



## Night of Fire

*Nico Rosso*

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**Night of Fire** Nico Rosso

**Night of fire, night of passion**

US Army Upland Ranger Tom Knox always knew going home wouldn't be easy. Three years ago, he skipped town, leaving behind the only woman who ever mattered; now that he's seen the front lines of war, he's ready to do what he must to win her back.

Rosa Campos is long past wasting tears on Tom Knox, and now that she's sheriff of Thornville, she has more than enough to do. Especially when a five-story rock-eating mining machine barrels toward the town she's sworn to protect.

Tom's the last person Rosa expects to see riding to her aid on his ether-borne mechanical horse. She may not be ready to forgive, but Rosa can't deny that having him at her side brings back blissful memories . . . even as it reignites a flame more dangerous than the enemy threatening to destroy them both.

## **Night of Fire Details**

Date : Published July 10th 2012 by Avon Impulse (first published July 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9780062201089

Author : Nico Rosso

Format : ebook 256 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Steampunk, Romance, Historical Romance, Fantasy, Paranormal, Westerns

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## From Reader Review Night of Fire for online ebook

### Kimberly says

U.S. Army Upland Ranger Tom Knox has just returned to his hometown for the first time in three years. But Thornville isn't quite the same as it was when Tom left it. Thornville is in danger of being wiped out by a greedy mining company's monster of a machine and the only person willing to help Tom stand in its way is the town's sheriff...who just happens to be Rosa Campos, the woman Tom loved and lost. For Tom, saving his hometown seems like far less of a challenge than winning Rosa back. But this U.S. Army Upland Ranger isn't about to back down from either fight.

The American West gets a lot wilder in *Night of Fire*. This second Ether Chronicles story is filled with non-stop action and wonderfully clever world-building. Nico Rosso captivated me with the steampunk technology he created in *Night of Fire*. The inventions in *Night of Fire* sparked my imagination and I loved the utter uniqueness of the story's world. Equally fascinating were Tom and Rosa. They're two tough, sharp, engaging characters who fit each other so well you have to root for them to find their way back to one another. Mr. Rosso perfectly blends world-building and romance in *Night of Fire*, a trait I appreciate in an author and one that has me eager to read more of Mr. Rosso's work.

*Night of Fire* is the second installment in The Ether Chronicles, a series that contains stories by Mr. Rosso and his wife, Zoë Archer. Both *Night of Fire* and the first Ether Chronicles tale, *Skies of Fire*, can be read as standalones. Where Mr. Rosso's stories are Westerns, Ms. Archer's tales span the rest of the world. I love the originality of The Ether Chronicles and I cannot wait to see what new adventures Mr. Rosso and Ms. Archer have in store for readers!

*Reviewed for Joyfully Reviewed.*

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### E\_bookpushers says

The second story in the Ether Chronicles was a lot of fun to read. Very different setting and characters which I think made it more fun. The technology was still in place and the world building remained consistent. Sometimes that is difficult with more than one author working in the same world but this fit nicely. I am looking forward to seeing what comes next.

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### Nibrock says

enjoyed the story. quick and easy to read.

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### Jen Davis says

#### 3.5 Stars

It's been three years since Tom left Rosa, running out of town in the middle of the night on a stolen horse.

After her parents threatened him, he felt like he couldn't have a future with her, so he made a new life for himself in the Army. He never forgot her though, and now that he has finally been granted leave, the only thing he can think of doing, is getting back to her.

When he arrives back home, Rosa is a changed woman. She's the new sheriff of Thornville and she's tough as nails. It's obvious she has been holding her own, but Tom couldn't have picked a better time to come back. Outlaws are targeting her, and even worse, they seem to be simply paving the way for an even bigger threat to both Rosa and the town.

They have to work with one another to fight off the danger. But together, their old sparks fly again. Can she ever forgive him for leaving her the way he did? And will they survive long enough to find out?

The story is a combination of steampunk, old west, and romance. And it is set in the same world as Skies of Fire, though they are each completely stand-alone stories. There is a similar thread, though, in that both books feature a couple reunited three years after one lover deserted the other.

It's hard to sympathize with a hero who unceremoniously dumped his heroine. He's got a lot to atone for and despite his heroism in fighting off the bad guys, I felt like Rosa forgave him awfully fast. The whole story takes place over just a couple of days. The romance is at the center, but there is a lot of action as well. Maybe a little too much. Sometimes I felt overwhelmed by all the descriptions of the equipment and choreography of the fight scenes.

But I found myself interested in the setting. The world building is clear and easy to understand --and the plot is pretty straightforward. I liked that the authors changed things up so much from the last book. I think steampunk fans looking for an action-packed ride will enjoy it.

Rating: C

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*\*ARC provided by author for review*

### **Babs says**

You can find my review over at Urban Girl Reader

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### **Jen (That's What I'm Talking About) says**

My Rating: 2.5 stars: Finished it - take it or leave it (C)

Our hero, Tom Knox, left his small coastal hometown of Thornville three years ago, leaving behind his love, Rosa Campos. He joined the service and has been fighting against the Hapsburg soldiers here on US soil - or in Tom's case, in the sky as an Upland Ranger. Before Tom left, he wasn't much of a hero or a man worthy of Rosa, and her parents were certain to remind him of that often. He returns now, uncertain of how he'll be received, yet certain that Rosa has settled down and moved on. To his surprise, Rosa is a changed woman - now the sheriff of Thornville, and she's never forgiven Tom for abandoning her those three long years ago.

Unfortunately, as soon as Tom arrives, there are serious problems for Thornville. The Crandall Mining Company, unhappy that no one would sell land in Thornville, is heading towards town in a massive monstrosity of a machine that destroys everything in its path. It's up to Tom and Rosa to overcome their past and work together to save the town.

Although this is the second story in The Ether Chronicles, the opening of Night of Fire is almost the complete opposite of the first book, Skies of Fire. Instead of jumping right into the action as in Skies, this book takes its time and introduces the reader to the surrounding landscape. We take a stroll down memory lane with Tom as he flies his way back to his childhood homestead and the woman he left behind. The beginning focuses on world-building and filling the reader in on the environment of the times.

Another change from the first book is that the locale has shifted from Europe to the United States in Night of Fire. The Army is warring with the Hapsburg troops (as they did in Skies), yet here in the US, there are no Men O' Wars or large airships. The culture is that of the "Wild West" and cowboys, complete with flying metal "horses" used to combat the foe. This book has a very different feel from Skies of Fire.

Yet even with the differences, the story still has similarities with its predecessor. Once again we have a hero and heroine that share a history - a love - that ended abruptly when one partner left. This time around it's the guy who ran away three years ago, instead of the girl. But that's about where the similarities end.

Although I'm not a big western-genre fan, I hoped the steampunk elements would supersede the wild west feel. At times the story did have the action and intrigue of a more traditional steampunk, yet at others, it was all whooping it up and cowboys. And while I felt the opening was strong and compelling, once the pair start their interactions with the mining company, the dialogue became flat and repetitive. The storyline held promise, but the voice it was written in just couldn't keep me glued to the pages.

I liked that Rosa was such a strong woman and could handle herself. I liked that Tom appreciated that in her and even found it sexy. I also enjoyed that they both recognized that their time apart (although it was painful), was the best thing for their relationship.

However, their one sex scene came across mechanical in style and didn't flow well for me. I also became annoyed with Tom and his constant jabs at and about Parker, the man he thought Rosa would marry. I wanted Rosa to punch him and tell him to get over it.

Overall, Night of Fire is an average book for me. It started out strong, and I found it intriguing. But all too soon, the story started to drag and felt repetitious. The high-intensity action was exciting for a while, but then started to grow old, and I found the insertion of serious relationship dialogue in the middle of fighting to be awkward. I had hoped for more after loving the first book, written by Zoe Archer. Knowing the next book is also written by her, I look forward to getting back to the Men O' Wars and the British navy.

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### **Kimm says**

This sequel was a worthy entry into The Ether Chronicles series. I had to admit to not wanting to leave the setting of the last novel, but soon understood the beauty of being able to continue to tell the story from the the other side of the world. It made sense to me. Steampunk and the old west are an accepted combination, and it affords the possibility of introducing much more diverse main characters.

I immediately loved that the female lead, Rosa Campos, has grown into a confident, no nonsense Latina, who hadn't let heartbreak keep her from her destiny as Sheriff of a small town.. I liked that the US Army Ranger Tom Knox, admitted early in the novel that he had been so wrong to leave his young love, but was a better man now after all he'd endured.

There was a strange similarity between the two first novels in the Ether Chronicles series. First, in each novel, one of the young lovers has abandoned the other exactly 3 years earlier. The circumstances of each reunion are different, but each reunion involves somewhat of a rescue on a damsel in distress scale, (grumble, grumble). At the core of it all is that once again our protagonists are up against the Hapsbergs. The invaders are spreading their hate all over the globe and this small town is in the way of their attempts to subvert the freedom of others.

I thought the similarity with the first novel was a tiny bit forced, but it worked well to move the plot forward and tie the two novels together. I am quite interested in how the next few installments compare, but a bit wary, I don't want to read the same story over again, just with subtle changes in flavor.

Again I love the multicultural edge this book presents. I am now wondering if all the characters will be meeting up in some type of final showdown...can't wait to see!

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### **Purple Osprey says**

It's full of testosterone, unrealistic B movie action scenes and shiny penis metaphors. Minus additional star for the generic copy-pasted sex scene which feels alien to the book.

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### **Elena says**

There's nothing I enjoy more than reading about a very strong heroine and Rosie didn't disappoint. Tom wasn't so bad either. He came back after leaving town and leaving Rose and ready to say and do whatever was needed to win her back. Tom did that and more, he treated Rose with respect, as his equal. Second chance romance while battling bad guys adamant about destroying their town. Steampunk is slowly becoming one of my favourite genres.

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### **Stephanie G says**

In Night of Fire, the second book in The Ether Chronicles, Tom returns home to Thornville. He left years ago and joined the army making him an Upland Ranger. On his way home he encounters a mining machine. Once in Thornville he meets the lover he left, Rosa, who is now the sheriff. He watches her deal with some rowdy men, and they soon learn the men were sent by the same people with the mining machine. The mining machine is heading straight for the town, and doesn't care who it flattens. It is up to Rosa and Tom to save the town.

Night of Fire is a western Steampunk. It isn't all that long, and only takes place over two days. Tom returns to Rosa to find her unattached. He wastes no time scooping her up on his metal horse and heading off into the sunset to beat up some bad guys. The story is about the action, and the short adventure. They dodge

bullets, blow stuff up, and everything in-between. It mentions very briefly the characters in the past book, but it lacks the feel of a broad world the first book seemed to have.

The major problem is that it lacked in romance. The steamy scene here isn't so steamy. I felt no buildup of romantic tension between the two of characters, and was more than a little disappointed. It doesn't help that Rosa is the one forgiving Tom. We don't spend a lot of time in her head other than her just telling us stuff. Her character was thin. She tells the reader how hot she is for Tom, how her anger is going away (not that I ever got that she was angry at all), and later she tells Tom how well it worked out because of the time that separated them.

The story mainly sticks to Tom who is just glad to be accepted back into Rosa's good graces. Instead of gratified and happy for their budding romance I felt irritated that she just let him move back into her life. It kind of seems that because Tom, without asking, helps her wrangle villains, putting his life on the line for her and the town, that it is ample reason to forgive him. While this is brave of him, Thornville was also his town, and I didn't understand how it was an acceptable reason to drop panties.

On a positive note this story has a ton of adventure. I don't think it stands on its own tension, but if you are reading it for the Steampunk romp it does have that. Near misses are plentiful, as are strange inventions, and tons of western whooping. If you want a quick Steampunk adventure, it is what you are looking for, but I wouldn't grab it for the romance.

- Beth

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### **Betsy says**

This seemed mostly like a Western to me, with steampunk trappings, but the steam wasn't really integral to the story. As a romance, it didn't work for me. The plot and action completely overwhelmed the characters and their relationship.

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### **Emilye says**

Zoe Archer and Nico Rosso are husband and wife, working on this joint series. *Night of Fire* (#2) is set in California and presents a uniquely American take on the steampunk world of the *Man O' Wars*. America has followed a different technological path while remaining in the same conflict. Land mass means more agricultural emphasis and more individuality; the premium is on improving and innovation in technologies and skills that are inherently American - pistols, sky horses, sky trains that can cover vast distances rather than the body modification that an overpopulated Europe would and has agrandized. In some ways this was a smaller scale story, with consequences of local effect. But the stakes life threatening and the battle one that had to be won. I liked this book.

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### **Lizabeth Tucker says**

Three years after fleeing town on a stolen horse, Tom Knox returns as a war-hardened soldier on leave. Expecting that the girl he loved, Rosa Campos, would be married to his rival, he's surprised to find her single and the town's sheriff. He finds himself joining with her to fight the Crandall Mining Company from literally

destroying the town.

Tom doesn't try to stop Rosa from doing her job, or going out of his way to protect her. He supports her, trusts in her talents and ability to give as good as she gets. And, while trying to stop the massive machine that eats everything in its way, dealing with what happened when they were younger and how they have grown and matured.

Loved this one! Tom is so supportive and the twist in the identity of the enemy was a surprise. After all, it isn't that hard to believe that a mining company would do the type of destruction that the Whisperers were doing. Plus, those Whisperers were creepy as hell. 4.5 out of 5.

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## Marlene says

Originally published at Reading Reality

The Ether Chronicles is a cooperative steampunk venture, or is that adventure, between writers (and real-life spouses) Zoe Archer and Nico Rosso.

The first book in the series, Skies of Fire, took place in more traditional steampunk territory, assuming there is such a thing as tradition when it comes to a genre as "new-fangled" as steampunk. It's set on the European side of this alternate, steam- and "ether"-powered world war and it's written by Ms. Archer, as will be the third book.

Mr. Rosso is responsible for Night of Fire, set in the U.S. West. Less traditional, not just for steampunk, but in general. The West of the late eighteenth century was the frontier, with wide-open spaces and people who didn't want to be hemmed in.

There's a war going on, and men are called away from their homes to fight against the Hapsburg enemy. Just as happened in real history, particularly in World War II, when the men are called away in large numbers, women fill roles that used to be reserved for men. And some of them find that their new roles suit them much better than the ones they would have traditionally found.

And some men think that this new assertiveness fits those women better than the old traditional roles ever did.

The Army has also given Tom Knox a new role in life. In Thornville, he was a boy from the wrong side of the tracks. The US Army has made him not just a soldier, but a leader. It's given him purpose and responsibility. The Army doesn't care where he came from, only how he conducts himself. And he's not a boy any more.

The war has brought him near enough to Thornville to visit. To find out what happened to the girl he left behind. Rosa Campos' father ran him out of town, said Tom wasn't good enough for his daughter. And he was right, then.

Now is different.

Now, Rosa is the Sheriff of Thornville. She's the only one man enough for the job, in spite of her father's

protests. The first thing Tom sees when he rides back into town on his ether-powered "horse" is Rosa fighting off a band of roughnecks, who aren't just hooligans testing the "lady lawman".

They're the front for a completely different threat, one that's going to literally gobble up the entire town, if Tom and Rosa don't set aside three years of simmering resentments and disappointments and face the threat together, instead of fighting each other.

About that simmering...the fire they sparked between them before Tom left still burns as hot as ever, but they can't afford the distraction. Distraction will get them, and everyone around them killed.

But once they defeat their mutual enemy, if they survive, can they find any feelings left for each other beyond lust, disappointment and pain? Did they lose their chance at happiness by not fighting for it hard enough, all those years ago?

Escape Rating A-: There are three stories going on in *Night of Fire*, and all of them are terrific. One is the war, and for background on the war with the Hapsburgs, read *Skies of Fire* by Zoe Archer first. It's tremendous fun, especially if you love steampunk. The information on what ether and telumium (the mineral that makes it all possible) are is there.

The second story is the Western "save the town" story. The sheriff needs to fight off the evil mining corporation that planning to swallow up the good ranching land and the good ranching community. This tale stands the usual trope on its head by having the corporation plan to literally swallow the town. Only in SF or fantasy (or one of their cousins like steampunk)!

Third, of course, is the romance. Tom and Rosa are doing the second-chance dance. They loved before and war has given them another try. They've grown up; they weren't the people they were before. They didn't fight hard enough before, they weren't ready. This time, the stakes are much, much higher, but they're much stronger. But they've got a lot of internal resentments to overcome, as well as the obvious external forces arrayed against them. It's one hell of a fight.

And I wish the story had been a bit longer. This was an awful lot of stuff to pack into 100 pages. I loved it. I would have loved it more had there been a little more of it. Which means I can't wait for the next one.

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### **Beth Dawkins says**

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