



A Dastardly Plot

Christopher Healy

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It's 1883—the Age of Invention! A time when great men like Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Nicola Tesla, and George Eastman work to turn the country into a land of limitless opportunity.

And it all happens at the world famous Inventor's Guild headquarters in New York City—a place where a great idea, a lot of hard work, and a little bit of luck can find you rubbing elbows with these gods of industry who will usher humanity into the future.

Unless, of course, you're a woman.

Molly Pepper, daughter of brilliant but unknown inventor Cassandra Pepper, lives with her mother in New York. By day, they make ends meet running a pickle shop; but by night, they toil and dream of Cassandra taking her place among the most famous inventors in America.

In an attempt to find a way to exhibit Cass's work at the World's Fair, they break into the Inventor's Guild, where they discover a mysterious plot to destroy New York.

The evidence points to the involvement of one of the world's most famous inventors, and now it's up to Molly, Cassandra, and a shop hand named Emmett Lee to uncover the truth—even if no one will ever know it was they who did it.

A Dastardly Plot Details

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Author : Christopher Healy

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From Reader Review A Dastardly Plot for online ebook

Karsyn says

I seem to be in the minority but I thought this book, which had so much potential, was soooooo bad. It kept me entertained, which is why I didn't rate it a 1, but I didn't love it, or even like some of it, which is why I don't rate it a 3.

Here's my issue with it: it's fiction, yes, but with fiction I still want characters to be believable, which this book has NONE.

The MC is a 12 year old girl who acts, behaves and talks more like a 17 or 18 year old. She's smart but also real dumb. The bigger issue was with her mother, who acts, behaves and talks more like a 12 year old. The mother was not a believable character for me, she was just all over the place, criminal at one time, spastic inventor at another and doting mother at another. Only thing in the whole book I believed was Molly telling her mother that she couldn't start acting like a mother at the end of the book.

The only believable character for me was Emmett. He was the only one that stayed consistently true and a good character. The MOI were almost all annoying, especially the one who kept saying "language" for saying things like "drat" and "cracking". Really?! Ugh! And OMG was the "bad guy" ever obvious. Even kids will see that coming, because as SOON as the person is mentioned, which is in a thrown in way relating in no way to the story, you're like yup, that's the bad guy. Too bad it takes the rest of the characters to 70% of the book before they figure it out.

UGH. This book was just bad. I'd recommend it only for young kids or kids who are easily impressed/surprised. It was so bad!

Amanda Delap says

I received an Advanced Reader's Copy through a Goodreads giveaway. The young adult historical fiction theme was interesting especially since it focused on mostly women inventors and how they were seen as inferior to male inventors. I liked the mix of fiction with facts, though at times it seemed a bit over the top and too much going on at the same time to keep all details in check. It didn't grab hold of me or seem to be as interesting as other young adult fiction that I've read, but it didn't bore me. There was good character development and I liked how the author used each character's pros and cons, though there may have been a few that were just outright antagonists with no redeeming qualities. The ending left a possibility for a series that I would probably continue to read.

Emily says

Didn't like it as much as the Hero's Guide books, but it definitely made me chortle.

Sam says

I LOVED this funny, smart, fast-paced adventure!

Asma says

I'll read anything this guy writes.

Mark Baker says

New York City is gearing up for the 1883 World's Fair, and Molly Pepper is hoping her mother, Cassandra, will be able to snag a spot in the inventor's hall to show case some of her amazing inventions. However, when the spot is given to a man - again - Molly and Cassandra devise a plan to break into the Inventory's Guild. That's where Molly stumbles upon the plans to sabotage the opening ceremonies. Who is the villain? Can Molly stop them?

The book starts out a little slowly, some of which is introducing us to the new characters and new series. Once the plot got going, the pacing certainly improved, and we got some fun twists that kept the pages turning. The climax introduced some new threads, and I can't wait to find out what happens next as the series continues. The characters are strong, and the real and fictional rubbed shoulders with ease. I did feel the book stopped at times to lecture us on equality - an important topic to be sure - but it felt like it slowed things down briefly when it came up. This new series has a slight Steampunk element to it, and I really enjoyed that aspect of it. I also enjoyed the pages at the end that told us about some of the same real people and events that underpinned this fictional world.

Read my full review at Carstairs Considers.

Liz says

This was pretty cute -- I didn't love it as much as his Hero's Guide series, but it still had some good laugh-out-loud moments, and you gotta love a book that celebrates under-regarded female inventors while also taking some excellent burns on Thomas Edison.

Beth says

Fabulous inventions, fun takes on historical figures, recurring jokes, parental/child conflict in several different directions -- this book is packed with good stuff. I liked the pacing and the twists and the main characters.

Ms. Yingling says

Public library copy

This reminded me of a couple of other Victorian era adventure books. I liked it, but they are a hard sell in my school, so I may pass. Do love the Hero's Guide books, but even those haven't been going out as much this year as in the past.

Heidi says

After loving his first series, A Hero's Guide, I was eager to pick up this new book. And I was not disappointed. While having more of an alternative history feel rather than the fairy tale vibe of the first series, the book still manages to have the trademark humor. Molly makes for a great main character. She's an empathetic character but she's also a fighter. She's also rather impulsive which gets her into a lot of trouble, but luckily for her, she's also a quick study. And she has others around her to help her. In this story, Molly's mother is an inventor who wants to exhibit some of her inventions at the upcoming World's Fair, but because she's a woman and not a member of the Inventor's Guild, she has no place to do so. In an effort to earn a place, Molly and her mother, Cassandra, break into the Inventor's Guild. In the process they come across plans for an attack to take place at the Fair. Their efforts to foil the plot result in some rather amusing disasters leading to Cassandra's incarceration in an insane asylum. Only with the help of some other female inventors does Molly and her friend Emmett have a chance of rescuing her mother and stopping the evil plot. Full of rather entertaining escapades and fascinating inventions, A Dastardly Plot, takes the reader on quite a ride, which ends up being as amusing as it is action packed.

Helen says

This was a fun, girl-power, science is not just for boys/men, twisted history surrounding a World's Fair in NYC that didn't actually come off. It's an over-the-top adventure that has a lot in common with Back to the Future as well as Healy's first series, The Hero's Guide to.... Instead of fairy tale heroes and heroines, we have historical inventors mixed up in a plot to take over the US government. Molly Pepper, her inventor mother, and Chinese immigrant Emmett Lee (maybe the first name is an homage to Dr. Emmett Brown?) find themselves fending off gangsters on the one hand and police on the other, plus a mysterious group of women who want to recruit Molly's mother. It's wild, crazy, and lots of fun. Looking forward to the sequel.

Gmr says

It's hard not to like the Pepper's, both Molly and Cassandra, though maybe a bit more of Molly. They've had to survive some hard knocks in life from the passing of her father to the ruination of their business to the scraping through mud of the family name, but as their family saying goes...Peppers never give up! Something to remember when things are looking severely down and all seems lost....just sayin'. I really loved Molly's spunky nature, relative quick thinking on her feet, and her ability to charm an audience when need arises. Her devotion to her mother is heartbreaking in its strength, but it's certainly not one-sided, which brings us to Pepper number two.

Cassandra Pepper is Molly's mom, and while limited in street smarts, she's a whip at anything with gears, steam power, or otherwise inventor-ish. Seriously, some of the gadgets and gizmos she created are astounding and I agree with her...the public deserves to know her name...as well as the rest of the female inventors out there lurking in the shadows just waiting for their moment to shine...and shine they will! The devotion she shows to Molly is heartwarming, and the love they have for their new family of two is present in all they do. Even when they are exasperated with each other, you can still see how much they care, and when things turn from bad to worse, the first thing on the other's mind is seeing them safely home again. We should all be so lucky to have family so dear...or even a friend, which brings us to our new chosen family member of sorts.

Emmett Lee never intended to leave behind the new life he was forging. His path was set after so much upheaval and my heart hurt for him, but sometimes fate has a different life for us in mind, and thus begins his adventure of a lifetime. He'll rise from the shadows to leave his own footprints in the sand, telling the world that LEE WAS HERE and don't you forget it! He's whip smart at all the mechanics of inventing and while suffering from his own losses in life, he'll find a new family to call his own because it's not all about blood relations, but about who we're willing to let into our hearts, and throw ourselves out a window with. Am I right? ?

In the end, we have a good bit of history with a large helping of dastardly deeds and twisty turns to spin it all together into one fabulous adventure!

Tory says

2.5. It started off fun, but became so madcap and zany that it wasn't cohesive or understandable. It's also so chock-full of historical references cheek-and-jowl with made-up people/places/things that I could see myself as a kid being utterly baffled as to what is historically accurate or not. There's a disclaimer at the end clarifying some of those things, but too little too late.

stan the Bookman says

the begging of the book was a little slow and boring. but it got a lot faster near the end. I like molly and Emmett both are funny and good characters. but some of the story was lagging in some areas. I will still read the series to find out what happens to them.

Amy says

Humorous action story set in 1880s New York City. Really enjoyed the blend of historical elements with an action-adventure plot. I especially liked that the story does not ignore the plight of women and immigrants in the time period but addresses them directly. Exciting, fast-paced, and fun.

A note if you're big fans of Healy's A Hero's Guide series: this new series has humor but is not as laugh-out-loud funny. I look at A Hero's Guide as a humor series set in the fairy tale world. This series is a historical adventure with humor. Still very entertaining, but be prepared for more action than belly laughs.

