



Behold the Bones

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Candace “Candy” Pickens has been obsessed with the swamp lore of her tiny Louisiana town for...forever.

That doesn't mean Candy's a believer, however. She and her friends entered the swamp at the start of summer and left it changed, but Candy's the only one who can't see or feel the magical Shine. She's also the only one who can't see the ghosts that have been appearing in town ever since. So Candy concentrates on other things—real things. Like fighting with her mother and plotting her escape from her crazy town.

But ghosts aren't the only newcomers in Sticks, Louisiana. The King family arrives like a hurricane: in a blur and unwanted—at least by Candy. Mr. King is intent on filming the rumored ghostly activity for his hit TV show, *Local Haunts*. And while Candy can't ignore how attracted she is to eighteen-year-old Gage King and how much his sister, Nova, wants to be friends, she's still suspicious of the family.

As Candy tries to figure out why the Kings are really in town and why the swamp now seems to be invading every crack in her logical, cynical mind, she stumbles across the one piece of swamp lore she didn't know. It's a tale that's more truth than myth, and may have all the answers...and its roots are in Candy's own family tree.

Behold the Bones Details

Date : Published February 23rd 2016 by HarperTeen

ISBN : 9780062241559

Author : Natalie C. Parker

Format : Hardcover 358 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Fantasy, Paranormal, Mystery, Horror

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From Reader Review Behold the Bones for online ebook

Stacee says

I really liked the spooky aspect of the first book and Candy, so I was quite eager to get into this story.

Being in Candy's head is different. She's quite abrasive and her inner monologue is too. I did love how tough she was and how she constantly stood up for herself. At the same time, her doing everything on her own and not letting anyone help got pretty repetitive.

The King family was interesting, but they definitely didn't add the sort of conflict I was expecting. Same with the swamp: the creepy, atmospheric setting seemed to be missing. Don't get me wrong, I did enjoy it, yet the spark that I saw and loved from book 1 didn't carry over.

****Huge thanks to Harper Teen and Edelweiss for providing the arc in exchange for an honest review****

Tee loves Kyle Jacobson says

Oh man I do not know where to start with this review because I don't want to spoil it but there is so much in this book from suspense to folk lore.

We meet Candy and her friends who live in a small town steeped in folk lore and stories that may or may not be true. See Candy has been obsessed with the swamp lore of her tiny town. Then one day her friends decide to enter the swamp and when they come out everyone is different when they come out except Candy. Candy can't see anything her friends see and she is frustrated because she has never been able to see anything and she wonders why.

So all Candy can do is think about the day she can leave her small town and start a new normal life somewhere else. Then one day a new family comes to town and the town is turned upside down and all Candy can think about is why are the new comers here in her town looking for the ghosts and things she can't see. What is she missing here? She starts to investigate the new family and what she finds she does not like. What could it be? And will it change her life.....

Mel says

This 2nd book is from Candace' perspective and her immunity to the shine. Then there is the King family and their interest on making the mystery of the shine into a TV show. I struggled a little bit with the first half of the book and almost DNF. Also Sterling did seem to have a different voice than the first book - lost her depth. However, the pace picked up and the story redeemed itself. 2 for the first half, 4 for the 2nd half.

Dark Faerie Tales says

Review courtesy of Dark Faerie Tales

Quick & Dirty: A decent companion novel set in a small Louisiana town.

Opening Sentence: Grandpa Craven kicked it the day I was born.

The Review:

Candy Pickens lives in the tiny Louisiana town of Sticks. She's never believed in the swamp lore that is spoken like religion, but she is about to face a surprise when ghost sightings appear everywhere. Except, she's the only one who can't see them, and apparently her touch chases them away, as well as the magical Shine that wreathes through the swamp. When a TV producer moves through town to film their ghost stories, his intentions are anything but innocent, and it's up to Candy to figure them out and solve her ghost problem.

This novel was a companion to a previous installment, *Beware the Wild*. Instead of focusing on Sterling, the story followed Candace, or Candy, as she journeyed a very different adventure. For the most part, I really enjoyed the originality of the story and how the Louisiana swamp factored into the mythology and folklore of the town. Sticks was just your average tiny Southern town – with a nice heaping of ghosts and magic. Again, the rich Southern atmosphere could have been translated a little stronger, but I still really enjoyed how the author played with such eerie swamp elements.

Candy is a very different character than Sterling was. Sterling was more reserved, but Candy is the rebellious one, the one who shakes things up a bit. Her bravado and confidence tended to hide the softer parts of her. I did enjoy how the writing style diversified with a different character, because I hate when one point of view sounds exactly like another character's (like in *Allegiant* by Roth). Over the story, Candy grew as a character, and became more selfless and more able to see other's points of views.

As for the love story, I really don't know how I feel about that. There wasn't much focus on the romance, more on the immediate plotline, which I enjoyed. The romance was kind of built in bits and pieces, but wasn't altogether unexpected. In all honesty, I was entirely uncaring toward the love interest. His character and the romance felt very subpar to me. There was kind of a love triangle, but never a legit one. And then, the ghosts: I liked the idea of Mad Mary. I think the first book carried a more original plotline, and more interesting one, but this second installment managed to take the world from the previous one and expand on it. This helped to explain certain things from the first book so I liked drawing these connections.

Altogether, I enjoyed the characters and development of this story. The plot was interesting and the setting was nicely done, although the tone and atmosphere could have been a bit stronger. It was a decent companion novel, with one of my bigger complaints being the romance, which didn't interest me at all. I still think the first was better but really liked this one, and I'd recommend fans of the first to go ahead and check out this awesome book!

Notable Scene:

And here I am, the North Star. Brilliant and isolated, orienting everyone but connecting to no one. I am all I'll ever be and I don't know what that means anymore.

I've never been the girl who imagines her wedding, or anticipates a family like it's a given I'll have both, but I've never considered that neither were in my future.

But I've also never imagined myself alone. And right now, that's all I see in my future. Me.

And me alone.

FTC Advisory: HarperTeen provided me with a copy of Behold the Bones. No goody bags, sponsorships, "material connections," or bribes were exchanged for my review.

Sarah says

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to HarperCollins and Edelweiss.)

"Every year, before they wish me happy birthday, my family hauls me to a backwoods graveyard to remind me that I, Candace Craven Pickens, killed my own grandpa."

This was an okay story about a girl who seemed to have magical ties to a swamp.

Candy was a character who knew her own mind, and wouldn't let other people change it. She stood up for what she believed was right, and if she wanted something, then she'd try to get it.

The storyline in this was about how Candy was the only person in town it seemed who couldn't see the ghosts that kept appearing from the swamp, and what this meant. We got some ghosts, a family intent on filming the ghosts and putting them on TV, and a bit about Candy's own person problems, which also related back to her odd ties with the swamp, and some strange effects from the 'shine' which came from the swamp.

The ending to this was alright, and it was a satisfying ending.

6.5 out of 10

Aimee Meester says

Just as kickbutt and southern-vibes-y as the first one and oh my goodness I love Candy a lot. AND I ALSO LOVE THE ROMANCE LIKE AMEN I AM SO HERE FOR THIS

Molly says

This was one of my most anticipated books for 2016 and I am so happy to say that it lived up to my

expectations!!! It's a perfect companion to Parker's debut, *Beware the Wild* and I was SO happy to return to Sticks and these characters! This book is so creepy and so damn country I can't even stand it!!! I was enchanted from the start and I am crossing my fingers that there will be a third book because I am not ready to leave the swamp!

Cillian says

Another book in the Beware the Wild setting.

More enchanted, creepy Louisiana swamp. More characters fucked in the head doing lots of fucked up stuff. More Beware the Wild...

Celeste says

I think I'll give this one **2.5 stars**. I didn't like it as much as *Beware the Wild*, but I think if you really enjoyed Parker's first book then this one's also worth a read!

The biggest complaint I had was that the plot pacing was just strange. Not much happens until the end. On a number of occasions something would happen that seemed like it could be important and get the ball rolling, but then it would kinda fall into the background as if it weren't a big deal. The final 40 or so pages kick it up a notch (which was much appreciated!), but by that point I was already feeling too disengaged to fully appreciate it.

AND CAN WE TALK ABOUT THAT ONE CHARACTER FOR A SEC. Don't want to give away any spoilers, but Candy, girl - fool you once, shame on him/her; fool you twice, and thrice, and whatever comes after thrice, shame the friggity-frack on you. If someone's acting sketchy and admits to doing sketchy things, maybe you should take the hint and stay away from said person.

Trisha says

*"take a stone, take a flower flower flower
these will only last an hour
but take a bone or take some strife
these will last for all my life
she's so mad mad mad
she's so very bad."*

Wow, what a wonderful 2nd book. I didn't even know this was a duology until I was going through new releases and this one popped up. I was wary - I'd loved book 1 - the lyrical quality of the writing, the lore and the Louisiana southern flair - I'd loved all of it in the first book. So I was worried a 2nd book wouldn't compare. But I Loved this one. I fell right back into the heat and sweat of the swamp and the small town and into the lives of three girls who were so close and loved each other so much. I loved being back, loved every page and raced right through it.

if there's a third one - which I doubt but if there is - then I will definitely devour it!

Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says

Natalie C. Parker's *Behold the Bones* came as an unexpected sequel/companion novel to her fabulous debut, *Beware the Wild*. Just like her first book, *Behold the Bones* takes place in Sticks, Louisiana, a town as slow and provincial as its symbolic name suggests. When you're born so deep in the South, you accept heath and gossip as a way of life. Aside from the small town mentality, Sticks is burdened with the surrounding forest and its swamp with magical properties. In the previous book, we followed Sterling on her quest to find and save her brother from the magical swamp. This time we join her best friend Candace as she discovers her family's connection with the town's history and magic.

Candy is completely unlike Sterling in every way that counts. She is headstrong, defiant and difficult and she makes poor choices on every turn. She is angry with everyone around her, but most of all she is furious with life itself. Her only goal is to escape from her small town at first opportunity, somewhere she can be anonymous and free. The swamp, however, has other plans for Candy, even when it seems that Candy and magic are mutually exclusive.

I suppose one could say that there's a romance in this book, but it's really peripheral, not unimportant but secondary, and Candy doesn't even understand her feelings until the very end. If you prefer your books heavy on the romance, this isn't a good choice for you. But if your priority is a good story, preferably with a light romance or at least some hope, *Behold the Bones* might be the perfect choice.

Behold the Bones is creepy, atmospheric and strange. In other words, it's a perfect read for fans of Brenna Yovanoff, Kendare Blake or Tessa Gratton, which I definitely am. Parker's prose is precisely the lush, gorgeous experience I enjoy above all else. She is a wonderful author and whatever she decides to write next has my wholehearted support.

Amber says

An awful lot can happen in a small town like Sticks, and if you don't believe me then you need to pick up the *Beware The Wild* series by Natalie C. Parker. With its southern Gothic vibe and tales of magic and ghosts, I promise you there is nothing like it in Young Adult right now – and you need it in your life.

See full review here: <http://www.memyshelfandi.com/2016/02/...>

Dahlia says

God, I freaking love the way this woman writes southern atmosphere, and if I had any worries she couldn't keep up the magic - literal and metaphorical - from *Beware the Wild*, this companion dispelled them completely. Candy is such a strong character, it's so nice to see the others again, and there's a little subplot

with Abigail that legit made me cry. I am *dying* for Beale to get her own story, so Harper, if you're reading this, for the love of God please make that happen.

Heidi says

Two and a half stars: A book with a lot of potential, but it is missing something.

Candy is enduring her annual birthday celebration with her family. Instead of a normal birthday party, Candy is treated to her uncle relating the family's long, cursed history in the graveyard next to her grandfather's grave. Candy was born on the day her grandfather died, a tradition or curse that stretches back for generations. Candy will soon learn that the family curse is affecting her life in more ways than she ever dreamed, starting with the reason why she can't see the mysterious shine in the swamp or the ghosts the rest of the town claims to be seeing. Is there something special about Candy?

What I Liked:

*I enjoyed Beware the Wild the companion novel to Behold the Bones so I was eager to go back to the small town of Sticks and the creepy swamp that surrounds it. Once again, I was pleased with the creepy atmosphere and the strange occurrences in the small town. This time the focus is on ghostly sightings. I like the eerie atmospheric setting of this series.

*The book focuses on Candace. She is a tough girl, who is frustrated by her inability to see the paranormal. I liked that Candy was a fighter and that she stood up for herself. She is a no nonsense girl. I also appreciated that she transformed and changed, especially when it came out her views on the town and the people in it. At the beginning of the book, she wants nothing more than to escape Sticks and the people surrounding her, but as the story progresses, she learns some startling truths about herself and her town, and she changes her mind. I liked her new outlook at the end, and I appreciated that she let go of many of her prejudices.

*I like the small town of Sticks. This is a town steeped in superstition and it thrives on its long history of ghost stories and swamp lore. Everyone in the town accepts that there is something paranormal about the swamp, and they have no trouble believing in ghosts. The small town and the swamp create the perfect backdrop for the story.

*I appreciated that the story had a strong focus on friends and family. Candy is fiercely loyal to her friends and family, and I liked that she always had her friends' backs.

*Even though this is the second novel in the series, you can read it without having read the first as it is a companion novel. This book has a different main character and story line. Events in the previous book are touched lightly on, but they don't have a strong bearing on this story. However, I would recommend reading the first book so you can gain an appreciation for the swamp and all of its peculiarities.

*The writing is wonderful. I loved the metaphors and similes and rich descriptions.

*The ending is crazy and chaotic with its big reveals and finale. I appreciated that once the dust settled that things tied off and ended neatly. No cliffhangers or nagging questions.

And The Not So Much:

*I wish I could put my finger on what was missing from this story. It just didn't grab my attention like the first book. I think one of the problems was that I felt like the book lacked focus. Not much happens during the first half of the book, other than a couple of ghostly sightings. I kept waiting for something big to happen, and it doesn't until the final pages. The pacing was slow, and I thought the book dragged, by the time I got to the end, it was too little too late. I was also expecting a better tie in with all the ghosts. Why were all the ghosts suddenly crawling out of the swamp?

*The King family was underdeveloped. I thought they were going to play a more prominent part in the book, especially Gage. Instead, the only who is featured is Nova. I wished that there had been more on the family, their travels and their ailing mother.

*The romance is a big miss. At first, it appears that Candy is going to fall for one boy, but he keeps shoving her away for personal reasons. There is a second suitor, whom I thought Candy treated very poorly. Then at the end, she makes her choice. The romance needed way more development. As it stands, it just felt thrown in there.

*There is a secondary story line that features Candy's friend, Abigail, who is struggling with her sexual identity. I wished that there had been a bit more on Abby, as I wanted to see her take a stand and be comfortable in her own skin, and with who she was. Unfortunately, her story line is abandoned and I was left wondering about her.

*I love the eerie atmosphere of the swamp, but unfortunately, the swamp doesn't play as prominent of a role as it did in the first book. I wanted more swamp.

*I was irritated with Candy because I couldn't understand why she kept trusting Nova. You would think one time getting burned she would learn, but she lets herself get taken advantage of by Nova several times. Annoying.

*This is a Young Adult book, but reader be warned, it is for a more mature audience as there is teen drinking and sex.

Behold the Bones was a book that I wanted to love, but I felt it faltered with a slow pace, lack of development with characters and story lines, a weak romance and an unfocused plot. I liked the atmospheric setting and the focus on friendship and family as well as the paranormal, but unfortunately this was a read that missed the mark a bit. If you want an interesting story, give this a try, but I would recommend borrowing it.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own and I was not compensated for this review.

Posted@Rainy Day Ramblings.

noor says

VERY disappointed on who she ended up with??? like what? even though it made much more sense for her to be with person2, what the fuck! i was rooting for person1, and we literally got no background for person2. he was just a dick half the book and the other half he became the man?! smh.
