



## Keeper of the Flame

*Bianca D'Arc*

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## **Keeper of the Flame** Bianca D'Arc

A warrior, a maiden...and a passion that could set the whole world aflame.

Dragon Knights, Book 7

Despite the fact he is the largest of his half-dragon brothers and better suited to fighting, Hugh has been sent on an undercover mission. Forced to stay in human form, he must discover if the land of Helios is truly the Draconian ally it pretends, or something more sinister.

When he witnesses injustice in the form of a misshapen baby gryphon kicked out into the cold, he cannot remain in the shadows and watch the child suffer. All he can hope for is that his act of kindness will go unnoticed so his mission can continue.

But someone does notice. When Lera cautiously approaches Hugh, she is drawn to his strange, foreign magic. She is entranced by its irresistible allure—until assassins come calling and reveal her true identity.

She is Valeria, queen of Helios, Keeper of the Flame. And she has been betrayed. Together they must risk everything to uncover the traitors and reforge the alliance between their lands. Yet beneath their blazing passion, both are still keeping secrets. Secrets that the Sacred Flame will reveal—if their love survives its cleansing fire.

### Product Warnings

When a dragon prince and a Flame Keeper come together, the conflagration is definitely too hot to handle!

## **Keeper of the Flame Details**

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Author : Bianca D'Arc

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## From Reader Review Keeper of the Flame for online ebook

### Beth says

Loved this! The Dragon Knights series just keeps getting better and Tor finally has a rival for my affections in Miss.

This series features great fantasy adventures with intricate plots, magic, shape shifting dragons and erotic romance. Keeper of the Flame continues the adventures of the royal family of Draconia and Black Dragon Prince Hugh as he goes undercover in the neighboring land of Helios.

Warning: this story contains sexy dragon princes, adorable baby gryphons and hot sex. I can't wait to read the next book so I hope Bianca writes fast.

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### Debrac2014 says

I love little Miss! Good story! All the different characters are meshing together well!

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### Ana says

I took an abnormally long time to read this book. Not a good thing even if it's 300 pages. I mean, it's a PNR with lots of sex. Not exactly rocket science so I shouldn't have taken so bloody long for sure? The story isn't terribly boring but isn't all that good either. I must say I was never particularly anxious to end my reading breaks. I finished it though. I really did. Not that it made much of difference in my enjoyment levels. They stayed pretty low throughout the whole book so...points for consistency? Also: *"She'd never seen better. She'd never dreamed she'd have such a man as her lover. Her life partner. Her husband."* Okay...The first 4/5 times I can understand but every other paragraph?? Yeah. Have I mentioned I got bored? I actually skipped a few most of their sex scenes. Here's a gem in the middle of a sex scene: *"He made rainbows appear on a cloudy day."* Sweetheart...if you can be that eloquent while he's inside you, he's not *THAT* good. Anyway...the rest of it was pretty predictable. The bad guys get caught and the good guys prevail. Hugh and Lera get hitched and live happily ever after. The End. Thankfully.

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### Clare O'Beara says

Latest in the 'Dragon Knights' series, this tale introduces gryphons... these winged big cats live in cliffside caves. But one abandoned youngling is following agent Hugh around town in the sleet. Attracted by his magical heat, little Miss is pitiful but Hugh, masquerading as an ordinary trader in this foreign land, gets her warm and fed. She's barely able to talk yet but she needs a friend. The endearing kitten is soon the source of tavern rumour and a lady who is KEEPER OF THE FLAME arrives to inspect the situation.

Assassins stalk the night and fleeing, the Keeper and Hugh run into further danger, when the dragon

shapeshifter needs help from his little gryphon friend. Lera the Keeper has her own innate magic and her relief at being safe, plus finding a like talent, draws her to Hugh in a tender, very passionate romance. But the hired Eyes may still be out to get her, and she doesn't know who in palace circles she can trust.

Halfway the story becomes more tightly linked in to the earlier books so a knowledge of the affairs of various countries and magicians would be a help. Once we get into the political discussions and suddenly endless cast list from earlier books, the standalone element is lost and someone new to the series would be swamped, which is why I didn't give this more stars. Bianca D'Arc has been creating a complex world filled with magical beings and ordinary folks; palaces, temples and inns. While dragonish folk like flames, gryphons are afraid of fire, with their fur and oiled wing feathers. The disparity makes for some distrust and compromises among the characters.

I really enjoyed the descriptions of the winged cat-girl and her behaviour. Many earlier Dragon Knight characters return in this book which takes off in a different direction but retains the action, romance and intrigue we have come to expect.

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### **Jill says**

Okay, so I'm having to admit I read some romance. \*Shrugs\* It has dragons and the most adorable baby griffen ever!

So, I've enjoyed this series, but this book was not one that really stood out to me in said series. While I understand that the Goddess plays a role in helping true love mates find each other and realize they're a love match right away, in this book the two main characters just... Well, they didn't have the same spark as a couple that several of the couples in other books have had. I really can't put my finger on what felt like it was missing. Despite this I still really enjoyed the book and thought it worthy of the series over all. I loved the developments to the larger series that happened within the pages.

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### **Shauni says**

YAY! Bianca D'Arc has come back to the Dragons!! In a sensual game of espionage, passion, a political coup and shapeshifting characters Ms D'Arc delights once again. Keeper of the Flame is the seventh book in her Dragon Knights Series, each more wonderful than the last!!

Draconia is fighting for the world's survival. Slowly they have been gathering allies, determined to keep those that want to control the world (or their small part in it) for their own purposes, usually evil ones.. To gather information it was decided that Prince Hugh be sent to gather information on the land of Helios. Hugh is so not the likely choice being that he is the largest of the royal brothers. Makes it rather hard to be inconspicuous but the Seers claim he would be the best choice.

Hugh, Prince of Draconia is third in line for the throne and has absolutely no desire to rule. He is a warrior through and through.. More than a bit confused as to why he has been chosen to gather information, he still willingly goes to Helios. The needs of his family and country always come first. No sooner had he set foot in the country when the storms hit, making the world a rather miserable place to be when not indoors. Yet, he must be out to gather the information he needs. Walking in the frigid downpour, he senses someone following him. Not too worried because he does not discern danger but still one can not be too careful. Finally catching up with the individual who is following him, he finds a baby gryphon, A Gryphlet. Cast out

of the nest because she was born different, the baby is cold, hungry and emotionally struggling and Hugh being the kind of man who understands that all creatures are equal, takes her in. Beginning the true love story in this book. Seriously, I completely and totally fell in love with young Miss (short for the slang misborn).

Hugh manages to get Miss back to the Inn where he is staying and finds allies who help him care for and hide the darling.. yet these are locals and they understand their responsibility to country and they send for a mysterious woman.

Valeria, Queen of Helios, Keeper of the Flame, comes to the small tavern to gather some information of her own. She needs to find out if this new gryphlet is safe and to offer her sanctuary in the palace. No sooner had she begin to settle into conversation with Hugh, when they were told that assassins were close and looking for her. With no other way to go, she is forced to put her life into the hands of this strange man.. Imagine her surprise when he shifts to a dragon and flies the three of them to safety.

As they search for a place to land, they discover that all is not as it seems at the palace so they go into hiding. Betrayed by family, they are not sure who they can trust and who they can't so they decide to trust only each other.. and slowly decide on who else they should trust with their very lives.

This book is a little bit different from the other Dragon Knights books. This is more a sensual delight than the erotic sexuality found in the other books in this series. These two do a dance of desire that slowly ignites.. A wonderful slip into sensuality. It also had a cast of characters that were more or less new to the story. We see a few of our favorites but Hugh has never been seen in the previous books and the twins that we get to chat with are not the twins from Dragon Storm. It is fun to see the rest of the family get some action..

I seriously enjoyed this book and am thrilled to see that Ms D'Arc had chosen to continue it. There is so much going on, so many exciting subplots and so many more stories to tell.. An excellent book and series that must be explored.. but I will warn you, this series in general is extremely erotic and has some very interesting scenes that steam up the pages.

Shauni

For more reviews by Shauni check out Tea and Book and Bodice Rippers, Femme Fatales and Fantasy

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### **Nicholette says**

I loved this story! It's a repeat read for me. I love everything that Bianca D'Arc has written and eagerly await each new book in all her series. The worlds she has created are completely absorbing and I love visiting them over and over. Must read for me!

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### **Hollie says**

I enjoyed this story, however....I felt the intimate scenes between Hugh and Lera seemed forced. Sorta like a commercial break. All these things are going on but Lera gets tired and we break for a go to bed/sex moment. Not all of them were like this. I thought the first one was well placed and the bathtub one wasn't bad...but the other two - not necessary.

### **rm2h says**

I enjoyed this story. Hugh of Draconia was not really present in the other books so it was great to see a character barely mentioned in previous books to be fleshed out. I was wondering when we would find out about the Doge of Helios and it was great to learn more about Helios and the gryphon. The set up of the story was outstanding and this book does stand alone so reading the previous books are not necessary but it is somewhat helpful. I really recommend this book.

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### **Theresa Giometti says**

#### **This one is a real nail biter!**

The continuing saga of the Dragon Knights gets even better with a new location and yet more new characters. I loved the addition of Miss and Hugh's story. It is sweet and exciting. Lera is a wonderful queen and a perfect addition to the family. I can only hope the next book comes out soon!

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### **Annie (Under the Covers Book Blog) says**

KEEPER OF THE FLAME is book 7 in the Dragon Knights series. I have been enjoying this series quite a bit. There's a lot that D'Arc infuses into this series that takes dragons onto a whole other level. The worldbuilding is unique and executed well and the writing is always stellar. However, for this particular book, I find myself conflicted.

I'm torn on this book. The reasons why I loved the other books in the series are the same reasons why I didn't enjoy this book so much. I felt that the same equation was applied to this book as the author has done with all the others and the results are the same. This book felt too similar in style to the others in the series that nothing felt new to me as a loyal reader. That being said, I found that I got tired of this one easily.

That is not to say that the author tried to bring something different to the series. For example, the heroine is a Flame Keeper, the first we've seen in the series. The gryphon is introduced and while I was initially intrigued by this concept, I found that the integration of this species seemed translucent and not fully formed. The author wanted or perhaps needed something unique to the story, so she added gryphons but it didn't resonate with me because it's become such a trend in the series. Whenever there is a rare species or a rare ability, either the hero or heroine has the ability or stems from that unknown species. As a result, it has become predictable and no longer new and entertaining after seven books.

The same goes for the romance. It's a textbook romance and while I was very pleased with the way the author was able to integrate threesomes in the series, the romances have been merely mediocre as of late.

So you can see why I'm a little conflicted. Much of what I enjoyed about this series is still very much present in this book. But after seven books, I'm looking for something different and new. The predictable plot lines

and textbook romances aren't doing it for me anymore and I need something new and fresh to take away from it all.

\*ARC provided by publisher

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## **Judy & Marianne from Long and Short Reviews says**

Originally posted at: <http://www.longandshortreviews.com/bo...>

Keeper of the Flame is the seventh book in Bianca D'Arc's Dragon Knights series, and the first new book in a few years.

Prince Hugh of Draconia is a long way from home because a seer convinces his brother, the king, that Hugh should journey to Helios posing as a simple traveler, to see if he can discover whether Helios is still an ally to Draconia, and do so without exposing his inner dragon. The seer has said he needs to meet with the Doge of Helios, the ruler of that distant land, to see whether there may be cause for alarm. As third in line to the throne, Hugh is more warrior than spy, so he tries to keep his cover as honest as possible.

When he suddenly finds a young, abandoned gryphon, Hugh is determined to protect her from harm, because he believes she has seen too much hurt already. As he cares for her, he finds allies in the innkeeper where he has lodgings, and the innkeeper's young son. When a mysterious highborn lady comes to the inn, Hugh believes she is there to take Miss, and he is determined to keep her safe. But things aren't as they appear, and soon Hugh, the Lady and Miss are forced to go on the run, avoiding assassins and intrigue, and a plot to kill the Lady, Valeria. What Hugh doesn't know, is Lera is the Doge, and also his mate. As the danger continues to build, Lera realizes there are traitors wishing her harm, including a member of her own family. In the middle of the drama, Hugh realizes that he is destined to stay with Lera in Helios, and they continue to grow closer to each other and to Miss, the little gryphlet Hugh rescued. As the extent of the treachery continues to grow, Hugh is relieved when his twin brothers and a pair of dragon knights, along with an emissary from Gryffid, the wizard, arrive to help with the defense of Lera and Miss, and the throne of Helios. Can Hugh, Lera and Miss survive the many attempts by the evil Eyes (master assassins), all the while forging bonds that will stand the test of time and more? Will the fire Lera wields strengthen Hugh's hold on her heart? Can these three survive to form the family they so desperately want?

The characters in this are as well crafted and intriguing as those that came before, and I enjoyed meeting some new members of the royal family, and catching up on news from familiar old friends too. I love that Ms. D'Arc is beginning to expand the world of the Dragon Knights, taking us to the lands where gryphons rule the skies, and dragons are not seen, at least not until Hugh shows up.

Valeria is the Doge, or queen, of Helios, and also the Keeper of the Flame, the most sacred position in the land. I love her strength, her determination and her fairness. In spite of the danger, and the hurt that the traitor who hired the assassins is family, she fights alongside Hugh to defend the throne, because she knows that to fail is to doom herself, and her people. And in spite of her fear, she has courage and yet there is a vulnerability that seeps through, keeping her from being too hard. I liked that she trusted Hugh, believing him to be just a man, and I was delighted when she took his dragon side totally in stride.

Prince Hugh of Draconia is strong, handsome and protective of those who trust in him. When Miss, the abandoned gryphlet, and then Lera are in danger, Hugh steps up and keeps them all safe. I enjoyed watching as Hugh and Lera gave in to the attraction building between them, and Hugh's decision that he would not be returning to his brother's court. Hugh begins to believe that his meeting Valeria, and finding she is his mate,

is part of what the seer predicted to his brother. I loved that Hugh was able to let Lera be strong, and not try to keep her from what she needed to do.

There are many converging threads in this story of treachery, betrayal and danger. There is also love, passion and laughter, and the joy of watching as a youngster learns she has worth, in spite of her hard beginnings. I love the baby gryphlet, Miss, and her growing attachment to 'Hoo'. She is a strong character as well, learning that she has worth to those who truly care for her, and I was absolutely delighted when Hugh and Lera formally adopt her. As with all of Ms. D'Arc's Dragon Knights books, there is lots of steamy hot sex in some unusual places. I loved seeing Hugh and Lera try to find ways to be together, while still trying to keep their actions from little Miss. There is a large cast of characters here, and although not all have major roles, everyone contributes to this in some way. I have missed this world, filled with fantasy and passion, and I welcome Ms. D'Arc's Dragon Knights back for more adventures. I look forward to more stories in this world, but be warned; this one is as hot as a dragon's flaming breath at times.

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### **TinaMarie says**

E-version has several typos. Loved the little gryphlet and how they treated her and handled her situation.

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### **Carmen says**

Love Love this book. love Hugh who took in Miss without a thought and was protecting her with his life. Love Lera who was tough while still be sweet and she loved Miss with all her heart.

I love the Hugh and Lera made a great couple. the compliment each other in that he was a warrior and she was a queen.

if life didn't keep interfering I would have not put the book down.

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### **Cindy says**

This book can be read separately from the series, however it is more enjoyable if you read these books in order. Bianca D'Arc does a wonderful job in her world building and this book features one of the ruling family of Draconia visiting, some would say spying, a neighboring kingdom to see if they are still allies or tending toward enemies. Prince Hugh is one of the least likely of the brothers to be inconspicuous, but those efforts are dropped as he rescues a "deformed" gryphon. This little child, who has only been called Misborn by her parents, steals the story. She and her "Hoo" work together to not only find her a place to fit in and be loved, but their story leads to a greater mission for both. I highly recommend this book. Although the intensity of the sex in her books takes it out of the young adult range, this book really hits the target of those struggling to fit into their family and their place in the world. I've read it many times, and it's still one of my favorites.

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