



Shadows in the Darkness

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Gwen "GiGi" Gelman, a ten year veteran of the Providence, Rhode Island vice squad, finds herself unemployed after being blamed for a routine bust that turned into a bloodbath. GiGi is used to being on her own, though, and with the help of a DA who owes her, she's scraped together enough capital to start her own PI business, specializing in "family problems"-in particular runaways who have disappeared into Providence's seamy underside.

With a few custodian kidnapping cases under her belt, as well as a case against a Catholic school teacher/molester, GiGi is doing well for herself --until she takes on the case of a fourteen year old runaway who may or may not have been kidnapped.

As GiGi investigates, she accidentally opens the door to her own mystical past. Now long-hidden family ties threaten her, and the secret of her identity unlocks a conspiracy that reveals the forces of darkness that play in the shadows...

Forces that intend to be the masters of all mortal life.

Shadows in the Darkness Details

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From Reader Review Shadows in the Darkness for online ebook

Janet Robel says

I can't quite put my finger on it, but this didn't grab my attention.

Elizabeth says

Shadows in the Darkness

By Elaine Cunningham

This isn't your usual urban fantasy. In fact, I'm not sure it is really in that category. There is a supernatural element present but it doesn't come into play much. Much of the this book seems to be setting things up for the series. It is a very well written third person narration that mostly centers around the procedural drama of Gwen's investigation. Very little progression into Gwen's origins and heritage are explored in this book. Her parents died in a burglary when she was young and she was raised in foster homes. She does solve that mystery by the end of the book but not much more than that.

I didn't continue with the series because there only seems to be two books and I'm guessing there aren't going to be any more. From the descriptions, book 2 isn't much different than book 1 and the story arc doesn't really progress.

Spoilers ahead.

In the prologue we meet Gwen (Sometimes called GigI) as an undercover cop. A bust turns into a bloodbath and we discover that there are elves and apparently she is one. Some time passes between the prologue and chapter one and in that time Gwen has become a private investigator.

Gwen is working a missing person's case. A teenage girl has disappeared and the girl's mother hired Gwen. It is a short case as Gwen finds the girl's dead body. With that case barely wrapped up, another woman comes to her asking Gwen to find her missing daughter.

As she works the case, we keep running into shadowy figures that talk of bloodlines and the gentry AKA the elves. Gwen doesn't seem to know anything about her heritage. Meanwhile, Gwen uncovers evidence that girl's father may be up to something nefarious that may or may not be related to her disappearance.

When she finds her old partner Frank dead, Gwen doesn't believe that it is any accident. Toward the end of the book, Gwen finally discovers that a person who hired her on a case, Ian Forrest, has not changed in 40 years. When she confronts him about it he admits that he is a member of what he calls the elder race. Since she had asked Frank to help her on the case, naturally she wonders if his death is related. She meets up with Frank's son.

When she gets the files on the case she gave to Frank to work on, in a complicated bit of deduction and with hints from Ian Forrest, she links the deaths of her parents to the death of another couple and their baby daughter. She begins to suspect that the people who were supposed to be her parent actually weren't.

She solves her missing persons case which turns out to be related to her own mysterious origins but only in a bizarre tangential way. By the end of the book Gwen is starting to come into her power and fully believes her

relationship to the Elder race and ends up embroiled in their politics and she captures her parent's killer.

Donna says

Gigi finds herself forced out of her job as a vice squad detective after a drug bust goes seriously wrong. She is now working as a PI. She takes on a case of finding a 14 year old girl who disappeared from her home. Something is seriously off as the father doesn't seem to want her following the trail into his private life especially since he spent time in a local child porn club. Gigi begins to wonder if perhaps the father is involved in the disappearance.

Gigi's own history gets pulled in and she learns that she is an elf half-breed changeling.

I liked the mixture of paranormal, fantasy, and mystery.

Topher says

I liked the fact that, unlike most of the current crop in the genre, the main character has a pretty straightforward love/sex life. It was a nice change.

I'll keep going with this series as well - I think I'm up to 37 series I'm actively following now - and see what happens next.

Barbara ★ says

I really enjoyed this book. It's the first I've read by Elaine Cunningham but definitely not the last. I have book 2 *Shadows in the Starlight* and will be reading that very soon to continue the adventures of Gwen "GiGi" Gellman, an ex-vice cop turned PI. Orphaned Gwen spends her time locating missing children and when her current case intersects with her own background, things start to heat up.

Michelle says

The book started out well and had a good premise but fell down in the execution. It was supposed to be the first in a trilogy but the series never went beyond Book 2. This novel set up events that seemed to have a long term pay off in books 2 and 3 in addition to having a cliff hanger ending and this is what deterred me from getting book 2. A good start but I cannot recommend it because there is no resolution to all the questions that are raised.

Ithlilian says

I'm not a fan of cop dramas and detective mysteries, and that's basically what this book is. There is a tiny bit of fantasy here, but it's barely noticeable. I couldn't connect with the story at all. It seemed fragmented and confusing throughout, then we find out everything is connected in a far fetched way towards the end. I really struggled to finish this book. At no point did I feel interested in anything going on. The romantic relationship between the main character and her ex was painful to read. I skipped entire sections related to that, and I didn't miss much. Maybe this story just isn't my thing. Judgmental cops and convoluted mysteries are not my cup of tea.

Kae Cheatham says

A good mystery story with PI ex-cop Gwen Gellman. A tough, sharp witted character, Gwen was orphaned as a baby and raised in foster homes. As a PI she specializes in child kidnapping cases, and has vice-cop knowledge of the porn scene.

The secondary plot, weaving through and eventually connecting with the main story (her search for a missing 14-year-old), involves Gwen learning her family background.

Well done third person limited. Room for a sequel.

Dev Singer says

3.5. I enjoyed the book and I definitely want to read the sequel. It felt like this book is leading up to something bigger, but there's only one more in the series. I'm wondering whether book 2 will be huge plot-wise or whether the series ends on a cliffhanger.

Tasula says

This is a mystery starring a former cop/now PI, who is asked to investigate the disappearance of a 14 yr old girl, and a bit later, the vehicle accident that killed a couple and their infant daughter. It starts off as a simple PI story, but supernatural elements start to appear. (This is fine with me, I love speculative fiction.) She is an interesting character, who becomes more interesting as the story develops. I thought it was a decent mystery and interesting take on the Elder Races. I also liked that none of the characters was exactly what they seemed, and neither all good nor all evil.

Clara Dearmore Strom says

This is Fantasy which I don't usually read, but the main character is Gwen. She is a strong interesting non-human who doesn't know who or what she is.

Henrik says

A recurring theme in Cunningham's Forgotten Realms stories is family legacies, an exploration of the good and/or bad sides of them. It is a theme that she manages, in my opinion, *very* well to explore and dig into in a fairly varied and multi-faceted manner.

That familiar territory is obvious in this book as well, the first of (so far) two books featuring the PI protagonist Gwen Gelman. As is the usage of a willstrong, fiercely independent young woman with unusual powers and talents as the main character (yes, she bears some resemblance, I think, with Cunningham's Arilyn Moonblade in the Forgotten Realms)--not to mention the usage of (HUGE SPOILER HERE, SO IF YOU DON'T WANT TO READ IT, STOP NOW) *elves*.

There's a huge--and important--difference, however: This story takes place in *the real world*. More specifically, it takes place in today's Providence, Rhode Island, USA; the state Cunningham herself lives, as well as the state and city where H. P. Lovecraft lived--the latter being of some interest to me, of course:-)

Cunningham's take on this blend of things works. It's as simple as that. Fellow-Forgotten Realms writer **Ed Greenwood** is quoted on the cover, saying "[she] makes me care about her characters. She makes the fantastic real." That's true in the Realms, and it is probably even more true in this "real life" setting. A main reason for this is that I got the impression that she really knows Providence well; the descriptions "rang true", resulting in a believable, realistic background setting for the tale.

Admittedly, I found the first half of the novel less satisfactory than the last half. To me it seemed as if she was sort of trying her way into this story and setting, and most things didn't really grab me: Neither characters (although they stayed interesting enough for me to continue) or plot(s). But when finally the overall setting was in place--boy, was it interesting!

It is a fairly complex and dark tale evolving around missing teens, old men's sexual interest in underage girls (I told you it was dark), dark family secrets and search for an identity in a world where light and darkness blends with the shadows. Some of the twists I saw coming, but not all of them, and that's always nice:-)

The mysteries solved in this story (solved in a satisfying manner) open up for questions to a larger array of mysteries... I am already looking forward to reading #2: **Shadows in the Starlight**.

That's a recommendation of the best kind, right?;-)

[Btw, please don't let the cliched titles of this Series frighten you away.]

Natlyn says

Elves. Why did it have to be elves?

This first book in a threatened series is a decent enough mystery with a hard-core ex-cop detective with a past shrouded in mystery even to herself. Although it contains the now-obligatory sex play (thanks LKH),

they are mostly interrupted scenes of heighten sensitivity. Gwen's missing daughter case dovetails neatly with the case that ended Gwen's police career *and* her own mysterious past.

It's light and hits just the right notes for the genre; however, it lacked the spark of fun that I prefer in paranormal detective fiction. For that reason, and because I find neither elves in general nor Gwen in particular all that interesting, I doubt I'll be back.

chucklesthescot says

Gigi was a cop who was blamed for the death of two undercover officers and led to her leaving the force to become a P.I. She deals with cases where there are family problems and now she is investigating the possible kidnapping of a 14 year old girl. Using her psychic gifts helps on her cases but it also unlocks a past she'd rather forget.

This one was more like a crime novel than a paranormal book. In the first 80 pages we get one tiny glimpse of her powers and rest is just bog standard police style investigating and talking to people of interest. Crime novels like that are not my thing so my mind started to wander a bit. I didn't really care one way or the other about Gigi as she didn't have much depth to her, and the supporting police cast were obnoxious, lying, corrupt lawbreakers. It didn't really hold my interest long enough to find out about this secret past that she has.

Yolanda Sfetsos says

Wow, what a cool book! I know I'll definitely check out the books that follow. Just gotta wait for the paperbacks! Lol.

Anyway, the story's about an ex-vice cop called Gwen Gellman who now works as a private investigator in Providence. She has a psychic ability she doesn't understand. Her latest case involves a 14-year-old that's gone missing, under really strange circumstances. Anyway, there's so much more to this tale and the intricacy just grows as the story moves along. She's a really likeable character with many flaws. But I still liked her and the array of characters introduced.

I'm really looking forward to reading more about Gwen, especially now that she found out some truths about herself. If you're looking for a really interesting mystery entwined with some dark fantasy, I really recommend this book. When I got to the end, the only bad thing was I wanted to keep reading... It was a lot of fun.
