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Andrew Neil Gray, J.S. Herbison

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The luxury cruise ship the Martian Queen was decommissioned years ago, set to drift back and forth between Earth and Mars on the off-chance that reclaiming it ever became profitable for the owners. For Saga and her husband Michel the cruise ship represents a massive payday. Hacking and stealing the ship could earn them enough to settle down, have children, and pay for the treatments to save Saga's mother's life.

But the Martian Queen is much more than their employer has told them. In the twenty years since it was abandoned, something strange and dangerous has come to reside in the decadent vessel. Saga feels herself being drawn into a spider's web, and must navigate the traps and lures of an awakening intelligence if she wants to go home again.

The Ghost Line Details

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From Reader Review The Ghost Line for online ebook

Lindsay says

A small crew are paid to investigate a "ghost liner", a mothballed luxury spaceship that is maintaining an orbit for commercial purposes, but is unmanned. But all is not as it seems.

This story works well at the novella length with an interesting premise and relatively simple story with some wonderfully creepy atmospherics. The cast is simple, with a husband and wife team as the main characters, their pilot and their mysterious employer. Where it falls down is that the mystery goes on a bit too long and the plot turns on the employer holding onto her secrets for far longer than she needed to, to catastrophic result.

Nthato Morakabi says

Andrew Neil Gray and J.S. Herbison are wonderful authors. This short but powerful novella started off as one thing. The story of a husband and wife hacker duo. Of a woman intent on breaching a ship lost to the vastness of space. Of adventure and hints of mystery.

It instead evolves into a beautiful, melancholic unraveling of something greater. Something deeper than just another story about a ghost ship.

Written from the perspective of Saga, we see the unfolding story of each member who traveled with her to the Mars Queen. Gregory, the ships pilot, battling his own demons. Wei, the mysterious patron with a dark secret. And Michel, Saga's husband and stronghold on this floating ship. Together, with strong imagery and the emotive journey that Saga undergoes, The Ghost Line becomes a sci-fi novella with a punch.

Kate says

An enjoyably creepy tale but I do wish it had been longer.

Rachel (TheShadesofOrange) says

4.5 Stars

This is a gripping novella that plays with tropes of the horror genre. Blurring the lines between technology and the supernatural, this story could be considered the science fiction version of a haunted house story. Taking place on an abandoned luxury starship, the setting was atmospheric with vivid, eerie details. The world building felt natural and immersive. The narrative was well paced, resulting in a highly entertaining and suspenseful story. I would recommend this book to science fiction readers who would like to read a futuristic twist on the classic ghost story.

Gregoire says

note : 3.5 étoiles tendant vers 4 !

personnages = ok

-1 pour ce qui est du pilote (russe alcoolique) un peu superficiel et cliché (par contre j'ai aimé le côté hacker de Michel)

-1 pour le manque d "historique" (à part pour Saga) les auteurs ne nous disent à peu près rien de leur motivation et de leur passé J'aurais aimé les voir un peu plus "étouffés" pour mieux comprendre leurs réactions

thème = ok

-1 parce que déjà lu (un mixte entre la série de KK RUSCH Diving Universe et celle de Jack McDevitt "Alex Benedict" sont 2 ex qui me viennent à l'esprit)

-2 pour les "spores" venues d'ailleurs ...je pense les avoir rencontrées dans des nouvelles (??? ou peut être une réminiscence de Leviathan Wakes de James COREY) et pour ma part, le côté "esprit collectif évolutif" semble peu crédible (pratiquement instantané) ou tout au moins, pas assez scientifiquement présenté

+1 pour ne pas être tombé dans le piège facile de l'horreur pour l'horreur (ce qui rend l'histoire encore plus poignante et terrible)

style écriture :

+ 1 j'ai été embarqué sans pouvoir lâcher et sans m'ennuyer Les descriptions techniques (hackage, description du vaisseau etc) sont suffisamment light pour sembler réelles sans ressembler à une notice technique indigeste Chacun des quatre coéquipiers est différencié et le lecteur n'a pas de mal à les visualiser

ressenti

+1 un très bon moment de lecture sans pour autant être époustouflant L'atmosphère est bien rendue, la tension va en escaladant. Saga n'est pas parfaite mais admirablement humaine

regret

-1 j'aurais aimé en savoir plus sur l'historique du vaisseau ; sur le passé des personnages

et sur le monde dans laquelle tout ceci se déroule qui n'est abordé que par des remarques ici ou là Le récit est court Pas le temps de s'ennuyer certes mais quelques dizaines de pages supplémentaires l'aurait rendu encore plus crédible et intéressant, à mon humble avis...

Autumn Is Azathoth The Haunted Reading Room says

Review of THE GHOST LINE

by Andrew Neil Gray and J. S. Herbison

What an exciting novella! I hope this universe will be expanded on, as I totally enjoyed the characters and the convoluted plotting, not to mention the advanced reason behind the events on the abandoned vessel, THE MARTIAN QUEEN. In many ways I found this story particularly special and engaging.

A married couple who explore abandoned asteroid habitats and space vessels are hired by a woman who claims to be acting on behalf of a corporation, to hack *The Martian Queen*, a ship which three decades ago flew between Mars and Earth, providing an upscale experience *The Titanic* and *The Lusitania* might envy. When the company went bankrupt, new ownership shut down the ship and left it in orbit. Now the ship is to be hacked and sent out of orbit—supposedly. In actuality, what Wei intends is far from anything Saga and Michel or their pilot Gregor could possibly expect; and even stranger is the ship's intention.

THE GHOST LINE is a riveting science fiction experience, but I think it will be enjoyed just as much by readers of other genres. It's just that excellent.

Melanie says

ARC provided by Tor in exchange for an honest review.

The Ghost Line is a short story that surrounds four people on a mission to hijack an abandoned space ship named the *Martian Queen*.

► **Saga** - Our main protagonist, married to Michel, is obsessed with exploring abandoned ships and has a fan-base from her haunted finds.

► **Michel** - The husband of Saga and one of the most sought after hackers in the universe.

► **Gregor** - A Russian pilot with a drinking problem.

► **Wei** - The woman who hired these three crew members, even though she answers their questions about the mission very begrudgingly, while keeping many secrets close to herself.

Saga and Michel accept Wei's mysterious mission, even though they were going to settle down and start a family, because the money she offered them was tremendous. I'm guessing that is also why Gregor accepted, but it is never clearly stated.

The *Martian Queen* was once a great and luxurious hotel ship, equipped with casinos, spas, nightclubs, and even more built inside. While active, it was a home and place to sleep for people traveling between Earth and Mars. Now, the ship still travels back and forth from Earth to Mars, constantly being lead by our orbit, even though it hasn't had a crew or passengers for twenty years.

This story feels like you're walking through and exploring what's left of the *Titanic*, but in space. It feels eerie and ominous, while you're trying to piece together the mystery of this ship and why it is still part of our orbit. I am not sure I would consider this part of the horror genre, but it is for sure creepy and will leave you on edge while reading.

This is ultimately a story about love and loss, and making sacrifices that you don't ever believe you are brave or capable enough to make until you are forced to make them. I loved the message, and I very much enjoyed the ending, but I still feel like this was too grand of a story for only 70ish pages. I, personally, feel like it would be been much better as a full length novel, or even if 100 extra pages were tacked on, so we could have explored more of the ship, more of the characters, and more of the mysteries. Instead, I feel like the message was way less impactful and I wasn't nearly as invested as I probably should have been. This definitely wasn't a bad read; it just left a lot to be desired and a lot of questions to be answered.

I would be very interested in a continuation short story, just to see how certain people felt with the

conclusion. Yet, I do think this is a decently strong story to stand upon its own, too. Regardless, this was a good short story, and for sure worth the short amount of time it takes to read!

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Paul says

I thought this was pretty good but didn't quite stick the ending. It went a little outside my realm of believability around the 80% mark but I still enjoyed it. It had a very 'The Shining' feel for a while that I wanted it to embrace even more so. I was expecting a little more paranormal in the end.

Bridget Mckinney says

Tor.com has had a whole series of excellent space opera stories coming out this summer, which came at a perfect time for me, as I've been in the mood for science fiction more than fantasy these last few months. The Ghost Line finds a small group of salvagers exploring a vast abandoned luxury cruise ship and discovering more than any of them bargained for. The book's best quality is its lovely, thoughtful descriptions of the abandoned ship and the way in which it allows the reader to become immersed in the exploration of the haunted ship. It's not the strongest of Tor.com's 2017 lineup, and it feels slight and a little uninspired (while at the same time owing perhaps a little too much of what inspiration it has to The Expanse) in comparison to gems like All Systems Red or even Killing Gravity, but The Ghost Line is nevertheless a solidly entertaining read worthy of a lazy afternoon.

Read more reviews at [SF Bluestocking](#).

Daniel says

Sci-fi ghost story. Nice :)

Necu puno pricati sem da je pricica odlicno napisana, tenzija se fino dize kroz celo delo i kraj je dosta originalan. Sve u svemu odlicno.

Preporuka.

Alice says

Saga and her husband Michel are persuaded by the tight-lipped Wei to take part in one last mission before settling down to raise children together. Their job is to hack the Martian Queen, apparently for profit. But Wei isn't telling them everything.

This novella has one of the loneliest, most distinctively creepy atmospheres I've ever experienced. I read most of this late at night, and found myself following my cat around just to feel less disturbed.

Gray and Herbison make a perfect team and I'm happy to hear there's a full novel in the works.

Odo says

4.5/5.0

Nikki says

Received to review via Netgalley; publication date 11th July 2017

I didn't expect to find this so creepy, but wow, it ended up getting under my skin. I thought I'd just start it, see what it was like before bed... and then I read the whole thing. I loved the partnership between the husband and wife team, and the whole idea of a space-liner drifting on an old cruise path just to keep the rights to it. There's not much explanation for why what happens on the ship occurs, but it's almost better that way — you don't understand why anymore than the characters do.

I loved the ending, too. It'd have been easy to give readers an easier, happier way out; to have some kind of compromise be reached. Instead — well, I'd better not say too much. Suffice it to say that it works really well, and though it's not horror, it definitely has a heck of a creep factor in places.

Reviewed for The Bibliophibian.

Therin Knite says

I received an ARC of this title from the publisher via NetGalley.

In general, I have no issues reading novellas, novelettes, or short stories -- except when I find that the length inhibits the storytelling. Unfortunately, I felt that was the case with *The Ghost Line*.

The story has a fairly abrupt start, as the main characters are approaching the titular ghost line, an abandoned luxury space cruise ship, and from that point on, it never quite gives us the full scope of the story's universe. We don't learn what Earth is like to any real degree in this spacefaring future--beyond a few mentions of advanced technology--and our interactions with its inhabitants are limited to the four-person crew on the mission.

The characters themselves aren't poorly written, per se, but they could have been executed better. One of them bordered on a cliché, another acted so aberrantly throughout the story that it made a few of the plot twists a little too obvious. The main character was a little too woe-is-me as well, dwelling on her personal problems so often that it distracted from the main storyline.

The plot itself was interesting, but I didn't find the twists all that original or shocking. I think the length really stunted the story's ability to build suspense, as it kept throwing out answers immediately after the questions were asked. My biggest letdown, honestly, was that the tone wasn't nearly as "horror-tinged" as I was hoping it'd be. I wanted a slow, atmospheric, creepy buildup, but the pace got so fast around the one-

third mark that such a tone became impossible to hold.

Overall, this was an okay read, but nothing to write home about.

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Mark says

I don't know if you've noticed, but publishers like Tor are trying very hard to reintroduce readers to novellas – you know, something about 150 pages long, long enough to pique your interest but easy enough to be read in one sitting. *The Ghost Line* is one of the latest of these - a story of space wreck recovery but with a touch of horror added that manages to reuse the tropes in a way that keeps the story chugging along.

From the publisher: “*The Martian Queen was the Titanic of the stars before it was decommissioned, set to drift back and forth between Earth and Mars on the off chance that reclaiming it ever became profitable for the owners. For Saga and her husband Michel the cruise ship represents a massive payday. Hacking and stealing the ship could earn them enough to settle down, have children, and pay for the treatments to save Saga's mother's life. But the Martian Queen is much more than their employer has told them. In the twenty years since it was abandoned, something strange and dangerous has come to reside in the decadent vessel. Saga feels herself being drawn into a spider's web, and must navigate the traps and lures of an awakening intelligence if she wants to go home again.*”

The Ghost Line is a surprisingly good debut that reminded me of Kristine Kathryn Rusch's *Diving* stories, mixed in with a touch of Greg Bear's *Blood Music* and even James S. A. Corey's *Expanse* series. It's a great story that feels like it could have come straight from *Asimov's Magazine* or *Analog*, of competent workers doing something well until they are put under stress.

Being a novella there's not a lot of time spent filling in the background. The story is told mainly from the perspective of husband and wife team Saga and Michel, who are cyber-hacking specialists able to revive AI systems from hibernation safely. They are hired by Wei to revive the mothballed *Martian Queen*. Since the owners went bankrupt, the *Queen* has been running a ghost line route between Earth & Mars, keeping a company's rights on it even though it is currently unused. Wei's plan is that they can move the *Queen* off course and allow her employers to claim the route for themselves. Wei, Saga, Michel and their pilot Gregor arrive quickly at the *Martian Queen* and initially things go well. But then, nearly as quick, strange things start to happen...

I liked the fast pace and the setup of the story. It all quickly establishes a setting and creates characters that are recognisable and likeable. The ship itself is appropriately grand and elegantly creepy. As we explore the corridors I'm sure there's something in the descriptions about the effects of the passing of time and the fleeting nature of material things in there as well.

That's not to say that it's perfect. The pacing is a little uneven, though perhaps this is to be expected in a novella. As a shorter piece of writing, the novella can result in things happening a little too quickly at times, and *The Ghost Line* is a little guilty of this. This also means that the characters are not as nuanced as they might be in a longer form. This is particularly noted here in the case of Wei, whose abrupt manner is a little manic and at times rather annoying. Ultimately she becomes a tool of the plot, with a few key plot points being conveniently waived away by Wei just not telling people why things are happening or being done.

But the fact that I read *The Ghost Line* in one sitting is a sign of a promising debut. If you like your science fiction at a fast pace with a little bit of the creepy thrown in, *The Ghost Line* is an entertaining story that does its job and keeps your attention.

I look forward to reading more from these two authors.
