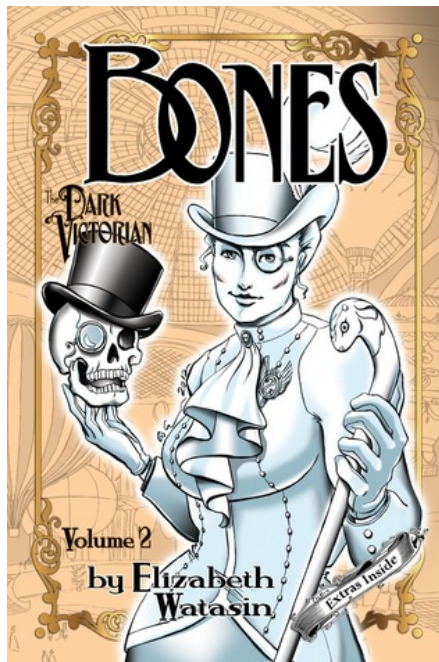




The Dark Victorian: Bones Volume Two

Elizabeth Watasin

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"I am made of this."

In a Victorian mechanical and eldritch London, a black arts surgeon is ripping out the bones and organs of healthy poor folk to transplant into the afflicted bodies of the wealthy. Anti-vivisectionists battle with medical doctors, medical doctors condemn supernatural practitioners, and amidst it all the Bone Stealer hunts for his most elusive prize yet: the skeleton of a woman over six feet tall. Secret Commission agents Art, the artificial ghost, and Jim Dastard, the animated skull, rush to stop him before another woman dies. And Art, only six days living after being resurrected to serve the Secret Commission, might be that woman.

The Dark Victorian: Bones Volume Two Details

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Author : Elizabeth Watasin

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From Reader Review The Dark Victorian: Bones Volume Two for online ebook

J. Kevin says

BONES continues the adventures of Art the living ghost and Jim Dastard the animated skull, both brought back to life by the mysterious "Secret Commission" to battle supernatural menaces in Victorian London. Which is a great pulpy adventure premise, but there's a lot more going on here than just spooky thrills (although there's plenty of that, too). This time out, Art and Jim are on the trail of the Bone Stealer, a villain who is using black magic to harvest entire skeletons out of people's bodies. Which is as awful as it sounds, and while I wouldn't call the book super explicit, squeamish readers might want to approach with caution.

This volume is longer than the previous one, and a lot of that space goes to developing the supporting cast, most of whom have secrets (supernatural and otherwise) of their own. Indeed, after the climactic showdown with the Bone Stealer (which is a seriously epic battle scene), the book goes on for another 100 pages, just dealing with the repercussions and reactions of the various players. Sometimes I think the author goes a little too far in making every character Deep And Mysterious, and the slow drip-drip-drip of information can be frustrating, but I have to admit that I'm thoroughly hooked.

Fans of steampunk and Victoriana will be well pleased, as the book oozes with period detail and clever, creepy fantasy elements. The rigid class system of the era comes under scrutiny, and one of the major themes of the book is people trying to find a place for themselves, or rebelling against the roles society has forced on them. Having died and been reborn, Art and Jim are the ultimate outsiders, but find a measure of acceptance among others who are on the fringes of society, whether that's the staff and patrons of the Vesta (a high-class private club catering to "alternative lifestyles"), or the supernatural shops of the Black Market, or even the community of Quakers that Art was part of in her previous life.

Watasin has come up with a unique spin on the historical fantasy/horror genre, don't miss it.

(Full Disclosure: I won a copy of this book in an online contest. But I totally would've bought it anyway, having bought and enjoyed Volume One.)

Corrie says

5 fat stars! Oh my, I LOVE this series and I can't wait for the next book to come out. So imaginative, such wonderful characters. Elizabeth Watasin has just blown me away.

(April 30) Read it again and out loud to my Book Club Buddy D. As always when you read it a second time you find parts that didn't stand out before. Elizabeth's world is so richly filled, so much detail. The woman spends an insane amount of time on research and it shows.

By now D. is fully under the thrall of Ms. Watasin and I am to read the whole series to her on pain of death. I don't mind the task ;-)) Onwards!

Douglas Stewart says

To the Staccato of spinal horror, now arrives our recently revived Art (attended upon by her ever faithful cranial savant: Jim)'

Read if you:

Delight in a heady, deeply satisfying blend of Victorian, Gothic and Romantic impulses.
Enjoy supernatural horrors subservient to true terror: Humanities Inhumanity
Can drown lovingly in narrative that is equal parts prose and verse.
Like your steampunk whodunit with layers of delicious conspiracy and malicious intent.
Enjoyed Dark Victorian: Risen [DUH]

Avoid if you:

Cannot stomach fictional [but historically accurate] depiction of man's inhumanity to animals
Need your steampunk literary desires are only sated by all the clichés the genre has now become bloated with [Aetheric Corsets anyone? *sigh*]
Did Not swoon over the first one [DOUBLE DUH]
The Screws that Bind: [All Previous Screws Apply]

Surgical Addiction

Death | Love | Gender [All the combinations thereof]

Social Commentary [Victorian Mores as observations on our own]

Aftertaste: Blood, Discovery and the fading scent of flowers and French Parfum

Lines to Adore:

"I don't know, Friend", Art finally said. "If the presence of this Venus inspires thought of sympathy towards my sex. She is beautiful, yes, yet she lies not dead or in sleep but as one alive, her body sensitive and with feeling, and her expression I think her in surrendered motion"

AND

"'Ghost and Skull for hire', it has a nice ring."

"Services offered with discretion and piety."

'Oh, most piously!'"

Author: Elizabeth Watasin-female, American, Artist

Personal Bias: If Risen was a sea tide withdrawing gently, Bones was all the promise of that swell returned.

With Force.

Rich in subtlety, dark in horror and deliciously sensual; The Dark Victorian: Bones was the ebook equivalent of an exquisitely seasoned mulled wine. Perfect for those dark nights where the only company you desire is not only terrifying and mysterious -but come shambling in forms strangely, unnervingly familiar.

Website review: Worthreading.co

Penelope Bartotto says

Some times waiting is definitely worth the suspense. I received The Dark Victorian: Bones (Volume 2) at the same time as receiving The Dark Victorian: Risen (Volume 1). I loved Risen, but at the time did not have time to sit down and enjoy the second book. Bones was my holiday break guilty pleasure book, and I am thoroughly thrilled with the results.

Art and Jim are back! Not fully recovered from the fray with the horrible re-animationist, a new terror is gripping the streets of London. The Bone Stealer is on the hunt, and now one of their own is in danger. Art, only a newborn, is struggling to learn the limitations of her body and strength. Jim, an odd, yet lovable father figure both worries about Art's need to rest, but also her need to learn more about her past. Her life before being resurrected garners a special intrigue within her, that burns like a fire in her heart and soul.

Once again the characters are fully developed and we are given the treat of learning even more about the characters that Watasin has created. In addition, as new characters are brought into the story, Watasin doesn't simply drop them in... okay, maybe she does, but she returns to give them the necessary details that bring them to life. Hopping with action, the story has a softer side, with romance blooming into a tender caress of emotional perfection. The plot is an intense mystery, that combines tidbits of Art's past that may or may not be coming back to haunt her, how interesting that should be for a ghost. Artifice is one of my all time favorite characters, and that's over forty years of reading being included.

If you are looking for a stellar book that spans the science fiction/paranormal/steampunk/LGBT genre you should look no further than this series. Watasin is able to knock your socks off, and yet not do one iota of damage to your hat. for we all know that would be a purely dreadful shame to dent thy hat.

? Irena ? says

This was such a disappointment. I liked the first book.

I expected a steampunk horror story featuring an artificial ghost and an animated skull trying to catch a serial killer. The Bone Stealer is leaving bodies without skeleton (a pretty neat theme). It seems as a great story, doesn't it? It still is, but that great idea for a steampunk horror was buried under all the day-to-day and hour-to-hour details. I lost count how many times something exciting and/or interesting was interrupted so we could read about characters having tea or eating talking about appearances, sensibility, respectability, sexuality or any other theme that didn't have place at that precise moment. And hats.

We are constantly reminded of proper behaviour one way or another through various characters.

Artifice, who is supposed to be one of the most interesting characters in this book spent her time being boring or incompetent. Jim, on the other hand, had a couple of shinning moments. He and the horrible things villains do saved this story from total disaster. Helia and Helena are pretty good too.

In the end I am not sure anymore if the villains were simply great at what they do, or Artifice helped them with her stupidity.

When she wasn't being beaten (a couple of times), she spent her time being pampered, being asked if she is all right, lying in her bed hurt, being kissed or aroused.

One of the most frustrating things is that after the case gets solved, you are left with one fifth of the book. It doesn't matter what happens since the actual case is finished. The thing is this story had a great potential and

if someone had bothered to remove all the things that ruin the most interesting aspect (the case), this would have been a great story.

The Dark Victorian: Bones ends in a cliffhanger, but as in the first book it is a good one. I hope there won't be all unnecessary details in the third book.

There are some elements that are good (the main idea, some other characters, interesting world), so this isn't exactly a book I hated.

Ray says

BONES – The Second Time is Even More Charming...

Once again, the unique (in any century) duo of Jim Dastard and Artifice find themselves at the center of danger and crime! More than able to handle the challenges with the skills and talents bestowed upon them by the Secret Commission.

I was so very pleased to read the second novel in Elizabeth Watasin's Dark Victorian series. A delightful present at the time of my birthday.

One of the best parts of the book is the visual images that her words painted in my head. Ms. Watasin's descriptive style is full of rich details and where other authors struggle to bring alive the world of their story, *Bones* is set in a world of rich imagery. A fitting setting for two fascinating characters.

The storyline of *Bones* gives us a deeper knowledge of both Jim's life and Artifice's past. Artifice, who was resurrected with little memory of her past, begins to find clues to her former life that in turn enrich her current one in the service of her country.

Besides the main characters in this book, the rest of the canvas is populated by a rich palate of secondary characters that take the settings and situations of the book and add their own lives to the mix.

Ms. Watasin's hasn't let down on the excitement of the plot or the rich tapestry of her world where the cold mechanical technology of Victorian England meets the glow of eldritch light. Pick this one up and give yourself a present... and here's hoping that book 3 will be out soon.

Ted says

Can't think of a single negative thing about it. Mystery, paranormal, steampunk... The secondary characters are extensive and pretty awesome. Loved it.

vacatedboat says

So, I'm a broken record and am just going to basically start all Watasin reviews the same. So, let's get it out already, shall we?

This woman is f'ing amazing and her imagination is boggling!

In this second installment of 'The Dark Victorian,' we are taken on the adventure of finding a serial killer/vivisectionist who has found the means of removing the bones and organs of his victims without so much as an incision. Art (an artificial ghost) and Jim Dastard (a reanimated skull) are tasked with investigating a series of murders that were discovered when four bodies were found completely intact, but with their bones and internal organs gone. While this is the meat of the story, there is also a lot going on in the background, as well.

In 'The Dark Victorian: Bones,' we are introduced to a few new characters and also given further background on a couple of characters who had minor-ish roles in 'Risen.' It was quite obvious in the novella that Helia and Helene were going to be important in the overall telling of this story, but they play much bigger parts in 'Bones.' And I look forward to learning even more about these mysterious women. I also hope that at some point, we get further information on Jim Dastard. With a name like 'Dastard,' it's rather difficult not to be curious...

I love the few little notes that Watasin always leave at the end of her books. The sheer amount of research that goes into her works is part of what makes them so wonderful...because, as a reader, we also know that she's not just throwing tales together willy-nilly. It's obvious enough in simply reading her books, but it's nice to be given references to where certain elements of the story came from, as well. She puts in the work for the love of her craft so that she can endow us with an enjoyable and entertaining few hours/days. And they are always enjoyable and entertaining...

It's hard to categorize Watasin, so there's no point in trying. Whimsy? Horror? Adventure? Steampunk? Mystery? Action? Magic? She's all of those things and more and I definitely recommend to anyone who has a slight curiosity about this unique blend of elements done in a very impressive way. Nothing is dumbed down and every word is meaningful.

Becky Stephens says

The adventures of His Highness' supernatural agents Art, an artificial ghost only a few days old, and her partner Jim, an animated skull, continue. And I couldn't be more pleased. This time, while Art is still recuperating from the re-animationist case, she and Jim must deal with a bone stealer who uses his rather unique gift to remove and insert bones into another and adhere skin, muscle, tissue, and nerves without permanent damage - except to the one who unwillingly donates his or her bones.

I was delighted by the first book in this series. (Read my review of *Risen* [here](#).) So, I was expecting to enjoy *Bones* as well. What I was not expecting was to absolutely fall in love with it! From the artwork to character development to the beautiful Victorian London scenes, it was impossible not to love this novel.

I know Elizabeth Watasin did a great deal of research for this novel, but I have a feeling that she actually lives and breathes this era, that she sees airships when she looks up and carts and hansom cabs on cobblestone roads when she looks around.

The pace was perfect. We get to know more of not only Art and Jim, but the other characters as well. I was surprised, however, when the conclusion of the bone stealer case is revealed, for it seemed too soon. But, it made room for us to get to know some of the characters even better when they are not under the pressure of solving a case. And for that I'm grateful.

I admit I am most fascinated by Jim Dastard. As an animated skull with phantom limbs, his manner of speaking is honest and, at times, funny, once referring to Art's "Quaker tantrum." I was especially amused by the nausea in his phantom organs, and subsequent vomiting of coins, cigarettes, tobacco, and the like.

The introduction of Delphia, Jim's new "legs" was an enjoyable addition to this novel. She impressed me with her bravery and open mind to the Vesta and its occupants.

And speaking of the Vesta, one of the things that is most pleasing about The Dark Victorian series is the acceptance of unconventional relationships. While Art and Jim, two supernatural creatures, find not only acceptance, but friendship, among the staff and residents of the Vesta, it is equally satisfying that the other residents live without "community condemnation or social judgment."

Fans of steampunk will revel in the culture that is The Dark Victorian, while fans of fantasy will enjoy a good mystery laden with supernatural fantasy.

I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

This review originally posted to Twisted Book Junkie.

T says

It does take a while to catch the flow of the language of the times, but worth it. such an excellent job of character creation that so many supporting character could get entire books of their own. i want a book about the mysterious and kick-ass Helene and Helia and Manon and Ellie and Elsepeth... well, lots of mysterious kick-ass women in this book. There were many things still unknown at the end of this book. Who really is/was the blackheart? What's the deal with the strange gym ladies? Is so-and-so a vampire? ...I want more.

lov2laf says

Reading this a 2nd time, it's still a five star book...

"Bones" picks up immediately after the events of "Risen" and delves into a deeper mystery and a much richer world. In this caper, Jim and Artifice are after the sinister "dark arts" master that is stealing full skeletons and organs from live bodies and does so without even making an incision.

Like the first book, this narrative carries numerous mysteries beyond the main storyline. There is so much we don't know but it's clear the author has complex backstories to every character and incident introduced. As we read, some of those mysteries are answered, some remain elusive, and others birth even more questions.

As a reader, you must pay attention as there's not a detail to be missed!

The cast is extensive yet all characters are distinct and full. And, there's not one, two, or even three strong female characters in the book but upwards of ten or more. Before you think the mains are all female, though, we also get a lovely supporting male cast.

And lesbian tropes? I don't think this manages to hit a single one. The main theme of the read is an action packed paranormal, Victorian, steampunk mystery that takes place in the heart of London. I wouldn't quite describe this as a romance but there are lesbian love interests to spice up the story.

Along with the original storyline, there's quite a bit of research done by the author to support the details of the book which she notes after the story so be sure to take a look after "The End".

I can't help but be impressed by the creativity and ambition behind this writing and that Watasin manages to pull it all off.

I would not say that this is a standalone read. You should pick up the novella "The Dark Victorian: Risen" and read that first. "Ice Demon" then follows the events that take place in "Bones" so get that one if you want to continue the adventures of Artifice, Jim Dastard, Helene and Helia Skycourt along with the rest of the cast.

Highest recommendation.

I liked this 2nd book much better than the first. The author really hit her stride and I found the book to be clever and engaging. I loved the supporting characters and the arc of Art. I look forward to reading subsequent novels. If you do pick this up, I suggest reading the first book 1st as it sets the tone and the world. My main complaint about the first book was that it was too short and not fleshed out enough. The second book doesn't have that trouble. Both are worth the read.

Barry Huddleston says

I was given a review copy by the author...

Another enjoyable read from Elizabeth Watasin. As you may have taken away from my earlier reviews, I love dark Victorian stories and Watasin knows how to tell a dark tale.

"Smoke grew thick in the afternoon air of London. Airships sailed, one after the other, in the skies above the fog and ash while the streets below congested noisily with omnibuses, cabs, and wagons."

Once again, we follow the exploits of Art (an artificial ghost) and Jim Dastard (an animated skull) as they battle evil in Victorian England. While this book is the second in a series, The Dark Victorian: Bones really stands on it's own. Having said that, I do suggest reading The Dark Victorian: Risen and I think reading the "Author's Notes" in the back of the book will help with the setting and the characters.

In addition to the wealth of information about the world of the "Dark Victorian" series, the author tackles the subject of unconventional sexual relationships head-on. I think we can learn a lot from the character "Art."

All in all, I give The Dark Victorian: Bones 5 animated skulls out of 5. I think that it is a must-have for your steampunk home library and for those of you who are still on the fence I have only two words for you — squid battle!

Sharon says

"Bones" is the second of Elizabeth Watasin's Dark Victorian novels. In this outing, someone is literally stealing the bones of the impoverished. All over London, deflated bodies are being found ... with no wounds apparent, but all bones removed.

Newly resurrected artificial ghost Artifice (Art for short) and her companion Jim Dastard are on the job again, this time tracking down the Bone Stealer. The adventures also involve subplot with the wealthy Skycourt twins, Helia and Helene, both of whom seem to know a great deal about Art's previous life (which she cannot remember, for the most part), but neither of them are talking.

While this is a fun romp through alternate history, Watasin also tackles difficult issues of the time, such as the ethics of vivisection. This is not always a light read.

It's clear that Watasin knows her history, and also how to mix things up to add elements of steampunk and alternate realities. She posits a London in which many social elements are radically different for many strata of society ... and one which might have made for a much more positive world today if those differences had been real.

Watasin is definitely no victim of the sophomore slump; this book is as entertaining as the first. I look forward to seeing more from this author.

Joc says

It's taken four days to read this because I didn't want to miss a word. The story takes place over three days and the detail that has gone into setting the scene and the action is extraordinary. Art, six days risen, and Jim have a new case to work on. Someone dabbling in the dark arts is stealing skeletons from the living. It's a fantastic story with loads of adventure and mystery set in an 1880 alternate London. It's not an easy read because every word is important but it is mind-blowingly worth it.

Kurt says

So once again we are reintroduced into the fantastical steampunk world of M. Watasin in this sequel to "Risen". Art is a reanimated woman, 6'2" and gives off a blue glow. She can fly as a ghost and absorbs her raw food in this process of absorption where the items fly from her plates and then into her. She is by far my most favorite character. Demure, but forthright, a Quaker but a killer, and a "Sapphist" when I hardly think the term was known to the general public. I liked her a lot.

There is an addition of Delphia a new assistant for Jim, the little skull who must be carried and their interactions were quite fun. The answers to the questions we have for Helena, Helia, Manon are largely put-off which is frustrating. I want to know now! This is a fun read for which I wish I had the time. I was required to read this piecemeal, almost page to later page with many gaps of time which was quite frustrating.

Back to the book. The villain was quite eerie and compelling. I wish Art had been stronger in this book 'cause I like her so much.

