



The Havoc Machine

Steven Harper

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In a world riddled with the destruction of men and machines alike, Thaddeus Sharpe takes to the streets of St. Petersburg, geared toward the hunt of his life...

Thaddeus Sharpe's life is dedicated to the hunting and killing of clockworkers. When a mysterious young woman named Sofiya Ekk approaches him with a proposition from a powerful employer, he cannot refuse. A man who calls himself Mr. Griffin seeks Thad's help with mad clockwork scientist Lord Havoc, who has molded a dangerous machine. Mr. Griffin cares little if the evil Lord lives or dies; all he desires is Havoc's invention.

Upon Thad's arrival at Havoc's laboratory, he is met with a chilling discovery. Havoc is not only concealing his precious machine; he has been using a young child by the name of Nikolai for cruel experiments. Locked into a clockwork web of intrigue, Thad must decipher the dangerous truth surrounding Nikolai and the chaos contraption before havoc reigns...

The Havoc Machine Details

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Author : Steven Harper

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From Reader Review The Havoc Machine for online ebook

Steven says

The book is part of a series. This particular novel is what I consider a stand alone book. IE it can be read without the others as back ground. The Plague theme is interesting. The alternative history is affected by the plague theme and thus somewhat odd. It is a book that carries a moralistic theme revolving around what makes a person human. Not sure that I agree per se with the way the characters are portrayed. But, still it was a good read.

LadyCroft86 says

This book was not nearly as good as the other books in the Clockwork Empire series. This book is supposed to take place before the third book in the series. It was a clever way to incorporate more clockworkers and the plague, but this story just fell flat when compared the the first three. I didn't feel like the characters were very well developed and I felt no connection to any of them. The story setting is the Kalakos circus, which isn't a new or exciting setting.

In addition to the story not being all that great, this book was full of editing errors, this was not the case for the other three books. I felt like this book was rushed and written just to bank on the previous books, but it failed. The first three books were genuinely good and I felt like a lot of time and thought went into making the world, the story and the characters. The Havoc Machine felt forced and the quality of the book shows this.

I thoroughly enjoyed the first three books and will be reading them again. I will not be keeping this book or reading it again. Overall 2 out of 5 stars.

All Things Urban Fantasy says

Review Courtesy of All Things Urban Fantasy

One of the great things about THE HAVOC MACHINE is the fantastic introduction at the beginning to catch new readers like me up on the previous events of the Clockwork Empire series. While the introduction was a wonderful summary its not necessary the enjoyment and understanding of THE HAVOC MACHINE plot which is a fun classic steampunk adventure story.

Aside from the thrilling adventure and neat steampunk contraptions there are also some interesting ideas on weighing the nature of clockworkers (super intelligent inventors created by the clockwork plague) and their automatons. Are the worthy of being equal to humans since they have their own ideas, free will, and ability to learn and grow? I enjoyed how these questions are molded around Thaddeus' own tragic backstory with his family and his growing relationship with Sofiya and Nikolai.

Thaddeus, Sofiya, and Nikolai all work as a team really well and fill the voids in each other's lives even though Thaddeus is reluctant to do so almost to his own detriment. Thaddeus is a fun character being part clockworker hunter and part sword swallower in a circus. His involvement with the circus plays a huge part in THE HAVOC MACHINE and the number of circus performances featured in this story were bizarre and

awesome in a way only a steampunk story with a circus performer as the lead can be.

The various plot twists in THE HAVOC MACHINE were surprising and fun including the identity of the villain. The tone of the story is pretty dark and intense so it comes off as very jarring when the villain is a maniacal, cartoonish, mad scientist like character. While I thought the villain belonged in some other story, THE HAVOC MACHINE is a fun, dark, plot twisty steampunk story and wonderful end to The Clockwork Empire series.

Sexual content: N/A

Tina says

There were different characters in this one, as opposed to the first books in the series, and I'm not sure I really liked them all that much. I'm not really sure why, they just didn't make me want to rush through the book to find out how they survived the mess they were in.

Ian Hu says

This is the best steampunk book I have read in a while and I will definitely get started on the series as soon as I can. True to the author's promise, the Havoc Machine has nothing to do with the prequels of the series so it is a fantastic way to get into the steampunk genre or into the Clockwork Empire series.

The book starts off in a small inn in a little European village, takes the readers through landscapes with abandoned castles and traveling circuses, finally culminating in a climactic finish in an alternate version of St. Petersburg.

The characters are well developed and the reader discovers a lot about their personalities along the way, as well as a few surprises that advance the plot of the story and leaves the reader shocked. The main character, Thaddeus Sharpe, is already pretty well-rounded by a third of the way through the book so we are even more surprised by the author's holding back of his characters' secrets by the time they are revealed.

I am hoping that the rest of the Clockwork Empire books will end up as great as this one. It is going to be on my shelf for a long time.

Sarah says

Good news: I hadn't read the rest of the series but with a recap in the beginning, a new protagonist, a great group of characters, an interesting plot, plus some questions about the nature of humanity led to an interesting read.

bad: the characters weren't THAT deep, the big bad's plan/ reveal was a bit from no where and for all the clockwork fear, I never saw a pay off in the story aside from an odd bruise.

still, a fun- if SLIGHTLY unsatisfying- read.

Cecilia Rodriguez says

Harper cast Russia under Steampunk's spell. Thaddeus Sharpe is a dedicated to eliminating Clockworkers. One night, Thaddeus meets the mysterious Miss Ekk. Together, they set off on a cross country odyssey with a clockwork circus. This is a darker and moodier story than the others in the series.

Felix says

This was a pure brain candy & as enjoyable as all the "Clockwork Empire"" novels!

K.A. Fox says

I liked the earlier books in this series, which focused on a different set of main characters. With that group's story wrapped up, the author moved on to the stories of some fringe characters, whom I believe were just politely waiting their turn. The Kalakos Circus, introduced in the first Clockwork books, is more central to this book. I enjoyed learning more about Thad, his heartbreaks and watching him learn more about clockworkers, the true line between good and evil, and what family really means. It started off slow, but I'm glad I hung in there and got to the heart of things. Definitely worth a read!

Cecilia Rodriguez says

Harper cast Imperial Russia under Steampunk's spell. Thaddeus Sharpe has dedicated his life to destroying Clockworkers. One night he meets the mysterious Miss Ekk and together they travel across Russia to the capital. This story is darker and moodier than the others in the series.

Lisa Pike says

Interesting but having read the original trilogy I was missing the characters I already knew, and was half expecting the cure to come at the end of the book as I couldn't remember the timeline.

Unrelated to the story, but there was a shocking number of typographical errors in the book. I rarely notice them but this was nuts.

Heather says

Steven Harper's "The Havoc Machine" is the fourth in the "Clockwork Empire" series. However, it sits somewhat apart from the events of the other books, and the opening notes recommend it for new readers. It stands well on its own.

The details of the clockwork plague are captivating: one plague that creates both a zombie menace, and a two-sided boon/menace in the form of the clockworkers. They create astounding devices that can give their countries great power, but they also lose such touch with their humanity that they become incredibly dangerous to those around them.

Some of the 'secrets' in the story are telegraphed, making it difficult to understand why the characters don't pick up on them. Also, I found the tone of the book discordant: most of the tale is dark and gritty fantasy/steampunk, but the clockworkers occasionally veer into the silly end of comic book mad scientist villain territory. It was also difficult to understand the tsar's decisions—sometimes they felt too convenient to the plot.

The question of free will in the context of automatons arises, but it seems to be handled a little inconsistently. Supposedly certain conditions have to be met before an automaton develops 'sentience' as such (sorry for the vagueness; I'm trying not to give away plot points), but there are minor automaton characters (such as Dante the parrot) that seem to exhibit such traits without the relevant criteria having been met.

There are lovely plot twists and ideas in here, and a very nice exploration of the nature of clockworkers as well as their automatons. There is some minor dark material to be aware of (things occasionally get a bit bloody). The concept of clockworkers is brilliant, and I love how it's handled. All in all this isn't the best steampunk novel I've read, but it's certainly an engrossing and interesting read.

[NOTE: review book provided by publisher]

For a longer review that includes a summary of the premise, you can see my original review:
<http://www.errantdreams.com/reviews/2...>

Michelle says

this seemed more like a parallel story to the impossible cube more than anything. based in the circus again, which we already have seen. the main idea was not that imaginative as robots taking over has been done so many times. it wasn't a bad book, dont get me wrong, it just wasnt up to my standards as the previous three clockwork books. perhaps if i'd read this as a stand alone before the others i might've like it more. i did love the kid though, he was so interesting, but you really don't get to know the two protagonists very well.

Michelle Leah Olson says

Our Review, by LITERAL ADDICTION's Alluring Angel – Kathy:
--Actual rating 4.5 Skulls

The Havoc Machine by Steven Harper is a steampunk gem. It is the 4th book in his The Clockwork Empire

series, but is written in such a way that The Havoc Machine could be read as a stand alone.

A plague has swept across the world, turning it's victims into slowly dying plague zombies, with a few victims becoming mad geniuses referred to as clockworkers. Thaddeus Sharpe's son is killed by a clockworker, and so he dedicated his life to finding and destroying clockworkers and their horrible creations. The Havoc Machine is a fast paced, action filled adventure with an unexpected amount of heartfelt emotion.

I truly enjoyed The Havoc Machine.

Charlie says

I enjoy good steampunk stories, and this is a good adventure. I read this in 2 days with 2 sittings, and it is a fun and quick romp. I do not have anything bad to say outside of the cover of the book. The blurb on the front mentions Dirigibles, but none are in this book, though they exist within the series, which is what I believe that the blurb refers to, and not this novel.

Also, the main character has two issues which I will not say to spoil the book, but once you read, the cover does not exactly 'fit' the main character.

Not the authors fault, so all in all this is a great read and fun for all. No grim dark here. This is steampunk at its finest.
