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Selkie Cove (The Ingenious Mechanical Devices Book 5)



Synopsis

Immanuel never liked being the museum's resident seal expert, until a strange specimen arrived: part human, part seal, and a murder victim. He knows the only people who will believe him are the supernatural agents of Her Majesty's Interceptors. But all help comes with a price. To become a member of the Interceptors, Immanuel must first convince his lover, Adam, to help him find the culprit. They have a week to uncover the killer or Immanuel will lose the only chance he has to learn about his own arcane abilities. Upon arriving at Seolh-wiga Island, Adam and Immanuel quickly discover that what the island lacks in size, it makes up for in mysteries. At the heart of it all is a series of disappearances, murders, and devices connected to the island's sordid history. Will Adam and Immanuel earn a place with the Interceptors? Or will they become the island's next victims?

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Customer Reviews

I received an ARC of this novel from the author in exchange for an honest review: As a super-fan of

the Ingenious Mechanical Devices series from the start, I was in eager anticipation of the latest volume. I found this one to not be a disappointment, and to remain in author Kara Jorgensen's literary style of modern thought and angst set in the colder, more rigid structure of late Victorian England. Some might find steampunk novels set in England to be a tad wearisome. At times, so do I. But with Miss Jorgensen you get a fresh stamp on the era, and on steampunk, for she staked her ground back in Book One. IMD would be daring adventure and gaslamp fantasy, but it would tackle head on the social prejudices of the times. We return to the escapades of Immanuel Winter (my favorite) and his partner Adam Fenice. I loathe spoilers, even small ones, but let's say their union is a big part of their struggle as a team, and in society. It makes for an intense struggle as they are caught up in another mystery from the dark corners of the world. Mind you, they are still coming to grips with the tortures and woes from earlier volumes, put together very well in Selkie Cove. I chewed up this book in one evening, feeling as if I were imbibing an Agatha Christie novel welded with the fantasies of C.S Lewis. These young protagonists go off on an adventure, and it was nice to see them choose it as opposed to it being forced on them. Jorgensen takes us to a new setting by the sea, introduces us to some new characters (A hint, a pinch, of Lovecraft shows through in this region) and our protagonists quickly get caught up in strange creatures (not a spoiler. It's in the title) and small town secrecy. I loved every bit and every word. Some people who read novels nowadays are enraged by the level of personal tragedy in protagonists. Some want our heroes to be fearless, soulless, indomitable. I'm in the middle. I see the benefit of both. In Selkie Cove, we get a fine, even sense of each character's individual strengths and weaknesses, as well as a very interesting explanation of how and why Immanuel and Adam are stronger together. Now, I am not a fan of mysticism or magic, for I long ago tired of the Tolkien clones, but IMD gives me enough of a slant on the fantasy genre to hook me. I find the powers of Immanuel a great twist, especially with broader uses for earlier contraptions such as the vivalabe, the explanation of the selkies, and the shadowy organization which investigates these matters. Adding to that, if the previous books were more akin to the dark, murky middle, as in a movie trilogy, then Selkie Cove comes off more like a fine finale, as much brightness as there is murky uncertainty. Immanuel finds his footing in this one, becomes a man as it were, and Adam himself struggles to cope with his own life and past. These are brilliantly displayed, and one would think Jorgensen was made up of worlds of pain herself, or a good recorder of it, to put such deep sufferings into the printed word. But by the end, heroes are forged, intrepid adventurers with a defined place in this strange steampunk landscape. I say well done again. If you need a series, need thrills, action, drama, the weird, read IMD. Take the train and the ferry to Selkie Cove. Bring a heavy blanket, a vivalabe, and high spirits.

Review (Spoilers Ahead) *“Magic is more of an art than a science.”* Judith Elliott tells Immanuel Winter as he struggles to learn to use magic in a world more suited to technology. Judith, a member of Her Majesty’s Interceptors, is helping Immanuel develop his abilities. And he needs those abilities as Judith involves him in investigating a rather unusual specimen that appears at the museum where he works. Staring back at him from beneath the bath of embalming liquid was a seal with a not quite human face. For a moment he merely stared at it, unable to grasp how the mismatched pieces fit together so seamlessly. While the body retained the shape and grey spotted fur of a seal, the creature’s face appeared out of place with its sharp cheekbones and Cupid’s bow lips, but what held him wholly were the creature’s eyes. They were wide and round like the seals he had studied, yet they retained the colored iris of a human. As Jorgensen mentions in the text, so-called mermaids were popular display items in the Victorian era. Fishermen in Japan and the East Indies had long constructed “hybrids” by stitching the upper bodies of apes onto the bodies of fish. P.T. Barnum obtained one of these creations for one of his exhibits and caused quite a stir when publicizing the item. But Jorgensen’s novels are filled with magic as well as science/technology, and the mermaid, also known as a selkie, Immanuel examines is real. The Interceptors offer Immanuel a challenge to find out what is happening to the selkies for a chance to join the organization. It is an opportunity that Immanuel cannot pass up as it would not only give him the opportunity to use his education and magical abilities, but also provide a way to support both himself and his lover, Adam Fenice. Adam has been facing challenges of his own because of their relationship. He was fired from his job as a bookkeeper because of social prejudice over his relationship with Immanuel. This sends him down a path of despair. The trip to Seolh-wiga Island in order to help investigate the death of the selkie is a way for him to regroup and come up with a plan for the future. But a trip becomes more dangerous when Adam and Immanuel try to join up with a Metropolitan Policeman who is investigating multiple disappearances among the human population of the island. There is more danger than meets the eye in the seemingly idyllic setting. And the two young men may end up becoming the next victims in an ongoing war that lies just beneath the surface of the sea. I received this novel in exchange for a fair and honest review, but I also purchased it because I believe in supporting indie authors. I recommend *Selkie Cove* to anyone who enjoys neo-Victorian novels, steampunk, magic, Lovecraft, and a good mystery. The other four books in Jorgensen’s series are available and I highly recommend them as well.

[Disclaimer: I received a free advance review copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.] We're back in the Ingenious Mechanical Devices universe, once again with a story entered around wonderfully well-matched couple Adam and Immanuel. Selkie Cove, which is book #5 in the IMD series, features a story sure to shake our protagonists' lives around. Immanuel is growing into his recently discovered magic abilities, but if he truly wants to explore what he's capable of, he needs to risk the safety he'd only just begun to find. And possibly his relationship with Adam, too. Whereas in previous books Adam and Immanuel have pretty much been thrown into the fray, this time they step into it very much by choice. reflecting the development of their characters, but also a maturation of the IMD series as a whole. Although I've always found Kara Jorgensen's books well woven together by mixing science, folklore, social and cultural history in a delightful flow of storytelling. Selkie Cove does it more seamlessly than previous titles. I loved learning about the selkies (talk about an undervalued mythological being right there!), seeing more vivalabe action (at one point, Adam picks it up too! I won't spoil what happens, but I will say it's totally cute), and of course, Interceptor things! Add to that descriptions so vivid that at times I was convinced I was on Seolh-wiga island myself, meeting some of those mysterious and sometimes quite shady inhabitants, and we have a very worthy continuance to an excellent series.

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