



# Jacaranda

*Cherie Priest*

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## **The Ranger**

On the island of Galveston, off the coast of southeast Texas, lies a hotel called the Jacaranda. In its single year of operation, two dozen people have died there. The locals say it's cursed. The Rangers say that's nonsense, but they know a man who might be willing to investigate. Horatio Korman crosses the water from the mainland, and hopes for the best.

## **The Nun**

But the bodies pile up, and a hurricane is brewing up fast. One of the Jacaranda's guests sees time running out, so she seeks an authority of a different sort: a priest from El Huizache who is good at solving problems and keeping secrets. Eileen Callahan has a problem to solve, and a secret to keep. She crosses her fingers, and sends a message that could save them all.

## **The Padre**

Juan Miguel Quintero Rios broke a promise to the Virgin, and so he was punished...but his intentions were pure, so he was also blessed. Now he walks the southwest with second sight and a tattoo across his back: "Deo, non Fortuna"--By God, not chance. The former gunslinger crosses himself, and makes for the Jacaranda Hotel.

Novella takes place 20 years after the events of Fiddlehead, and will be unrelated to the main arc.

## **Jacaranda Details**

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Author : Cherie Priest

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# From Reader Review Jacaranda for online ebook

## Charles says

While being set in the Clockwork Century, the other books don't have to be read to appreciate this story. There are a few tie-ins to the other works that can only be appreciated if you've read them, and I enjoyed the wrapping up of some threads there, but this novella really stands on its own. In truth I felt a greater connection to Priest's Maplecroft, which itself was a fine book.

Like Maplecroft, this is a gothic horror story. However this one takes place in a menacing hotel during the Galveston hurricane. The characters all have their demons, and it is those that the hotel feeds on. The interpersonal relationships and tension drive the action while building suspense for the plot. This is a great horror mystery and well worth it for fans of Priest or those genres.

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## James says

Readers of the Clockwork Century series will be disappointed, the only reference to CC is the word Texian for Texan. There are no steampunk elements, instead this is a cliched Gothic horror piece without the atmosphere or characters to pull it off successfully. Her other horror works are better and the CC series is fun, read those instead. This was a hard read for me, I almost abandoned it.

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## ambyr says

A compelling, evocative haunted house story that ultimately would have benefited from more fleshed-out characters. It makes me want to add a retrospective star to my review of The Haunting of Hill House, because it shows by contrast just how hard it is to give this kind of story psychological depth. (In fact, I think I'll do that right now.)

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## David Schwan says

This is billed as the a concluding novel in the Clockwork Century series but it has little to do with the rest of the series except a passing reference to the zombies from the main series. I wonder in passing if the author is including this in the Clockwork Century as a way to not write more 19th century stories.

This is a horror story with a plot with distant similarity to the movie Key Largo (the Humphrey Bogart classic). There are three basic characters--the nun, the priest and the ranger; the first two with some mysteries in their past. As usual the author has written a fun to read book.

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## Fantasy Literature says

Jacaranda is a horror novella set in Cheris Priest's CLOCKWORK CENTURY universe. This story, set after the end of the USA's long civil war, is a shivery tale that focuses on supernatural evil rather than the sap-infected zombies of the series.

Priest brings three characters to the Texan island of Galveston, to investigate a long string of strange deaths at the cursed Jacaranda Hotel. Horatio Korman is a Texas Ranger, a smart, clever investigator. Father Juan Quinteros Rios is a Catholic priest with a dark past and a supernatural gift. Sister Eileen Callahan, who has sent for the other two, has experience with the supernatural, and a secret of her own. Father Rios and Korman arrive via ferry just before a savage hurricane isolates the island and traps the three, along with several other guests, in the strange hotel.... Read More: <http://www.fantasyliterature.com/revi...>

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## **Cissa says**

This is a very, very creepy tale, of the "possessed building" trope.

It is not altogether clear how cutting down the jacaranda tree- important as it was to the island- caused this evil entity to take up residence- and it's a very specific entity, with precise requirements that to me did not jibe with the history of the tree.

That being said, it's a minor quibble in the face of an excellently creepy novel, that kept me page-turning long after i ought to have been asleep!

The characters are very well-drawn, and feel real. The plot builds and is is very creepy indeed. Not everything gets explained. Although this is in her "Clockwork Century" setting, most of it has little overlap with the rest of the books therein, so this is fine to read even if you've read nothing else in that setting.

That being said, it is closer in length to a novella than a novel, so the price for the physical version is rather high. The production values were excellent, though, and this is one of the few books I've read this year that did not have copy-editing errors- high praise!

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## **Althea Ann says**

This is categorized as 'Clockwork Century #6' - so far, other than this, I've only read the first two, so was afraid that 'skipping ahead' might be an issue.

However, I needn't have worried. This story is only tenuously connected to what I've read so far, and fully works as a stand-alone. It's a classic-feeling haunted-hotel story, perfect for fans of The Shining or anything in what Stephen Kings calls the "Ghostly Room at the Inn" subgenre.

As this is a 'Clockwork Century' novel, the setting is an alternate 19th century. (But really, the 'alternate' part here isn't significant.)

In response to rumors that an untoward number of guests have been dying at the Jacaranda Hotel, and for some reason this in being ignored by local authorities, two paranormal investigators check in to the hotel to try to set things right.

Padre Rios is a gangster-turned-priest, and he's been summoned by an Irish nun with hidden strengths. But will their toughness be enough to combat the dark forces swirling beneath the Jacaranda and to save the remaining guests? Or will all be swept into a dark whirlpool of malevolence?

My only complaint is that I felt that some of the supporting characters could've been fleshed out a bit more... and we're left with some mysteries (to be explained in other books?)

But overall, this is an excellent and entertaining horror tale.

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## Jason says

4 Stars

Jacaranda is a fun addition to the Clockwork Century series by one of my favorite authors Cherie Priest. Even though this is book 6 it really is just a standalone in the same universe. It is a hardly a novel at all, a long novella at best.

First I highly recommend this series to all seeking a blast of a steampunk ride. Priest has created a universe that is filled with amazing gadgets, dirigibles, weapons, and other machinery. She has sprinkled in just the right amount of real history and real people to give it the amazing alt-feel. A steam-punk western with lots of goodies and even some zombies.

I could read books like this all day, every day. The story, the writing, and the characters make for really great escapism. My only gripe is that I did not want this one to end and would have welcomed a few hundred more pages.

Jacaranda is a haunted house story filled with pretty bad people. Very fast paced. I enjoyed it all.

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## Rob says

...I must admit that this book was not quite what I was hoping for. It certainly doesn't deliver what I read the Clockwork Century books for. The hotel has few gadgets but they are not important to the story, nor is the alternative history Priest has laid out. Haunted house stories are not really my thing either. They tend to be so stuck in horror clichés that they rarely make for challenging or interesting reading. Putting my personal preferences aside for the moment, I do see a story that is well executed. Some readers may not be entirely convinced by the climax but it worked well enough for me. *Jacaranda* was entertaining reading, but as a postscript to the Clockwork Century, it is essentially unnecessary. Read it if you enjoy a good haunted house story or if you can't stand to leave a series unfinished. If those two don't apply to you, there are more interesting book out there.

Full Random Comments review

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## **Dave Creek says**

This was another of the books I received as part of the Humble Bundle. Billed as "A Novella of the Clockwork Century," it finds Juan Miguel Quintero Rios, a padre with a dark secret, called to Galveston's Jacaranda Hotel.

It turns out pretty much everyone gathered at the hotel, visitors and staff alike, have their own dark secrets. Those secrets, in fact, are why everyone, including Rios, has been called to the hotel.

Adding to the story's narrative drive is the hurricane bearing down on Galveston, and the near certainty that much, if not all, of the hotel will wash away.

I've not read any of the other novels in Priest's Clockwork Century sequence, but I'm likely to check them out now. JACARANDA's characters (including the hotel itself) are deftly drawn, and the story possesses a forward motion rivaling that of its hurricane.

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## **Bob Schnell says**

I suppose it is a bit serendipitous that I just finished this book about a killer hotel on the same day that the TV show "American Horror Story: Hotel" premieres. In any event, "Jacaranda" is the postscript novella of Cherie Priest's Clockwork Century series. Like its predecessors, "Jacaranda" has only slight connections to the other books in the series and could easily be read as a stand-alone.

The feel of the story is a bit Agatha Christie meets H.P. Lovecraft. In 1895 Texas, a dozen people are stuck in a possibly haunted, but definitely evil hotel during a monster hurricane. They were all drawn to the hotel for a reason, though none of them are fully aware of it. The hotel has a history of unexplained deaths that local law enforcement don't seem to be too eager to pursue so a nun, a priest and a Texas Ranger join forces to solve the mystery and expunge the evil. The story moves quickly and is written in a cinematic style. The reader can easily envision the characters, setting and action. Once the storm hits and everyone is trapped in the hotel lobby, the sense of dread is palpable. Overall this is a taut novella that is a bit of scary fun though it isn't nearly at the level of Stephen King's "The Shining".

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## **Frances says**

Borderline between three stars and four, and again I feel compelled to mention that I use four stars to denote that anyone into the genre should read it. In this case, there are two genres; weird Western and haunted house.

(I have mentioned before that a haunted house is a specific kind of story, different from a straight-up ghost story? okay, good.)

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## **Helen says**

One of my favourite authors, her Clockwork Century series is a brilliant steampunk zombie adventure. Each of the books focuses on a different character and has its own story arc .

Jacaranda is a shortish book about a cursed hotel, and a nun and a padre that arrive to investigate the rumours.

It takes place 20 years after the main story arc and can easily be read on its own.

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## **Catherine Siemann says**

As a final visit to the world of the Clockwork Century series, this is distinctly disappointing -- we find out that the "rotter" plague has run its course, and one of the protagonists is Horatio Korman, the Texas ranger who's played a role in several of the other books. The haunted hotel of the title is mechanized in some ways, but honestly, without those few references, this feels more like Priest's horror fiction than her steampunk.

On the other hand, I was pleased to see Sister Eileen Callaghan, the nun-with-a-secret of the non-Clockwork Dreadful Skin, and to meet gunslinger-turned-priest Juan Rios. I'd love to see these two have further ghostbusting adventures -- maybe Priest will revisit them again, someday.

Reread less than a year later (!) as part of a reread of the whole Clockwork Century. I felt a bit more in sympathy with the haunted hotel aspect, but it's still not Priest's best, from my perspective.

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## **Heidi says**

It was very different from the other books in this series. There were fewer steam punk elements and no zombies. Instead it was a very good paranormal thriller. The ending was more open than I would have liked but maybe that means there will be a sequel.

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