



The Case of the Girl in Grey

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This history-mystery series continues with another fine display of brains and bravery from the Wollstonecraft Girls—Ada Bryon Lovelace and Mary Shelley. The Wollstonecraft Detective Agency was supposed to be a secret constabulary, but after the success of their first case (*The Case of the Missing Moonstone*), all of London knows that Lady Ada and Mary are the girls to go to if you have a problem.

Their new case is a puzzle indeed. It involves a horrible hospital, a missing will, a hasty engagement, and a suspiciously slippery servant. But Mary has stumbled onto a mystery of her own. She spotted a ghostly girl in a grey gown dashing through the park. A girl who is the spitting image of their new client.

The two cases must be linked . . . or else there's a perfectly supernatural explanation.

The Case of the Girl in Grey Details

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Author : Jordan Stratford , Kelly Murphy (Illustrations)

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From Reader Review The Case of the Girl in Grey for online ebook

Selah Pike says

Another fun romp through alt history! 4.5 stars (1/2 star taken off for a few mistakes in the notes at the end, which made me wonder about the accuracy of the other historical notes - the name Earnshaw is borrowed from Emily Bronte, not Charlotte, and one of the plot points mentioned as borrowed from The Woman in White is inaccurate (I won't say which one because spoilers)).

QNPoohBear says

Ada Byron and Mary Godwin are gaining notoriety for their detective agency even though it is supposed to be a secret. Their respective sisters, Allegra and Jane, want in on the fun too. Jane wants to be able to meet people in Society and Allegra wishes to get to know her half-sister before running away to join the circus. The girls are presented by a mystery by mathematician and scientist Mrs. Mary Sommerville, one of Ada's idols. Mrs. Sommerville has a young relative, Lizzie, whose father has recently passed away after announcing he had some good news. This in itself is not so fishy but Lizzie is now engaged to marry a baronet and friend of the estate manager. Mrs. Sommerville senses something is not quite right and since Lizzie is a teenage girl close in age to Mary, Mrs. Sommerville hopes the girls can befriend Lizzie and determine whether she will truly be happy in her marriage. Meanwhile, Mary has spotted another girl she believes to be a ghost! Their new client just so happens to look exactly like Mary's ghost! Whatever does that mean and could the two mysteries be related?

I didn't like this story as much as the first one. It requires way more suspension of disbelief. I did not enjoy the introduction of Allegra and Jane. The timeline gets WAY too condensed for my liking. Allegra died at the age of 5 before the story takes place and Jane (Claire Clairmont) was actually Allegra's mother! I wouldn't have made the decision to make them contemporaries. That's too mind bending for me. Then there are some possible historical errors and further suspension of disbelief. First of all, Mary is reading Mansfield Park yet she doesn't make the connection Fanny Price does about fortunes made in Jamaica = sugar = slaves. I would have expected someone so intelligent and well read to bring it up. I really don't like West Indian fortunes.

The other historical error I picked up on was the issue of adoption and WHO adopted a child. While there were orphanages in England at this time, adoption was rare. The WHO seemed far fetched at best and the baronet wanting to marry x was even more far fetched because of who her parents were. I also took exception to Allegra's idiomatic phrasing, her expressions are too modern for the time. Looking them up, they date to the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th.

The world of this novel is very much a typical middle grades fantasy world where adults are all but useless and are outwitted by children. I was willing to accept that in the prison but not at a madhouse. Most definitely not. I'm not even sure inmates were allowed visitors let alone children.

The characters, however, are fantastically appealing. I wish I could be there to meet Ada Lovelace and her brilliant mind. The two of us would make an amazing team because I'm insanely verbal and she has a stronger right sided brain with mathematics being her strong suit. I can relate to Ada's fiery temperament and how she feels at a loss when she can't research something in a book to solve a problem. She's still antisocial but getting better thanks to Mary. Mary is also intelligent in a quieter sort of way. She reads a lot and she feels her family's lack of wealth keenly. Both of these things make her empathetic. I did not like her sister Jane who is a typical snooty conformist sister obsessed with etiquette and *Burke's Peerage*. I also did not like

Allegra who is just as fiery tempered as her sister but more social. Allegra is younger and acts it. She wants to be the center of attention and her extroverted nature annoys Ada (and me). I'm not sure big top circuses were around in 1826 and I question where she learned her special skills in a convent. Charles plays a larger role here but he's still somewhat mysterious and a secondary figure. Peebs also has a stronger role and takes his responsibility towards Ada very seriously. Mary Somerville was unknown to me but I simply must look her up. I very much admire 19th-century women who went against convention and actually made use of their brains. I wish someone could have translated *Algebra* into plain English for me! Byron's friend Dr. Polidori makes a cameo here. It's funny because he was dead in real life by 1826 yet he wrote the first vampire story so it's fitting that he is still living in this fictional version of 1826.

Fictional characters include Lizzie, an intelligent teenage girl who allows herself to be bartered in marriage to a Jamaican planter. Lizzie is too smart to follow conventions and like her new friends, I was somewhat disappointed she is fine with marrying a man she didn't know before he showed up and was introduced to her. Her uncle Mr. Thorpe is one of the worst guardians in literature but for different reasons than normal. He seems very Dickensian. In the "you've got to be kidding me" category you have a bumbling suitor, Sir Caleb Gulpidge who is not very bright and completely wrong for Lizzie. I don't know how a baronet can be friends with an estate manager but somehow Mr. Brocklehurst became friends with Sir Caleb. I think Brocklehurst is more clever and cunning. Just what are they up to? Read the book to find out.

There are more literary allusions in this story. The author used *The Woman in White* as a jumping off point and characters are given names from Dickens and the Brontës. Shame on the author not to know that EMILY had characters named Earnshaw! I picked up on that one right away. Adults will enjoy the cute little Easter Eggs like that and kids will later discover where those names came from- hopefully.

I look forward to reading the third book when Mary Anning shows up! Be still my heart! I would geek out meeting all of those strong 19th-century young women.

Victoria says

These are great books! I love this historical twist.

Kam Yung Soh says

An excellent book on the continuing adventures of a young Ada Byron (later to be Countess of Lovelace) and young Mary Shelly who, breaking all kinds of Victorian rules, set up a detective agency together and proceed to solve crimes. In this story, Lady Mary Sommerville asks them to investigate the pending marriage of a young girl to a peer who seems very anxious to get his hands on her family's fortune. Also involved is a mysterious girl in grey seen running in the streets that may be related to the case. If you pay attention to the story, you may be able to figure out the solution one step ahead of the girls, but not by much.

This is the second book in the series that plays a what-if with Ada and Mary, born years apart in reality, were about the same age, met and set up a detective agency with the help of young Charles Dickens and, in this book, their sisters. It's a fascinating scenario and quite well done. You also see young girls who, acting against Victorian norms, set out to do something instead of acting like 'damsels in distress'.

I look forward to reading the next book in the series, with hints dropped by the author in this book, of even bigger events to happen in the universe of the Wollstonecraft Detective Agency.

Susan says

I am really enjoying this series. I still like the characters introduced in the first book. The addition of the sisters, for me, was a plus; the new characters Allegra and Jane seem to round out the cast and support interesting interactions and dialogue between the group.

I will definitely read book #3.

Amy Sturgis says

I thoroughly fell in love with the first book in The Wollstonecraft Detective Agency series, *The Case of the Missing Moonstone*, and *The Case of the Girl in Grey* is a delightful sequel. Again Jordan Stratford brings together the mother of modern science fiction, Mary Shelley, and the world's first computer programmer, Ada Lovelace, as girls (14 and 11, respectively) who solve mysteries. This particular mystery is inspired by the Gothic classic *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins. Once more, Percy B. Shelley and Charles Dickens play key roles in the tale, and this time Mary's stepsister Jane and Ada's half-sister Allegra also join the adventure.

The book ends with a discussion of the real history behind Ada, Mary, Jane, Allegra, Wollstonecraft, *The Woman in White*, and the other ingredients of the story, and Stratford makes it clear when and why he's taken liberties with the past. I said it before and I'll say it again: this is the perfect storm of inspiration, entertainment, and education. Buy it for the young readers you know, but read it for your own pleasure, too.

?Kimari? says

This series is utterly adorable!

You might also enjoy:

- ★ Flavia de Luce series
 - ★ Book Scavenger series
 - ★ The Scandalous Sisterhood of Prickwillow Place
 - ★ Under the Egg
-

Allie says

My 11 year old said 5 stars, I say 3, so I'll go with 4.

Corrie says

this series is TOO CUTE. i'm hooked

Shan says

I've been thinking about what makes a five-star book for me, and I finally hit on it while reading this one. All of my five-star books, from Anna Karenina to The Countess Conspiracy, have one thing in common: they all just make my heart sing.

I don't know who looks at the Shelley circle and thinks "MIDDLE GRADE MYSTERY SERIES!" but Jordan Stratford somehow makes it work. If you can't abide historical inaccuracies, this is not the series for you. Our heroines, Ada Byron and Mary Godwin (later Shelley), never knew each other in real life and were a generation apart -- but Stratford has cast them as contemporaries and best friends, only three years apart. Percy Bysshe Shelley becomes Ada and Mary's tutor "Peebs," his disastrous first marriage to Harriet Westbrook conveniently erased. In this volume, the sleuths are joined by Mary's stepsister Jane Clairmont and Ada's half-sister Allegra (who were actually mother and daughter in real life -- not to mention the fact that Allegra died in a convent at age five, effectively abandoned by her father). Stratford also borrows a young Charles Dickens as a secondary character, because why not!

Normally, these liberties might have driven me crazy -- but there's just something magical about Stratford's alternate version of history. If there's one thing the Shelley-Byron folks were brilliant at (besides writing fiction and poetry and causing scandals, of course), it was hurting each other, and the romantic in me loves reading this sweeter, kinder version of events. The characters are funny, adventurous, and entirely lovable. In a fun literary nod, the mystery shares many elements with The Woman in White, and various place and character names tip the hat to the works of Dickens and the Brontes.

This book is also enchanting for more personal reasons -- I can easily imagine reading this as a kid and conning my younger sister into being Lady Ada to my Mary for endless hours of pretend adventures. (In fact, I'm pretty bummed that these books didn't exist twenty-five years ago.) And now that I'm a parent myself, I read this and think "I can't wait to read this with my daughter...I wonder whether she'll want to be Mary or Ada?"

In short, a delight, and I can't wait for the next one. Fingers crossed for a Keats or Fanny Brawne cameo!

Charlotte Holmans says

Another great book! Onto the third adventure!

Dark secrets, rain and sadly not in the least bit fishy (at least, in case of the smell) but Mary and Ada, aided by their younger sisters set off on their second case! Mentions a ghost who.. sobs? Really enjoyable read!

Katie says

This was a fun Middle Grade read with whispers of Wilkie Collins' The Woman in White woven in! First #boutofbooks title finished! Kids will love this middle grade mystery.

Richard Denney says

3.5 STARS!

Though a little better than the first book, this still was just as predictable as the first. I enjoyed the whole "Is it supernatural or not?" vibe that was going on but it still left me going "Okay, that was alright." I wanted to be WOW'd like I was with Wild Boy and this didn't do that for me. I am however planning on picking up the third book in this series when it's available at the library, I like the characters enough to carry on but this isn't the best Middle-Grade Victorian era mystery series out there.

- Richard

Jasmine says

This series is a pure joy. I can nerd out about victorian ladies! And victorian mysteries! And neuroatypical victorian characters!

Laura Noakes says

Another fun mystery!
