



## Bulldog Drummond

*Sapper*

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‘Demobilised officer, finding peace incredibly tedious, would welcome diversion. Legitimate, if possible; but crime, if of a comparatively humorous description, no objection. Excitement essential... Reply at once Box X10.’ Hungry for adventure following the First World War, Captain Hugh ‘Bulldog’ Drummond begins a career as the invincible protectorate of his country. His first reply comes from a beautiful young woman, who sends him racing off to investigate what at first looks like blackmail but turns out to be far more complicated and dangerous. The rescue of a kidnapped millionaire, found with his thumbs horribly mangled, leads Drummond to the discovery of a political conspiracy of awesome scope and villainy, masterminded by the ruthless Carl Peterson.

## **Bulldog Drummond Details**

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Author : Sapper

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## **From Reader Review Bulldog Drummond for online ebook**

### **Jayaprakash Satyamurthy says**

An enjoyable adventure tale about a clearly punch-drunk soldier who yearns for more adventures after WW1, advertises for it and gets it in the form of a chance to foil a sinister conspiracy to take over the UK through a Bolshevik revolution bankrolled by foreign millionaires and masterminded by a criminal genius. The love scenes are the most inept I have ever read, the characters are a parade of stereotypes, the prose is embarrassingly bad at times and the action is fast and furious with nary a real plot twist but several cliffhanging reversals of fortune for our hero, who seems to rescue and then lose a millionaire being held captive by the villains more times than I misplaced my specs on an averagely dunderheaded day. I can't in good conscience give this book more than two stars, but it's good at what it sets out to do - while away a few hours of your life with a short, sharp burst of vicarious manic action.

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### **Mauserpeter says**

Some (not to say many) modern reviewers consider the Sapper books as dated, pseudo-fascist, racist etc., etc. I find them highly amuzing and typical of their day: Remember that they were written in the 1920's and 30's, when the horrible present system of censorship, usually referred to as "political correctness" had not yet been invented. How I yearn for those halcyon days and despise the bleak and cowardly literature of today!

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### **Rupert Matthews says**

Well, the plot has more holes in it than half a ton of swiss cheese, but nevertheless I quite enjoyed it. An absolute breakneck speed of action and adventure: fights, shoot-outs, murders, chases, deadly traps, romance and thefts tumble over each other page after page. The characters are a mixed bag. Some are well drawn and credible, others are flat caricatures, and one who seemed very well developed was in the book for two chapter then left and was never seen again. An enjoyable romp so long as you are prepared to ignore the problems with the plot.

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### **Liberty says**

Really really "fun" book. I would give it a 5 star except for a good deal of language in the book. Drummond is breaks the stereotype of the usual detective/hero of a story (i.e. downright ugly, a little simple in his plans etc etc), but it only adds to the enjoyment of the book.

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### **Colleen says**

The preface and afterword breathlessly report ol' Bulldog as the predecessor to other famous heroes--the top of James Bond, the bottom Mickey Spillane. But reading this book, I thought of another author, far more

than Ian Fleming or Spillane--Sax Rohmer. Hell, when the evil poison dart toting pygmy in a diaper showed up crouched in his hotel room, he might as well have been carrying a calling card from Fu Manchu.

Besides a few breathless parts (evil Boche! greedy Americans! emotional communist Russian!), and an unabashed jingoistic UK stance, this book centers pretty firmly on the action--a shadowy cabal of "cosmopolitans" trying to destroy England for reasons & money (American industrialists & defeated Germans share a common enemy after all if you squint really hard), and while trying to save his girl's father, who as a drunken forger is both heavily involved with, and totally absolved of his crimes (he's weak! and they made him drink), it's up to Bulldog Drummond to save his country once again. Reading further criticism of Sapper, I see that book 2 and onwards merrily rolls around in anti-semitism and racism, and while it's not spread all over this book, I can see how it can certainly lay the ground for it in future sequels.

In a way, it's too bad Sapper died relatively young of cancer, pre-World War II, because maybe he'd have a chance to revitalize his reputation, though there's also evidence he would have gone with the Mosley UK Fascist movement instead. Leaving aside future unease, the book is relatively fun. The plot makes very little sense if you actually think about it, but how much sense do most thrillers make? Especially early 20th century ones in the vein of the serials (think Pearl White) and the villain and his vamp girlfriend were the 2 most fun in the book. They have an impressive lair filled with booby traps, a special liquid that will dissolve corpses in minutes, gorillas, cobras, and an endless supply of disposable henchmen.

The body count is high but Drummond is something of a predecessor to Rambo. Unhappy with peacetime after the War and seeking excitement he places a newspaper ad looking for a chance to use his war honed skills again. Luckily, he spent the WW1 snapping German necks in No Man's Land for kicks and has a take no prisoner mentality (his scene with one villain in particular was actually I thought over the top when it came to violence) so whatever Carl Peterson throws at him, he meets with a smile.

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### **Abbey says**

**BOTTOM LINE:** A lovely 1920s thriller, 'way, 'way over-the-top, with A Criminal Mastermind trying to rule the world, and The Good Guy and Friends trying to save humanity (and get the girl). Wonderful reread, still quite fun, and soothing, in a mad way.

Hugh Drummond was in The Great War and came out of it hardened and strong, both emotionally and physically. He now knows that he is able to handle pretty much anything that life throws at him, and in this first in series he meets his Arch Enemy Carl Petersen, not-quite-a-madman, out to rule the world. This time it's financial shenanigans, labor relations, and stock manipulations (gee, not much has changed in 90 years...), superior burglary of one-of-a-kind items, and all sorts of manipulation by the bad guys, including torture, clearly - and surprisingly - represented here.

Despite the period in which it was set and written, this is rather dark and, at times, quite brutal. But over all it's a nifty thriller, fast-paced, with cardboard-y characters (loveable nonetheless) doing things for what may seem to modern readers inexplicable reasons, many of them moral. Suits me, though, as I've a rather old-fashioned turn of mind. There is a love story of sorts, but it's mercifully brief and marginal, mainly working as a hook to get Drummond into the story. The fights and chases, shoot-em-ups and thugs, conspiracies and odd manners of death predominate, allowing for a lovely romp in a totally unreal universe. And it's lots of fun.

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### **Sarah says**

Such a delightful mix of Buchan and Wodehouse... I hated to see the ending as much as Captain Drummond himself.

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### **Patrick says**

A fun bit of fluff reading. Nothing to heavy or thought-provoking, just some good old-fashioned detective action/adventure fun. He actually ADVERTISED for an adventure to get into and runs into a criminal mastermind!?!?!

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### **Josh Hamacher says**

This was part of a four-volume collection available for the Kindle for free. Before I get to the review, some comments on the Kindle version. It's a bad OCR job, so there are a lot of typos, a lot of misspelled words, a lot of confused punctuation. More frustratingly, it seemed like entire sentences/paragraphs/? were missing in places; sometimes one sentence ended, and the next sentence started in a completely different place and I'd have to puzzle out what I had missed.

Having said that, I really enjoyed this book. It's a fast, easy read - no dense Holmesian prose here, just a fairly straightforward tale about an adventurer/detective who gets sucked into a nefarious plot by a beautiful woman and, the more he discovers, the more he feels compelled to unravel the entire thing. There are certainly no surprises here and cliches abound (although I suspect this series helped create what we now view as cliches), but rollicking good fun.

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### **Corey says**

James Bond by way of P.G. Wodehouse.

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### **Annie says**

Having become a huge fan of Bulldog Drummond watching the old films from the 30's starring John Howard, I couldn't wait to sink my teeth into the book! I loved it! Thrilling, fun, and quite hard to put down, this book is definitely finding a permanent place on my bookshelves. I'm so looking forward to reading the next one!

A few things were changed as far as Drummond's character, they cleaned up his character for film and made him much less focused on vengeance.

The way his adventures start with a newspaper ad reminded me so much of the swell old radio show Box Thirteen. I think that anyone who likes reading Sherlock Holmes type stories would love this book!

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### **Laura says**

*From BBC Radio 4 Extra:*

*After the Great War, demobbed Army officer Captain Hugh "Bulldog" Drummond finds peacetime tedious, so advertises his services to anyone offering adventure – hopefully legitimate and with excitement guaranteed. His wishes are quickly answered when he finds himself in the company of the most dangerous man in England.*

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### **Min says**

Narrated by Julian Rhind-Tutt for BBC radio, abridged.

A WWI veteran-skilled in many levels of combat, and cunning- returns bored with the life of peacetime Britain and seeks adventure. Places an add in the paper which is soon answered by a woman seeking help with discovering what is wrong with her father. The plot unfolds that a master criminal-master of disguise, shortly to become the arch-nemesis of our hero, is gathering investors to bring instability to Europe for his own profit. Now, with his nose to the chase, Bulldog Drummond calls upon his war buddies to assist him to stop the blighter.

So many tropes we know so well in the 21st century of those post war novels the Lost Generation continued from the Victorian explorer adventures, lead to the thrillers of men of war, gentleman of taste, that go forth for their own ends, to stop evil. The swagger of confidence, the unswerving sense of duty, and right, blended with a charm that the ladies love, and the men want to imitate.

As this is abridged, I wonder what was edited might conflict with modern cultural attitudes toward women, and those of non-European heritage. For what it was offered as a radio entertainment, it was an enjoyable few hours of over-the-top radio serial adventure so cherished in a former generation.

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### **Andrew says**

Bored ex-soldier seeks some entertainment and becomes embroiled in an international affair to revolutionise England organised by an opportunistic capitalist. This provides to be rather a jolly scrape for our hero, although at times the amount of to-ing and fro-ing becomes rather absurd (just how many times can pass the parcel be played with an American millionaire?).

The writing is adequate, the pace variable, the charactersiation caricature, the language dated (in some places unfortunately - and by no means intentionally - laughably so), and the opportunities for the opposing protagonists to 'do for each other' are woefully squandered. It's very much a crime novel of gentlemanly etiquette on one hand, and yet...on the other there are some surprisingly sadistic moments of torture and death which elevate it above many of its peers. Ultimately, however, it's not much more than a book which strives to be likeable and ok, and my rating reflects this ambition.

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## Perry Whitford says

*"I am about to put before you—the defeat of England... a defeat more utter and complete than if she had lost the war."*

M'sieur le Comte de Guy / Carl Peterson

Not if Captain Hugh Drummond, D.S.O., M.C., late of His Majesty's Royal Loamshires has anything to do with it you won't mate! At a loose end after the end of WWI, the adventurer 'Bulldog' Drummond places an advert in the papers:

*'Demobilised officer finding peace incredibly tedious, would welcome diversion. Legitimate, if possible; but crime, if of a comparatively humorous description, no objection. Excitement essential.'*

Contacted by a damsel in distress, Drummond finds himself up against the suave and ruthless Peterson, a prototypical pre-Bond baddie of uncertain nationality and ambitious cunning, planning to profit by kick-starting a Communist revolution in England.

Assisted by little more than his army training, some pals from his old regiment, a steady supply of beer and cigarettes from his case (*'Turkish this side—Virginian that'*) and a fine line in verbal flippancy, Bulldog enters the game!

Flippancy is indeed Drummond's principle attraction, his nerveless insouciance feeding some great lines, e.g. he *'struck Hugh as being the sort of man with whom one would not share a luncheon basket. I know he'd snatch both drumsticks and gnaw them simultaneously,'* he reflected, staring at him fascinated; *'and then he'd throw the bones in your face.'*

A connoseur of the understated yet infuriating insult, Drummond dares to be taken lightly, yet he is also an ex-heavyweight boxer and master of esoteric martial arts. To underestimate him is only *'a little more foolish than offering a man-eating tiger a peppermint lozenge'*.

*Bulldog Drummond* is the kind of rip-roaring, early 20th century adventure where the villains are credited with being fiendishly clever while exhibiting little evidence of it, whereas their laxity astonishes. The hokeyness of the plot is undeniable, the romance cornier than a summer's field, but here's the thing - it's fun from start to finish!

The romance is kept to a minimum, and mercifully the period xenophobia is virtually non-existent (though I understand it gets fairly rampant in other books of the series).

But for some lame conservative didacticism at the end, the writer's tongue was kept firmly where it belonged throughout - in his cheek.

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## Johanna says

After falling in love with the Bulldog Drummond movies from the '30s and '40s, I knew I had to explore the

books behind the film. Wow! I'm seriously wondering why I've never heard of this series before, what a fantastic read! Witty, daring, humorous, but not-too-good looking "Bulldog" Hugh Drummond is the perfect hero for this rip-snorting mystery / thriller set in post-WWI Britain (I say, what!). Veteran of the Great War and lover of all things adventuresome, Drummond asks for a little excitement in his life and gets quite a bit more than he bargained for.

This one has it all- witty fast-talk reminiscent of '20s and '30s era films, a damsel in distress, a hero you can't help but love, butlers, mysterious mansions, high-speed roadsters, an edge-of-your seat plot that will have you biting your nails to stubs, and a super-spooky, conspiring, power-hungry elitist villain (remind anyone else of Soros, or was it just me?) who will stop at nothing to bring his terrible plan to fruition. Seriously, I dare you to dislike this book!

(view spoiler)

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### **Lacie says**

What a book. What. A. Book. I say, Jeeves. Glorious Britain, egomaniacal super-criminals, world domination, stolen jewels, poison darts, millionaire hostages, a murderous gorilla, a dashing detective, and a beautiful girl. All in one book. What more could one ask? A little too much swearing, but by Jove, it was good! ;D

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### **Matthew says**

Bulldog Drummond is a book about sport. This may not seem apparent to the reader, since Sapper's brisk, lively, cheerfully xenophobic novel contains no actual sporting scenes. However its titular character approaches everything in life as if it is a sport.

Indeed, he reminds me of many sporty people that I have met – physically strong, not very bright, and breezing through life with everything made easy for him. There are always friends to give him a step up when he needs it, and women who will melt before his asinine charm. He is not especially good-looking, we are told, but this does not prevent him from doing anything that he likes.

Perhaps that explains why he is bored at the beginning of the novel, and seeks to alleviate his ennui by placing a classified ad indicating his wish for adventure, and a willingness to commit crime if necessary. Soon the former soldier gets his wish. An attractive young lady called Phyllis Benton responds. Her father is caught up with a couple of sinister men called Lakington and Peterson. In the course of investigating matters, Drummond uncovers a plot to overthrow the government and establish Bolshevism in Britain for the benefit of a number of foreign capitalists.

Drummond is an amateur in a way that Sherlock Holmes is not. Holmes uses methods that he has developed and honed to produce superior results than can be attained by the official police. Drummond blunders cheerfully into a number of dangerous situations with no real understanding of what he has undertaken, and he survives thanks to luck, his military training, a network of supportive friends, and (to be fair) a certain amount of resourcefulness on his part. We may also add to this the doltishness of his enemies who have Drummond at their mercy on more than one occasion, and fail to quickly dispatch of their foe.

Indeed it has been pointed out that the fictional character whom Drummond most resembles is the foolish Bertie Wooster, hero of a number of P G Wodehouse stories. Both characters speak in a fatuous fuddy-duddy lingo, have a range of equally dim well-to-do friends, and have a lot of time at their disposal for getting into scrapes. However P G Wodehouse treated his fictional upper-class twit with mocking affection, whereas Sapper is quite serious in his admiration for Drummond.

While Sherlock Holmes viewed his work as a career, Drummond sees it only as sport. His whole life seems to be based on this principle. He is excited to have Phyllis Benton as a client because she is physically attractive, and women are a sport to him (“Altogether, Drummond reflected, an adorable girl. And adorable girls had always been a hobby of his.”). Later he jeeringly disregards a letter from a widow, since a widow naturally cannot be attractive, especially one who has children.

It may seem curious that Drummond should enter a life-threatening endeavour as if it was all a bit of harmless fun, but that is how it is from first to last. From the moment when he posts his frivolous ad to the moment when he feels delight on learning that a homicidal enemy has escaped justice and will therefore be free for another round of one-upmanship, Drummond fails to take anything seriously.

To Drummond, the adventure is another bit of fun now that the war is over and he cannot kill the Hun. Again it may seem surprising to us, especially since Sapper himself had seen wartime fighting. While some of Sapper’s records are missing, there seems to be enough evidence to suggest that he did indeed fight in difficult environments.

Yet Bulldog Drummond has all the naïve attitudes concerning the heroism of war that we would expect to find in a Rupert Brooke poem. War is a game to be fought against the enemy, and there is no hint of the horrors of the First World War that we find in the poetry of Wilfred Owen or Siegfried Sassoon. If Sapper knew anything about shellshock, losing your limbs, sight or sanity, choking on poison gas or watching the wholesale slaughter of young men, then he says nothing about it here.

The only slight hint of Sapper’s wartime experiences is that there is an undercurrent of surprising brutality in the book. Drummond’s enemies murder people with poison and acid baths, and are not averse to striking prisoners or using thumbscrews to get their way. None of this seems to faze Drummond, or to cause him to take a more serious approach to the dangers that he and others face. Indeed Drummond’s approach to his enemies is very much ‘an eye for an eye’, and he turns some of their own devices against them.

When Drummond hears that a man’s secretary was murdered by nearly having his head severed, Drummond is indignant. Is he upset by the horrifying manner in which a man is murdered? Not a bit. He is indignant because it is an ‘unsporting’ way to kill a man. I am not terribly sure what Drummond thinks would be a sporting way to carry out a murder. Give the chap a gun and a 5 minute start before pursuing him, and make sure you do not do anything so dastardly as shooting the fellow in the back, perhaps.

Coupled with this schoolboyish sense of fair play is an equally juvenile patriotism. The British are sportmen and gentlemen, but the foreigners engage in devious and underhand methods. Hence the plot that Drummond uncovers is the work of cynical or fanatical foreigners, supported by criminal or idiotic Englishmen who do not understand the full implications.

Sapper’s attitudes are so right-wing that it is hardly surprising to learn that he wrote his stories for The Daily Mail, Britain’s most reactionary newspaper. The inter-war period was one in which it was possible to hate the Germans and the Jews in equal measure. Hence the book is full of sneering references to the Bosch and the Hun, but also includes a glancing association of the “homicidal, alien Jews” with the evils of Bolshevism.

The simplistic criticism of Bolshevism holds up to the test of time better than Sapper's comment on the Jews, which now sounds atrocious. At times Drummond's bullying and authoritarian methods seem reminiscent of the Fascists whose jackboots would soon be marching around Europe. We can also say that it was the narrow-minded prejudices and unfair stereotyping by people such as Sapper that enabled events such as the Holocaust. This may seem like an overstatement based on one chance remark in this book, but I believe that anti-Semitism can be found elsewhere in the Bulldog Drummond books.

It is true that nowadays few people would approve of the kind of communism being promoted in Bolshevik Russia, but Sapper's book is mere scaremongering. He casually lumps together tub thumping protesters, trade unionists and any disgruntled discontents, as serving as a serious Red menace to the country. This demonising of one's enemies is useful for dehumanising them in the reader's eyes, and ensuring we do not care when they are killed, but it also serves to promote an unsavoury political agenda.

Bulldog Drummond is a silly and poorly-written book. The characterisation is wafer-thin. The plot is rudimentary. The dialogue is silly. The narrative contains a number of clichés. It is however a book that is of some interest to read. It gives us a glimpse of the attitudes held by some conservative members of the establishment in Sapper's age, and it is a more frank expression of the bigotry and fears of a past age than we are likely to find in the public statements of many political and media figures.

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### **Travis says**

I have a soft spot for 'Gentlemen detective/ adventurer' stories and my Mom's maiden name was Drummond, so I had to check this out.

It's brilliant stuff. Hugh Drummond is not a refined character like Lupin or Peter Whimsey, he's a bit of a thug and even admits thinking is not his strong suit. He tends to just find the bad guys and pummel them till they are no longer a problem.

Fun, as it takes all the cliches of the gentleman detective novel and gives them a bit of a twist.

There is a damsel, Drummond is surrounded by good hearted, if somewhat thick friends, the villain is a thoroughly evil criminal mastermind and the traps are all suitably dramatic and over the top.

This would have made a great cliffhanger serial.

Warning: if you've only seen the Bulldog movies, the book will come as a bit of a shock, as the films smoothed down most of Drummond's rough edges.

Also, this was written in 1920, so it's not exactly PC in it's views. Keep that in mind, because if I hear one more person reviewing a 85 year old book getting all upset because of the language and ideas, I will slap them.

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### **Dfordoom says**

Bulldog Drummond was one of the most popular fictional characters of the 1920s and 1930s. *Bulldog Drummond*, published in 1920, was the book that launched the career of this gentleman crime-fighter and adventurer.

In *Bulldog Drummond* we meet Captain Hugh Drummond, and he's bored. Peacetime does not agree with

him. He misses the excitement of the war. So he places an ad in the newspaper, offering his services in any kind of adventure regardless of its legality or of the danger involved. Most of the replies are unpromising but then he hits pay dirt - a genuine damsel in distress.

The damsel in question is Phyllis Benton and her story at first seems incredible - a tale of master criminals, sinister plots and daring robberies in which her father has become an unwilling accomplice. Drummond soon discovers that her story is not merely true, it's actually much stranger than even she realises. In fact they have stumbled upon a conspiracy of almost unimaginably vast proportions in which the very fate of British civilisation is at stake. A gigantic communist conspiracy, funded by fabulously wealthy capitalists.

This was the first of the four novels featuring arch-villain Carl Petersen. Petersen is a master of disguise, and he's a very cool customer. His chief henchman Henry Lakington is a very nasty piece of work indeed - his main amusements being devising sadistic means of murder and torture and pulling off spectacular jewel robberies. There's also Petersen's beautiful, amusing but evil daughter Irma. At least she claims to be his daughter, but may well be his mistress.

There's plenty of action, and plenty of humour. Drummond is at this stage of his career very much an amateur. His main assets are his daring and his courage, his tendency to do the unexpected because he doesn't know any better, and the fact that his opponents consistently under-estimate him, regarding him as a harmless buffoon.

It's all very politically incorrect which is of course a major plus.

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