



Steam & Sorcery

Cindy Spencer Pape

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Sir Merrick Hadrian hunts monsters, both human and supernatural. A Knight of the Order of the Round Table, his use of magick and the technologies of steam power have made him both respected and feared. But his considerable skills are useless in the face of his greatest challenge, guardianship of five unusual children. At a loss, Merrick enlists the aid of a governess.

Miss Caroline Bristol is reluctant to work for a bachelor but she needs a position, and these former street children touch her heart. While she tends to break any mechanical device she touches, it never occurs to her that she might be something more than human. All she knows is that Merrick is the most dangerously attractive man she's ever met—and out of reach for a mere governess.

When conspiracy threatens to blur the distinction between humans and monsters, Caroline and Merrick must join forces, and the fate of humanity hinges upon their combined skills of steam and sorcery...

76,400 words

Steam & Sorcery Details

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From Reader Review Steam & Sorcery for online ebook

Laurielu Bona Fide Reflections says

This delightful, anachronistic story begins in the year 1851, London, England with Sir Merrick Hadrian who is a Knight of the Order. He gets into a bind while investigating the disappearance of some women in the area. While investigating, he is suddenly pitted against two vampyres and unwittingly receives the help of five street children with supernatural powers to help dispatch the vampyres.

As a Knight of the Order, Sir Merrick is used to hunting human and animal monsters; but, he is not sure he is up to taking care of five children on his own. His devious spinster Aunt Dorothy introduces Caroline Bristol into Sir Merrick's household. By trade Caroline is a governess. She has been employed in a few households but cannot keep a position for very long. Her lack of steady employment is partially due to her attractiveness. Ms. Bristol's former employers have a bit of trouble keeping their hands to themselves which causes the ending of her gainful employment since this behavior is unacceptable.

When Caroline is offered a job with the attractive Sir Merrick, she is not sure being under the same roof with him is a good idea since she very attracted to him. The five supernaturally charged children tug at her heart strings and she stays. Ms. Bristol is easily able to keep the children out of trouble and busy. While handling the children, the instant attraction between Sir Merrick and Caroline grows intensely.

The mystery of the missing women and the reason for the resurgence of vampires is keeps the momentum of the adventure on a nice even keel while assisting in making the romance between the hero and heroine more emotional.

Steam & Sorcery written by Cindy Spencer Pape is a very beguiling paranormal tale. While parts of the story can be predictable, the main and supporting characters keep the story engaging. I whole heartedly recommend this book to any paranormal romance lover.

Happy Reading from Bona Fide Reflections!

Mpauli says

Geez, what am I going to do with this book? I could justify every rating between 1 and 4 stars. I'll probably rate it 3 stars despite of all its issues, or maybe because it doesn't really care about all those issues and just wants to play.

Merrick Hadrian is a knight of the Order of the Round table, descendants from Arthur's knights, who fight vampyres (they are called vampyres here...with a y...cause it's cool....you know?).

On one of his vampyre hunting trips, Merrick gets rescued by a bunch of vampyre fighting street urchins and their clockwork dog George. (George is awesome!)

One of the kids radiates with the knight aura, so Merrick takes in the kids as his wards. As a bachelor he's in dire need of help. Enter Caroline Bristol, beautiful (look at the cover) guverness with a magical secret.

That's the basic absurdity we have to work from. Now the book does something really interesting. It sends

the plot on vacation (Bye plot, have a nice time in Brighton!) and focuses on Caroline's role and the kids. The kids are actually the strongest asset of the book and they are depicted rather well and age appropriate. At the 50% mark the plot decides to come back, opens the door and watches the adult characters having sex. That happens like 5 times until the end and everytime everyone is clothed again, the plot sneaks in and tries to be included...says something about vampyres and seems very relieved when a cheesy happy ending rescues him.

Another issue of the book is its language. I've read *Soulless* by Gail Carriger (also a Paranormal Romance in a Steampunk corset) recently and *Steam & Sorcery* can't compare, when it comes to reflecting the speech patterns of the era and the general stiffness of the setting. The language is very easy and modern compared to Carriger.

So, as you can see, on a very rational level this book is 1-2 star material, but and it's a big but (no pun intended) it's actually quite fun. Although I rolled my eyes at times, I enjoyed this book enough to honestly say that I liked it, so that's that.

So, if you're in for a Romance with sprinkles of supernatural and steampunk elements with a heart warming Mary Poppins story arch, this might be something for you.

Alexandra says

Disclaimer - the author is primarily a romance writer, so there's some predictability here, the occasional mild ick factor, and several explicit sex scenes. But overall a very light, enjoyable read with characters to care about.

July 2015 - re-reading.

Anna says

Steam & Sorcery is a quick read, and with two protagonists, an aunt, five children, and a variety of side characters, you'd think it would be quickly overwhelmed by a confusing number of names, but Pape does a fantastic job in giving them all dimension and keeping them distinct. Children are especially difficult to write well, since they often veer either to acting several years younger/older than they're meant to be or simply depicted as being so annoying you grit your teeth every time they're on the page (assuming, of course, the author pays much attention to them other than being used as a plot device). In this case, however, I honestly liked each of the children, and in spite of there being five of them, they had distinct personalities and abilities. (It helps that they're not very young children, ranging in age from 9-15.) I could have happily spent the entire book in the nursery, watching the kids adjust to their new surroundings and interact with Caroline and with each other. They were fun to read about and I actually wished we spent a little more time with them. We do spend a bit of extra time with the two oldest, Tommy and Wink, a potential Knight and a mechanical genius, respectively.

You may have guessed by this point that *Steam & Sorcery* is a very character-driven book. The plot does suffer a bit for this, becoming more of a random series of events that culminate in a big finale rather than something that builds one piece at a time to a natural conclusion. There are a number of elements that are introduced and then kind of wither off into nothing, sitting around unused and watching the character

interplay. Not that I could blame them, because that's pretty much what I was watching while reading, too.

Pape is also fond of splitting her phrases. It's not at all unusual to see two or three em dashes in a page, sometimes even in one paragraph:

Caroline saw the fear that lurked behind his pale gray eyes. These children were bold but terrified. It would be good to put their minds at ease before she went on her way --and she could have another bite or two while she was about it. The sandwiches were delicious, after all --if she nibbled long enough, she wouldn't have to buy supper tonight.

I have nothing against a good em dash, but when they're used that often, it becomes noticeable.

It's not a perfect book, but I'd be lying if I said I didn't enjoy it immensely anyway. Truth be told, I pretty well devoured the thing. It's a quick read, and a lot of fun, and not only am I looking forward to reading the next two volumes in the series, I did an excited happy dance when I discovered there's a fourth volume featuring Wink as the heroine coming out in October. And yes, I'm actually pleased enough about that it got marked down on my book calendar so I don't forget.

Simcha Lazarus says

Meljean Brook and Gail Carriger have proven that mixing together alternate history, technology, fantasy and romance can bring about the most delightful results. I loved Carriger's *Soulless* and Brook's *Iron Duke*, and so when I came across *Steam & Sorcery*, which sounded like it had some similar themes, I was eager to give it a try.

Steam & Sorcery starts off strong and seems to be heading on the path to some interesting destinations, but unfortunately it never quite makes it. The story opens as Sir Merrick is working on cracking a case involving the kidnapping of several women in London. Suddenly, two vampires materialize from the darkness, and attack. Just as Merrick is certain that he is about to die, a group of street urchins intervene and skillfully put an end to the vampires. Merrick is startled to discover how young his saviors are, and that they each appear to possess some magical abilities. Disinclined to leave them to the streets, Merrick invites the children to his home, to become his wards.

This was a great beginning to the story, and I couldn't wait to find out more about these children and their magic, as well as how they came to be such skilled vampire hunters.

Strangely though, after their initial fight with the vampires, the children become rather unremarkable. Yes, they do each have some kind of magical talent; one sees ghosts, one has prophetic dreams and one can create any kind of mechanical device, but these abilities don't actually play any substantial part in the story. The story also doesn't explore how the kids were able to defeat the vampires, and- to my disappointment- they don't do anything similarly interesting again.

When a governess is hired to take the unruly children in-hand, the plot begins to follow a familiar pattern. Caroline and Merrick are inexplicably drawn to each other, though they do their best to maintain a professional relationship, for a while, at least. Their relationship follows the predictable path, as does the rest

of the story. And when Merrick realizes that there may be a traitor among the Knights, working with the vampires, a couple of none-too-subtle clues make it pretty obvious who the culprit is.

The only real surprise for me about the book was that Pape did not make use of all the interesting elements that she had introduced into the story. I really thought she was going to dress up the traditional Jane Eyre plot with the magical children, supernatural creatures and steampunk technology, and I was really looking forward to see how it would all play out. But neither the magical or paranormal aspects were developed and while there was some steampunk technology, these items were just mentioned but not explained in any way.

While Steam & Sorcery did not turn out to be another Soulless or Iron Duke, it was entertaining enough that I easily read through it in just a few hours. The writing wasn't bad and both Caroline and Merrick are likable characters whom I enjoyed reading about. Readers of romance would probably enjoy this story, though anyone looking for a paranormal or steampunk novel will likely be disappointed.

Kelly says

This book was a load of fun. A LOAD. The blending of steampunk, knights, magick, vampyres and other supernatural critters just flat out worked. The mystery of what the vampyres were working toward, the flashes of magick, the rigid social lines that both Caroline and Merrick were trying not to cross and the five gifted children that tied it all together made for a sassy, spunky, well-crafted world with surprises hiding around every corner.

First off, I loved the children. They each had their own strengths and they all looked out for one another. They had made themselves into a family even though they weren't all related by blood. That becomes a sort of theme as Caroline begins to view them as more than just her charges and Merrick takes them under his wing despite his occasional misgivings. When one of them is threatened, they all rush in to help - from the adults right on down to their clockwork dog.

Caroline is initially reluctant to get involved with Merrick's household. She's been treated badly by other male employers and she has no desire to go down that road again. Once she gets steamrolled (haha! I said steamrolled and I'm talking about a steampunk book! I love it when words come together like that!) into helping Merrick and the children, she finds that all of them get under her skin and into her heart.

Merrick's desire to do the right thing, both for the children and for Caroline, makes him a sweet, chivalrous hero. The fact that he's a hunky knight with a handful of magick doesn't hurt him in the least.

This book pretty much hit the spot for me on every level. It was sexy, clockwork-y, violent and sweet. All at once. And that's a nice combination.

-Kelly @ Reading the Paranormal

Aoife says

Have you ever been on fanfiction.net or a similar site, read one of those stories about a Beautiful Heroine With A Tragic Past (TM) and no money who meets a Ruggedly Handsome Rich Guy (TM), falls in love with him, then discovers that she is in fact a Special Snowflake With Awesome Powers (TM) and somewhere on they way she gets lots of pretty dresses and they have Absolutely Faboulus First Time Sex With Hillarious Euphemisms For Penis and Vagina In The Description Of It (TM)? Have you read one of those stories and thought 'I wish there would be one with better spelling, slightly fewer plot-holes and only three pages of dress-descriptions instead of six?'

I have fabulous news for you: Such a book exists!

I almost don't know what else to say about Steam & Sorcery because that is basically it. I admit it started out quite enchanting. Of course it was obvious from the beginning that Merrick and Caro would end up together and I didn't mind that, I also wouldn't have minded if the book had been simply *heavy* on the romance but after a quite promising beginning in which some interesting elements were introduced (A WEREWOLF CONSTABLE! WHY DOESN'T HE HAVE HIS OWN SERIES??? freaking mechanical dogs and Merricks rather awesome aunt) the romance takes over completely and everything else gets shoved in the background: the children Merrick adopts barely get any personalty: Tommy is the oldest, Wink the one who builds the mechanical pets and also seems to make eyes at every handsome guy who appears (at least that is what Caro believes everytime Wink just looks at them/asks about them...always with an explanation why it's impossible) and I genuinly can't name the other three even though I only just finished the book and I only remember that one girl can talk to ghosts and one boy has prophetic dreams - with that each could be the main character of their own novel but it's barely gone into...

It's also painfully obvious who the bad guy is (OK, I called one more or less the moment he appeared, I did not call the other but only because I had almost forgotten his existence between all the sex and drama) and after half the book it also doesn't really seem as if they still bother investigating, they only react if they're attacked but spent their free time swooning and angsting over each other. I just wanted to yell at them 'HELLO VAMPYRES TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD!!! Could you be bothered to think with your brain for a few hours and not with various other parts?'

(Of course it's vampYres and magicK...because you simply get instant-awesome if you throw in a few Ks and Ys...didn't you know?).

Even if the book hadn't tried to pretend to be something else than a straight-up romance, the romance in the book was also somewhat lacking. Granted, there were a few cute scenes but most did boil down to 'Gawd (s)he's so HAWT' and Caro angsting about the fact that she's a bastard and he's a nobleman and now matter how much he's throwing himself at her feet and swearing undying love he would never really marry her. If done well I don't mind if the main character of a book worries about something that is completely obvious to the reader and I admit that Caro would probably doubt his sincerity especially considering her background but it wasn't done well. It came of as whining when there was never a serious doubt about the book having a HEA.

So overall: not impressed.

But hey: it had a werewolf constable!

La Fenice Magazine says

QUATTRO E 1/2

Incantesimi e ingranaggi è un libro meraviglioso, mi aveva proprio attirata il genere Steampunk di cui era infuso l'epoca che naturalmente si aggira intorno a quella vittoriana e la storia intricata.

Tutto il racconto si fonda su questa triade, intrecciato, appassionante, ben scritto e strutturato, tutto racchiuso in duecento pagine. La serie che è denominata "Steampunk Chronicles" avrà tanti titoli in uscita, in America sono già all'ottavo. La storia non è semplice ma tutt'altro, molto complicata ma facilmente districabile.

La protagonista Miss Caroline Bristol, è davvero sorprendente, con quel suo modo di fare e la sua forte personalità la rendono un personaggio unico; ella stessa dovrà accudire cinque bambini che Sir Merrick Hadrian ha trovato per strada, con vari poteri soprannaturali e che l'hanno aiutato a risolvere un caso intricato e spigoloso.

Ho adorato ogni singolo personaggio della storia, la ZIA audace e spiritosa, perfetta per quell'epoca un pò ottusa e retrograda. I bambini, ognuno ha un piccolo particolare che lo contraddistingue, messi insieme formano una squadra perfetta. Nella storia si mescolano elementi soprannaturali, steampunk e originali rendendola davvero toccante.

Imbastita anche una storia d'amore, ma non vi dirò fra chi, che non guasta minimamente anzi fa salire la verve e il tono che conduce il romanzo stesso. Un tema che io amo e mi sta molto a cuore. Ho adorato tutto, fino all'ultima virgola...quindi non vedo l'ora di leggere il seguito! Buona Lettura...

Cospirazioni, amore, magia mescolati al sapore amaro di Londra.

Stephanie (Once Upon a Chapter) says

Originally posted at Once Upon a Chapter

Sir Merrick Hadrian is a member of the Order of Knights. It is a secret society of descendants from the original Knights and King Arthur. Men can only join if they are blood related and have the gift. It is usually the oldest male sibling in the family. Merrick takes his responsibilities seriously. He watched his mother grow farther and farther away while his father was on assignment for the Order. The last thing Merrick wants is a wife and children at home to worry about and worry for him.

One night Merrick comes across two vampyres while getting information from an informant. He easily takes care of one but the other is almost upon him when a rough and tumble group of five children come to his rescue. Tom, the oldest at 17, refuses to let Merrick go on his own to the next point of the operation. The children help him take out a party of thugs and more vampyres and then disappear into the night when Scotland Yard shows up. Vampyres never work together and it is enough for Merrick to think about that he doesn't think of the danger the children might be in until a few days later.

The children have a hard time believing their luck when Merrick takes them in. Merrick can hardly believe

that in one day he becomes the guardian of five children. His household quickly becomes a zoo. The children who lived on the street before are having a hard time adjusting to their new surroundings. Staff are also having a hard time adjusting to caring for five children.

Caroline Bristol can't remember a time when she wasn't supporting herself. It's been a rough life but she has taken it in stride. Caroline has held many positions as a governess. Unfortunately her employment ends abruptly. It usually coincides with the time that the father in the family can no longer keep her hands off of her. Caroline never invites the attention but can never seem to escape it. She can't believe that she has found another position in another upstanding household very shortly after being dismissed from her previous employer.

Once she meets the children she can't say no. They are truly wonderful. Each one talented in a different way but devoted to each other unconditionally. Caroline accepts the position and tries to ignore Merrick as much as possible. The attraction they feel is impossible to ignore and quickly insinuates itself.

Merrick has been assigned to find a betrayer within the Order. If Merrick can't find out who is leaking information the world as they know it will change forever. Merrick didn't plan on the search bringing harm to his new wards and he will do anything to protect them and Caroline.

My Thoughts:

Oh my! This book was amazing. As it is a Carina Press title it is only available as an ebook. I am VERY glad that I have my Nook. If you have an ereader, heck even if you don't, you can't miss this book! It is a steampunk. For those who may not know it means that it is set in a somewhat alternate historical time period. It is alternate in that there are clockwork machines to ease everyday life and steam is a very valuable power source. I'm sure there's much more to it than that, but that's my basic definition.

There is a lot going on in Steam & Sorcery. The relationship between Merrick and Caroline is an intense one. They both want to ignore it fiercely. Merrick doesn't want the responsibility and Caroline feels like Merrick is above her touch considering she is in service. It is fun to watch them dance around each other. The children are a great addition to the story. They play a large part and I found myself becoming quite attached to them myself.

The mystery was hard to solve. Like I mentioned before, there is a lot going on in this book: betrayal, secret societies, a new adoptive family and a romance. Cindy Spencer Pape does a wonderful job balancing it all. I never felt like one aspect of the book was dominating the entire plotline. If you are in the mood for a read that will sweep you away and into a different world for a little while this is the treat you have been looking for!

Ian says

DNF 70%

Sir Merrick is a Knight of The Order of the Round Table. His job is to hunt vampires and werewolves and other creatures of the night. While investigating the disappearance of a group of young women he gets some help from an unlikely source. A band of street urchins step in and help him battle a group of vampires and

free the young women.

When he detects magical power in them he brings them into his home. But they are a ragtag lot and run riot. Merrick needs a governess.

Caroline finds it difficult to keep a job. Hungry and desperate she accepts some help from Merrick's mother and ends up working for him as governess to the little scamps. Caroline and Merrick fight their attraction but let's face it, it's a foregone conclusion.

Steam & Sorcery is a pretty good idea which unfortunately ran out of...well, steam. It had a promising start but the wheels had fallen off by about 30%. By 70% when I finally walked away it had become banal and predictable.

There was definitely some good things about this book and my negative review is probably as much a result of it being the third or fourth book that has made me cringe in the past few weeks as anything else. I know it's not entirely fair therefore the disclosure.

Kat Kennedy says

[image error]

Jennifer says

Steam & Sorcery is a nice blend of steampunk and romance. The characters are well developed while allowing for some twists and growth. It's nice how we find out Caroline's original problems as a governess come from a specific source, and I hope this is explored in future books. The children were written very believably, which is a nice change from some adult novels. I liked the touches of science the steampunk added, though I would have liked to see more examples of the uses of steam power. The combination of steampunk and fantasy is natural, and I hope to see more fiction like this in the future.

The ending was suitably happy for any fan of romance, though the climax was somewhat abrupt and rushed. Everything turned out well, though, and I enjoyed the story. I'm always little skeptical with these historical romances, wondering if relationships really would be allowed to develop in the manner the one in the book did, but the overall story is good enough that I didn't mind. I'll be on the lookout for more books by this author.

I received this e-ARC from Netgalley and the publisher.

Hallie says

Maybe 2.5.

I liked a few things about the fantasy, but the romance was underwhelming. I mean really - very much more powerful/higher status male who's totally smitten and planning to marry the poor, abused governess, but just doesn't tell her about it? Her determination to be with him while she can, knowing her heart will be broken when he leaves her doesn't cause the necessary heart-string tugging when the reader knows he's just -- uh, waiting for the perfect moment? Didn't find the sex scenes very appealing either, partly because Merrick was being such a goop in letting Caroline think he only wanted an affair. Not my cuppa, though I'm not sure there was anything really wrong with it.

Reni says

Don't read this book for the adventure. Or the mystery plot. Or because you're into steampunk. You will be disappointed. If you read this for the romance, however, you should be fine.

I purchased this book because I felt like I needed to read something light, fluffy, preferably with some colourful, sympathetic characters, a shining hero to swoon over and an imaginative setting. Well, *Steam and Sorcery* delivered perfectly on that account. I really enjoyed myself, when I began reading, but after a while I simply could not ignore the many faults any longer.

It is a decent quick read that never realises the full potential of its premise. Its first half is significantly more readable than the second.

This book isn't all bad. Especially in the first half it does a couple of things really, really well. While we're introduced to the basic setting and our main players, one of our protagonists is investigating a crime that will immediately get you hooked, immediately followed by a nicely paced action scene. The book keeps up the pace, introducing new elements fast enough to make you wonder how the characters will react to each them. It keeps you turning the pages, even when there are no mysteries to be solved or monsters to fight.

I also liked the idea of combining a historical setting, especially that of the budding industrialisation at its height, with supernatural creatures, an order of magic knights in service of the British crown, and light steampunk elements.

The book gets further bonus points for featuring vampires that truly look like undead monsters rather than hot humans with a couple of sexy animal features. The nocturnal seducer has, of course, been the modern vampire's main *raison d'être* since it was codified in times of Romanticism, but I certainly won't blame an author for escaping a trend that has become ubiquitous in paranormal romances in recent years.

However, the book reveals its most ugly problems when it comes to finding a balance between focus on setting, characters and action:

At first everything takes a backseat to the plot leading to the status quo of installing all the main players at Hadrian House: The book uses a very short time-frame, in which characters develop and relationships grow so fast it hurts the story's credibility.

You would think the book does this because the plot calls for a whirlwind romance, but at least the relationship between the lovebirds takes *a bit* longer to develop than the others.

In fact, once the players are all in place the plot takes a backseat to the romance!

Finally, sadly, the development of the setting, the world building, takes a backseat to everything. The steampunk elements in this book are a gimmick, not an experiment that set up the plot. How much would actually change if you took these elements out? Not much. It seems almost like the book doesn't have much interest in its steampunk elements apart from their coolness.

Even worse, how the most prominently featured machines work is never explained. Take the many clockwork pets: How do they work? They obey voice commands; something stops them from running into people or furniture. They are programmed! This exceeds simple steam engine technology. It is hinted that the technology of this world is based on Ada Lovelace's forays into programming computers, but how this would work exactly is never specified. How can the clockwork servants tell when there are people around they need to serve? Without running into them?

However, I do like that the author used Ada Lovelace and her importance to the technological progress in her world, to give women's rights a push, i.e. making it easier for them to enter formerly entirely masculine fields of work and allowing them entry into libraries. That is a nice bit of alternate history world building. It's a shame this is not explored further in the novel.

But I get it, this book is not about world building, it is about romance. But the fact remains that I feel disappointed. The combination of urban noir fantasy with steampunk elements deserved to be explored in greater detail and not to be treated as mere window dressing.

This becomes especially frustrating when the romance aspect, that takes over the book completely at about the half-way point, gets bogged down by more and more clichés and repetitive dialogue emphasising how perfect our lovebirds are for each other, and how much they love the kids. I began to be less charmed by the characters and their interaction, and felt more and more compelled to roll my eyes at the lovers' syrupy sweetness, the sudden possessiveness in their relationship, and the run-of-the-mill sex scenes, that are not without their "duelling tongues", "wet cavern"s, "damp folds", and similar expressions that either make you smile fondly at their awkwardness, or that evoke the sexiness of a stagnant swamp. I kept waiting for the *fleshy spear of tender impalement and passion* but it never showed up.

Had the book shown more interest in its world-building, characters aside from the protagonists, and, ultimately, it's mystery plot, I might have been more inclined to overlook the accumulation of purple prose and tooth ache inducing domestic scenes. In the end the book tries to hard to make the make-shift family look so perfect, that the whole thing feels forced.

I guess straight up romance simply isn't my genre. I would have loved to see the adventurous plot treated at least equal to the romance. But it mostly disappears after the first half of the book, to be taken up again only for the final two chapters in a rush.

Add to that a couple of lapses in the book's logical corset. Take the first proper chapter. As the scene is set it is so dark in the streets that our protagonist can barely make out what is about an arm's length in front of him. Yet, a couple of minutes later, without additional light sources being mentioned, he can see a man's throat being slashed out of the corner of his eye.

Then the kid characters show up, and while George is addressed, it is not revealed that he is a dog, much less a mechanical dog until about 10 pages later. You don't mention the existence of a clockwork mastiff a chapter

after it would have been most relevant! IT IS A GODDAMN CLOCKWORK MASTIFF!

Then there's all the other problems I had with the premise and the writing itself: How did a bunch of homeless, orphaned street urchins acquire swords to fight the undead with? This is never explained. Neither is it later explained how Caroline managed to hide a sword between her skirts and whatever gave her the idea this would be a good, accessible place for a weapon, if you need to retrieve it quickly in an emergency? Victorian skirts were not designed to be lifted quickly and inconspicuously.

And why, if the existence of vampires is an open secret, is it not fashionable for Merrick to carry a sword with him? Especially since he is repeatedly referred to as an officer, and even could have disguised his weapon as ornamental, to prevent the other nobs from turning up their noses at it.

At least the book doesn't pretend to be anything it isn't. It's fluff. And it does what it sets out to do: Be a quick, fun adventure read, with a focus on romance and to tug on your heartstrings with cosy domestic scenes. Unfortunately it gets increasingly bogged down with romance clichés as the story progresses, and the writing, while over all decent, turns unnecessarily purple from time to time. Add to that the occasional flaw in logic or research, and you ultimately have, while not a horrible book, a quick read with a few flaws too many to be truly called good.

Jess the Romanceaholic says

This is a quickie review. Full review available at [The Romanceaholic](#)

Finally! A Steampunk novel that includes both airships and welding goggles (albeit in very small doses)! One thing that bugs me with the explosion of so called "Steampunk romances" these days are the stories where the steampunk elements are practically nonexistent, or play such a minor part that they merely act as set dressing. *Steam & Sorcery*, while not as "Steampunk" as, say, *The Iron Duke* by Meljean Brook, does rely heavily on automatons and clockwork devices, and as I mentioned, actually had an airship that made a very brief appearance.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed this story. There were just enough Steampunk elements to keep my interest without distracting me with trying to keep up with which implausible inventions were going to be introduced next, and the paranormal elements added a delicious bit of flavor without distracting from the more important inner dynamics of the Hadrian household.

4.5/5 Stars
