



The Mystery of the Curiosities

C.S. Poe

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Snow & Winter: Book Two

Life has been pretty great for Sebastian Snow. The Emporium is thriving and his relationship with NYPD homicide detective, Calvin Winter, is everything he's ever wanted. With Valentine's Day around the corner, Sebastian's only cause for concern is whether Calvin should be taken on a romantic date. It's only when an unknown assailant smashes the Emporium's window and leaves a peculiar note behind that all plans get pushed aside in favor of another mystery.

Sebastian is quickly swept up in a series of grisly yet seemingly unrelated murders. The only connection tying the deaths together are curiosities from the lost museum of P.T. Barnum. Despite Calvin's attempts to keep Sebastian out of the investigation, someone is forcing his hand, and it becomes apparent that the entire charade exists for Sebastian to solve. With each clue that brings him closer to the killer, he's led deeper into Calvin's official cases.

It's more than just Sebastian's livelihood and relationship on the line—it's his very life.

The Mystery of the Curiosities Details

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From Reader Review The Mystery of the Curiosities for online ebook

Nerea says

5*

This is far better than the book one!!!

The mystery is really interesting and is NOT predecible. It hooks me totally into the plot and wanting to know more about what next clue would be or how is all the story going to end!

About the Mcs ... All what I can say is not enough. They are LOVELY and very very romantic ♥ are a ton of cute moments and scenes with very nice dialogues between them.

Also the secondary characters are so engaging! Sebastian´s dad is so supportive and sweet and I really loved that Max has a bit more of presence in the story and he results to be very amiable character too!!

I must add that the character of Audrey, despite appearing so short time, I found it very attractive and I really hope to know more about him in future stories :)

Volha says

This book was even better than the first. The mystery was irresistible and thrilling, the relationship was sweet, romantic and steamy, the narrative was engaging and engrossing. I like C.S. Poe writing style, I think it's very refreshing and at times edgy and full of humor. I loved it from start to finish.

The book's events continue a few months after the first book finished and Snow and Winter are together and so in love it's so cute and syrupy sweet. Winter took the plunge and came out to be with Snow. It's was not a decision he made lightly and I have a great respect for him for that and that he hasn't tied Snow to a chair yet because Snow's propensity to get in trouble is amazing. It follows him like a faithful puppy that he constantly trips over. But Snow also is a man who is not afraid of unknown and where there is a mystery afoot he will not stop until he cracks it.

This time their life falls apart like a house of cards. So many murders, so many clues and in the middle of it all is Snow. One thing he knows and keeps close to his heart is his love for Winter. That will not change no matter what is happening around them. Winter is stoic, reserved and stubborn but he has a heart of gold and so many troubled memories. He is scared because he needs help and he resists valiantly but in the end he wants to be a better man for Snow.

I didn't guess who the villain was at all. It was a mystery to me until the very end. I think the way it turned brought closure to Neil who was a part of this book too but for some reason had a hard time letting go of Snow. He was the link to the past that Snow needed to shake off and it finally happened but in the way that saved both their lives - literally and figuratively.

The end is the new beginning. Winter is ready for more with Snow, for commitment and to get help. It's a

hard step for him to take but he has Snow who has become his family - accepting him with warts and all. I loved them together, they suit so well, just two peas in a pod. I am so glad I read this series and can't wait to find out what's coming next! I highly recommend it!

C.S. Poe says

BOOKS:

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Natalie says

Fun mystery

I find that these mysteries feel a lot like cozies...with a lot of sex, although this has less than the first. Sebastian gets pulled into this one when someone showers him in bricks. Then it gets really dangerous. He frustrates Calvin but even though he gets mad it always seems to just fizzle out. I think that's the frustration for me about these books; Calvin just doesn't feel like a complete character. Information about him only comes from Sebastian, we're mostly told, not shown. His family disowned him but we never see a conversation about anything between the two about it. His role seems too shallow much of the time. Calvin just shows up at crimes Sebastian finds, then screws him into a wall or something.

The mystery is decent and there's a bit of misdirection, although it's a bit too easy to guess the villain but the motive isn't too clear and never fully explained or justified with background. Kind of rushed. Still it's enjoyable and I like the snarky humor and banter with Max. Calvin's troubles with PTSD and Sebastian's

attempts to help him are quite poignant. I'll keep reading these because I do love mysteries and cozies too.

Teal says

CS Poe has something special going for her that I can't quite put my finger on. Her dialogue is often zingy, her sex scenes are often hot, her characters are often engagingly quirky. Sebastian's father, for example, is a delight.

I wanted to love this book. I expected to at least *like* it. I'd actually preordered it (which is a pretty big deal for me), based on having liked the first book in the series. Well, having liked the first 90% of the first book. That last 10% was a total trainwreck, an over-the-top failure of logic, cause & effect, plausibility and characterization. But hey, first novel, promising new author and all that -- I was psyched for this second book, figuring that such a talented writer would improve with each subsequent book.

I was wrong. And I'm not going to enumerate all the reasons why this book failed for me, but will just highlight two issues I found insurmountable.

1. There was no plausible motivation for Sebastian inserting himself into the investigation -- for in fact hindering that investigation by interfering with crime scenes and repeatedly stealing evidence found there. Oh wait -- he "likes mysteries." No. That doesn't explain persevering in the face of violent physical assault. It doesn't explain breaking his promises to his lover over and over again.

You'd think Sebastian's behavior would change once he has the big realization -- and I don't think I'm spoiling anything here -- that endangering his own life in this way threatens Calvin's precarious emotional equilibrium and risks triggering his PTSD. That looked like a big "ah-ha!" moment to me, but no. Sebastian carries on as if Calvin's well-being means nothing to him, as if his own life means nothing to him... As if he can't help himself. As if he's deranged.

And frankly, by this point, Sebastian *is* behaving like a man deranged.

2. The second big issue for me: the lying. I'm not talking about lies of omission, either. Nor about fibbing, equivocating, or telling "little white lies." Nope. I'm talking about the series of overt, flagrant, barefaced, brazen lies Sebastian unashamedly tells Calvin while breaking his promises to him. (view spoiler) Those lies finally broke this book, and this couple, for me.

I see a lot of 4 and 5 star reviews, so I wonder: Does no one else take issue with this? It makes Sebastian look like... Well, it makes him look like a lying sack of shit. And it makes Calvin look pathetic for putting up with it. That's not the stuff of romance for me, folks.

So, I'm outta here. I still think Poe is gifted, so I'll check back later to see if she's gotten a better grip on her craft. But it's going to be a while before I revisit. Like maybe around book 5 or so.

Karen says

4.5 shining stars rounded down to 4 because still no 1/2 stars here on GR and if I liked the first book a bit

more I can hardly give this one 5 now can I?

It seems the circus has come to town...

While I enjoyed 'The Mystery of Nevermore' book 1 in C. S. Poe's Snow & Winter series a tiny, tiny bit more than this one that does not mean that 'The Mystery of the Curiosities' was anything less than enjoyable.

I think possibly part of my added enthusiasm for the first book was just the joy of discovering a new author who was writing a new series that I wanted to read...see all the shiny new that's going on here? I was dazzled...that's right I suffer from magpie syndrome. However, while this book isn't the shiny new of a first book in a new series by a new author it still holds its own with a well written story about characters that I truly like solving a well done mystery. Ms. Poe had me guessing right up until the end when I knew who did it and why only to find out things were not as they seemed...well done, I love a mystery that keeps my brain guessing from start to finish.

While I did get a bit frustrated with Seb for his perpetual lies of omission and half-truths, I do have to admit were I in his shoes I'm not sure I would have done any better and I think that while I don't advocate his behavior I probably felt a little more lenient towards him once my initial frustration wore off and I was forced to admit that while his decision making skills weren't always stellar neither were they malicious or intended to do harm...in fact, it was quite the opposite he wanted to resolve things in the hopes of keeping anyone else from being hurt...so his intentions were good...mmmm...I think there's a road somewhere paved with good intentions...just sayin'

Apart from the mystery and just the story in general one of the things that I truly loved was the approach that the author took with Calvin's PTSD. It wasn't made light of with implications that little more than some good sex would fix it. While Calvin doesn't want to seek medical help neither is Seb willing to give up on getting him to reconsider this decision. There is real concern for Calvin on the part of his partner, Quinn and Seb's father and not just Seb, but as we all know you can't help someone until they want to be helped. So to me Seb was being realistic about things in that he wasn't forcing Calvin to do something he's not ready to do but neither was he willing to stick his head in the sand and just hope it'd go away.

I love Seb and Calvin the passion is there and it's wonderfully tempered with humor and sweet yet sometimes awkward moments of them sharing their feelings whether saying 'I love you' or when Calvin is trying to explain how much he needs Seb to be safe or Seb seeking Calvin's forgiveness for something that he new he shouldn't have done long before he ever did it. These two tug at my heartstrings and make me smile contentedly as I travel along with them to solve their latest mystery.

While 'The Mystery of Nevermore' gave us the shiny new 'The Mystery of the Curiosities' proved that this author's candle is still burning bright.

An ARC of 'The Mystery of the Curiosities' was graciously provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

JR says

So who would throw a brick through Seb's antique shop window, then leave bricks all over the inside of the

store? The bigger question, can Calvin keep Seb from investigating on his own, and stay out of danger?

Once again, C.S. Poe has written a funny, creative, complex mystery with this pair of fantastic MCs. The first in this series was at the top of my best books of last year, this one is already at the top and it's only March. The mm genre needs more funny stories, and more mysteries as far as I'm concerned. I urge those looking for something different to give this series a try.

Karen says

It seems some things don't really change...

Once again this is an audio book for an e-book that I read back when it was released and I liked it 4.5 stars worth and basically as far as the story's concerned I haven't changed my mind and my original review is still good to go...Original Review: The Mystery of the Curiosities

While I enjoyed experiencing this story again. I have to admit there was a little bit of a loss in the audio for me. Derrick McClain was once again the narrator for this one and before I go any further I just want to say I think the tiny issue here is truly a case of it's me. For some reason this time around there were a couple of times when Calvin's voice wasn't quite working for me. Most of the time it was good so I really can't say for sure but there were a couple of times where I just didn't find Calvin's voice as distinctive as I had in the audio book for 'The Mystery of Nevermore'. This combined with the fact that Seb and his lies of omission actually irritated me even more and there were times that I simply found Seb to sound whiny and honestly, whiny is just one thing that I don't do.

While the mystery part of this story wraps up within the pages of this book, we're still left with a lot more to go when it comes to Seb and Calvin's relationship. Calvin's got his own issues to deal with and he's finally realized that a future with Seb means it's time to deal and Seb's on board to be the loving and supportive boyfriend that Cal needs so I'm also on board to see where things go between these two and if we could just get Seb to stick with selling antiques and not solving mysteries maybe Calvin's stress would be reduced a bit more as well.

I still enjoyed the story overall, I'm wrapping this one up at 4 stars rather than the original 4.5 stars that I'd given the e-book.

An audio book of 'The Mystery of the Curiosities' was graciously provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Debra says

Everything I liked about the first one was here again. Seb and Calvin's relationship is moving forward and I really like them as a couple. Calvin gives Seb a lot of leeway, but I really wanted to smack Seb a few times for doing things he knew would be problematic for Calvin. All the secondary characters were back, Max, Seb's father, and Neil, his ex, and get to meet a few more including Aubrey who I'm thrilled to find out will be featured in a book of his own next year (and it will set in Key West! Thank you C.S. Poe!).

The mystery was again interesting and a bit crazy, and while some of the how and why was a bit convoluted for me in the wrap up, I enjoyed it nonetheless and am looking forward to see what they will have to deal with next.

Donna says

Wonderful sequel! Loved the mystery and I especially loved the continuing love story of Snow and Winter. Their romance is very sweet and both are so supportive of each other. They are hot together, too.

Ann says

4.5 Stars

This is really turning into a fun series and I believe I enjoyed the second even more than the first. Most probably because when book #1 ended, Sebastian and Calvin were still very “new” and there was a lot of evolution in their relationship in book #2 that I absolutely loved reading.

The mystery kept me connected in a fun and engaging way. If you’re looking for plot twists, turns and surprises at the end of every chapter, this is not that story and I was perfectly fine with that. I read this while on a long weekend away decompressing and this was the perfect level of mysterious for that setting. It was fun while interesting and I didn’t have to think about it too hard to keep up. I could follow along with Sebastian’s OTT shenanigans and just enjoy the ride. Was it realistic for Sebastian to insert himself into police investigations? Of course not, but I didn’t come here for the absolute reality, I came for Sebastian, Calvin, their secondary characters; the mystery-lite was a bonus. Shit happens to Sebastian because it does, that’s all I really need to know to wallow in Snow & Winter happily.

I do so love the quirk and the snark Sebastian and Calvin share, but their relationship carries some extra weight in book 2. Neither of these guys are kids and it’s refreshing to read about two characters who are getting into a relationship while also have some history that they are both working through. As we get older, we become a culmination of our experiences and that is so true for both of these guys. The story was really well balanced between the thrill of new love and the gravity of the past. Calvin’s path could have been a story in itself, but the author kept the tone even enough so that there was no question as to the pain and struggle Calvin lived with, but the chance of new love kept the story hopeful even through the worst of times described.

Major props to Sebastian’s dad, the man is a rock that both Calvin and Sebastian need and he’s one of those quiet, yet amazing characters that hits you right in the feels with a few well-placed words and unwavering support consistently. The relationship between Sebastian and his dad was well described in book 1, but Calvin was included in that mix in book 2 and it created some heartwarming moments that made my heart happy for Calvin.

C.S. Poe has a writing style that is easy to fall into, I forget that I’m reading and just flow along with the words. For me, that’s the best kind of escape and the main reason I love to read to begin with. I’m eagerly waiting for the next installment of Snow & Winter, I can’t wait to read about the next step on their way to their happily ever after.

a copy of this story was provided for an honest review

Pianka *call me PIU* says

4.5 stars

I have been waiting for this book from the moment I finished the first one. I gobbled this ‘mystery’ in no time at all and I absolutely loved the ‘snow & winter’ team once again here.

This story can be read as a standalone mystery-wise but you need to read the first book to follow Calvin and Sebastian’s relationship which I would, advice.

This time around Sebastian is again targeted by an unknown ‘mysterious’ figure who leaves breadcrumbs all over the city for him to follow and solve cold cases. And each time Sebastian succeeds he gets rewarded by a bizarre artefact. Ooooo.....Intrigued yet??? I bet you are!

This story hooked me from the very first page. It was kinda similar to the first book but still I enjoyed the twists and turns. The start was bizarre enough to kick-off this mystery grandly. The various facts and history that the author used to construct the mystery was brilliant. It was right up the alley of our wannabe amateur sleuth, Sebastian. I loved his encyclopedic brain and his child-like enthusiasm to solve the mystery. **His antics did almost give Calvin heart attacks but once Seb is on a hunt there is no stopping him.**

The story moves very fast as dead bodies start piling up after every clue left is solved. Along with the mystery, Calvin and Sebastian’s relationship also progresses through personal trials and struggles. Calvin is shown here battling his PTSD and Sebastian along with his dad and his partner try to help him heal. The romance was adorable and I loved them together more in this book. The ex is still lurking in the shadows which spark some insecurities but they resolve their doubts by engaging in some fiery love-making which was HOT!

I loved this sequel. It was an exciting journey what with unraveling clues, catching killers and Calvin trying to keep Sebastian from becoming a prime example of “How curiosity killed the cat”.

A fantastic job done by Ms. Poe. I will be waiting with abated breath for Sebastian and Calvin’s next adventure!

This review has been cross posted at GayBookReviews

Eugenia says

*****4.5 Stars*****

I read this in one sitting. I liked it more than the first and I I loved the first book.

Here, Sebastian finds himself the focus of another serial killer—because that’s how life is for amateur sleuths, don’t you know? This one involves cold case crimes his boyfriend, Calvin, has been working on. Every time Sebastian solves a case, he gets a prize.

I loved the snark in this one. The fact that he was a sleuthing and couldn't stop himself made for many jokes, even by himself. I enjoyed this aspect since it made me feel a bit included in this game, too.

Calvin grudgingly accepts Sebastian's sleuthing needs, is struggling with his own PTSD as symptoms become more acute.

I had an idea of who the perp was, but never felt sure about it, nor did I guess their true motive behind the killings and the game.

I'm not sure if Poe will continue with these two guys, I mean, how many murders can they tackle? At the end of this one, we get a solid HFN which feels real amongst all the crazy killing.

Enjoy!

Chris says

I enjoyed this book and I must say I'm really loving the Snow & Winter dynamic. These two are not your average partners - they spend a lot of time in their thoughts and when they finally speak their minds their declarations range between hilarity and hysteria ! Poor Winter really does try to do his job and tame Snow but I guess he's realized Seb is just way too curious. Thoroughly enjoy the exasperation!

CrabbyPatty says

The Mystery of the Curiosities is the second book in the Snow and Winter series. Yeah, I suppose it could be read as a standalone, but you'll definitely want to read The Mystery of Nevermore to learn how Seb and Calvin met.

"When writing my obituary, just be sure it says, 'Sebastian was the death of him.'" He [Calvin] turned and walked to the exit.

"Ha, ha," I said loudly, following. "Heart disease is more believable."

Calvin turned as he held the door open for Quinn and I. "Not once people meet you, Seb."

It's only been a matter of weeks since Seb and Calvin officially started dating and now they are immersed in another mystery, this one involving P.T. Barnum's famous museum of curiosities that burned to the ground in 1865. Someone is tempting Seb with clues ("I know you like mysteries" and "He lost the whales but not the mermaid") and murders to solve. Of course, Calvin demands that Seb let the police do their job, but knowing Seb, yeah, that's not gonna happen.

When I stood up, he put a firm hand on my shoulder and pushed me back into the seat. "Not you. Stay." "I'm not a dog." "Dogs take better direction."

I absolutely love the dynamic between Calvin and Sebastian. Sure the sexual chemistry between the two is sizzling (with a side of dominance), but the bottom line is Sebastian makes Calvin happy. And Sebastian? He worries about Calvin and his PTSD and his stress:

"But I want to help him. I want to help him sleep through the night without dreaming about the

dead children in Afghanistan he's convinced died because he wasn't a good enough soldier. I want him to stop crying, to stop being afraid. He's the bravest and strongest man I know, and he thinks the exact opposite of himself."

I am in awe of C.S. Poe's writing skills and admire the deftness with which she crafts a mystery while building this weird, touching, supportive, deeply sensual, quirky relationship between Sebastian and Calvin that somehow just plain *works* for them. My only niggle about the book is the pacing of the story. After a brilliant misdirect about the killer (is it someone *very* familiar to Seb?), the answers finally start coming around 90% into the story and the resolution felt somewhat rushed. I highly recommend this book and anxiously await the next book in the series!

I received an ARC from DSP Publishing in exchange for an honest review.

Review also posted at Gay Book Reviews - check it out!
