



The Wicked Cometh: A Novel of Darkest London

Laura Carlin

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The Wicked Cometh will take readers on a heart-racing journey through backstreets swathed with fog to richly curtained, brightly lit country houses; from the libraries and colleges of gentlemen, to sawdust-strewn gin palaces where ne'er-do-wells drink and scheme, all told through the eyes of a heroine with nothing to lose.

The year is 1831. Down the murky alleyways of London, acts of unspeakable wickedness are taking place and no one is willing to speak out on behalf of the city's vulnerable poor as they disappear from the streets.

Out of these shadows comes Hester White, a bright young woman who is desperate to escape the slums by any means possible.

When Hester is thrust into the world of the aristocratic Brock family, she leaps at the chance to improve her station in life under the tutelage of the fiercely intelligent and mysterious Rebekah Brock. But whispers from her past slowly begin to poison her new life and both she and Rebekah are lured into the most sinister of investigations.

Hester and Rebekah find themselves crossing every boundary they've ever known in pursuit of truth, redemption and passion. But their trust in each other will be tested as a web of deceit begins to unspool, dragging them into the blackest heart of a city where something more depraved than either of them could ever imagine is lurking . . .

The Wicked Cometh: A Novel of Darkest London Details

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Author : Laura Carlin

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From Reader Review *The Wicked Cometh: A Novel of Darkest London* for online ebook

Ova Incekaraoglu says

This was quite an atmospheric novel in the way it paints 1800's London. But I found it difficult to get into the story. In a lot of ways it was very similar with Sarah Water's *The Fingersmith*. I can fault the writing and setting it's just wasn't original enough, it resembled me other books I've read, so settled on 3 stars.

Paromjit says

Laura Carlin pulls us into the atmospheric, overflowing poverty, and the filthy, disease infested alleys and backstreets of 1830s London. In this distinctly Dickensian world, the young Hester White resides in the slums, she has lost her parents, and is in search of any route that will take her out of her dire circumstances. Dark nightmarish deeds are taking place as poor folk disappear in the city, but little attention is paid, after all, it impacts only those of little consequence. After being injured in a horse and carriage accident, Hester finds herself in a more fortuitous position. The carriage owner, Calder Brock offers medical attention and sweeps her away to stay at his country home. Hester acquires the post of companion to Calder's sister, Rebekah.

Rebekah is an intelligent, strong, determined and independent woman, who takes Hester under her wing, providing tuition to a grateful Hester. The two women develop a close relationship, although it soon becomes clear that the Brock family past festers with murky secrets. Hester is warned to leave the household before harm befalls her. Hester and Rebekah are tested to their limits as they are drawn into investigating the wickedness that pervades and stalks those in London in their efforts to discover the horrifying truth whilst surrounded by a web of deception and facing great danger. Thanks to the hand of fate, Hester escapes her social strata, but finds herself with a family with a complicated history. The romance and passions that burgeon into existence challenge the society norms and conventions.

Carlin writes in vibrant prose with descriptions that easily evokes the London of that period. However, there are times that this feels like an uneven read, largely due to the mixed pacing that does not always work. This did not interfere with my overall enjoyment of this wonderful piece of historical fiction. A highlight is the relationship between Hester and Rebekah. This is a compelling and entertaining read which I think many will enjoy reading. I look forward with great anticipation to Laura Carlin's next novel. Many thanks to Hodder and Stoughton for an ARC.

Emma says

So the circle is closed; the merchants have become the goods.

I enjoyed this story greatly. It was atmospheric and an interesting storyline. I didn't guess what was going on to well into the second half of the book. The crimes were definitely of the age. The pace was a bit slow in the middle. I enjoyed the blossoming romance too.

Thanks to Netgalley for an ARC of this book. All opinions are my own

Simon says

This is a fantastic gothic historical novel. We follow Hester White, a young woman keen to get out of the slums of London at any cost, from the capital out to mysterious mansions and back again. A novel brimming with atmosphere. A twisting tale of secrets, whispers and passions. A modern sensation novel indeed.

Mackenzi says

gimme.

Jane says

On a dark winter night, a book that promised to draw me back into the 19th century, into a story of family secrets and terrible crimes, called to me.

It began with a newspaper report.

‘This newspaper has taken note that the past month has been remarkable for the prevalence of cases where men, women and children are declared missing. Scarcely a week passes without the occurrence of an incident of this type’

The Morning Herald, Tuesday 13 September 1831

And then it told me the story of Hester White.

Hester was a bright young woman who had very bad luck. Her childhood home had been a country parsonage, and she had been a much loved only child, but when her parents died, one after the other, she found herself alone in the world with no family to claim her. The elderly couple who had been the family’s servants took her in, hoping that the new parson would employ them and help the child. He did neither, and so they took her with them when they set out to look for work.

They struggled, they found themselves living hand to mouth in a London slum, and Hester learned some very hard lessons.

The writing was wonderful, I was very taken with Hester, and I was happy to follow her as the story unfolded.

It was maybe because she was worried about one of those missing persons that she didn’t look where she was going and was crushed by a gentleman’s carriage. She was badly injured, but she was lucky because that gentleman took her home in her carriage, he made sure that she had all of the care and attention that she needed, and then he made her extraordinary proposal. He wanted her to stay, and to be educated by his sister; because he was a social reformer and he wanted to prove that slum dwellers could be educated, that they

could better themselves ...

Hester seized the chance of a new life, but things went terribly wrong, she received a warning and she had to flee. She found though that she couldn't go back and that she couldn't let go of the new life she had been promised.

I understood why she acted as she did, why she felt as she did, and I loved her voice as she told her story.

I was interested in the relationships I saw, and with the relationships that were growing, with people she knew in London, with the servants who looked after her at Brock House, and with the Brock family and the people around them. There was one person in particular, a relationship that was uncertain at first but became firmer and stronger.

I loved the way that the intrigue had developed. The Brock family relationships were strained and it was clear that there were dark secrets. Two of their servants were missing, as well as the missing Londoners, and it was by no means certain that Hester was safer there than she had been on the streets.

I wish that I could say that the playing out of the story was as good as the setting up, but I can't.

It's difficult to say why without saying too much, but there was a change of direction and it was too melodramatic and too far fetched for me, and the characters and relationships were compromised for the sake of the plot.

There were times when questions should have been asked, but they weren't; because the plot was rushing forward to the finish.

It wasn't entirely wrong, but it wasn't right, and I couldn't help thinking that the author was trying to do too much in one book and that there wasn't the space to develop all of the different aspects of the story.

I loved her writing, I loved her ideas, but the book as a whole didn't quite work.

The ending was infuriating. A door was very firmly closed, and then it was forced open again when it shouldn't have been. I had thought the conclusion that I wanted couldn't be, and just as I had accepted that I found that it had happened after all. It was right but it was wrong!

I can believe that a different kind of reader would love the whole of this book.

I can't, but I found enough to admire in this book to be interested in seeing what its author does next.

Bex (Beckie Bookworm) says

???STARS.

ARC-Review

Release Date-8/2/18

The Wicked Cometh by Laura Carlin is a middle of the fence story for me.

It is set against the backdrop of the slums of London in 1831 and features Hester White born the educated daughter of a parson she has fallen on hard times after the passing of her parents.

Taken in by the gardener and his wife Hester soon Finds herself far far down with the dregs of society Using an opportunity of chance Hester finds herself in service to the Brocks using a falsehood to secure an improvement in her station, Hester finds a growing friendship with the enigmatic Rebecca Brock her new teacher.

But there are secrets afoot and it's not long before Hester and Rebecca are caught in a web of intrigue and danger.

So with this, I really enjoyed the beginning and I also found the end to be very exciting.

However, the middle of "The Wicked Cometh" I struggled with, I found this to be a trifle long winded and I did find myself skimming quite frequently.

This is the main reason I have rated this down slightly.

Despite that, there is still plenty here to keep the attention and I must admit that I did become misled in regards to plot direction so bravo to the author for that.

I also loved the uniqueness of this tale in regards to the relationship between Rebekah and Hester.

And also the underlying mystery here, that managed to keep this afloat.

And also found the language used here was of a very lyrical nature.

This was also a nice touch.

So that's about it, there were positives and negatives to this story for me.

It was an alright read but didn't blow me away.

NetGalley provided me with an ARC of "The Wicked Cometh" by Laura Carlin of which I have reviewed voluntarily.

All opinions expressed are entirely my own

Reviewed By Beckie Bookworm

<https://www.facebook.com/beckiebookworm/>

www.beckiebookworm.com.

Lucy Banks says

I received a copy of this book from Netgalley, in exchange for an honest review.

Lovely style of writing, intriguing topic, but meandering at times.

Victorian setting, mysterious disappearances, a family with more secrets than you can shake a stick at... what's not to like?

For the most part, this was a book that worked well - an authentic-feeling glimpse into Victorian life, told through the eyes of Hester, a quiet girl raised by a rough London couple after the death of her parents, then catapulted into a gentrified world after an accident on the road. But children are going missing, and gradually, the reader discovers the grisly reason why.

I particularly liked the conclusion of this book (I won't spoil it for you) - it wasn't something I saw coming, and it worked well. There were a few moments where I had to suspend my disbelief a little (especially at the very end) - but I was happy to do so, as it was a compelling enough storyline.

My main issue was the pace of the book - I felt it could have done with a little tightening; my attention did wane in a few places. However, I'm glad I stuck with it, it was entertaining and I very much liked the characters.

Sara says

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

The Wicked Cometh is a dark, gritty Victorian tale centering on heroine Hester White and her attempts to escape a life in the slums. All the while, whispers of wicked and dangerous acts appear to be happening to the poorest of the community, with people mysteriously disappearing. Thrust into upper society after a chance accident, Hester falls under the tutelage of the charismatic Rebekah as the pair set out to uncover what's really going on.

The descriptions of Victorian London within the novel are fantastic. Everything is vividly brought to life in wonderful detail and was very atmospheric. It's very easy to immerse yourself in Hester's world, and I got fully wrapped up in the gritty, dark London slums.

Hester is a great character. She's determined, and not one to wallow in self pity. She's practical and straight forward, but also an opportunist with a good heart. She's the perfect heroine for this kind of story, as she was interesting enough to carry the tale without being boring or overly unrealistic. However, she is quite simplistic in nature, without much emotional depth. Rebekah is the more complicated character. She's intelligent, and desperate to voice her views in a male dominated society that doesn't seem so far out of character for a woman of this era. Their combined relationship is also really strong, gradually building over time into something genuine and lovely. This was definitely the strongest aspect of the novel.

My main issues with the novel are the pacing, which is very stop and start in places (particularly the middle) and the ending - which falls very flat. I found it didn't really work with regards to the rest of the feel of the book. It was far fetched, unbelievable and felt like a let down compared to the wonderful writing that proceeded it.

Read for the great descriptions of London and a strong female relationship.

Thebooktrail says

Hester Hester what a character you are. How I loved being dragged into your world. I say dragged as it's a fully immersive experience and the stench and squalor of your London is not for the faint hearted but what a journey it was!

A girl from a poor family, raised by a rough couple and then in to a world of gentrification. There's a good story right there. But this had missing children, missing children no one seemed to care about as they were from the poor part of town.

Full review nearer the time

Laura, Laura - please write more!

Umut Rados says

You may find this review on my blog too: <https://umutreviews.wordpress.com/201...>

Wow, what a journey this book was! It took me by surprise with its beautiful writing, gothic atmosphere, mysteries, twists and characters! I absolutely loved it.

I listened to this book on Audible and it was fantastic choice of artist with an amazing performance that reflected the protagonist's character so well. Big thumbs up to Audible!

The Wicked Cometh is a gothic historical novel set in London in 1831. Our protagonist is Hester White, a young woman who lives in the slums of London. She somehow makes her way into the life of the aristocratic Brock family, meeting her mistress Rebekah. At the same time, there are a lot of missing poor people out of the blue from the streets of London. After this point, we lurch into many mysteries unsolved and the layers of different characters and events start to peel off layer by layer.

I loved Carlin's writing. It's very atmospheric as the time and place deserves it. There are lots of secrets, passions, twists embedded in the plot. The protagonist Hester comes out as a charming, young woman in search of security and a good future. She develops very well throughout the book. I also loved Rebekah and how the relationship evolved between the two women. The story telling was very successful. As opposed to many books today, in my opinion this book was at the right length. It had a very good pace. It had very rich descriptions, which might feel like it's slowing down, but I really enjoyed the writing. I guess it's a personal preference. It might put off some people, but I enjoyed it. The end was very packed, twist after twist, I really enjoyed it.

Overall, for me it was a delicious ride at the dark times of historical England full of surprises. I cared so much for Hester and Rebekah. I liked Laura Carlin's writing style, and I would definitely pick up another book from her without any hesitation. I would recommend this book for people who like slow burning mysterious historical fiction. If you liked this book, you'd also enjoy Mermaid and Mrs Hancock, which was another 5 star read for me this year.

Ana may I just say, WHAT A COVER!! It's absolutely gorgeous in real life. The rose gold accents on cloth binding. It's a jewel for a library ?

Big thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for providing a free copy in exchange for an honest review.

Mandy says

This is the story of Hester White, who lives in London. The year is 1831 and life is hard. Hester was born into a family that was reasonably well off, but her parents both died when she was younger and for the past few years she has been living in poverty with her parents' gardener and his family.

People are going missing in London. Hester knows about this but doesn't know who could be responsible. She is out one day and a horse and carriage knocks her down. The carriage is owned by Calder Brock, a physician, who helps Hester by treating her injured leg and then taking her to stay in the country with his family. Calder's sister, Rebekah, begins to teach Hester and Hester starts to fall in love. Then Hester is sent a note telling her to leave before she is hurt.

This was a good story, and although it was quite a convoluted plot, with many twists and turns, I was always able to follow exactly what was happening. The story takes a dark turn as it goes on, and I must admit I felt quite distressed in a couple of parts. The whole story is written from Hester's point of view, and I found it

easy to empathise with her, and root for her.

The descriptions of London were so vivid that I could almost smell it at times, and it was not a nice smell!

The only thing that I will say is that at times the book was very wordy, and possibly a little too convoluted. I wasn't bored at any time but a couple of times I wanted the story to move along a bit quicker.

I felt the book was very well-written and I would definitely be reading more from this author.

Definitely recommend this book.

Many thanks to NetGalley and the publishers for letting me read this book.

Emma says

Despite some brilliance in the evocative and lyrically expressive style, the book spent far too long lost in itself and was resolved by an 'actually-this-is-what-happened' ending in the form of a reported tale that was beyond ridiculous.

The story started slowly, but for the most part that worked effectively to build the necessary character study of Hester as she escapes from her desperately poor situation into the possibility of a new life. Carlin was great here, building tentative but deep relationships between the protagonist and supporting cast whilst the darker themes ran beneath: the questionable nature of the Brock family's past, the missing Londoners as well as two of the house's previous servants, and just what kind of people Hester has fallen in with. She has a strong, individual voice and her burgeoning love for and uncertain relationship with a certain character are strikingly rendered. A race through the pages part of the book that had me thinking 5 stars.

And then the book lost its way. It's somewhat difficult to discuss why without spoilers but it felt too contrived and therefore lost its vitality, I quickly lost interest. Whilst the ending gave some kind resolution, its melodramatic and far fetched nature contrasted too greatly with the dirty realism of the London streets to which we had been so successfully transported by the author. It made it even more unrealistic and pulled the illusion firmly from my eyes.

There's some genuine talent in the descriptive parts of the writing, but there needed to be more show, less tell, and some serious editing.

ARC via Netgalley

Rosemary Standeven says

This book, set in the murky sub-world of Victorian London, and beautifully written in Victorian-style prose, tells the story of Hester White, a young educated orphan, who has fallen upon very hard times. When being involved in an accident offers Hester the opportunity to move up in the world, she grasps it with open arms, and considers any deceptions on her part, to be the price she must pay. She does not reckon with the attachment she will soon feel to her benefactors, and her guilt in having deceived them.

The pace of the book is slow for the first half, but picks up as the danger mounts in the latter stages.

The book deals well with the class distinction in Victorian London, and particularly how the outward appearance of class, as shown by the clothes worn, decides the nature of interactions between people. Even better is the portrayal of gender politics, and the stifling fate of women in this period. For me, the heroine of

this story was Rebecca – willing and able to apply her considerable intelligence, capable of caring for those close to her, but also for people outside her class and acquaintance – but condemned to forever be undervalued as both unmarried and female. I kept hoping she might live long enough to see women get the vote.

The story is narrated by Hester. At first, I really liked her character, but as the story progressed, and she became increasingly love-stricken and obsessed with the object of her affections, I lost patience with her. I am not a fan of romantic fiction – and this was just a bit too much love-lorn sighing for me.

That said, the underlying story is engaging, and the writing very good. Anyone who loves Victorian crime mixed in with romance would probably give it five stars.

I received this copy from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Louise Wilson says

Hester White, is a bright young woman and is desperate to escape the slums by any means possible. Hester is thrust into the world of the aristocratic Brock family, she leaps at the chance to improve her station in life under the tutelage of the fiercely intelligent and mysterious Rebekah Brock. But whispers from her past slowly begin to poison her new life and both she and Rebekah are lured into the most sinister of investigations. Their trust in each other will be tested as a web of deceit begins to unspool, dragging them into the city where something so depraved is lurking.

Set in 1832. This book has the perfect mix of setting and atmosphere., a friendship between two very different class of women from very different backgrounds. The story does seem to drag a bit in the middle, but it's still a good book. This will suit readers who like seedier plot lines.

I would like to thank NetGalley, Hodder & Stoughton and the author Laura Carlin for my ARC in exchange for an honest review.
