



Wouldn't It Be Deadly

D.E. Ireland

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Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins make an incomparable pair of sleuths in the start of a delightful new series

Following her successful appearance at an Embassy Ball—where Eliza Doolittle won Professor Henry Higgins' bet that he could pass off a Cockney flower girl as a duchess—Eliza becomes an assistant to his chief rival Emil Nepommuck. After Nepommuck publicly takes credit for transforming Eliza into a lady, an enraged Higgins submits proof to a London newspaper that Nepommuck is a fraud. When Nepommuck is found with a dagger in his back, Henry Higgins becomes Scotland Yard's prime suspect. However, Eliza learns that most of Nepommuck's pupils had a reason to murder their blackmailing teacher. As another suspect turns up dead and evidence goes missing, Eliza and Higgins realize the only way to clear the Professor's name is to discover which of Nepommuck's many enemies is the real killer. When all the suspects attend a performance of Hamlet at Drury Lane, Eliza and Higgins don their theatre best and race to upstage a murderer.

This reimagining of George Bernard Shaw's beloved characters is sheer pleasure. Wouldn't It Be Deadly transports readers to Edwardian London, from the aristocratic environs of Mayfair to the dangerous back alleys of the East End. Eliza and Henry steal the show in this charming traditional mystery.

Wouldn't It Be Deadly Details

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From Reader Review Wouldn't It Be Deadly for online ebook

Kathy says

I couldn't help but find this premise, Henry Higgins and Eliza Doolittle turned detectives, interesting. Unfortunately, when I dove into reading it, it just didn't live up to that potential. The writing and the characters are elementary to the point of becoming annoying. The farcical take on the events makes the entire story seem forced. I had to push myself through the first three-quarters of the story as it just seemed either dull as ditch water or so ridiculous as to instigate involuntary eye rolling on the part of the reader. Perhaps if the authors spent more time fleshing out the characters and the storyline rather than trying to create a caricature of "My Fair Lady", this work would be more successful.

Sandybear76 says

Fun book. Good characters. Ready for the next one.

OpenBookSociety.com says

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/wo...>

Brought to you by OBS reviewer Daniele

Wouldn't it be Deadly is based on characters that first appeared in George Bernard Shaw's play Pygmalion and were made popular by the musical, and later movie, My Fair Lady. It picks up right where the musical ends, two months after the infamous Embassy Ball where Eliza Doolittle, an East End flower girl, was passed off as a duchess as a result of Professor Henry Higgins' elocution lessons. Professor Higgins and Colonel Pickering have been away on a two month long trip to Spain, and in the interim Eliza has moved out of Higgins house to reside with his mother and has taken a job with Higgins' rival Emil Nepommuck as a phonetics teacher. Higgins, furious when he learns of her arrangement and that Nepommuck is taking credit for Eliza's transformation to attract students, threatens to ruin Nepommuck and kill him.

How unfortunate that shortly after Higgins publishes an ad in the newspaper revealing Nepommuck as a fraud, the maestro is found stabbed in the back with one of Eliza's tuning forks stuffed in his mouth. The presence of the tuning fork initially draws Eliza to the police's attention, but she is quickly cleared of suspicion and learns that her cousin D.I. Jack Shaw is in charge of the case. Facing pressure from the victim's fiancée Lady Gresham, the police are hard pressed to solve the crime quickly, and Higgins proves to be an easy prime suspect as he cannot produce an alibi and his dislike of Nepommuck was no secret. Hoping to literally save his neck, Eliza and Higgins set out to find the real perpetrator.

There are plenty of suspects to be had; most all of Nepommuck's students had reason to want him dead. Mary Finch is in love with him, but she is already married, and her husband is none too happy. Rosalind Page is an actress and has a secret scandalous enough to end her career. James Nottingham is looking to better himself so that he may get a job with the bank, but he actually has far more nefarious plans. Kollas is posing as a retired Greek diplomat but is running from his past. Lady Gresham claims to have loved the

victim, but did her heart belong to another? Is someone else from his past out to right a wrong? Why did Higgins lie about his alibi?

The story plays out as part mystery, part humor, and part adventure. Ireland has kept true to the essence of the original characters. Eliza is a nice mix of naïve lady and seasoned East Ender, and Higgins is at his arrogant yet oblivious best. One of the plot twists involving Higgins was quite a surprise, but it showed a softer side of the gruff professor. I could not help but hear and picture Audrey Hepburn and Rex Harrison as I read. The supporting characters are well drawn. Though blackmail is a common enough motivator in murder mysteries, the suspects' reasons were interesting and revealed in a systematic manner. The climax of the story takes place during a performance of Hamlet, and it will have the reader laughing out loud.

I greatly enjoyed this first in a series and cannot wait to read the next installment. I highly recommend Wouldn't it be Deadly to fans of Eliza and the Professor and to those who enjoy historical cozies.

OBS would like to thank the publisher for supplying a free copy of this title in exchange for an honest review

LORI CASWELL says

Dollycas's Thoughts

My Fair Lady is one of my all time favorite movies! This story picks up after the Embassy Ball and I absolutely loved it! I immediately heard the voices of Audrey Hepburn, Rex Harrison, Wilfrid Hyde-White and Mona Washbourne.

A "loverly" idea to turn Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins into sleuths. They make a wonderful team. The barbs they throw at each other are hilarious and so true to their characters. Colonel Pickering is still the voice of reason and Mrs. Pearce is there to soothe flustered feathers and keep everyone's belly full.

The author has us travel all over London even back to where Higgins found Eliza selling flowers. With Higgins as the prime suspect Eliza is determined to prove his innocence. While doing so she puts herself in danger and still there is no one that is able to give Higgins an alibi. It seems Mr. Henry Higgins has a secret and even though revealing it would prove his innocence he is unwilling to give any details to anyone. I was very surprised by this secret and it is the one thing that left me a conflicted about the story, but as with all stories the reader just has to follow where the author leads.

This is a fantastic story. It is suspenseful but tempered with a good bit of humor. I may not have been dancing but I stayed up all night to finish reading this delightful mystery. I was laughing at loud in places which disturbed Mr. Dollycas but I couldn't put this book down. Charming, captivating, engaging, and a must read. "Where the devil are my slippers?" I am ready to read the next installment of this series right now!

Lesa says

D.E. Ireland must have written the first Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins mystery just for me. I'm a big fan of *My Fair Lady*. Ireland brings all the charm, eccentricities, personalities and humor of that musical to this book. *Wouldn't It Be Deadly* is a fun follow-up to the movie. And, I'm sure readers will picture Audrey Hepburn and Rex Harrison searching London for a killer.

Wouldn't It Be Deadly picks up two months after Eliza moved out of Professor Higgins' house, moving in with his mother. To the professor's horror, Eliza is now working as a language teacher, employed by that phony, Higgins' rival Emil Nepommuck. And, everyone in London seems to know that the professor was angry at Nepommuck's claim to have taught Eliza. In fact, the day after Nepommuck's wealthy patron announced her engagement to him, Professor Higgins revealed the truth about him in the newspaper. When Eliza finds her employer dead, stabbed just as Higgins had threatened, Henry Higgins moves to the top of the suspect list.

There may have been a number of people to want Emil Nepommuck dead, but only one person had broadcasted his scorn and dislike of the man, Professor Henry Higgins. And, the professor refuses to provide any alibi, other than he was wandering around London all day, listening to people talk. He may not have been guilty of the second murder, but that killer even thanks the professor for killing Nepommuck. Despite the professor's reluctance, Eliza drags him into the search for the real killer. He might not do much to get himself out of trouble, but Eliza Doolittle knows Professor Henry Higgins is not a killer.

Do you want to know what happened to Eliza Doolittle, Professor Henry Higgins, Freddy, Colonel Pickering? D.E. Ireland brings them all back to life in this captivating mystery. It's "so loverly sittin' abso-bloomin'-lutely still" reading *Wouldn't It Be Deadly*.

D.E. Ireland's website is www.deireland.com

Tarissa says

An Eliza Doolittle & Henry Higgins Mystery. The concept seemed divine (*absolutely loverly!*) to me when I first heard of it -- a new series written all about 2 of my favorite fictional characters. *My Fair Lady* happens to be my favorite film ever produced. Regrettably, I have a couple of personal issues with this new book, and won't be recommending it to like-minded readers who dislike the same issues.

Wouldn't It Be Deadly picks up after *My Fair Lady*. Eliza Doolittle is now a refined (or sometimes not-so-refined) lady with a suitable job. Her new life is going well... until... murder strikes! Pretty soon her beloved Professor Higgins is all mixed up in the case, and she's worried that he will be arrested... The full story is much more intriguing, but that's the gist of it.

Three big things stood out as **negative content** to me:

1. "Rough" language is used all throughout.
2. Multiple immoral affairs between characters come to the surface.
3. A man masquerades as a woman and dresses as one.

I usually don't read books with this sort of content. I only stuck with this one because I love the story of My Fair Lady so much, and it was so thrilling to see Eliza and Henry together again in a new adventure. Still, I dislike the book, as much as I want to love it.

It's a very well-plotted novel (even if I did call out the killer only 1/4 of the way into the book... sorry to say). I found all the characters to have good depth, and the story was built well.

A few **great things** to mention. The author(s) researched the time period of London 1913 well. Some tidbits that the historian in me was delighted with (I might have deviously giggled over these) include:

1. Mentioning the shipwreck of the Titanic only a year prior to the story (I'm a Titanic buff).
2. Henry and Eliza realizing that their sleuthing mirrored Holmes and Watson (my other two favorite fictional characters).
3. Bringing the silver screen actor John Barrymore into the novel, and referencing his brother Lionel (a favorite actor of mine!).
4. A character mentioning how like Pygmalion and Galatea that Henry and Eliza are (a full circle reference).

So, thank you, D.E. Ireland, for bringing those intriguing facts to light. It made parts of the story more enjoyable.

My final thoughts? Fans of My Fair Lady or Pygmalion would love it -- but only if you don't mind the issues that I personally didn't appreciate seeing in the story.

"This was all getting too murky. Higgins could scarcely believe that only last month, he had been enjoying the sun and sonorous dialects of Spain. Now he was being hauled in and out of Scotland Yard, learning unhappy secrets about men he barely knew, and worrying that he had dragged Eliza into what had become a deadly situation." (*Chapter 13, Wouldn't It Be Deadly*)

Tessa Arlen says

A superb treat for fans of My Fair Lady! I sang All I Want Is a Room Somewhere right through three times when I finished this witty, fun book. Treat yourself!

Sheri South says

I really, really wanted to love this book. It's a great idea, and the seeds of the murder are sown in the film (I've never seen or read the play, so I can't speak to that), so working Eliza and 'enry 'iggins into a mystery seems organic, and not forced at all. Unfortunately, winks to the film that seemed clever at the beginning (for instance, an aristocratic lady lives in Hepburn House) seemed tiresome by the end, as did the characters' dialogue motifs: I found the "bloomin's" and "Cockney cabbages" way overdone.

It's ironic that a book in which language is such an important factor was filled with Americanisms in the mouths of supposedly British characters: they lived in "apartments" rather than "flats"; said "gotten" repeatedly instead of "got"; and the titles for the Duke and Duchess were a hot mess. (Dukes and Duchesses are never Lord and Lady. Ever.)

And actions at times seemed out of character for the people we know and love from the musical. Eliza is always running up and hugging people (see Americanisms, above), and a cross-gender character is treated with 21st-century sympathy and tolerance by all. (Can you imagine Henry Higgins responding that way to such a person? Me neither.) Most unforgiveable, though, is the backstory offered as both an alibi for Higgins and an explanation for his misogyny: turns out he's had a long-time lover (for fifteen years) and an illegitimate son that we knew nothing about. I may just have to go watch the movie to get the bad taste from that out of my mouth.

Some reviewers here raved about the denouement at the Drury Lane Theatre. I confess, I felt its attempt at slapstick humor fell flat--as another reviewer noted, as if it were trying too hard--but humor is a subjective thing, and it's clear that it hit its mark for many readers.

All in all, it's a wonderful concept, and Eliza is an engaging heroine, just as we would expect. While I won't go rushing out to buy the next book in the series, I might look for it at the library.

Ron says

The authors stay very true to the original characters yet make the story their own and add nice touches of humor. As a linguist, fan of mystery, George Bernard Shaw, not to mention Lerner and Lowe musicals, this book was right up my proverbial alley. I hope there's a sequel.

G says

After completing (and truthfully enjoying) *Wouldn't It Be Deadly*, I feel as triumphant as Eliza Doolittle on the last turn of a page. Such consistent, humorous and engaging characters. Henry Higgins and Doolittle are two memorable characters I will not let go of very easily and sincerely might never do. Spunky Eliza may even be my new alternate ego. Kudos to D.E. Ireland. Not only did I enjoy the characters but Ireland's descriptive writing too. It was just enough to allow the dome that is my head to paint a picture without overwhelming details that could further blur my depiction and that I appreciate.

On every future occasion I catch sight of a copy of *Wouldn't It Be Deadly*, I will be reminded of the entertaining shenanigans and Doolittle's snarky, unforgettable remarks. I'm looking forward to the next one already.

Mark Baker says

In the two months since the end of *My Fair Lady*, Eliza Doolittle has gone to work for Emil Nepommuck, Henry Higgins's chief rival. This is just one of the many reasons that Higgins decides to take Nepommuck down. However, when the man turns up murdered, Higgins becomes Scotland Yard's chief suspect and Eliza and Higgins must team up to figure out what really happened to the man.

This is a delightful continuation of the characters from the famous musical (or more accurately George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* which inspired the musical). The returning characters are perfect, and the new characters are just as engaging. The plot twists and turns on the way to a thoroughly entertaining climax, and the humor mixed in is a delight. I can't wait to see what happens to this duo next.

Read my full review at Carstairs Considers.

Rose says

"My Fair Lady" remains one of my very favorite musicals, one I've known since before I can remember. So the premise of this one was a joy: Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins teaming up to play Holmes & Watson as they get to the bottom of a murder mystery.

They did a great job capturing the characters' voices (the book is based nominally on the original George Bernard Shaw play, although musical references abound). They did make Eliza a bit more ... mature_, really, but without losing any of her spunk; she's still apt to give you a piece of her mind, but she's a little less childlike about it. (This is not a knock against either the Eliza of the original story, nor of their character alteration here; it makes complete sense that Eliza would be a bit older and wiser now.) Higgins's voice is spot-on, although as we get to spend more time with him, we get an even closer look at the layers of the character, to great effect.

Considering the number-one suspect of the murder mystery is Henry Higgins himself, we get plenty of personal stakes -- and it's a chance for the authors (D.E. Ireland is the pen name of a writing duo) to let us see just how much these characters care about one another. The dialogue is witty, the mystery is decent, and the final act (taking place during a staging of "Hamlet") is inspired fun. I will definitely be picking up the next installment!

Teresa Watson says

Wouldn't It Be Deadly returns us to the wonderful world of Eliza Doolittle and Professor Henry Higgins. Eliza is still living with the Professor's mother, and she has become a phonetics teacher, employed by Maestro Emil Nepommuck. Between the two of them, they have several students, all wanting to sound more upper class for various reasons.

Higgins, however, is not pleased with Eliza's employer, because Nepommuck's ads make it sound like he trained Eliza, not Higgins, and he is using her to draw students to his school. Higgins vows to ruin Nepommuck, which could ruin Eliza's career as well.

The students, as Eliza once did, will try out their newly-acquired upper crust accents at a party being held by Lady Gresham. Things quickly take a downward turn when Lady Gresham and Nepommuck announce their engagement, Mary Finch, one of their students, makes a scene, believing he loves her and not Lady Gresham. She is forcibly removed by the butler, with her embarrassed husband trailing behind her.

True to his word, Higgins gives a local newspaper damaging evidence about Nepommuck that will definitely ruin him. Shortly afterwards, Eliza finds the poor man dead, one of her tuning forks in his mouth, and she's the prime suspect.

Luckily, her alibi checks out, and she reunites with her cousin, Jack Shaw, who is now a Detective Inspector for Scotland Yard. Unfortunately, because of the article in the newspaper, and the fact that he has no alibi, the prime suspect is now Higgins.

The duo begins to investigate the murder, and discover the victim was blackmailing some, if not all, of his students. And while they hope to find a murderer among the students, everyone seems to have an unshakeable alibi.

Returning to Nepommuck's apartment to retrieve her things, Eliza, Higgins, Colonel Pickering and his friend, Major Aubrey Redstone, discover Cornelius Finch sitting on the sofa, and his wife dead at his feet. Does this mean Finch could have killed Nepommuck, too?

With pressure mounting from the victim's fiancée and Scotland Yard, Higgins, Eliza, Jack and the rest of the troupe work frantically to find the real killer before Higgins is clapped in irons and thrown in prison.

D.E. Ireland has done a beautiful job of bringing Eliza and the Professor back to life. Being true to *My Fair Lady*, they create a wonderful mystery that shows the complex relationship between the two continues. I wasn't sure what to expect, but the authors paint a picture of Wimpole Street and London that makes the reader feel like they are right there, walking alongside the characters. I had absolutely no problem envisioning Audrey Hepburn, Rex Harrison, Jeremy Brett, and Wilfred Hyde-White as I read the story. The plot is well-written, with many twists, turns, a few surprises and an ending I didn't see coming. This is a book I will gladly recommend, and I cannot wait for the next book in the series, *Move Your Blooming Corpse*. Now, if you'll excuse me, it's 2:10 a.m., and I feel the need for a rousing rendition of "I Could Have Danced All Night" before I collapse into bed.

Alyssa Maxwell says

I loved this book! The mystery itself is clever and has several great twists I didn't see coming. The characters, though, are what really makes this story shine. Henry and Eliza are portrayed right on the mark, and with lots of humor. This is sure to be a hit with fans of *My Fair Lady*, historical mystery, and cozies in general. Adorable and fun!

QNPoohBear says

3 1/2 stars

This mystery used characters from George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* with many tongue-in-cheek references to the musical *My Fair Lady*. It helps if you're familiar with both before reading this but not necessary. It might be better not to know the characters ahead of time.

In 1913 Eliza Doolittle has left her home in Wimpole street after the Embassy ball in which she passed as a Duchesss. She's now working as an assitsant for Henry Higgins' biggest rival, Emil Nepommuck, a Hugarian count. (Or is he merely pretending?) Eliza tries to use the methods Higgins used with her, but finds her male clients want tp flirt and her female clients want to copy her fashon. To make matters worse, someone is lurking about turning off the lights on a stormy day and Eliza might be in danger. When Higgins returns home from Spain with Col. Pickering and discovers Eliza has decamped, he's furious and threatens to ruin Nepommuck. Henry makes the unwise choice to wonder why one of Nepommuck's clients hasn't put a knife in his back yet. Unfortunately for Higgins, someone does and first Eliza and then Henry are the chief suspectcs. Eliza ia certain her friend and mentor did not kill her employer and she's determined to prove it.

Henry Higgins is exasperated and annoyed by Eliza at every turn. He knows he's innocent but he can't prove his alibi. It's not something he can ever share. Can Eliza really solve the mystery? Meanwhile Freddie is still courting Eliza and not at all happy about her new activities. He also has a rival for Eliza's affections, a poetry-loving Sanskrit scholar and ex-Army officer has come to London to work with Colonel Pickering. Will one of them win Eliza's heart?

I didn't know whether to cringe in horror or be super excited at the idea of continuing the story of one of my favorite musicals of all time. My Fair Lady was my first professional live musical theater production and I have the movie memorized. I have read the play, but only once a long time ago. I do not think all the characters were true to the originals. I loved Eliza. You can take the girl out of the East End, but you can't take the East End out of the girl. She's a bit naive still but brave and plucky. I know she's supposed to be in love with Higgins ("I only know when he/began to dance with me/I could have danced, danced, danced al night") but she doesn't realize it. Romance is not the focus of her life right now. She thinks she'll settle down with Freddie but she is much more vibrant and intelligent than a Society girl. She's stumbles into situations she shouldn't be in but I found her charming and delightful anyway. I liked the characterization of Henry Higgins for the most part. I did NOT buy his backstory/allibi at all. I also never got the impression he was in love with Eliza. Yet this Henry clearly is and they would actually make a good couple despite the age difference and Henry's mysogninistic ways. Col. Pickering is faithful to the original as Eliza's fairy godfather. He doesn't have a large role in the story. Freddie is a bit of an idiot but I think he's spot on for a young man of his situation.

There are many new characters as well and they are too numerous to mention. They're typical of the people who move in and out of London Society in the early 20th century. Any one of them could be the murderer because Emil is a nasty guy.

The plot kept me up waaaayy too late. I wasn't at all surprised by the big reveal but there were enough twists and suspects that I wasn't all sure whodunnit. This is a cozy mystery but a little bit violent in parts. The story moves around London and we get to see Eliza's world past and present. I liked the descriptions of London and the things that were going on. The plot had TOO much going on and too many suspects though. The plot includes topics ripped from today's headlines such as police brutality, class issues, death with dignity and a transgendered person. It was too much for one story. The author's writing style also sounded a little too modern for the period. I liked when Eliza slipped into East End speech. It sounded much more authentic.

I need to go back and reread the play again and see if this novel is true to the original.
