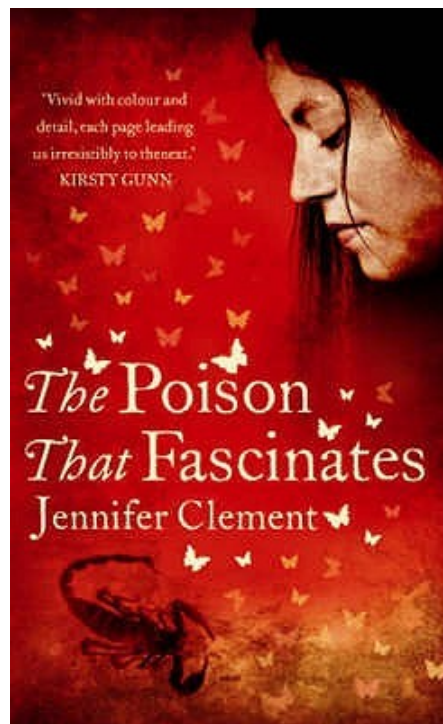




The Poison That Fascinates

Jennifer Clement

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Abandoned by her mother as a child, Emily now lives with her father in Mexico City, working in the local orphanage. When a mysterious cousin appears on her doorstep, he brings with him family secrets, and soon Emily finds desire and temptation have overturned her straightforward life forever.

The Poison That Fascinates Details

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From Reader Review *The Poison That Fascinates* for online ebook

? Pixie says

This book was like a rich dessert. It had a dark, velvety feel to it with its superstitions, saints and murderesses mingling into a web of intrigue, mystery, history and ancestry. Jennifer Clement has a beautifully poetic turn of phrase and when the twist hits you at the end of the book it's like having a butterfly's wing brush your face only for you to discover that it's made of steel.

Susan says

The language of this book is so rich and absorbing I was pulled in from the first page. I could almost taste every word, sentence, paragraph as it rolled through my eyes into my nervous system. Dubbed a "fable" rather than a novel, the tale of Emily Neale, a Mexican of English descent who collects facts about saints and about female killers (I was reminded of Edward Gorey's "Neglected Murderesses") moves quickly and keeps you reading even as it turns toward the dark. The darkness--and my having guessed some of the secrets perhaps too soon--made me give this four stars rather than five. If four and a half were an option, I would have done that! I cannot wait to read more by Clement.

Stephanie says

I did a poetry-writing workshop with Clement in Mexico a couple years ago and she did a reading from this book that was quite captivating. Prose by poets can be a bit precious, but there is an intimacy and inventiveness to her writing that can be wonderful. But despite my respect for Clement's talent, I can't say this 100% works as a novel. Because of the snippets from news articles about women killers in history that are woven into the story, it's not remotely a surprise when the main character kills her controlling boyfriend. It is a small book that I recommend in a lukewarm fashion, but I still would like to read her *The Widow Basquiat*.

Andrea says

This is a brilliant book, the story of a girl whose life is thrown into turmoil when her long-lost cousin arrives unexpectedly.

It can be a bit sick at times, when your mind is screaming at her to wake up to reality (and so on), but what a tale!

Jim says

The Poison that Fascinates by Jennifer Clement is a fable, a work dripping in symbolism. It builds on

ancient myths (both pagan – the story of the god Quetzalcoatl is fundamental to a deeper understanding of the book – and Christian – saints are everywhere) and modern folklore, specifically the tales told about murderesses, such as Lizzie Borden, Belle Gunness, and Myra Hindley.

Our archetypical Red Riding Hood is Emily Neale, a not very typical Mexican girl of English decent. Her age is not given. She is probably about nineteen although she acts younger. But more about her later.

The Poison that Fascinates is also a mystery novel. We know whodunit, (Emily's mother, Greta, is the guilty party – she abandoned Emily when her daughter was six months old); what we don't know is why she did it. And no one can seem to get their story straight.

I've written a detailed review on my blog [here](#).

VeganMedusa says

Meh. Badly edited, with you/your mistakes, your/you're mistakes, the wrong word used once (instead of the church granting cousins who want to marry a 'dispensation', the book has the church granting 'compensation'). All this would be bearable if the story was any good, but it just wasn't very interesting. Emily wasn't a real character, and even though I'm usually terrible at guessing twists and big reveals, I could spot both the big reveal and the consequences a mile off. On the plus side, it was a quick read.

Maggie says

An odd story, but intriguing. I found certain aspects unbelievable but enjoyed it overall.

Dani C says

I just couldn't get past page 100 of this - I have precious little time to read during uni terms, and this didn't interest me enough to keep me going.

Yelania Nightwalker says

Mujer, mujer divina
tienes el veneno que fascina en tu mirar...

Si alguno de nuestros lectores gusta de la música del cantante mexicano Agustín Lara, sin duda alguna ha oído esta canción. Pues bien, es de ahí, que Clement se inspira para dar nombre a este libro.

El veneno que fascina, cuyo título original es “The poison that fascinates”, es un libro lleno de canciones, creencias, historias y escenarios de nuestro México que para quienes conozcan esos lugares, sin duda recrearán con gusto en su memoria al leer el libro y para quienes no los conozcan, les dará la oportunidad de

acercarse más a esos espacios, mediante las magníficas descripciones que hace la autora, sin caer, sin embargo, en exotismos o parafernalias.

Jennifer Clement es una poetisa y –aunque he leído un solo libro de ella-, puedo decir que su prosa –poética- en muchos sentidos es precisa, épica, fluida...

“En la estación lluviosa, en cambio, la ciudad se derrite. Las calles se convierten en ríos que transportan plásticos, periódicos y hojas secas de los sauces y pequeños fragmentos de vidrio volcánico. Los volcanes y las montañas que rodean la Ciudad de México son como los muros de una fortaleza: no dejan entrar ni salir a nadie”

El libro está narrado en tercera persona, en tiempo presente. Y su protagonista es Emily Neale. Una joven mexicana, descendiente de ingleses. Emily vive con su padre, pues su madre desapareció misteriosamente. La familia de ella eran dueños de unas minas de plata y más tarde, su abuela fundó el Orfanato Rosa de Lima, donde Emily ha pasado gran parte de su vida. La madre Ágata –una mujer enorme, de grandes manos, que vestida con su hábito de monja, se parece a un ángel colosal al que la gente acude en busca de sombra o cobijo-, es quien dirige el orfanato desde poco antes de la desaparición de la madre de Emily.

Emily es estudiante de Historia en la UNAM, y prepara su tesis sobre la vida de los santos y cómo estas creencias influyen en las personas. Al ser una niña solitaria, su vida estado plagada de una soledad infinita que su padre ha intentado llenar. Por eso, ella sólo pasa su tiempo entre la escuela, el orfanato y su casa. Emily colecciona también algunas cosas, entre ellos, relatos de asesinas. Su fascinación por las historias donde mujeres han llevado a cabo homicidios, podría parecer desconcertante, pero, la autora ha tenido a bien, concluir cada capítulo con el resumen de estos hechos; haciéndonos así, partícipes de esta obsesión. Cada relato es narrado desde un ángulo diferente, lo que le da un aire de espontaneidad al libro.

Esta novela habla de mentiras, de misterios, de desapariciones y verdades a medias.

“Desaparecida” es una palabra de doce letras. Desaparecida como un anillo perdido o un jersey, o una cucharilla. “Desvanecida” es una palabra de once letras. Desvanecida como la niebla y el rocío del amanecer. Desvanecida en el sombrero de un mago. “Perdida.” Perdida es una palabra de siete letras. Perdida en la lámpara de un genio...

“Nunca te he mentado, pero tampoco te he contado nunca la verdad” ¿Qué hacer cuando las mentiras que han regido nuestra vida, son desveladas en el peor momento? ¿Qué sucede cuando te enamoras de la persona equivocada? ¿Qué harían si supieran que su vida, de un día para otro, se ha vuelto un callejón sin salida?

Emily enfrenta una verdadera encrucijada cuando todo se descubre. Cuando conoce el secreto que guarda Santiago, su primo, el mismo hombre de quien ella se ha enamorado. Y la decisión que toma, puede en cierta medida, resultar escalofriante justificada... o no.

El personaje de Emily me parecía muy frágil. Se me hacía una mujer sumisa, perdida en sus creencias, en la previsibilidad y monotonía de su vida. Hasta que llega Santi y cambia mucho de lo que ella es o siente.

Santiago era extraño. Durante toda la trama te debates entre aceptar que ¿la ama? O ¿la odia? Creo que las dos cosas. Creo que al final, se puede entender el por qué de esa relación enfermiza. Al final, puedes realmente entender por qué él se comportaba de tal o cuál manera. Yo, al menos, pude comprenderlo, más no justificarlo.

Jennifer Clement hizo de “El veneno que Fascina” una historia trepidante, caótica, que te dirige sin darte cuenta al punto álgido de la historia para hacer que seas tú, quien escriba el final. Quien decida si lo último que se cuenta, es lo que verdaderamente ha sucedido.

Sé que estoy siendo muy pero muy críptica, pero no deseo arruinarles la lectura de una novela que muestra muchos de los matices de la feminidad, desde la bondad hasta la crueldad y la locura de las asesinas. Muchos han dicho que las mujeres tienen el poder de levantar o de derrocar imperios, y en esta novela, una mujer, es quien destruye, de una u otra forma; tal vez sin quererlo, a una familia entera.

En resumen, el libro me encantó y guardaré mi ejemplar con mucho cariño por que la historia es magnífica. Y me llevó a experimentar muchos sentimientos encontrados. Una lectura genial para quien busca algo diferente que leer.

Pascale De thaey says

Very special novel...dark and intriguing. It's hard to put it down, as you know something very bad is going to happen...a very nice girl turns into a murderer.

Keris says

Some people have a morbid fascination with death, others with the means of death. Emily Neale, half British, half Mexican, collects facts about women who poisoned others. Abandoned as a baby by her mother, she's brought up in Mexico City by her father and Mother Agata, head of the orphanage that Emily's great-grandmother founded and where Emily now often helps out.

We hear that there are saints for almost everything in a devote Catholic Mexican society that is

To read the rest of this review (and more!), please visit [Trashionista](#)

Diana Skelton says

"Emily knows she is half an orphan. As a child she used to think of things that were halves of other things. She used to look up words in the dictionary: half-ripe, half-empty, a half note, half-moon, half-hearted, half-light, half-truth, half-and-half."

"Arsenic is a grey metal. Grey as grey clouds. Grey as grey pavement. At her confession, she said, 'If ghosts are in this room they're either drunk or sleeping.'"

"In Mexico City during the dry season everything in the city seems to turn into stone--stone birds, stone flowers, stone butterflies. The sun warms the red pockmarked volcanic stone and the cement buildings and pavements burn. In the rainy season the city becomes molten, streets turn into rivers that carry plastics, newspaper, dry willow leaves, small shards of volcanic glass. The volcanoes and mountains that surround Mexico City are like the walls of a fortress that keep everyone out and keep everyone in."

Joanna says

A very strange little book. The style reminded me a bit of Jeanette Winterson, but darker and more sinister. Somehow, the book didn't quite come together for me despite the interesting elements and lyrical prose. The facts about female murderers were interesting and provided a nice backdrop for the story of this strange British family living in Mexico City. But the main character, Emily Neale, never really came alive enough for me to be that interested in her story.

Drew says

3.5

Stewart says

"Working as a fable, *The Poison That Fascinates* entwines well the lives of saints and sinners, the past and present, spinning in a dark thread of Catholic themes to pattern an enjoyable novel showing the extremes of womanhood, leading to tragic circumstances."

Full review can be read [here](#).
