



## Vision of Darkness

*Tonya Burrows*

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# **Vision of Darkness**

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A beacon of light...

Undercover DEA agent Alex Brennan doesn't believe in the paranormal, despite the exhausting nightmares that reveal things he shouldn't know. When sleep deprivation causes him to make a horrible mistake on the job, he is driven to find answers. Dreams guide him to a lighthouse in Three Churches, Maine, where he finds an inexplicable and comforting familiarity in the arms of the lighthouse's beautiful keeper, Pru Maddox.

A whisper of memory...

Deadly misfortune has long plagued Pru's family, the result of a curse "The Green Lady" placed on the lighthouse. Skeptical, Alex searches for less ghostly explanations, though he can't deny that the town has had more than its fair share of disappearances, suicides, and accidents. As their passion simmers, Alex digs deeper, and his dreams turn violent, frightening, and very real.

A vision of darkness...

To keep Pru safe, Alex must embrace his abilities and unravel the lighthouse's mystery. Except someone—or something—wants the past to stay buried...and will do anything to keep it that way.

## **Vision of Darkness Details**

Date : Published December 1st 2014 by Tonya Burrows (first published November 7th 2014)

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Author : Tonya Burrows

Format : Paperback 400 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Paranormal, Romance, Suspense, Romantic Suspense, Mystery, Adult

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## From Reader Review Vision of Darkness for online ebook

### Claire Robinson says

#### 3 - "It's a long story. I have... issues." Stars.

I am a big fan of Tonya Burrows' books, everyone that I have read in the past has pulled me in, put me through the emotional wringer and not let me go until its very end.

#### "I'm not leaving."

I think that is why it was a bit of a shock to me that I found myself struggling with *Vision of Darkness*. It is not a bad book by any stretch, and Tonya as always has managed to give the reader a cast of interesting, unique and engaging characters. The storyline is complex and the scale and depth of its development, as well as the involvement of a large amount of what you initially assume are secondary characters make it a book that opens what will be a series with plenty of scope and potential for future releases.

#### "Ghosts don't exist."

Pru and Alex are a pretty likeable couple, both of them are a little odd and the town of Three Churches, Maine definitely plays up to and pretty much embraces their oddities. What with a haunted lighthouse, people disappearing and accidents and unexplainable occurrences abound it all adds up to a varied read, with a few little surprises thrown in along the way.

So why am I not giving it 5 stars then? Quite simply because I had to read well over 60% of the book before I actually felt like the story was going anywhere. Yes there is a lot of scene setting going on, as well as the establishment of the characters and their places in the story, and this has been the case in the past with Tonya's *Hornet* series as an example, but something was missing from *Vision of Darkness* I didn't have the buildup of anticipation that I would expect with a book from this author, and the plot twists when they came, lost their shock and surprise value because it took so long to get to them.

#### "I will do or be whatever you need. Always."

We do get a pretty kick-ass ending, and I would be interested to see where Tonya decides to take the series as a whole, it's just unfortunate that I wasn't 100% blown away on this occasion. It certainly won't stop me from one-clicking each and every one of Tonya's future releases that's for sure!

ARC generously provided by the author, in exchange for the above honest review.

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### Alexandra says

I got my coffee ready, cause I'm about to have a date with DEA agent Alex Brennan

YAAAY!!!!

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### **Karie says**

\*\*ARC provided by the author for an honest review\*\*

Wow! I honestly didn't see that one coming. VoD kept me on the edge of my seat! The characters, both main and secondary were well written and balanced. I loved the ones I was supposed to and had total distance for the others. I did find myself pleasantly surprised by the P.I. Now to wait to see everyone's fate in the next book. I feel like a kid... is the next one out yet?? Definitely a 5 star in my mind.

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### **Ellen Anderson says**

Wow! So not what I was expecting. Let me start off by saying this is not the type of book I would normally read. I'm not into scary books of any kind. With that being said, I surprisingly found myself holding my breath as I continued to turn each page to see what was going to happen next. As a thriller, this book definitely holds up to what I would expect from a really good one. I definitely would recommend this book to anyone who does like a scary mystery with their romance.

\*\*\*\*This ARC was provided in exchange for an honest review.\*\*\*\*

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### **Sarah says**

I'm a huge fan of **Tonya Burrows**, I've read and enjoyed all four of her previous stories and I know she writes great hot alpha men so to say I was excited about **Vision of Darkness** is an understatement. Especially when I heard it was her first paranormal romantic suspense and it was compared to Christine Feehan's GhostWalkers series because I love those books. Unfortunately I think I went in with my expectations too high and I ended up feeling a little disappointed.

I think my problem started with how quickly things develop between Alex and Pru, they've known each other for a couple of days when he is accused of murdering her cousin and she doesn't even consider the fact that he might be guilty. I get standing by your man but wouldn't you have a few seconds of doubt when it comes to someone you've just met? Especially when you're grief stricken over the death of someone who is practically a brother to you? It took a long time for me to actually feel any chemistry between them but by the time I did they were practically glued at the hip and it all came a little too late for me to feel fully invested in their romance. The fact that Alex lies to Pru (and everyone else) about his identity for absolutely no reason didn't help, I could understand his caution but not why he didn't at least talk to her about it.

Although the romance happened overly quickly I found this was a very slow book, we are introduced to a lot of characters and get to see things from a lot of different points of view which made it slow to read and

harder to connect to. A lot of the POVs are from very minor characters so it gives you a good insight into who is up to no good from a very early point in the story - why else would we need to hear from them? - but we also got a half-hearted romance between Pru's friend and another relative that seemed completely pointless considering how it was left hanging and just added unneeded page time to the story.

On top of that both Alex, Pru and Alex's friend and fellow D.I.E. Squadron member Nick all make some ridiculously stupid decisions that consistently put Pru in harm's way and left me wanting to bang my head against the nearest wall. The worst was when Alex realises that he's been set up to drive 5 hours out of town to get him out of the way. Does he call Nick and Pru to warn them that they could be in danger? No, he just turns around and starts the 5 hour drive to get back to them. It's not like this is a historical story in the time before mobile phones & just one little phone call could have alerted Nick to the potential danger and saved a whole lot of trouble for Pru. That's only one example of the idiotic behaviour on display but I can come up with several more without even having to think too hard about it.

Now, I've mentioned a lot of things that I didn't like about this story and perhaps I'm being overcritical because I know how much I love **Tonya Burrows'** other stories but **Vision of Darkness** wasn't all bad and there were things I liked about it. The ghost was creepy, there were parts of the mystery that it took me a while to figure out and on the whole I liked most of the characters when they weren't being idiots. I'm intrigued by the idea of the D.I. E. Squadron and definitely want to know more about their abilities. The ending also left me desperately wanting to find out what happens next for one character in particular so I'm definitely planning on picking up the next book in the series. I am hopeful that the series will just go from strength to strength now that some of the world building is in place and I still have a lot of confidence in this author's ability to draw me into her stories.

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### **Nicola says**

*Vision of Darkness* is a promising opener to Tonya Burrows *D.I.E. Squadron* series and whilst not as intimate as her previous offerings, she weaves romance, mystery, suspense and the paranormal into the story.

When Alex Brennan finds himself in Three Churches, Maine, little does he realise what lies in store for him in this small coastal town. Inexplicably guided by his dreams toward the town's lighthouse, he soon falls for its resident, Pru Maddox. Her family has been riddled by tragedy, she pins it on the curse of the "*Green Lady*" who haunts her home, only Alex doesn't buy it and begins to search for a logical explanation.

I found the first half of the book steady; it was enjoyable but the story seemed to be going nowhere particular fast; I needed that little bit more to keep me gripped. That said, Tonya laid solid foundations for subsequent books, introducing us to a plethora of characters and making them memorable to the reader. Each person plays a pivotal part and brings value to the story and once I passed the halfway mark, the pace quickened, things started to come together and there were surprises I hadn't anticipated.

Whilst the blossoming romance between Alex and Pru is a constant throughout, the intrigue and mystery are

equally as important to their story. And, with a slight cliffhanger of an epilogue (don't worry, it doesn't involve Alex and Pru), the ending has left me intrigued as to whose story will be next, but I can certainly say when the time comes, I shall be reading.

3.5 stars.

Reviewed for Read Your Writes Book Reviews.

*Copy received courtesy of the author in exchange for an honest and unbiased opinion.*

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### **Georgia Foulds says**

If you like the paranormal, murders, great romance and secret organizations this is a great book for that. Alex Brennan a latent psychic gets messed up in a world of paranormal he doesn't believe in and falls in love with Pru. But Pru and Alex have people coming to kill them. The past comes to light and no one is safe. A big mystery and visions await you.

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### **Mihaela says**

This story was a little bit too confusing for my tastes.

Alex is an undercover agent who will find himself in the middle of a world of paranormal he doesn't believe in.

Pru's family has been the victim of misfortune because of a curse and now she has to rely on Alex to stay alive.

I don't know how to explain but all the time I felt there was something missing.

First of all, Pru falls for Alex too quickly especially since he's a suspect in her cousin's murder. I understand strong chemistry but in these circumstances she comes across as careless.

Then, there's the fact that we are introduced to way too many characters and the story is told from different points of view, which makes it confusing and hard to keep up with sometimes.

Alex's partner, Nick, is another story altogether. That guy made me want to beat the crap out of him or beat my head against a wall. How many stupid decisions can one person make? Let me tell you - A LOT.

And it's not only Nick, it's all of them. Some situations are just stupid because they could be easily solved and our heroes seem clueless.

Tonya writes beautifully so maybe it was just me. I really couldn't connect with nor understand these characters.

Nonetheless, this book deserves a chance. There are murder mysteries to be solved, a ghost and a lot of suspense.

3.5 stars

Happy Reading!

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### **Megan says**

\*ARC provided by Author in exchange of honest review\*

If you haven't picked up a paranormal book before, then I suggest you start with this book.

Honestly, at first I thought the book was kinda slow. I even put it down for a few days. But after you get past the first few chapters, the book picks up.

I loved her other books. So, I figured I would like this one to, and I did. What got my attention was the synopsis. It being about a haunted light house and having former military men starring in it. Yeah, that had me sold. Well I just couldn't pass it up.

I really enjoyed it. At times Pru was a little airheaded, but I still found her enjoyable. Alex, well I enjoyed him too. I actually liked all of the characters and I'm excited to get the rest of the guy's stories.

If you like paranormal ghost stories then I really think you should give this book a try.

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### **Angela Carr (Under the Covers Book Blog) says**

3.5 Stars

Vision of Darkness is a not what I expected at all. Honestly, I jump on this book on the merit of who wrote it. I've read Tonya Burrows' Hornet series and loved it. Obviously, I had to give this a chance. It's not my favorite read from this author but it's a great start to a new series.

Undercover DEA agent Alex Brennan is forced to take a leave after a mishap on a mission. The unfortunate event had brought him a series of nightmares that lands him in a small town in Maine. There he will meet Pru Maddox who is plagued with a family curse aka ghost that is set to seek revenge. Strange things are happening around them. Fortunately, Alex's ability to sense ghosts will help them solve the problem. They will also get help from Alex's friends who share similar abilities. Wait til you meet them.

I enjoyed the twist of paranormal Burrows added to this Romantic Suspense story. I'm not one to enjoy ghost stories but Burrows did a great job with incorporating the two subgenres into one. I also enjoyed the banter between Alex and his friends. The mystery of why, how, who and WTF of the story was also well done. My only qualm is that there was a bit of insta-love between Alex and Pru. I wish they had more time to get to know each other.

Vision of Darkness was a fun and quick read. I cant wait to read more.

\*ARC provided by author

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### **Sophia says**

I know that I've put it off a bit late when it comes to trying this author's books since I adore military heroes and romantic suspense, but hey, I got around to it now. This one was a bit different and right up my alley. I love romantic suspense blended with the paranormal and this book was no exception. I was into it from the start. Ghosts, murder, creepy inexplicable stuff, wounded ex-military hero, tough heroine starting over, small town atmosphere...joys to the world, right?

This was the start of a new series which I assume will tell the tale of each man in a band of brotherhood that was once an elite military spec ops team. Elite doesn't even cover it because each of these guys doesn't just possess skills; they each come full-loaded with a gift option- a psychic gift.

The first book begins with lost and world-weary Alex Brennan following a weird instinct he gets at times that makes him head north to a little town in Maine he has never heard of before during his forced leave of absence from the DEA. Alex will accept that he has a dead-on instinct, but he rejects all things psychic and inexplicable. So when he is confronted by ghost boats, haunted lighthouses, odd visions of the past, seances, disappearances, and dire predictions from his brother, he gets stubborn and mad. That being said, he knows something is hinky about the Three Churches community and the lighthouse where the attractive Pru Maddox lives. She is lovely and fragile from a past trauma and he just wants to protect her though she shies away from anything that smacks of deeper feelings and commitment.

Pru knows she's damaged goods after what she has been through particularly when her ex left her. She is attracted to the stranger, Alex, and she enjoys that he accepts her as she is and she feels safe with him, but there is a small part of her that wonders what burdens he is carrying to put that expression in his eyes. A few of the locals want to pin the recent troubles on Alex and the timing fits, but she trusts him. If only he wouldn't refuse to believe about the ghosts and his own abilities. When things escalate, Pru finds that Alex has some powerful, lethal friends to help him and her.

While in the shadows, lurking, there are more than one group watching Alex and Pru. One to cover up a crime and the other on a crusade to eradicate the gifted types like Alex who doesn't even take the threat seriously because he doesn't believe he is different.

Alrighty, this was one incredible ride. There was so much awesomeness going on that my head was spinning in a good way. At first, I couldn't make heads or tails about what was really going on beneath the surface and I really felt like I was dropped right into the middle of a story the way things were left until later for the explanations. I still am a bit foggy about the D.I.E. Squad and the gifts stuff. I'm going to put a marker in that and assume it gets teased out as the series progresses since it is part of the series story arc.

I really have only praise for this book. The atmosphere was just spine-tingling goodness. I was definitely on the edge of my seat for what came next a lot of times in this book. With the ghosts and psychic stuff being real, but yet a bunch of human baddies roaming around too, I had a lot of people to keep an eye on. The twists near the end bringing things into full focus revealing who was behind what was just eye popping. I was so wrong with a few of my guesses and that's not a bad thing.

Now the romance did do some stutter-stepping between all the nutso stuff going on around it. It was there and it was progressing at a reasonable rate for two people who had some serious issues. The passion was hot and I groaned a few times like I was the one left wanting when they would get interrupted for the next crisis. I got to where I would hold my breath when they'd get up to their sexy times because I just knew that was the signal for trouble.

The two main characters were very likable and I loved following along with their narrations of the story. They both tended to be really cautious about reaching out for more than the physical and it was a little tough to know they were that bruised up from their former situations. Alex's pain goes all the way back to his childhood of abuse and then his soul-sucking work for the military and DEA. Pru had a strong case of PTSD and was deserted by her husband when she needed him the most.

Side characters were good too especially the brothers in Alex's old unit. The situation with Alex's brother, Theo was so sad because as a reader I was able to understand what Alex didn't- Theo didn't deserve to be locked away in an institution. I just really wanted Alex to arrive at the truth sooner rather than later. The story was left open enough to lead into the next story in the series that will probably feature one of Alex's comrades. There was a mild cliffhanger that I can't wait to see how its resolved.

All in all, this was a powerful first book in a new series and I recommend it to those who enjoy the blend of Romantic Suspense and Paranormal.

My thanks to Barclay Publicity for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Susan Jordens says**

I really enjoyed this book. It was very well written and got my attention from start to finish. There was a lot of suspense and strange events happening which only added to the plot. I loved the two main characters and it was interesting seeing how their attraction grew and how they handled all that was thrown at them. It looks like it is going to be a great series and I look forward to reading more. Definitely a book to read.

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### **Katorah Kenway says**

FABULOUS! As an avid fan of Tonya Burrows writing, I couldn't wait to get my hands on this one. The characters blend well together and I like the paranormal aspect of the book. It's a great read. I'm crossing my fingers for who I hope the next book will be about. Excellent job, Ms. Burrows, you always keep me wanting more.

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### **Kris Thompson says**

I was given this ARC for free for an honest review.

When I was asked to read this story the first thing I did was look up what people were saying, and I was pleasantly surprised to see that it only had 3, 4, and 5 star reviews. The biggest complaint that readers had was that they felt the story was too long and that the relationship between Alex and Pru moved too quickly. Compared to other reviews I've read those complaints seemed pretty tame in comparison.

**\*Spoilers after this point\***

I want to start off by saying that the ARC was only 250 pages (Yes, I rolled my eyes at the ‘too long’ comment when I saw that), and that the first kiss didn’t happen between these two characters until chapter seven (Another eye roll for the ‘moving too quickly’ complaint).

The best way I can describe this story is that it is very, for a lack of a better word, constipated. Two other books could have come out of this one. Easily. It reminded me of Game of Thrones; all these other storylines and moving parts with no clear idea of what was going on until the end. As a reader I didn’t like feeling confused half the time and found myself skimming back because I felt like I missed something. I also feel this book had way too many point of views going on. I seriously lost count. I think nearly everyone that was mentioned in the book had a POV.

Now I understand that this is book one of many, and that this story may be the lift off to the others, but I found myself being more interested in the secondary characters. It took me forever to become interested in Alex and Pru. They were so vague in the beginning I had to stop myself from skimming the pages.

Also, I’m not a big history buff, but the first character you meet in the story is an old man named John Putnam. Right off the bat I’m thinking this story is based out of Salem, or nearby, because if we all remember (or at least seen the movie The Crucible) John Putnam was one of the most influential elders of Salem Village during the Salem witch trials. But the story is based out of Maine. Then the old man quotes Paul Revere, “*Death was coming, surrounding him. ‘One if by land and two if by sea’.* He smirked at that thought.”

I’m just going to assume the author loves her history.

As an author myself there are a few pet peeves I can’t let slide. One of them is not explaining acronyms. Not everyone is going to know what BFE, IUD, RPG (and so on) means. Another is the discriminating use of the word retard. The character of Wade is obviously written where he has a mental disability, or can be deemed slow, but when his own brother calls him a retard I didn’t understand the need for that. And don’t add personal slang without a glossary at the end. The last thing a reader wants is to stop and have to look up a slang word just to understand what a character is saying.

On the same note of being a fellow author, I’m also a military veteran. Now I understand that with writing there is some creative leeway, but Alex’s extensive military background and transition into becoming a cop was incredibly farfetched. He suffers from extreme PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), insomnia, hallucinations, and to top it off his knee was shattered during his military time and now has the beginnings of arthritis. So you’re telling me that the police academy no longer does psych or physical evaluations? (Well, maybe this explains why my ex is a cop.)

Alex constantly feels he doesn’t flirt on purpose, but that it seems to happen naturally with Pru, and yet he is

very blunt about it. He all but says “I want to fuck you so bad right now, mentally I’m already 8 inches deep in you”. Alex and Pru’s relationship is very weird in my opinion. Right from the beginning Alex wants Pru, but Pru is like a ping pong ball about it – ‘I want you’ ‘Stay away from me’ ‘I need to fuck him now’ ‘No, go away’ – She came off as a tease and Alex came off as a stalker who wouldn’t take no for an answer. And then this line appeared...

*“If he stayed in, he could rid himself of the hard-on, but that made him feel a little dirty and ridiculous. He hadn’t jerked off in the shower since he was a teenager and really shouldn’t start again now as a guest in Pru’s bathroom.”* IS THIS GUY FOR REAL?! People, just a little known fact if you didn’t know this already, when a male becomes acquainted with his penis he doesn’t let go of it until it stops working. Especially in the shower. If a man takes a fifteen minute shower ten of those minutes were devoted to jerking off.

And I’m sorry Pru, but having sex with a guy who is basically a doppelganger of your great-grandfather is kinda gross.

I’ll give the author points for her story creativity, character wittiness, and my love for most of her secondary characters, but I don’t see myself reading any of her future works.

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## **Jonetta says**

### **Quick summary**

DEA Agent Alex Brennan was undercover for a long while and then forced to take some time off after an unfortunate incident. He's inexplicably drawn to the town of Three Churches, Maine and is confronted with some ghostly paranormal events. But, Alex doesn't believe in these kinds of things, even when the attractive Pru Maddox tries to convince him otherwise.

### **What I liked**

The story is fairly complex because there are multiple situations in play that are complicated separately and when considered as a whole. You know eventually there will be some connection but it's pretty gnarly to unravel and piece together. Alex also formerly served in the Marines and members of his squadron play significant roles here. They have unique skills that are compelling and I know there'll be future stories about them, which I'm looking forward to reading. Alex and Pru's relationship took time to form, even though there was instant lust between them. The story's climax was pretty exciting with a very odd turn at the end that has me hooked.

### **What created challenges**

As mentioned, the complexity I enjoyed also created some frustrations as it took time to set up the various stages. I knew it would get there (it did) but maybe it took a smidgen too long to develop and the romance was slightly impacted as my attention was drawn away from them.

### **The bottom line**

This is a strong start to the series and its concept is quite interesting, with some clever aspects that I'm anxious to explore. Now that the foundation is firmly in place, I expect the next stories to be a bit nimbler,

though I really enjoyed where this one landed. 3.5 stars

(I received an ARC from the author in exchange for an honest review)

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