



The Amulet

William Meikle

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It was supposed to be an easy case. Fast money, and a way to kill some time-something Derek Adams, a down-on-his-luck Glasgow private investigator, has way too much of. Recover a stolen family heirloom, and try to keep the relationship with his very beautiful-and very married-client, strictly professional. Easy. But the Johnson Amulet is no mere trinket...and Derek isn't the only person trying to find the priceless relic. Before long he's up to his armpits in bodies, femme fatales... and tentacles. The stars have aligned... An ancient evil has awakened. To save the day, Derek must take some dark pathways, and not everyone is going to make it back out into the light.

The Amulet Details

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From Reader Review The Amulet for online ebook

Annie says

A decent read. Editing could have been better. Not as good as the Road Hole Bunker Mystery.

Julia Jenkins says

Written in the noir fashion. Very entertaining.

? Irena ? says

I loved this book. You have your P.I. (he kind of drifted into the profession), a beautiful woman who hires him, occasional humour, a missing sinister artefact and lots and lots of tentacles. The only thing I didn't like is the damn foreshadowing but that is completely my personal preference and has nothing to do with how entertaining this book is.

Derek Adams has this tragic past that still haunts him and yet he can laugh (it's not even 'he smiled' and such). The man jokes with his friends and they actually laugh. I have never paid attention to how rare that is in mysteries/thrillers/horror stories until he laughed. And then he did it again. Even with the horror creeping around him and dead bodies dropping left and right, there is this indestructible silver lining in his life. He may not see it, but it's there. I also love the fact that he has a truly wonderful friend in his life.

As I said, the protagonist is a P.I. but the only thing he seems to get right is the drinking and chain smoking. At least in the beginning. He makes mistakes, but considering the unbelievable things he is facing here I think one should cut him some slack.

The book could have been a bit longer though. The last part, although with a very satisfying ending regarding the good guys and the bad ones, is a bit rushed and the description of the place where Derek ends up at one point in the story is too short. I might be greedy, who knows.

As far as I am concerned, you can't go wrong with *Lovecraftian* themes and this story has quite a few. I admit I may be biased.

Wayne says

This is my first Meikle book read for fun, rather than an illustration project, and it was great. The protagonist was relatable and the story engrossing. In fact, the hardest aspect of reading this book was not planning illustrations as I read! Fans will know to pick this book up. For the unread masses, consider it recommended to the highest degree. Meikle ROCKS!

Johann says

Noir and Cthulhu

Derek was a normal P. I. Until the dame came through his door asking for him to track down an old amulet. But after that nothing stayed normal for long with an old Arab that doesn't seem human is also tracking the amulet as well.

Will Derek find it first or will something else get him before he does?

Pick this up and find out.

Riju Ganguly says

H.P. Lovecraft had possessed an imagination that was completely beyond his literary skills. Hence, his works have provided others with raw material to construct and create better works. The present book under review is a classic example.

Growing out of one of the earliest stories penned by William Meikle, this novel features the Glasgow PI Derek Adams, in one of his earlier cases. He is quite raw, sensitive, and unable to keep himself aloof. In such a setting, a client appears at his doorstep right out of the world created by Chandler. The story that unfolds gradually, however, belongs to the world of HPL. The narrative is lush, fast-paced, and sardonic in a way that lovers of Chandler would be impressed with (apart from being a cut above anything written by HPL).

Recommended for dark and mournful evenings.

Carpentermt says

The Midnight Eye Files: The Amulet is a newly published book by Willie Meikle. Fortunately for us, it looks like the start of a new series. The publisher is Black Death Books. It is a standard sized trade soft cover, 197 pages that's all story, no introduction or author's notes. The cover art is by KHP studios, with no specific photographer credited. It shows a world weary gumshoe, cigarette in hand, with a femme fatale in the background. My favorite touch was the Elder Sign ring. Production qualities are good with maybe 1 typo. There may have been a few Glasgow references or language that I missed, but the prose was both accomplished and accessible. In fact, Mr. Meikle's knowledge and characterizations of Glasgow made the book spring to life.

I must admit I approached this book with a bit of trepidation. I really was not won over by Island Life, a title by Mr. Meikle from a few years ago. I actually gave my copy away. I need not have worried. The Amulet was a triumph and I hope the beginning of a beautiful friendship with private eye Derek Adams. Maybe I was a sucker for it because my all time favorite movie is The Maltese Falcon, hands down. I just love all those old Bogart flicks. Schizophrenically, I've never read a Raymond Chandler, even after reading reams of Doc Savage, Tarzan, Ludlum, Clancy and other potboilers. Maybe I'll mosey to the bookstore and give them a gander, as Chandler is treated reverentially by Meikle.

To explain how the mythos fits is I have to include some mild spoilers, so stop now if that is going to bother you.

Derek Adams is a down on his luck £250-per-day-plus-expenses gumshoe in Glasgow, what little time he isn't chain smoking he spends getting drunk. Or at least drinking really hard. Man if I had 10% of what he downed in this book I would be completely incapacitated for weeks! In walks a knock out dame with a case

and it is trouble (it always is isn't it?)! It seems there is an amulet from ancient Ur, of the image of a terrible tentacled demon. It was unearthed in an archeological dig decades earlier, perhaps under nefarious circumstances, under the influence of a mysterious ancient Arab. The amulet has been stolen from its current owners under suspicious circumstances, with a mysterious ancient Arab needing sighted around the fringes. What follows is a well paced story of Derek first doing some basic PI work, and some flashbacks to the dig at Ur. Mutilated bodies start piling up, the local police start hassling Derek and it becomes obvious some supernatural agency is involved. After the mystery is largely solved, the book's last 50 or so pages turn into a sorcerous confrontation between the amulet's owners, a scholar and Wiccan witch, and those who want to use its power to open the gates of reality to awaken Great C'thulhu. The demon of the amulet is not a specific mythos entity but is a creation of Mr. Meikle, called the Gatekeeper (unless I missed that somehow it is an avatar of Yog Sothoth). A creature with starfish like tentacles on the top of its head seems like one of our old friends, and there may be an oblique reference to Azathoth what with all the piping going on. The climactic confrontation takes place in the depths of a forbidding place called Arkham House. How much more mythos can it be? Of course, however, it is not really a mythos story except maybe the last bit. It's really more a detective novel. Naaah, not a detective novel. A gumshoe novel.

So here, in stream of consciousness format, are things I liked and my one quibble. I really like the first half of the book. This isn't CJ Henderson type stuff, at least not a first. This is more like James Ambuehl's *The Pisces Club* with break neck action and humor intermingled. There is a real patina of gritty Glaswegian reality, lending richness and depth. I loved the stock PI novel characters. But I was distressed when so many of them ended up among the victims! I liked that Derek was not a superman, not even a real tough guy type. But he pursued this case like a bulldog. And non-existentialist mythos fans will be quite pleased by the way the good guys put up a fight with ultimate evil. I also liked the events at the end leading up to the confrontation if not quite so much as the first part of the book. I hope Derek rethinks his end of book decision to give up the PI business. I guess I'll just have to wait and see where Mr. Meikle takes us.

Now my one quibble, such a tiny thing but it always puts me off in a mythos book. HPL is mentioned as an author of fiction, and yet his mythos is the backdrop for the horror elements of this story. HPL writing reality passed off as fiction is a plot device I just don't like. This was one tiny part of a short sentence. It didn't detract in any way from my enjoyment of the novel. I just couldn't help noticing it.

I don't know if Derek Adams will cross paths with minions of the Great Old Ones again, or if his further adventures will be along other arcane avenues. Whatever he does, I'll be along for the ride and you should too. I also want to explore some of Mr. Meikle's other books too, particularly his *Watchers* series. *The Amulet* is recommended to mythos fans, gumshoe fans, Meikle fans and fans of a good yarn.

Jayaprakash Satyamurthy says

Coming from a skilled writer of occult tinged tales of detection featuring the immortal Sherlock Holmes or Carnacki, I was curious to read this occult/noir featuring Meikle's own private eye. The narrator/detective has the usual shadows in his past and moves in a suitably seedy milieu. A major plus point is Meikle's obvious love for and familiarity with the Glasgow setting. The story trots along well with sardonic asides, a dazzling dame, sinister villains, seedy characters and a hectic quest for a lost amulet that will bring Derek Adams face to face with a horror straight from the pages of Lovecraft. This is a solid entertainment, laced with action, horror and numerous smoke and drink breaks, something Meikle is consistently adept at creating.

Kelly says

Picture it: A twelve-year-old Punky Brewster look-alike with a curse on her tongue and a backpack containing all of the necessities a Nancy Drew wannabe might consider pertinent: flashlight, pen, paper, magnifying glass, a bag of chips and a soda. Following in tow are three fourteen-year-old boys who swear by Superman comics and that world peace could be achieved if everyone would just appreciate arm-farts. They stand in front of the local beat down house that is supposedly haunted with an accelerated heartbeat and a gleam in their eyes. This, people, is my childhood. And those three boys were my brother and his idiot crew.

Why let you sneak a peak into my younger days? Well, simply so I could convey to you the love I have for all things Nancy Drew, and so I could publicly call my brother an idiot. Did I ever grow out of it? Hell no, I love exploring! Every so often I toss on a pair of jeans and a black rock shirt, grab the necessities (since I'm an adult, I traded chips for cigarettes), hop in my car and look for a prime spot to invade and look for clues. Lucky for me and my 91 gas-guzzling Cadillac, I didn't need to go looking for a case, one fell into my lap...literally. I took one look at Meikle's cover, read the synopsis, and immediately dressed in my detective attire.

Tight, sharp, and cynical, Meikle's characters are brilliantly portrayed. Sure the main character has a fascination with Humphrey Bogart that borders on obsessive, but it's okay, it works here. Why? Because he is the quintessential detective you imagine every P.I. to be. His wit is quick, his obvious blindness to his client's motives is at the end – legendary, and his heartache and empathy is palpable. Perfect. What wasn't perfect was the secondary characters' dialect.

Now, I understand Mr. Meikle is British, but some of the casts' dialogue became more of a mystery than the case itself. In fact, in order to save my sanity and my need for all things orderly and clear, I had to skip over a few of the interactions between Derek and the locals. Other than dousing us in the local slang, Meikle's style of writing is nostalgic, baroque, and spellbinding. Never has an author had me so caught up in his mystery that I forgot to smoke. Mr. Meikle, you may just be literary Nicorette.

While the outline to the story is not wholly original, the fleshed out plot is. Formative and intelligent, this story has it all: Mystery, horror, lost-love, and friendship. In other words, it could become a classic. Now, don't go getting the idea that this is some creampuff book; it's not. But I do have to admit the horror is sparse. In fact, the blood count is shamelessly low, but that's okay, the supernatural elements carry this book into the genre nicely.

Sultry and casual, the story moves at a languid pace. Starting at a near crawl, the pace increases with a progressive speed that leaves you breathless before it's over and done with. Pure Lovecraft, the atmosphere is dark and disturbing with just a hint of decay. You can smell the cheap gin and cigarettes, but there's an underlying aftertaste of mold.

My rating? I give it a 4. Dark, dank, and mysterious, Meikle's latest will hypnotize you from beginning to end and leave you begging for more.

-As posted on Horror-Web.com

Jacqueline Jackson says

Amazing!

Imagine Raymond Chandler collaborating with H P Lovecraft. (For those of you wondering what I mean, Chandler wrote detective novels.) And believe it or not it worked wonderfully! Pick up this book. You won't be disappointed. I'll be purchasing the next book after I write this review.

April says

(Originally posted @ CSI:Librarian.)

The Amulet has a very compelling main character with a very authentic, engaging voice. Derek Adams is a fairly normal man confronted with fairly odd situations. His detective agency has been set up to stave off despair as well as his sense of helplessness and futility when confronted with his past. Needless to say, this makes him perfect for a Lovecraft-ish tale, but unlike many of Lovecraft's "heroes," Derek has more of a spine. The setting of the book is also really fascinating not only because it is set in Glasglow but because Meikle has a real way with dialogue and detail.

In terms of atmosphere and plot, I think the mystery and horror elements were well done. I really, really liked the backstory behind the amulet and the creepy Elder God who wielded it. At the same time, I felt a certain loss of momentum as the story was moving towards its final confrontation. Maybe it was Derek being mostly normal and not equipped with his own high-powered abilities that made it fairly jarring to suddenly have him working with two people who were. Maybe I was a bit too concerned about what had happened to Doug at that point, to care about learning much about Dunlop or his lovely wife. I definitely didn't care much about about their well-being. I sincerely appreciate Mielke providing Derek with secondary characters who know what they're doing if only to keep Derek from meeting a grisly end... But I can't help thinking I would have rather read about Derek finding a way to take out a cult and its monster all on his own.

Aside from that somewhat minor complaint, *The Amulet* is a book that I could honestly kick myself for not reading sooner, and one that I really enjoyed. Derek was a really perfect noir PI who cared about his friends and not too much about himself. He's a character that mattered to me from beginning to end and one I definitely was relieved to find more books for. I liked that he wasn't as tough as he wanted to be. I liked most of the people he met, particularly Jimmy and Doug, as well as Derek's take on them. I liked all the little details Mielke added, I loved the Derek's sense of humor, and am still quite amused by the Gilbert & Sullivan references.

In conclusion, a really good read and introduction to a very cool character. I dug the mystery, the horror, and the slight urban fantasy vibe reminiscent of Simon R. Green's *Tales from the Nightside*. And I have a feeling I will be acquiring more William Meikle books in the near future. In the mean time, I would definitely recommend *The Amulet* to readers who pine for Lovecraft meets Chandler storylines, or to readers who simply wish their urban fantasy-tinged fiction took more risks.

Albert says

Well that was interesting. I haven't read many Noir sub-genre horror novels, or Lovecraftian stuff, but I really do enjoy this author so I figured I'd give it a try, and who doesn't love tentacles?

It was a fairly short read, book 1 in a trilogy, about a down on his luck Scottish PI. The opening Chapter was pretty cliché but beyond that this was pretty fun.

Meikle can't do wrong by me. He writes interesting, down to earth characters and fairly interesting stories, can't wait to read the next two.

Zoe says

Spoiler Warning & Preface: I am clearly not the target audience for this book, primarily because this is a Lovecraft lore book, or a story which uses the Cthulu mythos as a springboard. There is no surer way to get me to put down a book than to name drop this one guy in a non-sarcastic way. Which partly explains why my review is harsh.

Also note that I have read many of Willie's short stories and liked all of them. But the Cthulu mythos leaves such a bad taste in my mouth. It's not just used as a springboard, either. This story takes Cthulu and snuggles drunkenly in bed with him. And then everyone smokes, a lot. Seriously, if you were going to AA meetings or are just quitting smoking, this is not a story to pick up. And if you're quitting whiskey AND ciggies this week, this really, REALLY isn't the right time to read this book. Maybe later, if you're a fan of Lovecraft and are nowhere near a pack of Camels.

The premise starts off well enough, if a bit predictably. Hot dame walks into a dick's office...private dick, I mean. The dame has a job for the dick, an amulet that was stolen from her home. The dick is clearly outclassed, but like most men with more balls than common sense, he takes the job. And this PI really is a dick in my mind even if he tried to paint himself in a halfway favorable light.

Part of my problem is the character talking winsomely about the good old days when people weren't such sex freaks and weirdos. He is suspicious of "kids" (anyone under 25, apparently) and freaks. And yet despite all this talk of chivalry, he drinks a lot because back when he had a woman, she needed to talk, and he left to go party and drink instead. She killed herself, and it tore him up so badly....he pretty much kept doing more of the same for a decade. BUT, like a decade later, he decided to become a PI, and he no longer parties. He still drinks a lot, and still hangs out in pubs. But now he's grim about it.

Yeah, still not a real sympathetic guy for me. But this has to do with the fact that I often felt like I could more readily identify with the "freaks" than I could with the dick...the private dick, I mean. But the story of the amulet and its history were fascinating right up until the Mad Arab was trotted out, and the story just kept snuggling up to Lovecraft more and more until the dick is buried hip deep in Cthulu's hot, sweet, mucus-wet folds of dhoom.

But more than that, the story is Lovecraft-aware, meaning that not only is this a story that proposes to be a part of the mythos, it is also a story that suggests "Hark! Lovecraft was psychic and predicting the story all Nostradamus-like!" And when the story suggested that the big conflict was to prevent the big C-guy himself from putting in an appearance, I sighed and put the book down. Then I lit up a ciggie...okay that was a lie. But I did drink some whiskey. Okay, that was a lie too.

The writing style is good, although a bit indulgent upon stereotypes of normal and abnormal. The pace is good, and if you like Lovecraft or old school PI stories, this will probably work for you. But I will not be reaching the final fight with the evil tentacled monster because Lovecraft and his whole wide tentacled world, are not my cup of tea.

Two stars, recommended for Lovecraft fans.

Roy says

Meikle is a very readable writer of fantasy and horror. I have always been a sucker for stories that involve the Lovecraftian universe if done well and Meikle writes with a clear style. The Midnight Eye Files concern a Glasgow private eye who ends up with occult cases from time to time. He is the classic tough former cop who mostly just gets by and drinks too much in the bargain.

This is a tale of a missing artifact that will bring about an end to the world when the stars are aligned, etc. Very entertaining read that moves on well.

Kent Holloway says

The first book of the Midnight Eye Files, *The Amulet*, blew me away. Seriously. This book and author is the perfect example of why indie authors can be just as competitive and awesome as authors from the Big 6 Publishers. Blending elements of the classic hardboiled detective story (think Philip Marlowe, Mike Hammer, and Sam Spade) and nightmarish legends and monsters straight from the mind of H.P. Lovecraft (C'thulu anyone?) and you'll have a pretty good idea of what you're in store for.

As most people know, I'm a huge Jim Butcher fan...Harry Dresden, the wizard P.I. from Chicago, is one of my favorite fictional characters. Meikle's detective really isn't anything like Dresden at all. He's no wizard. Heck, the only magic trick he knows is seeing his cigarettes and booze disappear. No, he's just an ordinary guy who's been hired to find a most extraordinary object...an amulet that opens a portal to another dimension. A dimension where the creatures inside want to come through. And Derek Adams has to figure out a way to stop an evil cult from doing just that.

With a mixture of intense action scenes, smart and witty dialogue, good looking femme fatales, and horrendous monsters with one too many tentacles growing out of their head...this book is a rip-roaring good time. I can't wait to read the rest of the series!
