



Smoke and Mirrors

Tanya Huff

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When Tony and his TV crew find themselves shooting in an actual haunted house, all hell threatens to break loose. Locked into the house overnight, can Tony keep the diabolical controlling spirit from turning the crew against one another in an orgy of blood?

Smoke and Mirrors Details

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From Reader Review Smoke and Mirrors for online ebook

Erin *Proud Book Hoarder* says

Better than the first in the series, itching to read the third now. Better book than the first. Liking character of Tony more. Love Lee and the surprising situational conflict arising. Henry was in book very little and takes a long time to appear. Clear Huff wants reader to be clear this is a Tony show, but a character as interesting as Henry can't disappear too long in the background without harming the book. Villain was awesome in a gory, almost cheesy but not cheesy way. Showdown fight worthy of its story and opponents. Sometimes assistant Amy got on my nerves. Ghost scenes cool, pacing tight. Rarely dulled (although a mite bit at minor times). Really left warning more at end with the Lee and Tony situation (i'm such a drama addict!)

Freyavenlyo says

The second Tony Foster is even better than the first. So 4,5 stars.

It all plays out in a haunted house, where the CB production is filming the next Episode of Darkest Night. Too bad the ghosts are real.

I'll admit I'm not one for scary movies or books. I'll get scared easily and must move hand over hand to the light switches after watching a partially spooky movie at night. So I don't. And because my favorite genre is fantasy, I read next to nothing in horror. Staying up late and reading this book I wouldn't say I got scared ... but I did. At the high of the hauntings it got really spooky for a few pages. And being the middle of the night ... Let's just say, the lights stayed on.

It was really interesting to see how other people on the cast and crew dealt with being shut into a murdering old house over night and how Tony dealt with his ever growing crush on Lee, the other star of their TV show, his emerging wizarding power, mouthy kids and exes.

It was again incredible entertaining, spooky and just bloody fun to read.

Vanessa says

I know it's really unusual, but in this case the second book of a trilogy is my favorite. I love all three of them very much, but if I had to rank them, this one would come out on top every single time.

Imagine: You're stuck in a haunted house. With your colleagues. Including the one you have a big crush on. Nightmares! At least your boss is not there, right? But his two young daughters are and you know he'll murder you at least twice if they get hurt. Plus, you're the only person who actually can see the ghosts which in this case means you also have to watch their flashbacks of getting murdered again and again. And no one believes you.

Basically it's one of those days where you wish you hadn't left your bed in the morning.

At least you actually like most of your colleagues, most of the ghosts are more pitiful than scary, your crush is talking to you an awful lot, your vampire ex-boyfriend is waiting outside the house to help you and you haven't lost your sense of humor yet. So it could be worse.

Long story short: This book is awesome. I don't think there is one thing I would change about it. It's funny, it's sad and it's heart-warming. And sometimes a tiny bit scary.

My personal highlights were the interactions between the different characters. First and foremost between Tony and Lee. After the first book I was honestly expecting nothing, because usually not much comes out of a gay character crushing on a straight one outside of m/m romance books. So seeing them spend a lot of time together and growing closer was a really nice surprise! (view spoiler)

And I know I keep calling what Tony feels for Lee a crush, because most of the characters call it that, but reading this book I felt it became more and more clear that he's actually in love with him.

And filed under "Things I didn't know I wanted": Henry and CB. They were hilarious together. Henry being puzzled by CB's everything, CB's dry humor and everyone around them being confused by them in general. They were an endlessly entertaining team and I think they deserve their own book. Or at least a short story. I would pre-order it faster than lightning.

Plus all the interactions between the people trapped in the house ranging from hilarious and heartwarming to frustrating. They even made the fight with the big end boss almost light hearted.

Tanya Huff really knows how to write characters and relationships and how those can further a plot without swallowing it or becoming cheesy and cliché.

Kathy Davie says

It's actually the Smoke Trilogy, 2.

I AM enjoying this series...irreverent, topical, and with an interesting insight into producing films. Great cast of characters.

Olivia says

Pure genius! I could not put this second book in the Shadow series down. I seriously read like 200 pages in a single day. I wanted to stay up all night to finish it but my body would have protested the lack of sleep during class today.

Every death was more gruesome than the next and while I'm not a big fan I couldn't stop reading. This book truly built on Tony's character and I'm loving where Huff is taking him. I can't believe there's only one more book left in this series.

And it's official, I'm in love with Lee. I won't give anything away but THEY need to be together!

Katie M. says

Smoke and Mirrors is an excellent ghost story to be read in twenty-four hours, not just because it's not exactly dense but because the plot will make it very difficult to put the book down until you're done. A cheesy vampire detective TV show is using a big, isolated, abandoned mansion as the perfect location for a haunted house episode. Problem is, the house really is haunted. Oops. A number of the cast and crew are trapped inside when the house seals itself at sunset. Many clichés are in use, but as they are mostly either parodied or used in an unusual way, the story as a whole is quite creative. As I alluded to, the plot is a real page-turner, starting the tension early and keeping it high. Tony, the protagonist, is likable, clever, and just the right amount of insecure as he tries to use his recently-discovered wizard powers to get out of a dire situation. Huff does a fine job of making the rest of the characters memorable too. The book has a lively sense of humor. Sadly, there is very little of Henry Fitzroy, the vampire who is Tony's friend and a fixture of this series. Henry's minimal presence is partially made up for when the Ho Yay between openly-gay Tony and his crush, ostensibly-straight actor Lee Nicholas, is turned up to eleven and beyond. They're adorable. I do hope the next book features something between them with Lee not even slightly possessed by Evil Forces for once.

Rachel Thompson says

Tony Foster works as a production assistant on the Canadian television show *Darkest Night*, a show about a vampire detective. Last spring Tony discovered he was an actual wizard as he defeated a being called the Shadowlord and his minions. Things have been quiet on the set since, until they go on location to shoot an episode featuring a haunted house. But no one realized the house really is haunted until it's too late. Now the cast and crew must somehow survive the night because the house isn't willing to let them go.

It's amusing watching some of the characters slowly fall apart as the house works its magic on them. They even turn on Tony, the only person who might actually be able to get them out of this mess. But he has to reveal his secret if he's to have a chance of success. The comedy in this book keeps things light even though this is a dark book, filled with ghosts reliving their horrible murders/suicides. Tony's strictly platonic relationship with his crush Lee Nicholas, costar of *Darkest Night* takes a huge step forward. That's my only complaint about this series, not enough romance.

Jammies says

While I did enjoy the Vicky Nelson series and the first "Smoke and..." book with Tony Foster as the main character, I was surprised at just how blown away I was by this book. The characters are well-drawn, quirky enough to be engaging but not so quirky as to make relating to them difficult. The plot is an amazing new take on the old "group of people trying to survive in a haunted house until sunrise" and the twists and turns kept me turning pages until late in the night. In fact, the television show "Supernatural" borrowed the plot for an episode.

What delighted me the most about this book was Huff's extraordinarily skillful blending of horror and humor. Every page had something that made me start or wince or shiver, and almost every page had

something that made me giggle. I've re-read this repeatedly, and it has lost none of its attraction for me. If you love to see clichés skewered and like your horror laced with belly laughs, this is a book for you.

Keikii Eats Books says

To read more reviews in this series and others, check out keikii eats books!

56 points/100 (3 stars/5) [revised from 4 stars].

Alert: LGBT themes

Tony Foster is a production assistant on a TV series about a vampire detective. He is also a fledgling wizard. Now they're trapped on location in a haunted house. A haunted house that wants to kill them. Tony may be their only way out of the hell they have found themselves in.

Smoke and Mirrors is thankfully kind of better than Smoke and Shadows. It isn't nearly as confusing as the first book. The perspective switches were fewer and less confusing. It is also vaguely more interesting to me as a story, even though I've seen it a dozen times before. It was just sooo long. It was much longer than it needed to be, and I felt as trapped as the characters were throughout the book waiting for something, anything to happen so I would be less bored.

The entire story was that most of the people on the vampire detective show are trapped in a haunted house that is trying to kill them. I think if this was the first time I had seen this story, I would have been really interested in it. It is really chilling in a way, and managed to creep me out despite my being very bored with the story. As it was, I have seen this story play out many times before, and there really wasn't a lot new added to the story archetype.

Minor rant here: Why the hell is it that everyone is so pissed off at Tony this entire book. They think because he is a wizard he should be able to stop everything that is happening. As if he is a god or something. They hate him because he immediately can't get them out. Tony knows **one** spell. That is it. The fact that he is even calling himself a wizard at all is hilarious. He is so incompetent that if Arra was still around, she'd beat his ass for being so egotistical. I just hate how half the book is people yelling at Tony because he isn't doing anything...because he can't.

Also, someone discipline those fucking kids already. For fucks sake! They're going to get you all killed through their inability to follow directions! Arrrgh

It looks like Tanya Huff is exploring tropes from other genres and bringing them to urban fantasy through Tony Foster. I just wish that these tropes were actually explored instead of being the same thing I've already seen, just thrown into modern day Earth without a care for what it actually means.

Anneloup Roncin says

So. It was my first 'horror' story, even tho it wasn't that scary.

I grew frustrated with so many characters this time! They blamed everything on Tony until they could visually

see his injuries. He was the only one able to save the day, but also the only one who HAD to keep his temper. The others ? Na, it was okay. They were in a haunted house, so they got a pass. Not him. You know the book is good when you get really mad with the fictional characters. So I guess that's my point.

I like the development of his relationship with Lee. Though in truce, I keep waiting for a Tony/Henry comeback. Instead, we've got a "Henry so comfortable on CB's lap". Which, well... I chose to ignore. Nope. Not happening.

I've seen lots of people happy about the way homosexuality is depicted in the book. Not a big thing, just... normal. Crutches, non-serious dates, exes with a huge past. Just relationships, plus the whole supernatural thing. There's even the "faggot" put there by one of the characters, Zev reacting at first and then just laughing it off because of a secret joke with Tony. That's good, it's life. And it's a huge source of amusement how the "big bad" always has an opinion to share with Tony. Last time, he was way too interested, and this time he disapproves as much as he can. Looks like one way or another, they'll share their opinions.

As usual, Tanya Huff shows lots of self-deprecating humor. "How does it work?" "well who cares it doesn't make any sense anyway". It's really about Tony, and the plot is here to support that. Even in this situation, taking care of Mason's ego is a priority, after all.

No more than three stars because even though it's really enjoyable, the plot is simple, no great sub-plots, and the prose so so at times. I would read it again though, so if I could give it a 3.5 stars I would have.

Angela says

After chugging through Phaedra Weldon's *Wraith*, I was definitely in the mood to go right back to good ol' Tanya Huff, so I went for *Smoke and Mirrors*, Book 2 of her Tony Foster series.

And really, Tanya Huff just continues to solidly entertain. It's less rare than it used to be to have an urban fantasy series with a male protagonist, but it's still very, *very* rare to have an urban fantasy series with a *queer* protagonist. So just being able to read one is cool.

It helps of course that the Tony Fosters are entertaining reads as well. This installment follows up some months in time to the events of Book 1, when the TV production Tony works for goes to an allegedly haunted house to shoot an episode on location--and, surprise surprise, the house is of course actually haunted. Huff delivers some decently creepy haunts in the story, and the two young children who are the most significant ghost characters bring a lot to the story. Tony's secret magical ability also leaks to his coworkers in the progression of events, nicely advancing his arc with that and forcing him to start taking more charge of his gifts.

I won't say much about the progression of Tony's love life as I would run into the territory of spoilers, but I was at least simultaneously pleased and disappointed by events on that front herein. Still though it's a refreshing change of pace to see a relationship cease between a previous book and a subsequent one, and yet have the involved parties remain on good terms. More situations like this, please! Let us cut down on the angst.

I will of course be reading Book 3, which is already on my To Read shelf. For this one, four stars.

Liz says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book & was surprised to find I had trouble putting it down [this lead to some very bleary-eyed work days]. Fans of the Blood series should enjoy it, but I strongly recommend reading the first book in the series, *Smoke & Shadows*, as there's little time spent on filling in the back story, and you may find yourself a little lost otherwise. I had to look up some of what happened previously to understand some of Tony's references. One other criticism is I would have liked to see more of Henry, but then the point of the book was Tony starting to come into his own, and Henry would have detracted from that. I loved all the dry humor and sarcasm, which sometimes was subtly British in flavor. There is just something inherently fun in reading about people who produce a fictional TV series about a vampire detective who are then forced to deal with the supernatural in 'reality'. Particularly as they find the supernatural antics unoriginal compared to their fictional TV show plots.

Vanessa says

My original review of the novel

The Tony Foster trilogy is one of my absolute favorites on my shelf (and this is my favorite of the three), so I was super thrilled to find out that there are audiobooks. That usually doesn't happen to my older favorites barely anyone talks about anymore.

So of course I loved the story. Brian Sutherland is a competent narrator, too. Still, I subtracted a star because while it definitely *is* enjoyable to listen to this, I thought that there was something... lacking. I've listened to audiobooks where the narrator elevates the story and makes the characters' voices their own. Maybe it's just me, but sometimes they just sounded so flat?
Still, I'll definitely listen to this again.

Christine (AR) says

Tony and the crew of *Darkest Night* film in an actual haunted house and get trapped inside overnight.

Loved it, loved it, loved it! Scary haunted house, fun banter and bitching between the TV crew, and wow -- keeping dialogue and POV clear between *eighteen* people trapped in a house, not to mention the ghosts? Huff pulled that one off *very* nicely. Not a lot of Henry, but baby-wizard Tony is adorable and I think I love him the best anyway. I thought his UST with Lee in this was perfect. I hope Huff writes ten more in this series.

(and now I wonder if she's in fandom somewhere, b/c some of the asides and phrasing have a definite LJ fanfic feel, though not at all in a bad way.)

Punk says

Supernatural/Mystery. The crew of *Darkest Night* is filming a haunted house episode in a house that,

surprise, turns out to be haunted and Tony has to save them all with his new beginning-level wizarding powers! This is very, very good. I tore through it. Huff seems to have resolved her POV issues and the story itself has lots of suspense and gore and creepiness. Tony's growing up some, and it's awesome that he's wizardly. The unresolved sexual tension between him and Lee is actually sexy this time, and I loved Tony's relationship with the adorable Zev. Also, Chester Bane and Henry suddenly being all BFF? Fantastic. THIS is the Huff book I wanted, and may be my favorite to date.

Four stars for an exciting, creepy read, and for Tony, who tries very hard and makes fun of himself in his head and is easy to like.
