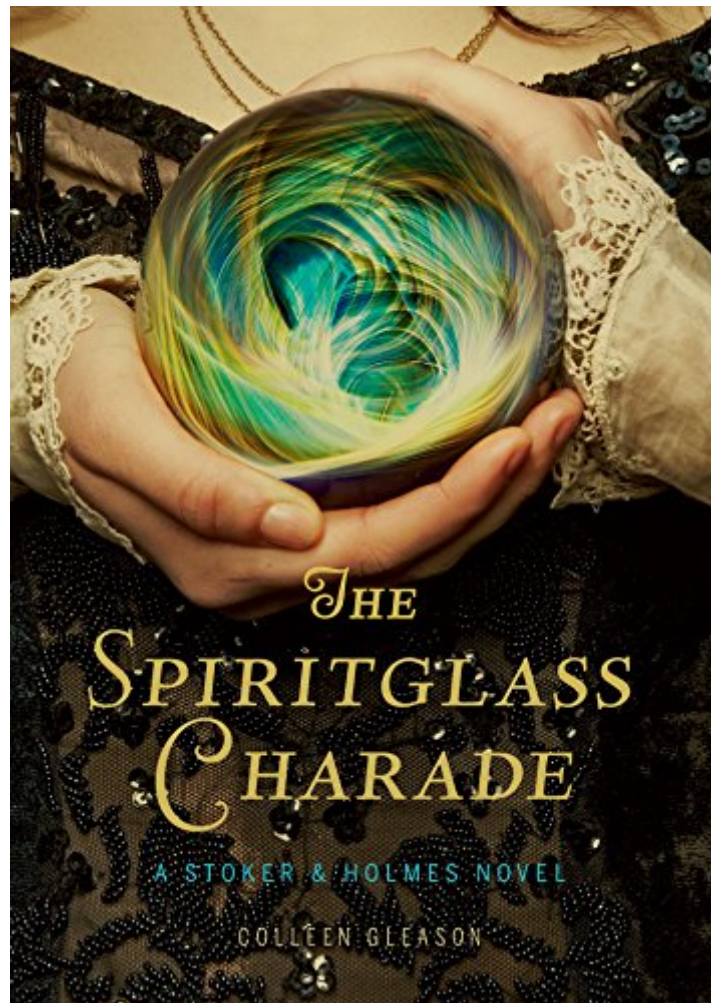




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The Spiritglass Charade: A Stoker & Holmes Novel



Synopsis

Evaline Stoker and Mina Holmes never meant to get into the family business. But when you're the sister of Bram and the niece of Sherlock, vampire hunting and mystery solving are in your blood, so to speak. After the Affair of the Clockwork Scarab, Evaline Stoker and Mina Holmes are eager to help Princess Alix with a new case. Seventeen-year-old Willa Aston is obsessed with spiritual mediums, convinced she is speaking with her mother from beyond the grave. What seems like a case of spiritualist fraud quickly devolves into something far more menacing: someone is trying to make Willa appear lunatic using an innocent-looking spiritglass to control her. The list of clues piles up: an unexpected murder, a gang of pickpockets, and the return of vampires to London. But are these events connected? As Uncle Sherlock would say, there are no coincidences. It will take all of Mina's wit and Evaline's muscle to keep London's sinister underground at bay. Includes bonus material!- Sneak peek chapter from the next book in the Stoker and Holmes series *The Chess Queen Enigma* by Colleen Gleason

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Customer Reviews

LOVE SO MUCH! This is Such an incredible creation! The author does extremely well in bringing mystery, action, imagination, and a touch of a romantic twist to bring this brilliant book into creation. The Characters are SO fun and quirky with their own personalities that add SO much to this book. I fully recommend this amazing masterpiece. Trust me, you don't want to wait to start this book! Jump in and read about this fascinating new world full of intrigue and genius! This is a book you Don't want to miss out on!

So I'm 60% through this book and it's.... boring. Nothing has happened. Meanwhile there's about 7 other mysteries swirling around the two main heroines to the point of distraction: - There's Dylan, the time-traveling guy, who's sole purpose so far was to be another love interest for Mina. I don't really understand the necessity of this character. Maybe it'll be revealed as time goes by, but he just takes away from the story - There's Evaline's mysterious blackout on her first Vampire hunt. And the vampires in general. They haven't factored into the story at all, and then suddenly, they pop up. - There's Irene Adler; oh why oh why does she act strangely at times? I'm really, really hoping she's not the main villain of the story. It's a little too convenient and cliched. - There's Pix, who seems to be everywhere, has strange connections, and knows a lot about Evaline - There's the actual mystery, which has had so little development at 60% that I don't particularly care who's behind the dastardly plot - And there's Mina's mom's disappearance to the Continent! I think one of the real problems of this book is pacing; it's incredibly slow, with barely any action and so much time spent inside the heroines' heads thinking about things or describing the surroundings/clothing/gadgets/Mina's constant barrage of "THERE ARE NO COINCIDENCES"! I'm also not overtly impressed with the characters themselves. I find Mina to be going further and further away from "endearingly awkward" into more "extremely obnoxious" territory. Neither of the characters have really grown much from book one; there's been no character development and no growing camaraderie/friendship to the point where I don't really want to spend time with these two people who dislike each other so much. I finished the book. The ending felt rushed, but was pretty entertaining. Evaline's big emotion upheaval and her reaction to Willa's emotions was a little ridiculous - She couldn't believe the way Willa was acting was kind of hilariously stupid. It could've been better, could've been worse. A personal aside: I keep thinking Evaline's name is Mina just because of Mina Harker and her association with Dracula. Every time the two characters are together and someone says Mina's name it confuses me. Maybe Evaline's brother is going to write a book and base one of the characters on Mina. Who knows.

I have read the previous two books in this series and they seem to get better with each volume! While certainly no history book, this series does show that its author is not unfamiliar with the streets and parlors of Victorian London. Each Stoker-Holmes book is more inventive than the last, raising questions I look forward for future books to explore. The sheer fun and historical interest made this a five star book despite the fact that proofreading/copyediting errors were frequent. They were obtrusive enough that I was starting to wonder when we were going to learn why this world's version of the 19th century eschewed capitalization of proper nouns denoting businesses. So, high praise, and will certainly continue to follow!

I love young adult books, and I love books set in the Victorian era. Coleen Gleason's Stoker & Holmes series combines both of these elements, and adds a partnership between Bram Stoker's sister and Sherlock Holmes' niece. I have recently finished listening to *The Spiritglass Charade*, which is the second book in the series. Mina Holmes and Evaline Stoker have already solved one mystery, but they are asked by Princess Alix for assistance with a rather delicate matter. A young aristocratic woman has been increasingly involved with spiritualism following the death of her mother and the disappearance of her brother. The princess fears that Miss Aston is being taken advantage of, because mediums are believed to be charlatans who take advantage of mourners. But of course, nothing is as it seems, and the two young women find the case to be far more complicated than it appears. Throw in evidence of vampires, and you've got an intriguing case that Mina and Evaline are determined to solve! The story unfolds with each girl narrating alternating chapters, so we are often treated to an event from both perspectives. Mina is very logical and calculating; she claims to know all of the tricks mediums employ, and refuses to believe that they are really connecting with the dead. Evaline is much harder to convince; she hunts vampires, and is well acquainted with phenomena that cannot be explained. Their personalities are different, and it's so enjoyable to see them interacting with each other. It should also be noted that this story takes place in an alternate Victorian London, where electricity has been banned. Machines are steam powered, and society has been highly mechanized. The enigmatic Dylan returns, and I won't say anything more about him to avoid spoilers for those who haven't read the first book in the series. I would absolutely recommend *The Spiritglass Charade*. I would suggest reading *The Clockwork Scarab* first; there are several important elements that will help the reader understand the plot of this book. The mystery is not particularly difficult to solve- there aren't that many suspects. The alternate Victorian London, the banter between

both girls, and even the hints of romance all help to make this book enjoyable. I am looking forward to reading the third book in this series soon.

This is a wonderful young adult novel, but can be used to captivate older readers also. The characters are dynamic and well - developed, running through a series of plots that blend into a wonderful whole. The overall plot is imaginative, and the subplots work diligently to entertain and entrance the reader. There are abundant surprises, even as the book moves pell - mell to a wonderful conclusion. Which comes with just a tiny surprise, that no doubt can lead to the next book.

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