



The Bullet-Catcher's Daughter: The Fall of the Gas-Lit Empire, Book 1

By Rod Duncan

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Finalist for the 2014 Phillip K. Dick Award

Elizabeth Barnabus lives a double life – as herself and as her brother, the private detective. She is trying to solve the mystery of a disappearing aristocrat and a hoard of arcane machines. In her way stand the rogues, freaks and self-proclaimed alchemists of a travelling circus.

But when she comes up against an agent of the all-powerful Patent Office, her life and the course of history will begin to change. And not necessarily for the better...

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Editorial Review

Review

“Steeped in illusion and grounded in an alternative history of the Luddite Rebellion, Duncan’s strong supernatural mystery serves ably as both a standalone adventure and the start to a series...Strategically placed steampunk tropes inform but do not overwhelm Elizabeth’s headlong quest to find a missing aristocrat sought by the Patent Office, which is fixated on both achieving perfection and eliminating “unseemly science.” A hazardous border crossing into the permissively corrupt Kingdom of England and Southern Wales provides ample excitement, and a glossary at the novel’s conclusion hints enticingly at a much more involved story to come.”

–**Publishers Weekly**

“I was completely caught up in her adventure and her plight. I think steampunk readers and fantasy/sci-fi readers will enjoy this one, so I’m recommending it for them even though (and to some extent because) its use of steampunk is a bit different. I found it to be a refreshing change from more formulaic steampunk novels.”

–**Popcorn Reads**

“A detective story with a difference ... Chapters begin with quotes from the legendary *Bullet-Catcher’s Handbook*, phrases that introduce not only the idea of illusion that pervades the novel, but also the author’s sly humour. [Duncan’s misdirection is] subtly and well done, all the way through the book, right to a neat little twist at the end, a play on the title that had me nodding in approval. Each [character] is vividly portrayed, lively enough to feel like the heroes of their own stories, all with distinctive voices; it’s always a good sign when you find yourself reading dialogue out loud, rolling your lips and tongue around the words. Rod Duncan’s talent has combined inventive plot and characterisation to create a smart, amusing and fascinating tale that had me reading long into the night.”

–**Fantasy Faction**

“It’s all steampunk and circus wonder as we follow the adventures of Elizabeth Barnabas. The double crosses along the way keep the plot tight and fun, and the conclusion sets us up nicely for book two.”

–**The Washington Post**, Best New Science Fiction and Steampunk

About the Author

Rod Duncan is a published crime writer. His first novel *Backlash* was shortlisted for the CWA John Creasey Dagger, and he has since written three other novels (all Simon & Schuster UK), and had his first screenplay produced.

His background is in scientific research and computing, and he lives in Leicester.

You can find Rod online at www.rodduncan.co.uk and follow him @RodDuncan on Twitter.

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Joan Marcial:

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