



HAWTHORNE: Chronicles of the Brass Hand ~ Mystirio Astronomiki

Christopher C. Meeker

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HAWTHORNE: Chronicles of the Brass Hand is the story of Edgar J. Hawthorne who sets out on a journey in the summer of 1835 to the Royal Observatory at the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa after reading of an incredible discovery in the Edinburgh Journal of Science, submitted by close family friend John Herschel.

Traveling with the Royal Air Brigade on the Stratos, England's newest and most advanced airship, pride of the British fleet, Edgar and the crew are caught unaware and attacked in the early hours of dawn by a flotilla of marauding airships. Outnumbered the Stratos is forced down into the deep jungles of Africa.

With the Stratos disabled and in need of repair Edgar, along with the first officer and a portion of the crew, set out to locate provisions. What Edgar discovers in the jungle, however, convinces him there are other forces involved in the downing of the Stratos. In the attempt to discover the truth behind the attack, Edgar unearths an unbelievable and far-reaching secret.

Finding himself caught up in a conflict that has raged for centuries, Edgar is thrust into a world of which only a handful are aware. With the aid of a mysterious girl and an unlikely ally, Edgar must do the impossible: prevent humanity's extinction.

HAWTHORNE: Chronicles of the Brass Hand ~ Mystirio Astronomiki Details

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From Reader Review HAWTHORNE: Chronicles of the Brass Hand ~ Mystirio Astronomiki for online ebook

Bill Tillman says

Brass Hand

An interesting tale done in a style reminiscent Tarzan or the Mars series of books. I did keep at the end and will no doubt read the next one.

Lois Langdon says

HAWTHORNE: Chronicles of the Brass Hand ~ Mystirio AstronomikiHawthorne: Chronicles of the Brass Hand was my first foray into the world of Steampunk and I was not disappointed. I really enjoyed the 19th century English Pulp fiction style the book was written in and felt that it lent to the story's descriptive nature, which was what first captured my attention. I would describe Hawthorne as a cross between Sherlock Holmes, Indiana Jones and The Mummy, with maybe even a splash of Stargate thrown in to boot! There was adventure, intrigue, machines you can only imagine, characters you love and characters you love to hate. I found myself riveted from the start and once the mystery began to unfold was completely swept away into Edgar's world of ancient megalithic temples, strange, mysterious devices and amazing flying machines. I recommend Hawthorne: Chronicles of the Brass Hand to anyone who loves a great, fast-paced, easy to read action adventure story. Pick up a copy as soon as you can, you will be glad you did!

Estott says

Lots of verbose setup for future revelations, characters are paper thin.

Chris says

Really liked this book, it was well written, the characters were well thought out and the action seemed to never stop. Steampunk references were well written. I would hope there will be a follow on book with more of the adventures of Edgar J. Hawthorne. I'd recommend this book to anyone who likes fantasy, adventure and of course SteamPunk.

Clay Davis says

A good steampunk swashbuckler story. The hero is a stereotype stiff upper lip British adventurer.

Kerry Reis says

Edgar Hawthorne, having read of an amazing discovery by his and his father's good friend while manning the telescope of the Royal Observatory at the Cape of Good Hope, has undertaken a trip from England to South Africa on the newest naval steam-powered airship, the HMA Stratos, to meet the friend about his amazing discovery. However, the journey becomes a major adventure as the Stratos is beset by pirate airships over the jungles in the Congo, an army of apes tries to overrun the ship on the ground, and Edgar and the crew wind up saving a mysterious woman from an ancient ziggurat temple hidden in the jungle. Yet, the adventure, dangers and mysteries are just ramping up for Edgar as he faces a committed nemesis. For very dedicated fans of the steampunk genre, this is a tale full of action, blending newer sci-fi elements into the mid-nineteenth century historical milieu and related in the first person with the more expressive style of language of the Victorian era. Yet, there is a feeling of too many close escapes from certain death and some of the anachronisms are a bit beyond the steampunk genre, but true fans will forgive these moments of hyper-surrealism.

Keanan Brand says

The language and style of this steampunk novel has a delightful old-fashioned sensibility that makes it an amenable companion of classic speculative fiction.

Much attention is paid to the workings of an airship, so the reader might at first think all the story entails is the minutiae of fantasy engineering, but when our hero encounters tomes, hieroglyphs, and jungle temples, as well as battles, a mysterious girl, and a father's secret, the story also evokes the fast-paced dime-novel air of an Indiana Jones adventure.

The story is set in 1835, in an alternate history in which travel by airship is a matter of course. Edgar is a likeable, curious, courageous young character taking a journey via the HMA Stratos from England to South Africa, but all does not go as planned.

But isn't that the way of every good adventure yarn?

Ralph says

Unlike other entries into the genre of steampunk fiction, which are either firmly set in the Victorian Age or placed in an alternate universe stemming from changes in that time period, this book takes place in 1835, during the reign of William IV, two years before the ascension of the young Victoria. It was, then, a time of reform in British culture which saw the abolition of child labor in factories, the emancipation of slaves in Britain's colonies (had the American colonies not revolted, slavery would have ended two generations earlier than it did, and without a bloody war), and the rise of the House of Commons over the House of Lords. And in the world of Edgar J Hawthorne, narrator and hero of this rousing adventure novel, it was a time of steam-powered horseless carriages and massive airships able to travel from England and down the length of Africa to the Cape of Good Hope, upon which is the journey young Edgar sets.

The author has paid careful attention to keep Edgar's narration in the style of the times, which means it is often verbose and circuitous by modern standards. Though it initially grates upon ears accustomed to today's

streamlined and often staccato prose, it is not much more difficult to plow through than the writing of Jules Vern, H Rider Haggard or Edgar Rice Burroughs, and it does provide a rewarding immersive experience for the reader.

Edgar's trip from England to the southern tip of the Dark Continent is anything but uneventful, and he encounters everything from airship pirates to an army of Great Apes to a mysterious Egyptian who seems to control time and space. Anyone who has read the adventure novels of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries will recognize the many nods to past masters of the genre. Likewise, you will encounter many of the same themes and archetypes, but the author incorporates enough new ideas (or successfully reworks old ones) to provide a reading experience that is as novel as it is exciting.

This is the first volume of a projected series, thus it's not unexpected that the story ends on a note that sets up for the next book, but the story told within these pages is in itself a tale that can stand on its own. If you're looking for a steampunk-themed book which recalls the great adventure stories of years' past, this might be a good choice for you.

Kenneth Preston says

Very reminiscent of a 19th Century adventure story, "Hawthorne" is like a time machine, transporting its readers to an imaginative, long-forgotten time. Christopher C. Meeker has done a marvelous job of capturing the narrative style of a 19th Century writer. One would be hard-pressed to find a contemporary writer to equal the authenticity of this 19th Century narrative style.

A roller-coaster ride of a story, "Hawthorne" follows the adventures of Edgar Hawthorne, sent by his father to investigate a remarkable discovery at an observatory in South Africa. The journey doesn't go as planned, as Edgar and his companions aboard the airship Stratos find themselves traversing the jungles of Africa in search of provisions. It is in these jungles that Edgar stumbles upon a discovery that will challenge what he believes to be true and pushes the course of his adventure in a direction he is not prepared to go in.

The story is fast-paced, moving swiftly from thrilling moment to the next. The protagonist is well-developed. Edgar is a character with a backstory that readers can sympathize with. However, Edgar's backstory does more than just provide readers with a sense of who the character is and where he comes from. It actually pushes the story forward in a way that readers might not expect.

An adventure story told as if written in the 19th Century, "Hawthorne" is a blast! The narrative style transports the reader to a place they can only get to if told by a 19th Century writer or by a writer with the skills of Christopher C. Meeker. Finding a writer that can recreate the style of a 19th Century writer as authentically as Christopher C. Meeker has done would be a tall order.

nick says

i only read 2 chapters. the beginning was good but quickly turned into something I was forcing myself to push threw, waiting for (the other book vibes that reviews mentioned). there was too much detail about every single object that nothing was left to the imagination, very little went on in the story between all this filler

Alexis Allinson says

An intriguing twist of technology and piracy? I'm not sure I'm able to form words for this book except to say it was fun!

Madeleine Holly-Rosing says

Written in a pulp fiction kind of way, this steampunk adventure book is reminiscent of the style of Edgar Rice Burroughs. Not that is a bad thing, but I had a few problems with the main character, Edgar, which affected the story.

Sent off by his father to ascertain whether the findings of an astronomer are true, Edgar boards the airship, Stratos, and heads off to South Africa from London. This young man is good at everything and whenever he gets into a bad situation, he always seems to have the exact skills to get him out of it. Because of that, the plot became very predictable and not terribly interesting. And then there was his creepy attachment to his dead sister. If the author had set up that he had any type of romantic relationship before setting off on this journey, it would have mitigated this. Unfortunately, this pretty much killed the story for me.

However, if you like detailed descriptions of airships and other technological marvels of that time, Mr. Meeker is spot on. The story moves along well, the action is well written, and the narration fits the time in which this is set.

Michael A. Gunter says

Mr. Meeker neatly brings the story-telling styles of Burroughs, Verne, and Haggard into the 21st century. This mode of story-telling, while admittedly long-winded, is all the more realistic for that. (When was the last time YOU heard of someone editing their diary to ensure 'readability for consumers'?) As a thoroughly entrenched fan of the older works in this style, I enjoyed this refreshing return to them no end.

Surprisingly, 'Mystirio Astronomiki', while following a course of events that was predictable (in a sort of 'hindsight is 20/20' way), was not cliché in its plot. The story is only predictable because the hero is such a predictable fellow. I can't imagine the good Edgar Hawthorne doing anything BUT what he does, because if he did, he wouldn't be Edgar Hawthorne. The story itself is both old and new, with new variations on old tunes. If Mr. Meeker were a musician, listeners would not boo and hiss because they recognized extant themes; they'd cheer because the new variations give fresh life to old (but dear) melodies.

Possibly the best part of the entire story was the ending, which was a plot twist I've never seen in a book of this genre before. (I applaud, Mr. Meeker) The antagonist, the 'Egyptian', had his origins in a quite surprising place, certain original enough to entirely overshadow any minor clichés found elsewhere.

However, I did find a few problems with the book, none of which were with the story or the telling. 'Hawthorne: Mystirio Astronomiki' would not be the worse for a bit of editing, since there are a few places where the author stumbled over the antique phrasing. The other problem, was some of the longer sentences.

Mr. Hawthorne is rather fond of run-on sentences when excited, Mr. Meeker; you really should take him to task over the subject. (If a re-edited version of this book released, I'll be happy to withdraw this minor complaints and give it a full five-star review, by the way)

All in all... a most excellent read. The fact that Burroughs and Verne are no longer in any condition to write new stories is a big problem for me, but I may have discovered an author who can continue to fill my shelves beside them.
