



## **Glass Town**

*Steven Savile*

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## **Glass Town** Steven Savile

A brilliantly rendered story about obsession and one man's attempt to unravel the mystery that destroyed his grandfather's life, set against a magical and intricately woven cityscape.

Steven Savile has been an international sensation, selling over half a million copies of his novels worldwide and writing for cult favorite television shows including Doctor Who, Torchwood, and Stargate. Now, he is finally making his US debut with Glass Town, a brilliantly composed novel revolving around the magic and mystery lurking in London.

In 1926, two brothers both loved Eleanor Raines, a promising young actress from the East End of London. But, along with Seth Lockwood, she disappeared, never to be seen again. Isaiah, Seth's younger brother, refused to accept that she was just gone.

It has been seventy years since and the brothers are long dead. But now their dark, twisted secret, threatens to tear the city apart. Seth made a bargain with Damiola, an illusionist, to make a life size version of his most famous trick, and hide away part of London to act as a prison out of sync with our time, where one year passes as one hundred. That illusion is Glass Town. And now its walls are failing.

Reminiscent of Clive Barker's Weaveworld and Neil Gaiman's American Gods, Savile brings out the magic in the everyday. Glass Town is full of gritty urban landscapes, realistic characters, conflict, secrets, betrayals, magic, and mystery.

## **Glass Town Details**

Date : Published December 5th 2017 by Thomas Dunne Books

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Author : Steven Savile

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## From Reader Review Glass Town for online ebook

### William says

Steve S has excelled even by his standards. A masterful piece of work that reminded me of Tim Powers filtered through a particularly British perspective. Memorable characters, a great premise, and as tightly plotted as we've come to expect from Steve.

Lovely stuff.

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### Classiccolors says

This is an atmospheric urban fantasy that centers around the disappearance of an actress named Eleanor, who vanished during the filming of Hitchcock's first movie, in London, in 1924. The novel opens in the present day with the main character, Joshua, discovering a letter left to him by his recently deceased grandfather. The letter introduces Joshua to the mystery of Eleanor's disappearance, her connection to his family, and the obsession that has consumed the lives of both Joshua's great-grandfather and his grandfather. The day of his grandfather's funeral, Joshua interrupts a creepy monster ransacking his house and the race is on to figure out the secret of the magic at play before Josh ends up being murdered by the same monsters that have been plaguing his family for generations.

Pros: There's interesting magic based on cinematic elements. I liked the atmosphere of the book a lot; dark, creepy, a bit unsettling. The history of 1920's cinema in London, as the basis for the inciting event, was different and interesting to me. The monsters were scary. While I saw one reviewer called it slow, I thought the pace was fine. The book was fairly short, took place over a matter of days, and the story wrapped up in one volume. The author is a London-based TV writer who has written for Dr. Who and Torchwood among others and while this book is darker than both of those, and contains no humor, it gives you a bit of an idea of the tone.

Cons: The point-of-view jumped around. It was mostly from Joshua's viewpoint but there were random chapters from other character's viewpoints and it made it seem choppy to me. Despite nominally being about Eleanor, there really weren't any women characters with any agency. I tend to be fairly easy going about stuff like that, but one character and scene in particular was over the top. Most of the magic was a bit hand-wavy. Again, I thought the explanations were fine for the story, I appreciated the gestalt of the magic, but the particulars didn't always make sense to me.

Be aware, there are some intense sex scenes involving succubi. I'll leave whether that's a pro or con up to the reader.

Overall, I found it to be a quick read that I enjoyed well enough. I wasn't blown away, but I don't regret spending the time on it.

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### Iasa says

Mystery, magic, cinema, a hint of the 1920's, hell yes. I had no expectations going into this novel so maybe I was more easily pleased than I normally am, but whatever I enjoyed this. It's a slower paced book, but nowhere near plodding; it just draws you in.

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## **Mel (Epic Reading) says**

3.25 stars. This is a hard book to rate. It's a book that requires thought, attention and dedicated reading time. If you're thinking "well that's how I always read" then I commend you.

### **Intensive Reading**

For me I find myself (especially with e-books) reading in line-ups, before meetings, at lunch, etc. So my reading time is not always sitting in my chair at home with no distractions. I wish it was; but if I want to read 100+ books in a year I cannot limit it to just those dedicated moments. After the first 50 pages or so I came to realize that *Glass Town* was one of those books (like *Lord of the Rings*) that requires your full attention if you want to catch all the nuances, foreshadowing and smart little quips. I call this 'intensive reading' as it requires all of your attention and is a different kind of reading than a romance, teen or even light thriller (ie: Dan Brown) is.

### **The author**

Steven Savile is a well known writer in the TV world having worked on *Torchwood*, *Doctor Who* and other sci-fi/fantasy shows. As I was already familiar with Savile's television work I was very excited to read his debut novel.

I think what Savile did with *Glass Town* is a bit extreme; in that he maybe got too excited about being able to provide every detail, thought and aspect of every moment of his story. Whereas in television he has dialogue and set notes at most (unless he's directing) so the tendency is to over explain, provide too much detail and potentially bore your reader.

### **Lagging at times**

*Glass Town* really needed a sharp, hack and slash editor. It is an amazing story and would make a gorgeous movie or mini series (I'd love to see it over say 6 episodes). That's where this is a hard book to review or give a rating to. What do you do with a book that is so well thought-out including: good characterization, involved plot, clever twists and mind-bending timelines; but just not that engaging?

The answer for me was that I had to be wide awake and ready to read. I read before bed every night and this book was great for putting me to sleep, which was unfortunate as I'd have to re-read the next day. I read at lunch and found it was a bit intense to focus on in the middle of my work day (when I'm needing a break from thinking so hard). I also read after work and during commuting times. These times were the best to read *Glass Town* during as they are more focused reading. Unfortunately this limitation made it so that it took me a really long time to finish this book (by my standards). This resulted in me being tired of it before the end and almost skimming the last 50 pages (which is unfortunate as a lot of things happen).

### **Overall**

If you are okay with an intense read and like thrillers with a mystical twist then I believe you will really enjoy this book. If you are more of a casual reader or someone who prefers 'easy' reads then this is probably not for you.

My hope is that in the future Savile can tighten up his writing. If he is able to do that then I believe I will adore his books as all the right things are there for *Glass Town* it was just a bit too overdone at times. I will definitely try another Savile book as the man is a genius when it comes to time bending, science fiction,

mystical stories (which are some of my personal favourites)!

*Please note: I received an eARC of this book from the publisher via NetGalley. This is an honest and unbiased review.*

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## **Kristen says**

Full review is here, on my blog.

This is going to be a rather difficult book to get my thoughts together about, because it is very in depth and such a huge idea that I found it often a little confusing, especially in the beginning. It's a lot to take in. This is a fascinating story though, and the way that the mystery of Glass Town is revealed is through Joshua, the main character's discovery of different pieces of the puzzle, was well done, in my opinion. It's revealed slowly as the story moves on, as one would hope.

We start the story with the funeral of Boone Raines, who is Josh's grandfather. He has left him a long letter from his great-grandfather Isaiah Raines, detailing his obsession with Eleanor Raines, an actress from the East End back in the 1920s. He and his brother Seth feuded over her, and something happened and she disappeared. Isaiah spent the rest of his life trying to find her, obsessed with her, even going so far as to marry her twin sister and taking the name Raines to be closer to her. After he died, he passed the mystery to Boone, who has now passed it to Josh.

So, curious about all this, Josh starts investigating, and finds that his world sort of goes crazy with all kinds of cinema related shenanigans from the 20s and beyond. He starts seeing film stars following him, and breaking into his house and whatnot, and it only gets crazier from there.

The blurb compares this book to American Gods, but if I were to compare it to one of Gaiman's works, it'd absolutely be *Neverwhere*. It's more reminiscent of a strange, deeply magical, sort-of hidden, dark, and rather creepy bit of London, rather than gods road-tripping across America. Given the setting, this book is very British just in general, obviously. Places, slang, et cetera. But, I digress.

As I said, I found it a little confusing right at the start, and it's because some characters know and reference things that aren't apparent to the reader right away, so, it's a little overwhelming. Like, oh snap, the dweomers are failing! Uh, well, point one is this is an awesome use of the word dweomer, but what is a dweomer in this context? ;D

Anyway, once I got into it, it was a pretty fantastic and quite thrilling adventure with an antagonist who is pretty easy to hate, and protagonists who are easy to root for. I thought it was well written, fast-paced, and mysteriously fun. I liked Josh as a character, and wanted him to succeed. So, all told, it was a pretty great read.

I'd like to thank the author as well as St. Martin's Press via NetGalley for the review copy of this book.

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## **Lauren Stoolfire says**

## **I received an ARC from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.**

In the 1920s, Seth and Isaiah Lockwood both loved Eleanor Raines, a young actress from the East End of London. However, Eleanor mysteriously disappeared never to be seen again. Isaiah, Seth's younger brother, couldn't accept that she was just gone. It's been over seventy years and both men are dead, but now their secret threatens to destroy London. Seth made a deal with an illusionist to make a life size version of Glass Town, his most famous trick, in the city. Glass Town is a prison out of sync with time where every one hundred years on the outside equals only one year inside. And now, Seth's trick is collapsing.

*Glass Town* by Steven Savile is a totally enthralling, gritty historical urban fantasy with a great core mystery and compelling characters. The premise caught my attention right away and for the most part it live up to my expectations. I love that the author blends the world of 1920s and modern London so well. His descriptions of the setting and obsession of the characters are all wonderfully atmospheric, almost noirish even. My favorite unexpected element is the connection between this fantasy and Alfred Hitchcock's real life unfinished silent movie titled *Number 13*. My only real issue with the story is getting characters mixed up and having to backtrack a bit to review who was speaking and when.

Overall, if you're looking for an intriguing new historical fantasy to sink your teeth into, Steven Savile's new release comes with high marks from me. There are so many elements to enjoy with everything from classic film, gangsters, and to magic. I don't know about you, but that sounds like a great combination to me. If you like Neil Gaiman, Tim Powers, and possibly even *Peaky Blinders*, you may also enjoy *Glass Town*.

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## **Alysa H. says**

Before I say anything else about this book, including anything positive, let me start by saying that this is one of the most sexist books I have ever read. I mean, I'm sure there are worse offenders out there, but they tend to be in genres that I don't read, or occasionally books that I start but don't finish. But this book, I kept hoping it would get better. Instead, it wasted every opportunity it had to *not* be sexist. I can barely believe that this book made it, unquestioned, past a production process that apparently included women in the publishing house. This is a book that has people in it, and then it has females it. Well, barely, apart from victims and/or objects. Even the "good" characters seem to view women this way. (And actually, some of the male characters could have been written as women — officer Genarro, magician Damiola, or even main protagonist Josh— with practically zero substantive change to the book, other than a vast improvement in female representation.)

Apart from all that, this is an okay book. It is interesting enough to keep one reading, to see if Josh will discover the secret of Glass Town and "save the girl" (who is apparently too stupid to save herself). I enjoyed the concept of the film studio taken out-of-time, and the use of film imagery and language married with demonic entities. It reminded me of something one might see on *Doctor Who* -- which is a a compliment, and also unsurprising considering the author has written for *Doctor Who*! The fusion of these concepts with religious ideas such as Hell did not always work, however, and was not fleshed out. The internal logic of how Glass Town was kept in limbo was also not always clear or consistent. The writing, generally, was fine. I am even giving an extra star for some of the good points.

But from the get-go, it was very hard to push past such blatant and unexamined sexism. I was planning to list examples, but by the middle of the book there were already too many. It just infuses every aspect, every page. By the end, I was glad it was over.

\*\* I received a Review Copy of this book via NetGalley \*\*

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## **Kara says**

I have vomit in my mouth.

If you're a feminist, do not read this book. If you are a woman who values yourself as any kind of human being with thoughts, dreams, or intelligence, you probably shouldn't read this either.

There's a reason why most of the books I read are by female authors, or male authors already vetted by reviewers I trust. This book was sent to me unsolicited by the publisher, and the premise sounded fantastic, so I thought I would try it.

## **That was a mistake.**

I'm going to direct you to another review here on Goodreads because it encompasses all I feel and words it better than I probably ever could: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

But I will say this. This is one of the most sexist, misogynistic books I have ever read. I'm not sure this author has ever spent any time around women, and if he has, he's never looked at them as anything but sex objects there for males to desire. In this *Glass Town*, women are seen only through the male gaze, and they are there for men to fuck and ogle. That's it. And it's a shame, because the premise and the storytelling held a lot of promise. But I was so fucking offended on behalf of every woman in the world, that I could not read further. This book is GROSS.

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## **Lauren says**

When Steven Savile's *Glass Town* appeared on my doorstep it was my first time hearing about it; however, as soon as I read the synopsis, I decided it may be the book for me and dove right in.

The Result? *Glass Town* has left me feeling incredibly torn. On one side I enjoyed it. I found the premise unique, the mystery multilayered and suspenseful, and the characters complex. On the other side, however, it was too odd for my liking. Some parts left me flabbergasted and even churned my stomach.

Eleanor Raines.

That was her name.

My obsession.

The object of my desire. I was going to say affection, but there was nothing remotely affectionate about it. Desire is a much better word. Less wholesome. Desire speaks of dark places, of yearning, sweat. - pg. 1

Glass Town is built upon obsession as well as desire.

Obsession can be a dangerous thing - it can cause you to lose your grip on reality as well as your friends and family. There's something about it, however. Something you just can't resist. That's what Isaiah and his brother Seth discovered over 90 years ago in their respective quests for Eleanor Raines's love and attention. With obsession there's a winner as well as a loser, and Isaiah unfortunately lost; however, he never gave up and passed that obsession - that compulsion - to find Eleanor to generation after generation.

It amazed me how much Steven Saville could build upon two men's desires. He brought along mystery, the supernatural, and magic with it. The later of the three truly managed to fascinate me. I've also been curious about magic and the illusions a magician creates. The illusion in Glass Town is more complex than you'd ever imagine, and it shocked me how deep it ran. Additionally, throughout Glass Town I had so many questions: Where had they hidden Eleanor? How does one get into Glass Town? What was Seth's end game? Would Josh survive? These questions kept me hooked, turning page after page in search of answers. At sometimes I couldn't believe that so many events could be based on one person - someone who "existed" over 100 years ago. Was she really worth it? However, I guess that's the crazy thing about obsession - it doesn't depend on worth but desire.

Glass Town never settles on one POV. Over the course of the book a variety of POVs are introduced - Seth, Josh, Damiola, Julie, Taff, Eleanor, and Gideon. While each character comes from different backgrounds each are connected through obsession. For Seth, the man who started it all, his obsession with Eleanor may just break him. Seth is the ultimate villain. He's frightening as well as chilling and he always plays dirty. Josh, the great-grandson of Isaiah, is obsessed with solving the case, no matter at what cost. Josh's obsession was almost as large as Seth's, which I found surprising at time given the short timeline. I will say, however, that no character was incredibly well developed, nor did I ever truly forge a connection with any of them. Also, I wish there were more POVs from Eleanor's perspective. I would've loved to learn more about her as well as her time in the Glass Town.

Overall, Glass Town is a book I liked but didn't love. Some parts just didn't appeal to me; however, there was something about it that kept me reading. I suggest this to fans of magic and illusion.

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### **Jeanne25 says**

I have mixed feelings about this book. First – I love the story premise. The novel is well written. The characters Josh and Julie are likeable. My rating must hover somewhere between “It’s ok” and “I like it”. I am sure there is an audience for Glass Town. Unfortunately, I had to force myself to finish the novel, not because it was bad but because I just never could get into it. I wish I could say more positive or negative but I simply have a neutral view of it. Thank you to the publisher and NetGalley for supplying me with a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Alan Baxter says**

This is a really interesting supernatural thriller with some killer ideas at work. The characters are well drawn, the evocation of old movie magic and modern London crime an excellent juxtaposition. It reminded me of



something by Clive Barker or Ramsey Campbell, but with a uniquely Saville twist. Blisteringly paced, cleverly plotted and relentlessly inventive. Highly recommended.

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## **Mackey says**

Glass Town by Steven Saville is one of those genre bending books that causes you to say "I don't normally read this type of book but...." It is a blend of psychological thriller, urban fantasy and magical realism but written in a way that is so utterly fascinating that you are drawn in and cannot stop reading until the very end.

In the story, the main character, Josh, has found a letter that tells of his grandfather's true love - not his grandmother - and of her disappearance. He, and we, learn of a Glass Town where time is nothing like our own and whose inhabitants certainly are not. There also is a marvelous rivalry and co-mingling of the two families, the Lockwoods and Raines, that is nothing short of brilliant. Yes, there is a LOT of information in the book and at times it appears that it isn't relevant - until it very much is and then you sit back and say, "ohhhhhh," in that aha moment kind of way. I LOVE books where the author stays ahead of me!!

I admit that I was a Saville fan going into the book. I could spot the episodes he wrote for on certain series and I've liked his other books. But this is a giant step forward. Regardless of your genre choice, this is a book I can wholeheartedly recommend to you. Enjoy!

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## **Jenea Whittington says**

Review to come soon...Glass Town is one complex town, but so intriguing. This is a story that involved a love triangle that happened back in the 1920's between a woman and the two brothers who loved her deeply. For one it was truly love and the other it became an obsession. This obsession led him to betray his brother and the woman he loved and he imprisoned her in a town that no one know about. Time moves differently there, for a year inside Glass Town, is one hundred years out in the world around it. This feud between brothers has carried on from generation to generation. Now begs the question, will the feud ever end? And who will it be that finally takes a stand and ends it?

Our main character Josh has found a letter that his grandfather wrote detailing his love for Eleanor, and her disappearance. With this comes a chain of events that is suspenseful and thrilling and even dark and scary at times. Family ties are supposed to strong, but when there is betrayals between family members, it is hard to know who to trust and what to trust. And with Josh's family, he hasn't ever really know a whole lot about them. He didn't know about some of them to begin with. But, Josh stayed strong, both for his mother and his sister. He went through a lot, and most would have just given up, it wasn't his fight to begin with. But that wasn't Josh and I admired that about him. Now as for his cousin Seth, he was the epitome of evil. There was something off from the beginning. And as the story went along, it all came out to. A lot of the side characters were really good in this too. I just loved Josh's mother, she was just the sweetest thing.

The setting was vividly described and it felt like you were right there with John through it all. Especially the parts about the Glass City, was a fascinating world that Saville created. Magic and spells, and the set of an Alfred Hitchcock movie being the back drop for the town. With the magic starting to fade, and the truth about the town coming out and magical creatures appearing in the real world looking like old movies stars,

the suspense built and all led up to a pretty intense ending. I'm not much a science fictions reader, but this had more of a urban/dark fantasy vibe to it, that I really enjoyed and I think that other that enjoy the the genre will as well.

Overall, this was a gritty and dark world, with family betrayals from the past and the present. It was thrilling and kept me guessing on what the Glass Town really was. I am curious to see what Saville has in store for us in Coldfall Wood that comes out next year.

[image error]

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### **Rhett Bruno says**

A captivating novel from a veteran author. I was engaged from start to finish. It's gritty, there is magic and mystery, what isn't to love? Plus, there is nothing I enjoy more than a taut story that doesn't waste any time, and this has that in spades. Highly recommended!

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### **Carrie says**

Joshua Raines finds a letter that his grandfather had written confessing to being in love with another woman back in 1924 right before he passed away in 1994. That woman, Eleanor Raines had gone missing seventy years before that confession was written leaving a mystery that had yet to be solved. Joshua didn't have much of a memory of the letter since he was only eight when his grandfather passed but finding it has brought the past back to mind.

Back in 1926 Isaiah had fallen in love with Eleanor but wasn't the only one, his brother Seth Lockwood had also loved her and she and Seth both disappeared at the same time. Now Joshua will go on a journey to learn that the Glass Town had been created where time passes differently than in the real world, a hundred years would equal one in this realm and now the walls of the secret city are falling.

Glass Town by Steven Savile is an urban fantasy with a bit of a mystery edge to it as the character in our time is taken in with events that took place all those years ago and finds a fantasy world has existed. Unfortunately as interesting as this one sounded to me when picking it up once I got into reading the book it just never really grabbed me or completely gained my interest.

The pace in this one started off rather slowly to me with the writing being a bit denser than I usually like which didn't help me really get invested in this story at all. I will say there were some creative ideas that had potential but I just felt it kind of drag along and never really wow me as I read. I would also warn too that I was not expecting sexual activity at all from the synopsis so finding it took me rather by surprise. There was also a lot of language and some violence in this definitely adult fantasy. In the end though the style just wasn't for me but others may enjoy it.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.wordpress...>

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