Fascinating

A literary genius...his realm of terror lies in the shadows of imagination.

A brilliant killer...his violence shatters the night streets -- and his knives blade shows no mercy.

One will become a legend.

And one will meet a dark and grievous end.

THE HUMBUG Having proved his deductive brilliance solving Baltimores notorious Nevermore Murders, Edgar Allan Poe turns his investigative eye to the streets of mid-nineteenth century New York City. A young beauty with a shadowy past has been savagely murdered; her hideous wounds mirror a gruesome tableau in P.T. Barnums wax exhibit -- and it is in defense of his own innocence that Americas greatest showman has come to Poe for help. But neither the writer nor the huckster has anticipated the jagged maze that is the soul of a madman.... Harold Schechter, whose historical fiction keeps the finger of suspicion wandering until the very end (The New York Times Book Review), adds a wry, pitch-perfect, and suspense-laced dimension to the fascinating life and times of the literary master of morbid, criminal motivation -- Edgar Allan Poe.

My Personal Review:
Edgar Allan Poe is unable to feed his family on the wages he makes as a journalist/editor in Philadelphia. He relocates, with his family, to New York City where writing opportunities are much better. When he sees a handbill for the P.T. Barnums American Circus, Edgar turns irate because he knows that at least one falsehood exists on the handbill he was given. He confronts Barnum, but obtains nothing but blarney from the glib talker.

Barnum is very impressed with Poe and visits the writer in his home when the media blames Barnums American circus for causing a murder to happen. Poe who has solved murders before (SEE NEVERMORE) agrees
to investigate. When the victims missing arm is mailed to Poes home, he concludes he is on the correct path and if can stay alive long enough he will solve the case.

Poe is clearly the star of this book as he uses his belief in his superior brain power to slice and dice everyone using self-deprecation so nobody will be offended. The HUMBUG is a serious historical mystery though Barnum lightens up the atmosphere with his unique brand of showmanship. Though a nineteenth century who-done-it, mystery lovers of all sub-genre persuasions will enjoy Harold Schecters tale. Harriet Klausner

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The Hum Bug by Harold Schechter - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!