



Gaslight Hades

Grace Draven

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Nathaniel Gordon walks two worlds—that of the living and the dead. Barely human, he's earned the reputation of a Bonekeeper, the scourge of grave robbers. He believes his old life over, until one dreary burial he meets the woman he once loved and almost married.

Lenore Kenward stands at her father's grave, begging the protection of the mysterious guardian, not knowing he is her lost love. Resolved to keep his distance, Nathaniel is forced to abandon his plan and accompany Lenore on a journey into the mouth of Hell where sea meets sky, and the abominations that exist beyond its barrier wait to destroy them.

GASLIGHT HADES is a 39k-word novella-length gaslamp fantasy romance with a sprinkling of airships, monsters and ghosts. This story may also be found in the duology, Beneath a Waning Moon, alongside an Elizabeth Hunter tale.

Gaslight Hades Details

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Author : Grace Draven

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From Reader Review Gaslight Hades for online ebook

MrsJoseph says

OMG. I own so much Grace Draven! I saw this release and went flying to Amazon...only to discover it's a re-release (from an anthology) that I already own.

What can I say? FI-LO

Tanya Tate says

Praise the lord that Grace got me out of my reading slump!
RTC!

Alexandra says

Despite being a novella, it was absolutely amazing! I love that despite the gothic atmosphere you get fleshed out characters and heart-wrenching romance!

Liz says

RTC.

Shari Kay says

3.25 ★

5 years ago, Nathaniel and Lenore were in love. Nathaniel proposed, but Lenore turned him down...for reasons. Both heartbroken, Nathaniel left on an airship on a dangerous mission, giving Lenore time to reconsider his proposal. He's no way giving up on the love of his life and when he returns, he'll convince her to say, yes. He never returns, dying in battle.

Lenore will always regret turning Nathaniel down, at the time it seemed like the right thing to do. She's never stopped loving him and will live out the rest of her life as a spinster as she wants no other man. This changes when her father dies and she meets the graveyard's guardian, the Bonekeeper. Something is familiar about the creature, though she knows they've never met. It'd be impossible not to remember the white skinned/white haired 'abomination'. Still, she feels drawn to him and feels desire when she never expected to again.

Both MC's are likable characters. Nathaniel is sweet and Lenore is independent in a time when that is not the

norm. I just thought the story suffers because it's short, making it seem like Lenore's feelings for Nathaniel weren't as strong as we were led/wanted to believe. She *falls* too quickly for the Bonekeeper, after telling us she'd never be with anyone else. I would've liked a gradual opening of her heart, not an almost immediate 'connection'.

Yeah, Yeah the Bonekeeper and Nathaniel are one and the same (blurb, not a spoiler), but Lenore doesn't know this! Sure, you can argue her 'subconscious' was trying to tell her the truth, but she didn't actually KNOW it was Nathaniel's soul put in another's dead body by a wackadoodle scientist. Her ladybits are tingling for a man who looks NOTHING like Nathaniel. It felt like...betrayal.

And though Nathaniel yearns for Lenore and still loves her, I don't know that he would have ever sought her out and told her the truth. It took the death of her father for him to even talk to her. I can't remember how long he's been 'back' (or if we were even told) but I got the impression it was long enough to contact Lenore and explain things. He was so afraid of her rejecting him again that he just martyred himself. I really felt his love and longing for Lenore, which strangely upset me even more because it was like she was cheating on him/his memory. Does that make sense??

In the end, it's not even Nathaniel who spills the beans. I think I would have been waaaay more pissed than Lenore if I was in her shoes. Though I understand *why* Nathaniel was resistant to tell her...I hate when H/h choices are taken away and time together is wasted because of it. Lenore did this to Nathaniel 5 years ago and regretted it, you'd think he would have learned from the past.

This is light steampunk with interesting hints of a bigger world. For now, it seems like the series has been abandoned as book 2 was due in 2017. Which is too bad, because I was looking forward to reading more about Bonekeepers, mages and monsters.

Most of my deducted stars are for what lacked due to the length,(not the writing) but also because of what I considered a detour into silliness (view spoiler) during what was *suppose to be*, and should have been a sweet, sexy scene. Oh well. I imagine others will find it cute.

I enjoy this author's work most of the time, she has a way of telling a story that is very compelling. I will definitely read her again.

Shanna Mattheo says

I knew right off the bat this was gonna be a tricky one for me. I'm not into steampunk, but I'm a big Grace Draven fan so I thought I'd give it a go anyway.

The steampunk elements turned out to be very light and not as off-putting as I feared. It's the story itself that didn't really do much for me. It lacked the richness and mystery that I love about Grace Draven's writing. And the flow of it seemed kind of off to me.

I do like the idea of 6 other Guardians and their possible stories, but I don't think I will actually read them.

Suz says

4+ stars

This novella length introduction to a new fantasy romance series is, in typical Grace Draven style, original and fun. It reads like a Victorian/Steampunk/Paranormal world set-up story although the world is so engaging that it's easy to get caught up in. I enjoyed the MCs quite a lot and found the action breath-catching, as well.

I didn't want to leave the world when it was over, and I closed the book hoping to get to spend more time with the MCs as the series goes on. I'm also looking forward to meeting the rest of the "monsters."

This was an excellent start.

Kindling Micky says

2.5 stars

Erika (OwlwaysReading) says

It's a GRACE DRAVEN!!!

Where did this come from? I've been slacking on my duties as a major fan. :/ Luv her stories

Beanbag Love says

Another five star from this author. So far I've enjoyed everything I've read by Grace Draven.

Lenore is a spinster mourning her recently deceased father. She's already borne extreme tragedy in the loss of her true love, Nathaniel, five years earlier. Now she feels completely alone. But she has a guardian watching over her who will go to any lengths to keep her safe.

As usual, Draven creates engaging characters with depth and nuance. Their chemistry is apparent and their individual character traits make their interactions pop.

I kept thinking this needed to be a graphic novel, so rich were Draven's descriptions of the leads and their steampunk surroundings.

This is a novella so it's shorter than I would wish, but it's an excellent beginning to what I hope will be a fun

series.

Sabrina says

The story telling is amazing!!!

I kept thinking about “Howl’s moving castle” in some parts...and if you know me, you know I LOVE all Ghibli movies, so it was a pleasant surprise!

I cant wait to read more of this series!!!

♥?♥?♥?♥?

Hollis says

Definitely noticing a trend in the fact that I love Draven's full length stories but notsomuch her novellas.

Adrienne says

Review is also available on my blog The Shameful Narcissist Speaks.

Grace Draven shows off her ability to subvert established narratives and tropes in this Victorian steampunkish tale of stolen bodies, a Lovecraftian portal, lost loves, and the resurrected dead. The author also draws from her prior series *Wraith Kings* (Radiance and Eidolon) in ways that though numerous are neither tedious nor redundant.

In Nathaniel Gordon's case, he was denied even the chance at love with Lenore Kenward before perishing in an airship accident, nor was he allowed to lay unmolested, instead he was forced to inhabit the form so graciously revealed on the book's cover. A transfer of consciousness from broken body into a new, binding all together with gehenna, which proves its meaning of "a place of fiery torment for the dead" in what our hero suffers upon revival. By the time he's past the agony, Dr. Harvel, the depraved scientist who made him, is dead, slain by Gideon, his original creation, and Nathaniel is in the first Guardian's care, slowing recovering from death's transition to a semblance of life.

Now one of seven "Bonekeepers," Nathaniel dutifully takes up the task of protecting the dead from fates such as his (if not worse), rendering any would be resurrectionists as dead as he and his fellow Guardians once were. There's a clever irony in that , since the resurrectionists were stealing bodies for the purpose of creating Guardians (and other unnatural things), but since Harvel failed to robbed them of their free will, they remained the men they had been inside despite their outward metamorphosis. Guardians are a staple of this world, and though the non-dead denizens of the city are familiar with them, they're still slightly feared and shunned especially if they leave their cemetery.

Lenore, however, shuns unnecessary propriety, much to her mother's rue. In visiting her late father's grave, she makes the acquaintance and eventual friendship of Nathaniel, fascinated by how this strange being

reminds her so much of her lost love in his mannerisms and speech if obviously not appearance, and Draven displays more of her aptitude for irony in having Lenore's eventual wistful thoughts for the Guardian overlap her grieving ones for Nathaniel.

Due to her father's untimely demise, the practicalities of life demand Lenore seek employment to keep her and her mother from destitution despite Jane Kenward's prim and overbearing sense of propriety. The main plot of *Gaslight Hades* hinges on Lenore's occupation, and since her best friend is an airship captain, she seeks that path despite both its dangers and her mother's disapproval. Nathaniel, still haunted by the last moments of his former life, can't stand idle while the woman he loves could be endangered by the very horror that killed him, and he realizes the title Guardian can extend to those not moldering in the earth.

Prior to writing this review, I (re)read Poe's "The Raven," since *Gaslight Hades* was obviously inspired by it in part. In the poem, the titular bird itself seems to be both the speaker's sorrow and guilt at the loss of his Lenore. He is looking for some confirmation that he will receive respite from his sorrow or that his dead love is at least with the angels, as he believes. The bird refuses to confirm either, answering with only the famous, "Nevermore." Note the raven does not and cannot assure him of Lenore's spiritual status, and it's clear to both us (the readers) and the speaker that it can only say, "Nevermore." He is also only asking it certain questions with this knowledge, thereby fueling his own grief.

Gaslight Hades does similar with both Nathaniel and Lenore, who was more than likely named for the original poem's absent love. It is a highly personal debate whether or not visiting graves goads grief or assuages it, and whether or not in the former case this will eventually lead to catharsis (nor is it something I shall discuss at length), but it could be the underlying and certainly subconscious question Lenore is pondering as she bides besides her father's resting place. Nathaniel is of course lamenting his own death and the loss of Lenore when he comes upon her duly and "dually" mourning, and it's a sweet irony instead that a chance meeting in a boneyard with a Bonekeeper eventually leads to such joy.

Like the main character of "The Raven," Nathaniel has lost Lenore, but it is Nathaniel who has died, nor should it be missed that death brought her back to him. Had her father not succumbed, she never would've had cause to visit the cemetery on a consistent basis, and she never would have made his (re)acquaintance. Lenore is also much more of a person in *Gaslight Hades* than the deceased of Poe's poem, which is wonderful, since women should be more than just objects for men to pine over. Draven has equal sorrow on both sides and equal regret.

The author has also done her research with the etymology of names. At first I was skeptical of my own findings and considered I might be incorrectly (or as many would claim over) analyzing the situation, but I tend to look when lightning strikes twice. Nathaniel means "God has given," which could imply that God has given him another chance. This would fit perfectly with the story since the now Guardian lost the chance at love in life, but now in death or after death or *undead*, he has another opportunity for it and happiness due to the perversions of a sick scientist/doctor who wanted to use him for his own twisted purposes (...sigh). This lays a darker tone on it since Harvel was playing God in restoring the dead to life, not to mention transferring consciousnesses between bodies, but even poisoned gifts can be useful, and whether a rightful god or a dark one gives you life, it's still yours to live.

As an antithesis to Nathaniel's circumstances, Lenore means "light," thereby light to his darkness, though of course he has the pale skin and bone white hair against black clothing/armor to reflect a distorted light of his own. Also, forgive my vulgarity, but I fucking love that someone (else) has subverted the White Hair, Black Heart trope. Draven did it in *Wraith Kings*, as well with the added bonus of the Kai having dark grey skin and other features that are usually considered "bad." Subverting these ideas is an essential step in subverting

the existing stereotypes in our own world.

Returning to name meanings, I'd initially chalked up the origins of Nathaniel's moniker to coincidence, until I looked up Gideon, which means "he that bruises or breaks, a destroyer." Since Gideon was the first Guardian who eventually slew their creator, it seems far less likely Draven was naming her characters haphazardly. The only other Bonekeeper mentioned is Zachariah, which I already know means "remembered by God" from my research for *Final Fantasy VII*, but there isn't enough information about him to either support or denounce my theory. There are seven Guardians in total, and the second book in the series, *Gaslight Viduus* (the Roman god who separates the soul from the body after death and means "divider," so it could be a reference to Dr. Harvel) which is not yet published, will focus on Gideon and will also hopefully reveal more details about the other five.

The chemistry the author writes between couples could light a thousand worlds, and similar to *Wraith Kings*, Lenore couldn't care less that Nathaniel looks not only different but far less human. This is another example of loving someone for whom they are and not how they appear, and Draven again uses paradigms from her prior work without making them redundant. All authors have a formula. This is not an insult (especially considering as a writer, I have one, too). It only becomes problematic and tedious when the exact same elements are used in the exact same way. Lenore loved Nathaniel prior to his transformation, and she continues to do so afterwards, despite the obstacles in their way. Granted, she did grow used to his Bonekeeper appearance before she knew it was her lost love, but the way Draven writes her character greatly suggests she would've embraced Nathaniel at instant disclosure had his identity been immediately revealed. This contrasts Ildiko in *Radiance* who has to learn to look past Brishen's strange appearance, but once she knows *him*, she loves seeing it all.

Draven constantly shows a penchant for subtle and meta humor, which is shown in the name Nathaniel gives a stray dog. He calls her Spot, which is what Cerberus, the three-headed hound guarding the gates of Hades translates into. So...you have the main character of a novel called *Gaslight Hades* who is a Guardian naming a dog the English translation of the guardian of the underworld. It's pretty brilliant.

I adored this novel. It resides now on my favorites shelf, but there is something that keeps it from being perfect and won't allow me, no matter how much I wish, to give it a full five stars. I tangled with this dilemma for a while, because the story is damn near perfect, and the good greatly overshadows the questionable, but issue is egregious enough in terms of writing/plot development that against my personal viewpoint, I have to consider it. Reviews should aim to be as objective as possible, though subjectivity of course permeates them, since we all have unconscious biases and preferences.

The issue lies in the resurrectionist plot. The villains Nathaniel guards his dead against work for Dr. Tepes whom like Dr. Harvel deals in necromancy though the manner of Tepes's nefarious deeds is not as disclosed. Though the situation is introduced, nothing comes of it in the narrative. There are only hints dropped that Gideon intends to handle Tepes the same way he disposed of Harvel, but nothing comes to fruition. There's a good chance this will be covered in the next installment, but presenting the plot coupon so blatantly without cashing it in leaves the question open at the close. If Tepes were only briefly mentioned and the resurrectionists in his employ more vague with whom they worked for, it wouldn't have left its small hole in the narrative. The evil doctor was propped up as a seemingly formidable antagonist who had his own minions, but then the story steered us in another direction. The Tepes plot is left by the wayside, and though I'm certain it will be covered in *Gaslight Viduus*, I think it would've been a better move to leave it more vague here. Speaking of Tepes, he is a clear cut reference to Vlad the Impaler whose name was Vlad Tepes

The positives of *Gaslight Hades* far outweigh the negatives, and the fore mentioned issue is far less

egregious even though I have to take it into account. Grace Draven masterfully turns and twists tropes in ways that re-envision paranormal romance along with what kinds of characters are allowed to be heroes. Usually people like Nathaniel (and Brishen from *Wraith Kings*) are defined by their appearance, and if they're even allowed to be heroic, they're usually antiheroes who fight some "dark side" that mirrors how they look, but Nathaniel's only "sins" are dying before his time and having his corpse confiscated and his consciousness transferred into a transformed host. He is melancholy (for good reason), but not evil. Being associated with the dead doesn't make you a ubiquitous dealer of it. He kills those who warrant it, uses his new life protecting the dead and living, and for god's sake he saves a puppy! Heroism is not defined by appearance, but by deed. Both Nathaniel and Lenore prove that despite their society's adherence to values that would confine Bonekeepers to the boneyard and women to the home.

4.5 stars

RachelW (BamaGal) says

Also available in the duology Beneath a Waning Moon with another ss by the always wonderful Elizabeth Hunter...

The finally finished version of *Gaslight Hades* was a fantastic and well thought out SteamPunk story. A little dark, and a bit gritty, which was great; it fit the setting. There were the 'Guardians', who are beings resurrected/created from the dead à la Frankenstein; the airships, the rift between two worlds, and an intriguing SteamPunk setting.

Oh, and a second chance at love story, a really good one. The wordbuilding in this one was great, and I'm hoping this is the beginning of a new series. There is so much more to tell in this world; and I want to know the story behind Guardians Zachariah and Gideon...and Rachel. Hope there is more forthcoming.

Jessica (HighFantasyFanatic) says

3.5 stars

I read this as a part of the beneath the waning moon collection, and i mainly picked it up as i have read some of Grace Draven's other work and enjoyed it.

I definitely preferred the other authors story, although i did enjoy this one it just didn't grab me. It was short and sweet and good weekend read.
