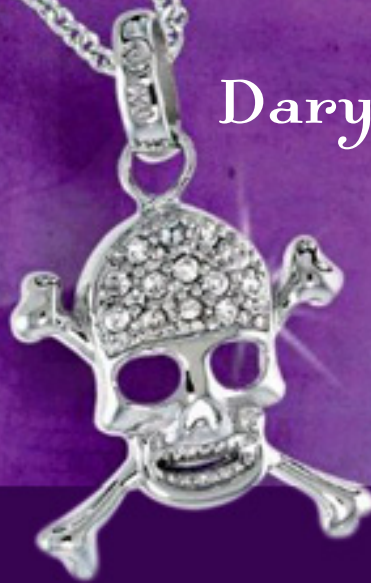


Fifth Grave Past the Light

Darynda Jones



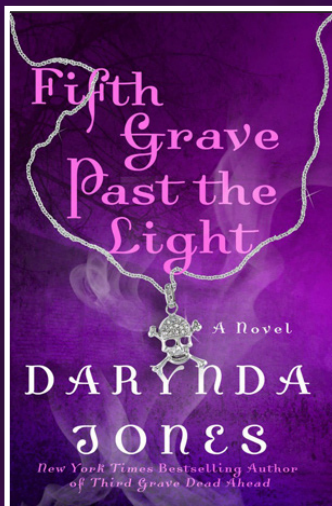
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Introduction

Never underestimate the power of a woman
on a double espresso with a mocha latte chaser high.

T-shirt



Charley Davidson isn't your everyday, run-of-the-mill grim reaper. She's more of a paranormal private eye/grim reaper extraordinaire. However, she gets sidetracked when the sexy, sultry son of Satan, Reyes Farrow, moves in next door. To further complicate matters, Reyes is her main suspect in an arson case. Charley has vowed to stay away from him until she can find out the truth but then dead women start appearing in her apartment, one after another, each lost, confused, and terrified beyond reason. When it becomes apparent that her own sister, Gemma, is the serial killer's next target Charley has no choice but to ask for Reyes' help. Arsonist or not, he's the one man alive who could protect Gemma no matter who or what came at her. But he wants something in return. Charley. All of her, body and soul. And to keep her sister safe, it is a price she is willing to pay.

Charley Davidson is at it again in *Fifth Grave Past the Light*, the sexy, suspenseful, and laugh-out-loud funny fifth installment of the New York Times bestselling series by Darynda Jones.

Interview

1. Fifth Grave Past the Light goes on sale in July in the U.S. This is the fifth book in the Charley Davidson series. After the amazing end of the fourth book... What will we find in this book? Has Reyes more prominence? Are we going to know more about demons?

First, thank you so much for the kind words! I love writing this series and hope to keep doing it for a long time.

Sadly, there are no demons in Charley's latest adventures. Instead, she has to deal with a group of murdered women who are terrified beyond reason and have invaded her apartment by the droves, a cheating spouse who may be more dangerous than she originally suspected, and a notorious new neighbor in the form of the sinfully sexy Reyes Alexander Farrow. But while her plate may seem full, she still has time to spy on her sister, dole out advice to a Deaf kid named Quentin, and tease the ever lovin' out of her bestie, Cookie Kowalski. All in a day's work for Charley Davidson. But it's the sultry nights and steamy run-ins with her new neighbor that make Fifth Grave so fun.

2. In Fourth Grave Beneath My Feet, we can see Reyes softer, vulnerable and showing her love to Charley. Will we see the feelings of the great son of Satan again in this book?

Most definitely! We get a lot of page time with Charley and Reyes, and his softer side definitely comes through.

3. Will we know more about Donovan? Can you tell us something about him or the rest of the band?

Donovan will be back! Just not in Fifth Grave. I have high hopes for that boy and hope to bring him back in the next book. For the time being, they are relaxing on a beach in Mexico.

4. Do you know the date of publish in Spain? Have you sold the rights of this book?

Unfortunately, I don't know the dates yet. I am rarely given that information from my world-rights publishers. The minute I know, I will announce.

5. Don't you still know how many books will have the series? If you know it, how many will be? Have you already wrote the sixth book?

I am actually working on Sixth Grave on the Edge right now! Six through eight have sold, but the series itself is open-ended, so there is no telling how many we will end up with.

6. Will we see a face to face confrontation between Reyes and his father in this book or in any of the following?

We will see that eventually, but not in this book. Or, well, for a while yet. I'm saving that for a couple of books down the road.

7. Will Mr. Wong speak? Will we know his story? Will he pass through Charley or remain in his corner?

I'm not sure if he will speak, but we will definitely see more of him and get his story eventually. Let's just say he is in Charley's corner for a reason.

8. Will have a small forward in the Cookie and Uncle Bob relationship? Will we know more about Garret in this book?

We will have a TINY step forward with Cookie and Uncle Bob, but not much. However, we do get to know more about what happened to Garrett when he was in hell, and the whole reason he was sent there in the first place.

Interview

9. Can Charley and Reyes finally have a more stable relationship? Will we have more moments of Reyes and Charley together?

In Fifth Grave, there is a GIANT step forward in their relationship. I hope readers are pleased!

10. We are delighted to have more Charley and Reyes but Do you think that the readers might lose interest if the series extends too much?

Well, I certainly hope not! LOL. If they do, then I am not doing my job. There will always be tension in their relationship, but there will also be fiercely passionate times too. They are a volatile couple and that will continue to show.

Darynda thank you very much for giving me this interview, it's always a pleasure to have you here.

Thank you so much for having me!!! I'm so thrilled to be in Spain and I hope I continue to do so.

Claudia

Surprise!

Darynda has given us an excerpt from his new novel **"Fifth Grave Past the Light"**...

Surprise!

Ask me about life after death.—T-shirt often seen on Charley Davidson, a grim reaper with questionable morals.

The dead guy at the end of the bar kept trying to buy me a drink. Which figured. No one else was even taking a second look and I'dressed to the nines. Or, at the very least, the eight-and-a-halves. But the truly disturbing part of my evening was the fact that my mark, one Mr. Marvin Tidwell, blond real estate broker and suspected adulterer, actually turned down the drink I'd tried to buy him.

Turned it down!

I felt violated.

I sat at the bar, sipping a margarita, lamenting the sad turn my life had taken. Especially to night. This case was not going as planned. Maybe I wasn't Marv's type. It happened. But I was oozing interest. And I wore makeup. And I had cleavage. Even with all that going for me, this investigation was firmly wedged between the cracks of no and where. At least I could tell my client, aka Mrs. Marvin Tidwell, that it would seem her husband was not cheating on her. Not randomly, anyway. The fact that he could've been meeting someone in particular kept me glued to my barstool.

"Come here often?"

I looked over at the dead guy. He'd finally worked up the courage to approach and I got a better view of him. I figured him for the runt of the litter. He wore round-rimmed glasses and a tattered baseball cap that sat backwards on top of muddy brown hair. Add to that a faded blue T-shirt and loosely ripped jeans and he could've been a skater, a computer geek, or a backwoods moonshiner.

His cause of death was not immediately apparent. No stab wounds or gaping holes. No missing limbs or tire tracks across his face. He didn't even look like a drug addict, so I couldn't tell why he'd died at such a young age. Taking into account the fact that his baby-faced features would make him look younger than he probably was, I estimated him to be somewhere around my age when he'd passed.

He stood waiting for an answer. I thought "Come here often?" was rhetorical, but okay. Not wanting to be perceived as talking to myself in a room full of people, I responded by lifting one shoulder in a halfhearted shrug.

Sadly, I did. Come here often. This was my dad's bar, and while I never set up stings here for fear of someone I knew blowing my cover, this just happened to be the very same bar Mr. Tidwell frequented.

At least if it came to a knockdown drag-out, I might have some backup. I knew most of the regulars and all of the employees.

Dead Guy glanced toward the kitchen, seeming nervous before he refocused on me. I glanced that way as well. Saw a door.

"You're very shiny," he said, drawing my attention back to him.

He had a stutter. Few things were more adorable than a grown man with boyish features and a stutter. I stirred my margarita and pasted on a fake smile. I couldn't talk to him in a room full of living, breathing patrons. Especially when one was named Jessica Guinn, to my utter mortification. I hadn't seen her fiery red hair since high school but there she sat, a few seats

down from me, surrounded by a group of chattering socialites who looked almost as fake as her boobs. But that could be my bitterness rearing its ugly head.

Unfortunately, my forced smile only encouraged Dead Guy.

“Y-you are. You’re like the s-sun reflecting off the chrome bumper of a f-fifty- seven Chevy.”

He splayed his fingers in the air to demonstrate, and my heart was gone. Damn it. He was like all those lost puppies I tried to save as a child to no avail because I had an evil stepmother who believed all stray dogs were rabid and would try to rip out her jugular. A fact that had nothing to do with my desire to bring them into the house.

“Yeah,” I said under my breath, doing my best ventriloquist impersonation, “thanks.”

“I’m D-Duff,” he said.

“I’m Charley.” I kept my hands wrapped around my drink lest he decide we needed to shake. Not many things looked stranger to the living world than a grown woman shaking air. You know those kids with invisible friends? Well, I was one of those. Only I wasn’t a kid, and my friends weren’t invisible. Not to me, anyway. And I could see them because I’d been born the grim reaper, which was not as bad as it sounded. I was basically a portal to heaven, and whenever someone was stuck on Earth, having chosen not to cross over immediately after death, they could cross to the other side through me. I was like a giant bug light, only what I lured was already dead.

I pulled at my extra- tight sweater. “Is it just me, or is it really warm in here?”

His baby blues shot toward the kitchen again. “Hot is m-more like it. S-so, I— I couldn’t help but notice you t-tried to buy that guy over there a drink.”

I let my fake smile go. Freed it like a captured bird. If it came back to me, it would be mine. If not, it never was. “And?”

“You’re b-barking up the wrong tree with that one.” Surprised, I put my drink down— the one I bought myself— and leaned in a little closer. “He’s gay?”

Duff snorted. “N-no. But he’s been in here a lot lately. He l-likes his women a little . . . l-looser.”

“Dude, how much sluttier can I get?” I indicated my attire with a sweep of my hand.

“N-no, I mean, well, you’re a l-little—” He let his gaze travel the length of me. “—t-tight.”

I gasped. “I look anal?”

He drew in a deep breath and tried again. “H-he only hits on women who are more s-substantial than you.”

Oh, that wasn’t offensive at all. “I have depth. I’ve read Proust. No, wait, that was Pooh. Winnie- the- Pooh. My bad.”

He shifted his non ex is tent weight, cleared his throat, and tried again. “More v-voluptuous.”

“I have curves,” I said through a clenched jaw. “Have you seen my ass?”

“Heavier!” he blurted out.

“I weigh— Oh, you mean he likes bigger women.”

“E-exactly, while I on the other hand—” Duff’s words faded into the background like elevator music. So Marv liked big women. A new plan formed in the darkest, most corrupt corners of Barbara. My brain. Cookie, otherwise known as my receptionist during regular business hours and my best friend 24/7, was perfect. She was large and in charge. Or well, large and kind of bossy. I picked up my cell pone and called her.

"This better be good," she said.

"It is. I need your assistance."

"I'm watching the first season of Prison Break."

"Cookie, you're my assistant. I need assistance. With a case. You know those things we take on to make money?"

"Prison. Break. It's about these brothers who—"

"I know what Prison Break is."

"Then have you ever actually seen these boys? If you had, you would not expect me to abandon them in their time of need. I think there's a shower scene coming up."

"Do these brothers sign your paycheck?"

"No, but technically neither do you."

Damn. She was right. It was much easier to just have her forge my name.

"I need you to come flirt with my mark."

"Oh, okay. I can do that."

Nice. The F-word always worked with her. I filled her in and told her the deal with Tidwell, then ordered her to hurry over.

"And dress sexy," I said right before hanging up. But I regretted the sexy part instantly. The last time I told Cookie to dress sexy for a much-needed girls' night out on the town, she wore a lace-up corset, fishnet stockings, and a feather boa. She looked like a dominatrix. I'd never been the same.

Thank you!

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