



Dark Light

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Reporter Sierra McIntyre's stories on Crystal City's ghost hunters—and their mysterious guild—have earned her tabloid a bit of respect. It helps that she has her incredible intuition to fall back on. Especially when she interviews Ghost Hunter Guild Boss John Fontana about the disappearances of retired, homeless hunters.

Sierra doesn't want to trust the physically and psychically powerful man, but her senses—and her pet dust bunny, Elvis—give her the green light. To uncover the conspiracy within his own organisation, Fontana proposes . . . marriage. And though it's purely a business arrangement, there is nothing pure about the attraction that sizzles between them.

Dark Light Details

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From Reader Review Dark Light for online ebook

Pamela says

I love this futuristic series. It takes place on another planet similar to earth. There are alien artifacts, and dangers underground. This area is protected, and governed by the Guild. Each sector has it's own boss. John Fontana has barely set up his office, when a tabloid reporter shows up to interview him. He has taken this post ,due to several things not adding up, in this sector. It seems friends of hers are disappearing right off the streets. They are retired tunnel workers, and are the guild's responsibility. There is also a new drug of choice, out there to which, no one can find the source. It all seems to be an inside job, but the last guild boss has been dismissed. Sierra, who seems more connected to society, than first thought, will not back off, and John feels she has put a target on her back. They agree to work together. To do this they agree to a temporary relationship, where he can keep her safe. Sparks of course fly, and tempers flare, attraction hits both of them. Then there is her dust bunt, Elvis. They are like large balls of lint with eyes, and teeth. They are harmless unless threatened. They pick their own friends, and are very funny, and loyal. I love these stories. There are all the adventures in the tunnels, and fighting creatures of the rain forest. It is a world set up by an alien race, but one they could not inhabit, and live. people settle there, and there is one adventure after another..Fun series to follow....

Jenny Koch says

Overall a quick, fun read. I enjoyed how the heroine was a reporter for a cringeworthy tabloid and I also loved all her coworkers.

Mojca says

Woohoo! Another 'freak' Ghost Hunter talent. And the heroine wasn't that annoying either. This series keeps getting better and better.

Tight plot, quick pacing, gripping suspense, possible alien threat, love at first sight (don't you just love one of those), heavy denial of love at first sight (me likey), great chemistry, even greater attraction, cute couple, twisted villain (I didn't see that one coming, great surprise), funky motley crew of journalists, some magic moments in the alien jungle...And a dust-bunny dressed like Elvis.

The hero was yummy, the heroine was feisty, they ran for their lives, they worked wonderfully together to uncover the conspiracy within the Guild, they both almost died...And the 'guy thing' in the end was absolutely priceless. ;)

Kari Chapman says

I really liked this one. The male leads talent was fun to read about. I liked him a lot - a nice blend of confidence and insecurity. The female lead was great as well. I liked the family issues she had to deal with. The mystery was a nice one, and the new find in the jungle was great. Overall, one of my favorite Harmony books so far.

Julie (jjmachshev) says

I'm loving the recent upswing in paranormal romance novels, but I must tell you that one of my favorite series is the 'Curtain/Ghost Hunter' series by Jayne Castle AKA Jayne Ann Krentz AKA Amanda Quick. The first book was written a little over 10 years ago and I was hooked. So whenever I get a new release, I put down whatever I'm reading at the time and gobble the new down. I've reread every book in this series at least 4-5 times and I know "Dark Light", the newest release, will be no exception.

Sierra is a tabloid reporter, now. She's also been hotel concierge, worked in an art gallery, a various other assorted short term jobs...in other words, she's still looking for her career path. Unlike all the others in her overachiever family. So far as a reporter, she's managed to piss off the local Guild. But hey, she did manage to score an interview with the new Guild Boss and ...Whoa, is he sexy! He makes her special senses sing! What's up with that?

There's a rumor that Hunters 'know' when they meet their mate. From the minute Sierra walks into new Guild Boss John Fontana's office, he knows she's the one. Unfortunately, she's also managed to stir up some trouble that appears to be putting her in danger and she doesn't appear willing to share her sources. So Fontana comes up with a great plan--he'll marry her!

I almost forgot about Elvis! I think he steals the show in this book. The fancy outfits with all the rhinestones are fabulous! And his special abilities...well, I don't want to give it away.

Once again, the perfect blend of romance, mystery, humor, and action. I don't know how she does it, but I'm so glad she does. My only beef is that now I'll have to wait another year or so for my next 'fix'.

If you miss the way Linda Howard used to write, if you like Krentz's 'Arcane Society' books, heck...if you like excellent romance, then you need to get off your duff and read these books. "Dark Light" is another one for my keeper shelf, just like all the rest in this series.

Anita says

Actual Rating: 3.5 Stars

There were many things I really liked about this book despite the common formula that Jayne Castle uses on a regular basis. I like the new paranormal talents that continue to be introduced with each book. I like that the world of *Harmony* isn't static, and that things are continuously being discovered from alien history, to human history, to new and unknown abilities. I like that the characters are always likable and easy to follow. I like that the romances are steamy and sexy and fun. I like the wit and humor.

And in *Dark Light*, I also very much liked our main couple, Sierra and Fontana. Of course, as per usual, Fontana is the typical broody, alpha with some back story issues. Sierra was a bit hard to like in those first few paragraphs if only because reporters tend to be some of my least favorite character types--but she turns out to be lots of fun, laid back and righteous, and witty in her own way.

I liked the other characters introduced, even though we'll probably never see them again.

And I *loved* Elvis, the diva dust bunny, companion to Sierra, who loves his little Elvis cap and sunglasses, and loves to play new games. To be totally honest, as much as I like the main human characters in these books, they are always overshadowed by the dust bunnies. I don't think there's anything I don't love about dust bunnies and it makes me so happy to see them incorporated so naturally into the story.

Finally, I like how Jayne Castle is starting to officially incorporate the *Arcane Society* into the *Harmony* books. As soon as it was mentioned that Sierra's ability was of a psychic nature that she uses without the aid of tuned amber--the stone that helps the *Harmony* characters use their psi abilities--I had a feeling we were talking about the same types of psychic abilities from the other aforementioned series. And then it was confirmed, so I'm happy about that.

So it looks like we'll have more to look forward to in these books as the world becomes more extensive.

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Jacob Proffitt says

Another good entry for the series. And again, you could easily start here if you like. I still suggest reading at least the first two before others, but you don't really have to.

This story was rather light, but I kind of enjoyed that. For one, it meant that there was a very, very bare minimum of PoV hopping. Only a couple really short shifts that weren't really bad guys so much as bad guy adjacent.

While I liked both protagonists, I didn't connect strongly with either. They were *good* but not great. I'm sure that's a personal taste situation rather than a reflection on their quality as characters. Likewise Sierra's dust bunny, Elvis. I'm not going to diss on the King, or anything, but even if you have elvisaphenalia surviving that far into the future, I'm pretty certain it wouldn't be ubiquitous enough for all the in jokes from so many different bystanders. So that broke immersion all on its own.

So yeah, it's a solid 3.5 stars that I'm rounding a generous four. I was entertained and I got three or four laugh-out-loud (literally) moments.

A note about Steamy: Low mid level steam. There are two almost perfunctory explicit sex scenes. That was actually kind of frustrating because their emotional involvement far outpaced their physical intimacy and that felt a bit strange.

CatBookMom says

Part of the great Harmony re-read binge.

Aly is so frigging bored says

I really enjoy these books, I don't need to concentrate overlay much to enjoy them. I liked both MCs, they didn't let themselves be defined by their families and they succeeded on their own merits.

Pam Baddeley says

In this fifth volume of the Ghost Hunters series, we have the elements we've come to expect: feisty heroine who usually has a downer on ghost hunters, controlled, powerful, hunky hero, cute dust bunnies - the indigenous life form which likes to pair up with (usually) the heroine, a mystery of some kind involving murderer(s) who would stop at nothing, and lots of alien tech and psychic powers.

In brief, Harmony is a colony cut off from Earth for 200 years after being established in the late 21st century. During that time humans have developed psychic powers, perhaps from exposure to psychic energy from the ruins left by departed aliens, which each major city and town has been built around and which extend underground for unknown distances - plus are probably connected by the recently discovered artificial rainforest environment - although the author seems to have found the original powers developed in the first two books rather limiting. We now have various additional abilities which are known to have been brought from Earth by members of the Arcane Society - another of her series - and which do not depend on the mineral found on Harmony, named amber by the colonists, to provide a strengthening focus. Similarly, the ghost hunter talent - the ability to control the errant energy clouds which manifest in and around the underground catacombs, and which are a serious hazard to human explorers - has developed so that as well as its usual manifestation in controlling and manipulating green energy, we have encountered heroes who manipulate blue, silver and now dark energy, all of which have different properties than the usual green light.

As the story begins, reporter Sierra McIntyre is in the office of John Fontana, new chief of Crystal City's ghost hunter Guild. She has been doing a series for her paper alleging Guild involvement in drug manufacturing - a new drug called juice has had an unfortunate and rapid effect on some ex-Guild members who have become homeless addicts. Fontana has recently come into office to replace the former chief who was involved in corrupt activities, including serious drug trafficking. McIntyre is taken aback when Fontana suddenly proposes they enter a Marriage of Convenience that afternoon - he convinces her that her inquiries into the disappearance of the homeless ex-hunters has placed her in danger as well, something that is proven when two men in motorcycle gear attack her as she leaves her apartment to travel to the registrar office. Luckily she is able to reach the nearby tavern where she knows several retired Guild members who come to her rescue, and deliver her in time for her wedding, somewhat dishevelled and bruised.

Sierra is an unusual heroine for this series, rather a dilettante. Most of Castle's previous heroines are career businesswomen, often down on their luck due to previous adversity not of their own making, but trying to get their own businesses going. Sierra at first appears to be a crusading do-gooder as Fontana calls her, but she actually comes from a privileged background and has never settled on a vocation. She has tried one dead end job after another, her stint on a despised tabloid newsrag being the latest. We learn by the end of the story that, despite her zeal to get justice for the washed up guildsmen, and to find out what happened to those who disappeared, she is just as quick to quit the newspaper job for one her new husband provides. Also, unlike the heroines in the previous books, she has no special psychic ability. She has an unexplained claustrophobia, but that doesn't actually impede her from doing anything in the story. I wasn't that keen on her, to be honest, and it was difficult to grasp what Fontana saw in her.

As is usual for this series, the hero and heroine are strongly attracted to each other, and the man is convinced she is the only woman for him, but the heroine needs a lot of persuasion. Despite her friendship with the old

guildsmen, Sierra has a low opinion of the Guild itself. The story of their ups and downs romantic journey is interwoven with danger from the motorcycle gang, who are soon shown as working for more powerful figures behind the scenes, and the resolution of the various threads of the drug running and disappearances. For light relief, we again have the heroine's companion dust bunny, this time a bit too cute perhaps with the author milking it for all she's worth: the dust bunny is called Elvis and has a little cloak, miniature pair of glasses and little guitar, plus he spends quite a bit of the time literally floating around on a balloon-powered platform in the newspaper offices. This and Sierra's character were both starting to grate a bit by the end, but the book does just about scrape a 3-star rating.

Lisa says

Dark Light was basically just a stamping out of the usual stock elements present in all the Harmony books. The hero and heroine meet and enter into a "marriage of convenience" incredibly quickly and for poorly defined reasons, one or both of them has a dust bunny companion that plays a pivotal role in finding the corresponding kidnapped or lost human, at some point the hero will be required to "melt amber" in order to protect the heroine and they'll have sex either right before he passes out or after he regains consciousness, and the story wraps up within half a page of the hero and heroine admitting that they love each other while a whole gaggle of dust bunnies have a party somewhere close by.

That is pretty much the plot of every single Harmony book and Dark Light doesn't stray from that outline at all. Most of the time I don't mind the repetitive formula. I mean, every romance novel follows the basic "meet -> sex -> happily ever after" plot when you get right down to it; but what keeps the book interesting is how those stock elements are put together. Unfortunately, Dark Light didn't include enough interesting elements or character development to help me look past the boiler-plate plot.

Sierra and Fontana are already in the middle of their first meeting when the story opens up, so we didn't get to see their first glimpse of each other or read their inner thoughts about each other, etc.. Then Fontana proposes a marriage of convenience completely out of no where. It's only after the fact, in the next chapter, that we get a peek at Fontana's inner thoughts where he admits that he hadn't intended to propose to Sierra before meeting her, but once he saw her he felt this instant connection and just went for it. Leaving aside for a moment how ridiculous it is to propose even an MC after only knowing a person for an hour regardless of attraction, by the time we read this snippet from Fontana's mind it's too late to convince the reader that this proposal is anything but a plot contrivance. Blindsiding us with a proposal that doesn't make sense isn't romantic, it's off-putting. We need to feel a connection with and between the characters first! If we'd gotten to know the characters before the proposal, or at least read their inner monologues it would have been one thing; but as it was, all we got was "they're getting married because I say they are."

This poor start unfortunately sets the stage for the whole book. Since we as the reader are not emotionally invested in the marriage/relationship, the whole romance gets off on the wrong foot. Sierra constantly talks about how this is just a business arrangement and that's exactly what it feels like. There's no spark or sizzle between them. So when a line about Fontana getting irritated that Sierra keeps reminding everyone that this is just a MC gets thrown in, it seems weird and out of place because there basically IS no romance. It really IS just a business arrangement. Sierra seems completely unaffected by Fontana to the point where JC had to resort to getting her drunk before she'd even flirt with the him. Sierra shows much, MUCH more enthusiasm when discussing her work at a tabloid paper that publishes (completely fictitious) stories about vampires and alien abductions.

I had trouble relating to Sierra's character. Her big "troubled past" is that she's a trust fund baby from an incredibly rich, powerful, successful and psychically gifted family that dates back to the Arcane Society from

the Amanda Quick and Jayne Anne Krentz books. Oh you poor, poor dear. However do you get out of bed in the morning?

Sierra might have been a touch more likeable if she'd been a real journalist who did the work because it was her one passion in life regardless of her upbringing, but that's not the case. Despite Sierra's cavalier disregard for her own safety while she pursues the story of the missing retired ghost hunters, we find out about mid-way through the book that she's only doing this job because she can't figure out what she wants to be when she grows up. Everyone else in her fabulously rich and successful family has a passion; a calling, and she doesn't. So she's bounced from one dead-end job to another, usually managing to get herself fired in the process, while she searches for her "thing". And by the end of the story she's moved on to yet another job, this one handed to her by her hubby Fontana, so obviously tabloid journalism wasn't her true calling either.

Her psychic talents weren't anything to write home about either. As usual we're told that she's an off-the-charts talent, just like all the Harmony heroines. However in Sierra's case she can't actually DO anything. She just supposedly has extra-strong intuition. You'd think she'd be able to use this gift to avoid getting into trouble but she doesn't. It's never used, not once in the whole story, to prevent her from needing to be rescued. And aside from her talent she's basically useless. She can't fight or use guns. She can't use amber to navigate the underground. She doesn't have any special knowledge that comes in handy. She can't even hike through the jungle at a pace that doesn't slow the hero down. Oh, and she's paralyzingly claustrophobic as well, for absolutely no reason. I admit that I skimmed some parts of this book (the recitation of how amber and ghost light and powers work on Harmony was really obtrusive and flow-breaking in this book so I flipped through some sections to get past these parts) so it's possible I just missed it, but as near as I could tell there was no "event" that caused Sierra to be claustrophobic. She just was. I know in real life people can have phobias with no cause but in a book it's weird to not give an explanation. And even the phobia felt like a plot contrivance because it was JUST intrusive enough to give the hero a chance to "admire" Sierra for not freaking out when they went into the catacombs, but not debilitating enough to prevent her from doing anything important.

All in all, Sierra was not my favorite heroine. Fontana was fine as the hero. Nothing particularly groundbreaking about his character. His "tortured past" was pretty token as well. He's got issues because he's a bastard. His father was in a covenant marriage with another woman when he had an affair with Fontana's mother and got her pregnant. He financially supported Fontana until the age of 18 without any fuss but was never around. That's it. As far as bad fictional dads go, he's not exactly Darth Vader. It was a weirdly dated hangup to give our hero. I mean, here in the 21st century people don't really care about that sort of thing anymore. So it's hard to believe that this futuristic world would revert to such a puritanical view of things. And in truth, no one in the story besides the hero seems to give a fig about his lineage so it was all much ado about nothing.

Aside from his daddy issues, Fontana did a decent job as the hero. He was protective of Sierra and fought like a champ when the story required it. It was just hard to understand why he was drawn to Sierra in the first place since there was no chemistry between them. The mystery plot and the villain(s) were pretty forgettable. It felt like a monster-of-the-week episode of some long-running sci-fi TV show. Nothing in the series will change as a result of the events so if you skip this book, you won't be missing anything.

Abra says

This is another book in the series in which the characters get married immediately for some reason. It's a common plot in this series and I don't mind it.

I liked both the hero and the heroine and enjoyed this book.

Irene says

What can I say?...

Elvis the Dust Bunny RULES!!! Again :)

Lexie says

I've read the four books preceding this one (After Dark, After Glow, Ghost Hunter and Silver Master) plus the novella that (I believe) started it all, Bridal Jitters and to date I think that other than the duo in Bridal Jitters I haven't fully liked any of the romantic couples featured (to be fair it's the same couple in After Dark and After Glow) until this book.

Sierra was a little too reckless to be honest, but other than that I really enjoyed the interaction between Sierra and Fontana. That said the book has 'two' endings, depending on how you look at it. The bad guy is seemingly found out, but a twist near the end makes that just turn upside down slightly. The twist made sense, but was tacked on and not given a lot of development before being pounced on the reader.

The world of Harmony is such an intriguing adventure to be sure. Endless possibilities, but the details given about the original inhabitants of the planet the humans call 'Harmony' make me wish this was more of a sci-fi book series that would give us a whole book or at least novella with more concrete clues than 'educated' guesses.

Jilly says

This series seemed like such a strange, mixed-bag type of thing when it started. It had so many odd things going on that almost didn't go together, and yet was entertaining enough. But, now I feel like it has settled into a definite identity. It is a very campy sci-fi romance. Why camp?

First of all: the language. This planet has psychic waves that the people "resonate" with, and amber helps them tune into the psychic flow. So, everything is either amber-related or "rezzed". Here's what I mean:

"We should take the results with a grain of amber"

Instead of a grain of salt. By the way, they DO have salt on this planet.

Curtain Cola

Instead of CocaCola. The "curtain" is the window that opened from Earth to this new planet.

"Son of a Ghost"

Instead of Son of a bitch. Ghosts are balls of psychic energy in this world.

"Ghost Shit!"

Instead of Bullshit! (They also have bulls on this world. They must. They eat cow meat.)

They were armed with knives and rez-ball bats

Instead of baseball bats. Just throw 'rez' in front of any word and you are able to speak the slang in this world.

It reminds me of either the old Batman thing:

Or maybe how McDonald's puts "Mc" in front of everything to make it their own.

So, the language is almost silly.

Next is the Dust Bunnies. In the first book, our heroine has a little dust bunny as her pet. This thing was the absolutely cutest thing ever and everyone fell in love with it. So, in each subsequent book, the author has added a dust bunny pet in for each heroine, and even one of the men had one once. Each dust bunny has been a little more elaborate than the last, and each story has featured the dust bunnies a little bit more. This is smart on the author's part because she is giving her audience what they want. I swear that some people read this series for the dust bunnies alone. Not me. Oh no, I am here for the jewelry, which I will explain in a minute. In this book, the dust bunny is an Elvis impersonator who wears a rhinestone cape and, by the way, flies around in his personal little hot air balloon made from a helium balloon and a cardboard basket. It's so freaking adorable that your teeth will ache. I'm not going to say that the author is pandering, but ... well, she's definitely playing to the crowd.... which is the definition of pandering.... so, I guess I am saying that.

Pander Bear is so great! He says everything I like!

And, speaking of Elvis, and yes, I've mentioned this before. The other thing that is OTT and campy in this book is the jewelry thing. The people here wear amber jewelry to help their psychic flow. So, the more amber jewelry, the better, right? Uh, yeah. It's a little hard to be attracted to the male character when he is described as wearing this:

Fontana wore amber. Even the buttons of his shirt and his cuff links were set with amber. So was his belt buckle, the face of his watch, and, of course, his seal ring.

yeah, that's the visual I get. And, I might live in the South, but Elvis does NOT rock my boat. By the time I was born, he was Fat Elvis and about to be Dead Elvis. I can't think of much that is less sexy than a man dripping in jewels, like the guys in these books.

So, basically, we have a series where the language is silly, there are ridiculously cute side-kicks, and men who are dripping in jewelry. Camp.

Will I keep reading? Oh, yeah. I'm a sucker for camp.