



Of Darkness, Light, and Fire

Tanya Huff

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Famous for her acclaimed vampire novels, **Tanya Huff** has created many popular fantasies, including these two classics—**Gate of Darkness**, **Circle of Light** and **The Fire's Stone**—finally available in one omnibus volume...

Of Darkness, Light, and Fire Details

Date : Published December 4th 2001 by Daw Books (first published December 1st 2001)

ISBN : 9780756400385

Author : Tanya Huff

Format : Paperback 528 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Fiction, Science Fiction Fantasy, Lgbt

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From Reader Review Of Darkness, Light, and Fire for online ebook

AA says

A bit different from her other books, but I enjoyed it since it was a different setting, etc.

Tamara says

Had this on to be read for a challenge and discovered I'd already read it. In fact its probably the first Tanya Huff that I read. In my defense it is repackaged with another book (that I also have read) so no longer part of the challenge reading but I now have a copy in my library.

This was my intro to Huff I particularly like the worlds she creates and the female characters are heroic while still being very human.

Heather King says

3 stars for Gate of Darkness, Circle of Light and 5 stars for Fires Stone.

La Tricia Ransom says

i've yet to read a tanya huff book that i didn't like.

Angela says

Of Darkness, Light, and Fire really counts as two novels, on the grounds that it's a reprinting of Tanya Huff's two first novels; *Gate of Darkness*, *Circle of Light* and *The Fire's Stone*. As a longstanding fan of Huff's later work, I certainly enjoyed reading both of these books, though I could also see how they were rougher versions of the style she'd later develop for the Vicki Nelsons, the Quarters novels, and the Keeper ones.

Gate of Darkness, *Circle of Light* in particular felt rough around the edges, primarily in the handling of the main male character, the young street bard. I kept having too many "yeah yeah yeah, seen this" reactions to the various and sundry things thrown at him as part of his development arc, and I didn't really quite buy the reasons given for his maturation towards the end. Also, I have to admit I was hugely thrown off by seeing the lyrics of a familiar Mercedes Lackey filksong, "Wind's Four Quarters", quoted as a plot point in the story--duly credited, of course, but still. I'm very used to thinking of that song in other contexts, i.e., Valdemar, so it knocked me askew from the story to see it here. The ending was also rather a bit of "yeah yeah yeah, seen this". I won't go so far as to say "deus ex machina", but one could make a very good argument for that term literally applying here.

Now, all that said, there are other things I also really like in this story. The treatment of the primary female character was interestingly well-rounded and didn't fall into the easy sorts of traps that might have come from having a mentally challenged person as your lead female character. And I liked seeing a young woman from India as another of the primary female characters, too. And I enjoyed seeing Toronto serving as the setting--though, having just whipped through all the Vicki Nelsons as well, I think I even recognized a couple of minor cop characters that appear in both this book and the Vicki Nelsons. I may have to doublecheck that; it would amuse me if this is supposed to be Vicki Nelson's Toronto here.

Meanwhile, over in *The Fire's Stone*, you have a more traditional fantasy in which a thief with an angsty past, a drunken but charming prince, and a bristly young wizard team up together to try to recover the stolen magical stone that keeps the local volcano from erupting and thereby destroying the kingdom. This one read roughly for me as well, mostly due to the very modern-flavored narrative and dialogue not quite working right for me--for example, the wizard girl referring to the prince as a "jerk". (Though to be fair, after a while I got used to it, and it helped to keep in mind things like oh, say, *Avatar: The Last Airbender* to get the flavor down.) There weren't any real surprises in the development of any of the characters, nor in the various obstacles they had to solve to get to their goal.

Also, you could really tell that Huff was trying to get the hang of writing a queer-friendly plot--and, for that matter, a poly-friendly plot. We do get two boys attracted strongly to one another here, but at least on the part of one, a bit too much "ZOMG BOY + BOY = BAD" conditioning out of his culture. I see way too much of that in real life, and honestly prefer Huff's later, defter handling of queer-friendly plots: i.e., having queer characters just *there* and being part of the story without the double-barrelled angst.

On the other hand, points for being one of the few fantasy novels I've read that's not only queer-friendly, but poly-friendly as well. ^_^

All in all, three stars, I think. Not Huff's strongest works, she got her feet under her with later ones, but pleasant reads in general.

Belle says

This book's comprised of two of Huff's novels. The first, *Gate of Darkness, Circle of Light* is a modern fantasy set in Toronto. It's sort of a near-apocalypse story, as the conflict's due to an Adept of Darkness (a demon, in other words) infiltrating the city. He plans to access a gate which will unleash complete chaos on the world, destroying it for what it is. An Adept of Light (basically an angel...with leather pants. w/e) sent to Earth to try to cut off the Dark Adept's plans. Rebecca, a developmentally challenged young woman, comes into contact with the Light Adept through her gift: the ability to see the fantastical creatures which inhabit the world. Through their acquaintance with her, several others become involved in the lead up to the eventual Light vs. Dark battle. There's Mrs. Ruth, a bag lady whose craziness might actually be wisdom concerning the dark/light struggle; Roland, a personable street musician who's been told his skills mean he's meant to be a Bard; Daru, the tough-minded social worker who's watched over Rebecca; and even the stray cat, Tom, does his share.

Erm, this one was just okay. I really enjoyed Roland's character, but Rebecca and Evan (the Light Adept) actually grated on my nerves a bit. It was also pretty obvious that this book was one of Huff's earliest works, evident by the writing style.

Maybe it's because more traditional fantasy stories are my preference, which leads me to *The Fire's Stone*, the second book in this. This one's about a fantasy setting called Cisali. Ischia--a city inside Cisali--is preserved due to the Fire Stone, which contains powers needed to keep the city's volcano from overflowing...but this stone gets stolen. Three unlikely candidates are dispatched to retrieve the stone from the city where it's suspected to be hidden. Well, originally the one chosen was Prince Darvish, who's loveable, but secretly depressed by a sense of having no belonging. Darvish happens upon Aaron, a boy who'd run away from his family expectations. When Darvish finds Aaron, Aaron's being whipped for getting caught while trying to steal a crown gem. Darvish rescues Aaron, and it's determined that Aaron's thieving skills can be of assistance on the trip. Before the two can leave, they're accosted by Princess Chandra, a young wizard with a know-it-all attitude. Her father, without her knowledge, cemented her betrothal to Darvish, without her knowing. She sneaks on board a ship into Ischia so that she can meet her fiance and tell him she refuses to get married. When she realizes the Stone--created by the pooled powers of her magical forefathers--is missing, she brings it upon her self to join the rescue mission.

Hey, wait a minute...don't the key points of their personalities remind you of the three main characters in another fantasy book? Before you accuse this book of stealing traits, just let me tell you that *The Fire's Stone* was published in 1990. ;)

I really enjoyed this story, fwiw, despite some cliches. And the characters weren't very fleshed out. I would also have liked to see more insight into one particular relationship. The magic elements were very delightful, as well as the overall plot. I know others have whined over there not being a sequel to this book...I also think I'd have liked to see one.

Also, a warning kind of similar to my last: in *Gate of Darkness, Circle of Light*, the Light of Adept attracts all kinds of people...in non-sexual and sexual ways. And notice I say "people". As for *The Fire's Stone*...in the world of Cisali, bisexuality seems to be regarded as nothing unusual, and perhaps even the norm. So...use your head. If you're not comfortable with that, these stories won't be for you.

Anastasia says

Nice fantasy

Wendy Holcombe says

I really liked this book(s), I'm disappointed that they end!
I wish it was a series.

Shae says

I really liked both books. Be aware though that this is just two books under one cover, not a sequel or a prequel or two books in the same universe. They have nothing to do with each other, but they're both good.

Ben Babcock says

This is an omnibus edition that contains *Gate of Darkness*, *Circle of Light* and *The Fire's Stone* . Check out those respective pages for their reviews.

Jerry says

Both good stories...worth the read.

Laura says

I loved both of these stories.

the first set in Toronto - was my favourite mix of Toronto and fantasy- I loved the characters.

loved the queer storylines in both books

I am not exactly sure why both books are put together but I definitely am reading more of this author.

Kristen Coffin says

"There is no shame in loving, or in wanting to love. Nor is there harm in wanting without having."

Originally read this back-to-back with The Wizard of the Grove duology and I like that set a little better.

Obviously that set is a duology and this set it two completely separate, in no way related to each other books, so it's not like the momentum keeps going in this set as opposed to that one.

That being said, of the two novels herein, I preferred the first one: Gates of Darkness, Circle of Light. I love the world here and the Adepts of Darkness/Light. I feel like the pace of this story was a lot more even, it stayed consistent throughout the novel. The second novel, The Fire's Stone, had so much world set up, it was almost a culture shock to go from the first to the second novel. Once the plot was established and the story was rolling, it was still really good though.

susannah says

Wonderful intergenerational friendship in this book.

Jeremy Preacher says

Omnibus, two separate reviews:

Gate of Darkness, Circle of Light:

All of Tanya Huff's urban fantasy (this, the Keeper trilogy, the newer ones) feel like iterations on a single idea. I happen to like the idea, so I enjoy all of them pretty much in ascending order by date published. This is the earliest, so it's a little scattered, but the closeted bi dude is charming, the developmentally disabled woman is portrayed with great sympathy (and man, that's a sadly rare character type) and the good and evil guys are appropriately iconic. (I did particularly enjoy the angel's offhand "well, if you're a good person, you're drawn to good things, and of course that means you want my ass, that's totally normal and ok.")

The Fire's Stone:

The closeted thief, the alcoholic, bisexual playboy prince, the driven princess with daddy issues, and the macguffin to bring them all together. This was not exactly a profound book, but it was, typical of Tanya Huff, solidly crafted with believable characters and a great deal of fun. Obviously an early work, but I have no qualms recommending it as entertaining queer fluff.
