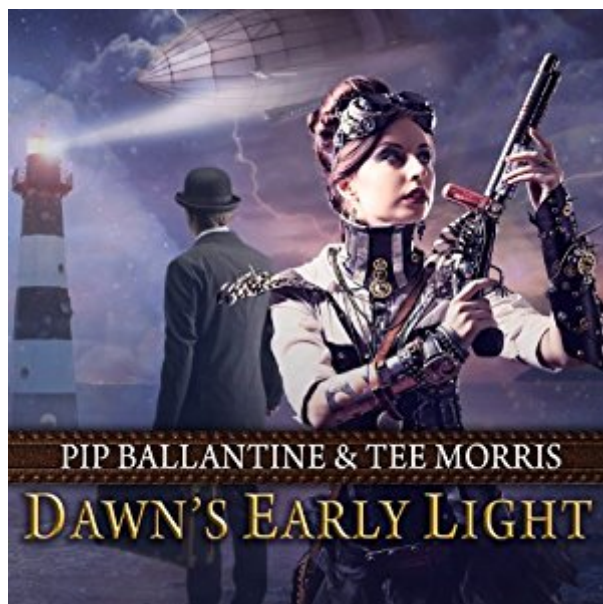


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Dawn's Early Light: Ministry Of Peculiar Occurrences



Synopsis

After being ignominiously shipped out of England following their participation in the Janus affair, Braun and Books are ready to prove their worth as agents. But what starts as a simple mission in the States - intended to keep them out of trouble - suddenly turns into a scandalous and convoluted case that has connections reaching as far as Her Majesty the Queen. Even with the help of two American agents from the Office of the Supernatural and the Metaphysical, Braun and Books have their work cut out for them as their chief suspect in a rash of nautical and aerial disasters is none other than Thomas Edison. Between the fantastic electric machines of Edison, the eccentricities of MoPO consultant Nikola Tesla, and the mysterious machinations of a new threat known only as the Maestro, they may find themselves in far worse danger than they ever have been in before.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rating: B Liked It, recommendOriginally posted at That's What I'm Talking AboutReview copy provided by publisher.The third full-length tale from the Ministry of Peculiar Occurrences begins shortly after the conclusion of the second book, with Agents Wellington (Welly) Books and Eliza Braun en route to America. This is Books first official mission as a field agent, although he's been through the routine a few times with Eliza. The pair are being sent to America to help with a case, but more importantly, to stay out of the limelight back home while there is some heat on the Ministry of Peculiar Occurrences following their last case. While on the airship, the pair gives chase to a cunning thief, who gets away. The start of Dawn's Early Light opens with action and

adventure, befitting of our heroes. Once Books and Braun are in the New World, they are paired with their counterparts from the Office of the Supernatural and Metaphysical (OSM). Agent Felicity Lovelace is the OSM librarian. She's never been in the field, and this is only her tenth assignment. Then there is William "Wild Bill" Wheatley. He is a rough and tumble cowboy with arrogant attitude. He and Eliza share a brief history, and he was the cause of some problems for her several years ago. The American pair are truly mirror images of Welly and Eliza. The team is tasked with investigating the disappearance of airships off the coast of North Carolina. But what they uncover is something much larger, taking the quartet cross-country, and involving Thomas Edison, The House of Usher, a female priest, and a death ray. The story truly is a madcap adventure with high stakes and plenty of action.

Ministry of Peculiar Occurrences operatives Eliza Braun and Wellington Books are back in another Steampunk adventure, this time in the United States some 30 years after the Civil War where they, with the help of a couple of erstwhile American agents, are trying to prevent the infamous House of Usher from plunging the world into chaos. Braun and Books are among my favorite fictional characters, despite what I find are some inconsistencies in the way they are drawn by authors Pip Ballantine and Tee Morris. Braun, the charge-straight-ahead New Zealander, and Books, the seemingly mild-mannered archivist with hidden talents, combine an iron-clad sense of duty with a fair degree of humanity that sometimes gets them into trouble. Add into this mixture the fact that they are often at odds with one another about how best to proceed in an investigation and you get what I think is a delightful pair of agents doing their best in a world that is moving much, much faster than the one their parents grew up in. As someone who has written a Steampunk novel, I know from experience that one of the most difficult parts of crafting a story is to come up with credible villains. Writers often focus so much on the heroes of their stories that the bad guys are often thinly drawn characters. Ballantine and Morris avoid that pitfall because this adventure has its fair share of truly memorable villains, including the beautiful assassin Sophia del Morte, her mysterious boss The Maestro and Thomas Edison - yes, THE Thomas Edison who, despite his carefully crafted image in textbooks and Hollywood movies was actually not a very nice man at all.

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