



The Lost History of Dreams

Kris Waldherr

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A post-mortem photographer unearths dark secrets of the past that may hold the key to his future, in this captivating debut novel in the gothic tradition of *Wuthering Heights* and *The Thirteenth Tale*.

All love stories are ghost stories in disguise.

When famed Byronesque poet Hugh de Bonne is discovered dead of a heart attack in his bath one morning, his cousin Robert Highstead, a historian turned post-mortem photographer, is charged with a simple task: transport Hugh's remains for burial in a chapel. This chapel, a stained glass folly set on the moors of Shropshire, was built by de Bonne sixteen years earlier to house the remains of his beloved wife and muse, Ada. Since then, the chapel has been locked and abandoned, a pilgrimage site for the rabid fans of de Bonne's last book, *The Lost History of Dreams*.

However, Ada's grief-stricken niece refuses to open the glass chapel for Robert unless he agrees to her bargain: before he can lay Hugh to rest, Robert must record Isabelle's story of Ada and Hugh's ill-fated marriage over the course of five nights.

As the mystery of Ada and Hugh's relationship unfolds, so does the secret behind Robert's own marriage--including that of his fragile wife, Sida, who has not been the same since the tragic accident three years ago, and the origins of his own morbid profession that has him seeing things he shouldn't--things from beyond the grave.

Kris Waldherr effortlessly spins a sweeping and atmospheric gothic mystery about love and loss that blurs the line between the past and the present, truth and fiction, and ultimately, life and death.

The Lost History of Dreams Details

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From Reader Review The Lost History of Dreams for online ebook

Sherry says

Kris Wadherr's forthcoming novel kept me on edge, wanting to learn the secrets of Hugh de Bonne and his beloved Ada. This riveting novel expertly dances on the line between reality and fantasy, blurring distinctions so that anything seems possible. A terrific book!

Heather Webb says

I had the good fortune of reading an early copy of The Lost History of Dreams. In this accomplished debut, Kris Waldherr transports the reader to the fascinating world of Victorian England and its tradition of post-mortem photography with a deft hand. An atmospheric tale of lost love, family secrets, and an inquiry into how our own histories define us, I relished every poetic page. Mesmerizing, lyrical, and deliciously brooding, The Lost History of Dreams is a terrific contribution to Gothic literature.

Megan Collins says

This book was exquisite. The setting was eerie and beautiful, the prose was gorgeous, and the characters were as haunting as they were haunted. The entire story was richly compelling, but the last 100 pages had me basically speed-reading, eager to find out all these characters' secrets. The twists were surprising, satisfying and, at times, even moving.

As someone who's passionate about classical mythology, when I learned that this was an Orpheus and Eurydice reimagining, I was so excited--and the book's use and manipulation of the myth actually exceeded my expectations. It made me think of that ancient story in ways I never had before, which I didn't even think was possible at this point, since it's one of my all-time favorite myths.

It's rare for me to be moved to tears by a book, but this one did it for me. While the story can be deliciously creepy and chilling at times, it's ultimately a beautiful story of love, loss, and grief, and it's one I won't soon forget.

Kathleen says

I was immediately gripped with this read. And I mean immediately. In the beginning I couldn't put it down. The settings were described perfectly and the grief in this book, which is palpable through the entire book, was slapped into your face hard right from the start. In fact, the main character's grief and longing were so well done that I found myself thinking his plight was actually quite beautiful. Which I can only attribute to the author's talent. Let's not forget this book is a ghost story. Filled with ghostly imagery, mysterious characters and haunting structures it's a really, really good ghost story. I will say that most of the middle section of this book was a bit of a slog for me and I really found myself pushing to get past it. But the ending was totally worth it, full of mystery and intrigue. *Thanks goes to NetGalley and the publisher for allowing*

me to read an advanced copy in exchange for my honest review.

Julianne Douglas says

I read THE LOST HISTORY OF DREAMS in manuscript form and was totally enthralled! Can't wait until others can read it, too. Review will appear prior to publication.

Erica Boyce says

It felt like I was holding my breath through the entirety of this book! Waldherr does an excellent job of building suspense, twists, and turns, and it wasn't long before I had a hard time putting THE LOST HISTORY OF DREAMS down. She does a beautiful job of painting a detailed world with nuanced characters and fascinating backstories. The ending was perfect and wonderfully satisfying.

Katherine Riley says

The Lost History of Dreams is historical fiction. It is also a delicate nesting of two love stories. It is a slim volume of romantic poetry. It is a gothic mystery. It is even, arguably, a scholarly investigation of such varied topics as Ovid, daguerreotyping, stained glass, and ornithology. The prose is exquisite, the characters compelling, and the rendering of Victorian England feels deliciously exact. Waldherr has created here something very lovely and unique.

Clarissa says

I was very fortunate to receive an advance reader copy of this beautiful novel. I'll add a longer review closer to the publication date, but readers who are interested in Victorian culture, literature, and/or art need to pre-order this book now! Waldherr cleverly plays with gothic conventions as well as gendered Victorian tropes (e.g. the cult of the invalid, silencing of women's voices, the angel/whore dichotomy, mourning customs). Fans of early Victorian novelists (e.g. Emily Brontë, Charles Dickens) as well as fans of modern neo-gothic authors (e.g. Sarah Waters, Diane Setterfield) will love LOST HISTORY.

Jessica Woodbury says

A gothic novel with daguerrotypes of the dead, two tragic love stories, romantic poetry, and a couple ghosts for good measure. Quite readable, I finished it in just two sittings. If you like the kind of book where one character promises to tell a story over five nights, this is a book that will make you happy.

While it's quite successful, ultimately I think there may be one too many pieces in this puzzle. It definitely keeps the plot moving forward with a few different mysterious threads to pull on, but the heart of it can get a bit lost with all the different parts. Still, I'm a sucker for a gothic novel and even if it doesn't quite go full

melodrama it was a fun book to get lost in for a bit.

Julia Phillips says

What a rich, precise world Kris Waldherr has created here – what an astounding accomplishment!

Kate Quinn says

Updated with my cover quote:

"Wuthering Heights" meets "Penny Dreadful" in Kris Waldherr's **LOST HISTORY OF DREAMS**, a dark Victorian epic of obsessive love, thwarted genius, and ghostly visitations. When Byronic poet Hugh de Bonne dies mysteriously, post-mortem photographer Robert Highstead is propelled into a dark quest to fulfill the poet's dying wish and reunite two long-dead lovers. Still locked in obsessive grief for his own lost wife, Robert must confront his own demons as well as Hugh's if he is to learn the unsettling truth behind his mission. Eerily atmospheric and gorgeously written, **LOST HISTORY OF DREAMS** is a Gothic fairy-tale to savor.

Gina says

With a tag line like “every love story is a ghost story,” I expected **THE LOST HISTORY OF DREAMS** to be haunting, but I was still not prepared to be sucked in to the rich underworld through which Kris Waldherr’s wraithlike characters flicker. Like Orpheus, be prepared to look back and wonder what is real and what is fantastic. With tales nested in tales told by narrators of varying reliability, **TLHOD** will keep you guessing until the last riveting page. Waldherr’s storytelling will grip you and leave you wanting more.

Andrea Bartz says

I loved this eerie and atmospheric debut! I read an ARC, and the rich prose and beautifully drawn characters totally transported me to the 19th Century. It follows Robert Highstead, who makes daguerrotypes of the dead and whose existence from the start somehow straddles the world of the living and the dead. He's forced to confront his dark past, and what unfolds feels like a Russian nesting doll of storytelling and imagination. If you like carefully researched, poetically written books that feel like magical realism and historical fiction all at once, you'll love **THE LOST HISTORY OF DREAMS**.

Dan says

Love stories are ghost stories in disguise.

Kris Waldherr's **THE LOST HISTORY OF DREAMS** is a lush fever dream of a book. From its first pages

there is a sense of disconnection from the mundane world. Robert Highstead, daguerreotypist of the dead, has severed all ties to anything and anyone that might stand between him and his love. Forced to perform a grim and unpleasant errand, Robert will ultimately have to confront his past and everything he holds dear.

Waldherr expertly establishes the threads of loss, mourning, and love that wind throughout the novel's entwined stories, and she uses the trappings of gothic romance to repeatedly turn the tables on the reader, showing us that nothing is as we might assume, and every story has multiple authors.

K.A. Doore says

Well, Waldherr wasn't fucking kidding about the ghosts.

The Lost History of Dreams is haunting in nearly every aspect of the word. The ghosts live in the pages, breathing between the words, and the story lingers well beyond the last page. At its core, this is a story about love, but it's a story told through generations, decades, and layers of lies. It's the story of a famed poet and the people who loved him and came to understand him, if not forgive. It's the story of a widower, who clings to death instead of life. And it's the story of a woman who just wants to be seen - and all the ways in which she is haunted instead.

Robert Highstead, a daguerreotypist nee Ovid historian still sees the world around him as a historian would, with a need for grounding, for evidence, and an aversion to allowing just any story to come out. Yet he also sees the world through the grimy lens of his daguerreotype, distorted by loss and grief. Haunted by his past and present, and unable to create a story from either, he must nevertheless transcribe the story of the late Ada, wife of the famous (and also late) poet Hugh de Bonne.

But in the telling - and transcribing - of Ada's story it's soon apparent that nothing is quite what it seems. Every perspective is a different story, and every story is a little bit haunted.

Waldherr layers and folds and layers again story upon story, myth upon legend upon wish, with a thick Gothic atmosphere and an almost ephemeral humanity.
