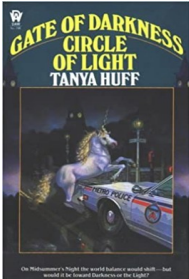




# Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



Gate of Darkness, Circle of Light  
By Tanya Huff  
*Discussed February 2002*

## Discussion Questions

1. Urban fantasy has been somewhat prominent in the fantasy field in the last 15 years or so, and seems to have its own set of tropes or "rules". For those who've read other pieces of urban fantasy, what are some of those "rules" and how well did Tanya follow them?
  - a) Urban fantasies usually rely on a very strong sense of place, utilizing concrete real world landmarks to anchor the story in the here and now. Discuss Tanya's use of place/location in the book.
  - b) They often also utilize an unreal world with its own landmarks and rules. How well did Tanya develop her fantasy realm? Were its boundaries clear?
  - c) In most urban fantasies, while magic plays a significant role in the story, it usually follows a strict set of rules. How did magic work in the book, and did you feel it was consistent and well thought out?
2. Who is the main character?
3. What was your take/impression of the movement between real world and fantasy world? Did the transitions work for you?
4. What did you think of Huff's cosmology as developed in the book - with the "light" and the "dark" and the goddess, and all that went with it? Was it a consistent and satisfying cosmology?
5. In many magical systems, power is gained through a journey into the dark realm, or to face the guardian at the doorway, or some other form of confrontation with ones inner demons. Tanya used this in her development of Roland as a Bard. What did you think of his "hero's journey" through the shadow realms? What archetypes and symbolic imagery do we find in his journey?
6. What did you think of her use of Roland's sexual identity distress? Did you find his inner dilemma believable? Did you find resolution? What happens next for Roland?
7. One of the archetypes in myth is the fool who carries great wisdom. In Gate of Darkness we have two different forms of this - Rebecca who suffers from mental illness and has great clarity through mental

simplicity; and Mrs. Ruth, the odorous and repulsive wise woman/outsider. How effective was the use of these wise fools for you?

8. Tanya also utilizes a woman suffering from mental disability as one of her main characters. How well did this work for you? Was the characterization of Rebecca's mental processes believable?