



The Devil In The White City

By Erik Larson

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The Devil In The White City By Erik Larson

Two men, each handsome and unusually adept at his chosen work, embodied an element of the great dynamic that characterized America's rush toward the twentieth century. The architect was Daniel Hudson Burnham, the fair's brilliant director of works and the builder of many of the country's most important structures, including the Flatiron Building in New York and Union Station in Washington, D.C. The murderer was Henry H. Holmes, a young doctor who, in a malign parody of the White City, built his "World's Fair Hotel" just west of the fairgrounds—a torture palace complete with dissection table, gas chamber, and 3,000-degree crematorium. Burnham overcame tremendous obstacles and tragedies as he organized the talents of Frederick Law Olmsted, Charles McKim, Louis Sullivan, and others to transform swampy Jackson Park into the White City, while Holmes used the attraction of the great fair and his own satanic charms to lure scores of young women to their deaths. What makes the story all the more chilling is that Holmes really lived, walking the grounds of that dream city by the lake.

The Devil in the White City draws the listener into a time of magic and majesty, made all the more appealing by a supporting cast of real-life characters, including Buffalo Bill, Theodore Dreiser, Susan B. Anthony, Thomas Edison, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and others. In this audiobook the smoke, romance, and mystery of the Gilded Age come alive as never before.

Erik Larson's gifts as a storyteller are magnificently displayed in this rich narrative of the master builder, the killer, and the great fair that obsessed them both.

To find out more about this audiobook, go to
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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Author Erik Larson imbues the incredible events surrounding the 1893 Chicago World's Fair with such drama that readers may find themselves checking the book's categorization to be sure that *The Devil in the White City* is not, in fact, a highly imaginative novel. Larson tells the stories of two men: Daniel H. Burnham, the architect responsible for the fair's construction, and H.H. Holmes, a serial killer masquerading as a charming doctor. Burnham's challenge was immense. In a short period of time, he was forced to overcome the death of his partner and numerous other obstacles to construct the famous "White City" around which the fair was built. His efforts to complete the project, and the fair's incredible success, are skillfully related along with entertaining appearances by such notables as Buffalo Bill Cody, Susan B. Anthony, and Thomas Edison. The activities of the sinister Dr. Holmes, who is believed to be responsible for scores of murders around the time of the fair, are equally remarkable. He devised and erected the World's Fair Hotel, complete with crematorium and gas chamber, near the fairgrounds and used the event as well as his own charismatic personality to lure victims. Combining the stories of an architect and a killer in one book, mostly in alternating chapters, seems like an odd choice but it works. The magical appeal and horrifying dark side of 19th-century Chicago are both revealed through Larson's skillful writing. --John Moe

From Publishers Weekly

Not long after Jack the Ripper haunted the ill-lit streets of 1888 London, H.H. Holmes (born Herman Webster Mudgett) dispatched somewhere between 27 and 200 people, mostly single young women, in the churning new metropolis of Chicago; many of the murders occurred during (and exploited) the city's finest moment, the World's Fair of 1893. Larson's breathtaking new history is a novelistic yet wholly factual account of the fair and the mass murderer who lurked within it. Bestselling author Larson (Isaac's Storm) strikes a fine balance between the planning and execution of the vast fair and Holmes's relentless, ghastly activities. The passages about Holmes are compelling and aptly claustrophobic; readers will be glad for the frequent escapes to the relative sanity of Holmes's co-star, architect and fair overseer Daniel Hudson Burnham, who managed the thousands of workers and engineers who pulled the sprawling fair together on an astonishingly tight two-year schedule. A natural charlatan, Holmes exploited the inability of authorities to coordinate, creating a small commercial empire entirely on unpaid debts and constructing a personal cadaver-disposal system. This is, in effect, the nonfiction *Alienist*, or a sort of companion, which might be called *Homicide*, to Emile Durkheim's *Suicide*. However, rather than anomie, Larson is most interested in industriousness and the new opportunities for mayhem afforded by the advent of widespread public anonymity. This book is everything popular history should be, meticulously recreating a rich, pre-automobile America on the cusp of modernity, in which the sale of "articulated" corpses was a semi-respectable trade and serial killers could go well-nigh unnoticed. 6 b&w photos, 1 map.

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Larson's ambitious, engrossing tale of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 focuses primarily on two men: Daniel H. Burnham, the architect who was the driving force behind the fair, and Henry H. Holmes, a sadistic serial killer working under the cover of the busy fair. After the 1889 French *Exposition Universel* wowed the world with the Eiffel Tower and high attendance numbers, interest began to grow in the U.S. for a similar fair. Chicago and New York were the top contenders for the location, and in February 1890, Chicagoans were overjoyed to hear they had won the honor. Burnham and his partner, John Root, the leading architects in Chicago, were tapped for the job, and they in turn called on Frederick Law Olmstead, Louis Sullivan, and Richard M. Hunt to help them build the world's greatest fair. They faced overwhelming

obstacles: inhospitable weather, bureaucracy, illness, and even death. Unbeknownst to any of them, Holmes, a charismatic, handsome doctor, had arrived in the city and built a complex with apartments, a drugstore, and a vault, which he used to trap his victims until they suffocated. When the White City opened for business in May 1893, hundreds of thousands of people flocked to it, although a plummeting economy and several accidents did nothing to help business. A shocking murder concludes the ultimately successful fair, and that's before Holmes claims his final victims in the cruelest act of his career. A magnificent book. *Kristine Huntley*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Hilda Szymanski:

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they carrying out activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Will you something different to fill your current free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book may be option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the reserve untitled The Devil In The White City can be excellent book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

Judy Young:

Your reading sixth sense will not betray a person, why because this The Devil In The White City guide written by well-known writer who really knows well how to make book that may be understand by anyone who have read the book. Written within good manner for you, dripping every ideas and writing skill only for eliminate your personal hunger then you still hesitation The Devil In The White City as good book not merely by the cover but also by the content. This is one e-book that can break don't assess book by its deal with, so do you still needing a different sixth sense to pick this specific!? Oh come on your reading sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to a different sixth sense.

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