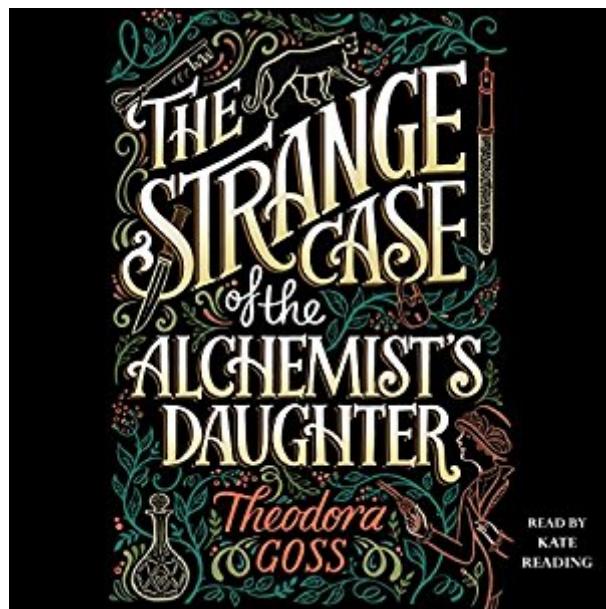


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The Strange Case Of The Alchemist's Daughter



Synopsis

Based on some of literature's horror and science fiction classics, this is the story of a remarkable group of women who come together to solve the mystery of a series of gruesome murders - and the bigger mystery of their own origins. Mary Jekyll, alone and penniless following her parents' deaths, is curious about the secrets of her father's mysterious past. One clue in particular hints that Edward Hyde, her father's former friend and a murderer, may be nearby, and there is a reward for information leading to his capture...a reward that would solve all of her immediate financial woes. But her hunt leads her to Hyde's daughter, Diana, a feral child left to be raised by nuns. With the assistance of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, Mary continues her search for the elusive Hyde and soon befriends more women, all of whom have been created through terrifying experimentation: Beatrice Rappaccini, Catherin Moreau, and Justine Frankenstein. When their investigations lead them to the discovery of a secret society of immoral and power-crazed scientists, the horrors of their past return. Now it is up to the monsters to finally triumph over the monstrous.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 13 hours and 39 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Audio

Audible.com Release Date: June 20, 2017

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B07148V9DD

Best Sellers Rank: #89 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Historical Fiction #141 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Mysteries #184 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Fantasy

Customer Reviews

There's a type of fantasy and/or mystery that inserts not merely one but a whole slew of famous historical or classic fictional characters, or characters related to them, into its imaginary world; I think of them as "name-dropper" stories. Fairly often they don't work very well because the authors don't really develop the personalities of the characters they introduce, apparently thinking that mentioning the

names and a well-known feature or two is enough— but it isn't—but it is, after all. I think that this one succeeds, however. Most of the characters here are famous at one remove: we have, not the originals, but the daughters (biological or created) of Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde (both of him, by different mothers), Dr. Moreau, Rappacini (as in the Hawthorne story), and Frankenstein— plus Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, a Jack-the-Ripper-style murderer, and a few characters from Dracula thrown in around the edges. Most of the story deals with how the daughters, all lively, intelligent, and opinionated young women, find each other and learn to cooperate in finding out how their fathers knew each other and what evil plot they were all involved in. The fathers' experiments made all the daughters

“monsters” in one way or another, with personalities and, in some cases, physical features that keep them from fitting into normal Victorian society. The book’s best feature is the personalities of the daughters and the closeness they develop for each other despite the differences that lead them to argue constantly, as sisters, whether literal or figurative, often do. The author shows this through the unusual technique of having short bursts of the arguments break into the story, which is narrated mainly by Catherine Moreau (by the end of the story, she’s earning a living as a thriller writer). Mary Jekyll (who, as the most mature daughter as the one with the most resources, becomes a sort of mother to the troupe, with the help of her devoted housekeeper, Mrs. Poole) and Diana Hyde (an endearing brat) are perhaps the best developed, but the other women have even more bizarre backgrounds, especially Justine Frankenstein, whose story, appearing near the end of the book, pulls those of the other daughters together. Holmes and Watson are well handled and play a significant part in the proceedings, but they’re not the main focus here. The Dracula connection is only hinted at, but there are suggestions that it will be further developed in the next book in what is apparently slated to become a series. Although the book wraps up its tale quite satisfactorily, with the five daughters deciding to share a household and finding ways to use their unique talents to earn money for its upkeep, it solves only some of the mysteries that have been presented. We learn who committed the Ripper-style murders and why, but by the end of the book we still know little about the “Society of Alchemists,” to which all of the fathers belonged, or the ultimate purpose behind the experiments in transmutation that have made the daughters who they are. That, along with the Dracula bits, remains to be explored in a future book or books—which I am greatly looking forward to.

It's an entertaining, light read. The writing is a bit lazy in that it employs a convention I did not enjoy

-- the author interjects (really interrupts) the narrative with direct commentary from the characters. This does a large disservice to the story by telegraphing how it will resolve as well as deflating any tension in the atmosphere that the author might have been trying to create. Additionally, sometimes there is just too much of a "clever" thing -- combining historical well-known characters in different and ways. Loved it in Penny Dreadful (the Showtime fantasy drama); the writing was excellent and the feel was creepy and at the same time lush. In this book however, it is who can I combine like that and put a twist on it by coming at it from the perspective of the daughters of these well-known characters. This approach might have succeeded if the focus had been on developing the story and deepening the characters themselves as opposed to piling on additional characters one right after the other (think six degrees of Kevin Bacon gone amuck). With that written, it is fun way to spend an afternoon.

Truly enjoyed reading this. It's a fun read, engaging and interesting. I enjoyed experiencing the different personalities of the characters. The style of having the characters interrupt the flow of the story with side commentary took a bit of getting used to, but added to the fun in most places, occasionally irritating. There are assumptions made that the reader is fairly familiar with gothic literature, but looking up, for example, Rappacini, made it even more intriguing to me. I look forward to more books in this series. I think it could make a really fun movie, too.

Loved how Goss brought all of these accessory female characters into the spotlight and gave them common purpose. I didn't give it more stars because I felt like the writing kind of stepped on its own feet. The characters are "writing" the story together so will interject opinions and have conversations overlaying the main thread. It was an interesting narrative idea but ends up becoming a distraction by interrupting the action and the flow. It was still a fun read with lots of great ideas. Explores that poignant sci-fi question: If we can do it, should we?

With wonderful female characters. The premise is promising, and the author kept her promise. I hope this becomes a series; I'd like to go along on the next adventure!

This is one of most clever books I've read in some time. It slyly mashes up so many things I love from some of my favorite gothic novels—Sherlock Holmes, Frankenstein, even the Island of Doctor Moreau. Besides being a ton of fun, Goss's use of pov is simply virtuosic. While the plot itself is a well-crafted page-turner, the characters are the true stars of the show. I often found

myself thinking of them when I wasn't reading, and yearning to spend time with them.

I really enjoyed this book. I purchased it on a whim when I was looking for a book with audio narration so I could listen while working out in the yard. The description was interesting to me so I decided to try it. I've always been a huge fan of female characters who don't take life sitting down. The characters were terrific. The author did a wonderful job of bringing several different "stories" together. Jekyll and Hyde, Dr. Moreau, Frankenstein and more, made for a great story. I certainly hope that the author continues to write about more of these ladies and their adventures!

Imagine if all of the mad scientists from fiction had daughters (or created daughters!), and that those daughters came together to solve a series of brutal murders in London's East End. A delightful fantasy with engaging characters. I loved the occasional asides by the young women as they commented on the writing!

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