



Gaslight

Mark Dawson

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It's London, 1920. Newly demobilized soldiers have flooded the capital's streets but an ungrateful country isn't ready for them. Harry Costello has returned from the horrors of the Somme to no job, no money and no prospects. Desperate times demand desperate measures and when an opportunity to burgle a house presents itself, Harry seizes the chance.

When Harry and his brother Frank are blackmailed into paying off a local hood they decide to take care of the problem themselves. But when all of London's underworld is in thrall to the man's boss, was their plan audacious or the most foolish thing that they could possibly have done?

You think crime doesn't pay? Meet the Costelllos - the kind of criminal family that might make you change your mind.

Gaslight Details

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From Reader Review Gaslight for online ebook

Toni Osborne says

Book #0.5 in the Soho Noir series

A 65 pages novella, a prequel to the earlier published works “The Imposter and The Black Mile.

The story is moody and vivid but it is too short and too thin but the biggest disappointment is that it leaves you hanging and wanting more. Like most short stories “Gaslight” has its flaws but it is worth the time reading it.

What pushed me to download this book: simple I am a huge fan. Mr. Dawson usually writes exciting stories that lures you in and keeps you interested till you reach the end and why not at the time the book was offered free of charges.

Here he set the stage to post war London 1920, his main characters are two brothers, Harry and Frank Costello who burgle house to supplement their incomes. Mr. Dawson even in his short story never misses the mark in creating the right atmosphere. His vivid prose paints a picture of the seedier side of London’s life, its crime elements and the poorer quarters with ease. But it ends too abruptly for me. This story is more of a teaser.....

Shirley Thomas says

I must say that what drew me first to this book was the cover. There were also the setting, post war London, and the crime element—but cover and title were first and foremost attractions.

The noir part made me hesitate a bit. I like it in movies but find that for the most part, people who say they create noir stuff (movies or novels) rely heavily on superficial props or lengthy description alone.

Happy to report it was not the case with Mr Dawson.

I found *Gaslight* to have the right amount of description that captured the atmosphere well, a range of interesting characters and a story that serves as a nice opening to the series I figured the author had in mind.

A side note: The 'gaslight' I had in mind was not the 'gaslight' Dawson had in his when he wrote this but, personally, I was so into the story that this realization did not come until the time I wrote this review! Definitely an entertaining read for someone who was wary about noir.

Lauren Stoolfire says

When Harry comes home to London in 1920 after the horrors of WWI, he returns to an ungrateful country without a job, money, or any prospects. Desperate times call for desperate measures, so Harry jumps at the

chance to rob a house. Harry and Frank, his brother, then find themselves being blackmailed by a local hood, so they decide to take care of the problem on their own. It turns out that all of London's underworld is in thrall to the man's boss, so they're plan's either incredibly audacious or the dumbest thing they could have done.

When I saw this short story for free on Amazon, I knew I had to get it. The cover, the name, the description - it sounded like it had such potential. I generally like noir, but when I realized it was set in 1920 (which I wouldn't have guessed from the cover) I was wary because that just seems far to early for noir to me. I tend to think of something in the 1930s or 1940s. The author captures the atmosphere well, but tonally, it doesn't live up to a noir - it needs to be punched up more to qualify. While I did enjoy the story and the characters, it just seemed to be lacking something that could have really taken it to the next level.

By the way, I was expecting a completely different kind of gaslight (read: the 1944 film starring Ingrid Bergman kind of gaslighting).

Neil says

London after the end of the Great War was not an easy place to live. This novella follows two brothers, Harry and Frank Costello. After leaving the army Frank takes a job as a lamplighter, which gives him the opportunity to scout out possible houses to burgle. After one such burglary they fall foul of a gang which runs a protection racket throughout that area of London. Everyone is scared of the gang's boss, so have the brothers bitten off more than they can chew?

Once again the author depicts the seedier side of London life, but it is done with such attention that you can't help but imagine yourself there, treading those same cobbled streets. The characters have that self same ring of authenticity about them. I just wish that this was a full book and not just a novella.

Allan Ashinoff says

Not a bad read by any measure. I just had a hard time getting into it.

Luke says

It was an entertaining, quick read, but I'm always looking for 'a bigger bang for my buck,' so to speak when I read a novella. Every word, every scene has to count in transporting me into another world. Gaslight markets itself as a 'noir'. The story was well written, but I felt the author missed the mark, in not creating the right atmosphere for the tale. The characters were well rounded, but the plot was a bit thin.

It filled the time in nicely, competent in what it did, but it was certainly no wow... it was just ok.

T.B. Markinson says

Entertaining and quick.

Rima says

Pleasant!y surprised

Not one to read stories in this time era, and I had finished all of Mark's books, I was pleasantly surprised. When the book ended, I wasn't ready. Time to start the next one

Jen says

London post World War I in 1920. The culture and actions of the lower echelon of the city are illuminated in Mark Dawson's Gaslight.

Harry Costello works as a gaslight attendant after he comes back from fighting in the war. His job allows him to scout houses he can steal from with his brother George. It's after one of his jobs that the "tax collector" for the Little Italy mob boss comes to the Costello's to extort their "earnings" from them. Harry is rather quick-tempered and formulates a plan, with the help of local bartender and love interest Isabella, to remove his problem. Harry's actions catch the eye of the boss of Little Italy and earns him a job as an enforcer for the mob.

Within the text, there were issues in consistency of punctuation usage, namely in quotation marks. The narrative paints the scene relatively well, but the entire narrative is rather abbreviated in its scope of what actually takes place in comparison with the language associated with it. Events all built up to the climax that just sort of happened all too quickly and fizzled out immediately, despite its attempt to set up for subsequent installments. I found it interesting that the full title of this work includes the term noir. I can see how there are some elements of noir and an attempt was made, but by traditional standards, it's not quite there and could certainly be punched up more to more fully live up to that name.

Anne says

Really good short story. Really makes you feel like you are there.

Kevin says

Intriguing

3.5*

I have rounded up for the sake of how to end on a cliffhanger.

The story was short, to the point and I personally felt that I was in the said era after the great war. The cliffhanger at the end let it down yet leaves an insatiable desire for more.

The overall context is realistic, believable and true to the time setting of the book.

Mark Dawson is fast becoming a brilliant, top notch author within different sub genres of the crime and thriller fields.

Mrs Susan J Bociek says

First book sets the pace

I have read the first three Soho Noir books, funny enough in reverse order. Having read the first one pulls it all together. By day I am an ordinary woman, but between the covers of these books I almost believe that I am there with them, a different person entirely.

Tulay says

Good beginning for excellent series.

Reading books written by Mark Dawson always reminds me A. J. Cronin. London 1920, after the first war, Harry is back, no jobs and no prospects. Doing what he can earn a living with his older brother. Some reviews didn't like these characters, but we didn't live in those terrible years.

Ben says

"Gaslight" is a novella set in London's Soho district of Little Italy, just after the end of the Great War. Edward Costello, a veteran is employed as a Gaslighter, a job that allows him to peek into the houses on his assigned route from his ladder as he light the flames in streetlights. It is a perfect opportunity to size up which houses are worth robbing and when the owners are usually not at home.

He and his brother break into one of the houses, coming away with a good haul to fence. Finally, a chance to have a bit of a fling.

What they forgot was that there was a boss of Little Italy, and he wanted his cut- plus a "tax" for holding back. Trouble? Oh, yeah.

I think that " Gaslight" , an early work of Mr. Dawson, shows his ability for atmosphere and fleshing out characters in a few well- chosen words. Even in this short piece, the reader feels the dank gloom of slum London. One can understand Costello's desire to claw himself out of his dreary neighborhood and his realization that working as a gaslighter was only going to keep him , literally, at the bottom of the ladder. How he climbs upward , using the lessons learned during the war makes for an interesting story with strong, very strong echoes of " The Godfather" . No, I am not suggesting that" Gaslight" is up to that classic, but it quite good for the short novel that it is. Dawson does a lot in 120 pages.

I recommend "Gaslight" for when you need a quick hit, perhaps just as I did after finishing a slog through 500+ pages bio.

Notes: violence, of course. Criminality. A bit of clean romance. And a pleasant hours break from the world.

Mr Kenneth L Mullen says**Another good one**

Another good book in Trevino noir series. Well crafted and written and really bringing out the atmosphere of the era. Looking forward to the next one
