storico con un personaggio principale di eccezione: Edgar Allan Poe, giornalista investigativo. La trama, infatti, si dipana molto lentamente; la soluzione del mistero presenta tanti, troppi colpi di scena, alcuni poco credibili; Poe ed il suo giovane amico (Augie) prendono un bel po' di cantonate prima di capire la verità. Tuttavia il libro mi è piaciuto, anche se per altri motivi.

Lo stile elaborato si presta benissimo per raccontare una storia ambientata nella New York di metà Ottocento. Le immagini di questa città in costante trasformazione sono molto vivide: mi sono sentita addosso la sporcizia dei quartieri bassi, ho respirato il fumo delle bettole, ho inalato l'odore acre degli alcolici di bassa qualità, ho avuto paura della polizia corrotta e dei loro manganelli. Poe e Augie sono due investigatori dilettanti quanto ingenui, ma la loro relazione intenerisce il cuore: Augie trova in Poe il padre che non ha mai avuto; Poe trova in Augie l'amico fidato che gli mancava. I due "eroi" sono circondati da una serie di personaggi tanto ben caratterizzati quanto convincenti.

Ho trovato intrigante come RS abbia giocato con il personaggio Poe. Per sua stessa ammissione, ha cercato di descriverlo in modo veritiero, presentandoci le sue idiosincrasie (dal gusto del macabro al piacere del bere); la sua costante condizione di miseria e povertà; Virginia, la moglie-bambina eternamente malata; la suocera "Muddy". I corvi sono un punto di riferimento costante: svolazzano nella campagna intorno a New York, impazzano nei sogni di Poe, chiudono la storia (il romanzo finisce con Poe che inizia a scrivere uno dei suoi racconti più famosi). Nella parte finale, RS riesce pienamente a ricreare l'atmosfera tipica dei racconti di Poe, dove paura, terrore, ed ansia, accompagnano i nostri eroi fino allo svelamento del mistero.

Fino alla fine sono stata indecisa tra 3 o 4 stelle (3,5 sarebbe stata la mia valutazione). Non potendolo usare le mezze stelle, ho deciso per 3, per via dei troppi colpi di scena, un po' improbabili, nella soluzione del mistero.

Terry Lee says

The premise of this book was very interesting. I loved reading about young Poe, a newspaper reporter here, trying to solve a murder with a street urchin he meets in 1800's New York. This is fictional, but through the book, the author gives hints of stories Poe would write in reality.

I would suggest this book to any Poe fan.
