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James Scott Bell

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Ty Buchanan is living on the peaceful grounds of St. Monica's, far away from the glamorous life he led as a rising trial lawyer for a big L.A. firm. Recovering from the death of his fiancée and a false accusation of murder, Buchanan has found his previous ambitions unrewarding. Now he prefers offering legal services to the poor and the under-represented, from his "office" at local coffee bar The Freudian Sip. A mysterious woman with a six year old daughter comes to him for help. She's being illegally evicted from a downtown transient hotel, an interest represented by his old law firm and former best friend, Al Bradshaw. Buchanan won't back down. He's going to fight for the woman's rights.

But then she ends up dead, and the case moves from the courtroom to the streets. Determined to find the killer and protect the little girl, who has no last name and no other family, Buchanan finds he must depend on skills he never needed in the employ of a civil law firm.

Try Darkness Details

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From Reader Review Try Darkness for online ebook

Lisa Johnson says

Title: Try Darkness

Author: James Scott Bell

Pages: 292

Year: 2008

Publisher: Center Street

My rating is 5 stars out of 5.

Ty Buchanan is back in another legal thriller. This time he represents a poor, single, woman with a young daughter who is facing eviction from a hotel that rents rooms weekly. She has the money, but the hotel won't take it because if she lives at the hotel for more than 30 days, it changes the legal status of the hotel. So, the hotel only accepts money for three weeks, then evicts tenants, putting them out on the street usually. Ty's client refuses to be cowed and wants to fight against the hotel in court. Ty quickly discovers that the firm representing the hotel is one he is very familiar with, his former employer. The lead attorney for the firm is his former best friend. Ty wastes no time in playing hardball against the big firm, telling them his client wants to remain in the hotel and if they don't accept her money, they will be taken to court. Ty is warned to let the matter drop, but his client remains firm in her stance. That is until she is found dead.

Ty is still living at the St. Benedictine Monastery with Father Bob and Sister Mary Veritas. They help him in his quest to find his client's killer as well as take care of her young daughter. Father Bob also likes to discuss theological matters with Ty, trying to get Ty to open his mind to God. Kylie, his client's daughter, develops an attachment to Ty and Sister Mary as she tries to remember some things about her mother that might help Ty's investigation. Ty isn't afraid of the big-time law firm or their wealthy and powerful client. He loves to poke the bear. He seeks justice for his client as well as her daughter.

Again, Ty's wit and sense of humor are quickly evident, which I found refreshing. His developing relationship with Sister Mary and Father Bob was also interesting. His basketball skills are sure put to the test by Sister Mary as she schools him in the art of b-ball. I also loved his interactions with Sister Hildegarde. Boy, did he love to push her buttons! He is a protector of those who can't protect themselves. When the pressure is on, he acts with courage and grit and stubborn refusal to give in or give up. For those who like suspenseful legal thrillers, this book is sure to please!

Shelly says

Great read

Really enjoy this author, good suspense but no filth. The characters are likeable and i look forward to next one in series.

Ellen Christian says

All said and done, this is the story of good and evil. It's the story of the rich and powerful against the poor and powerless. Ty Buchanan champions the poor like Robin Hood and locks horns with the rich in order to

do that. Try Darkness is a fast paced suspense/mystery novel. James Scott Bell's writing style is witty and fun to read and keeps you engaged until the story ends.

I really enjoyed that his character wasn't foul mouthed and that the book wasn't loaded with gratuitous violence. Sometimes authors think that in order to create a gritty character, the story has to be loaded with a lot of swearing and blood and guns. That isn't the case at all with James Scott Bell and I enjoyed the story all the much more for that fact.

Ty is a lawer who used to work for a big, powerful law firm. He was accused of a crime he didn't commit and the firm kicked him out. After proving his innocence, the firm asked him to return but he chose instead to take on the cases of the poor and disadvantaged. He used to have a big fancy home but now he lives in a trailer on the outskirts of a monestary. The residents of the monestary figure into his story as well. Now he's finding himself up against the very people he used to work with and he's learning more about himself and his abilities than he ever knew before.

This book is really hard to put down & I devoured it in a couple of hours. I'd never read a book by James Scott Bell but I can tell you that I'll be looking for more!

Cheryl says

Trial lawyer, Ty Buchanan is back again in James Scott Bell's second novel Try Darkness. He left the glamorous life in LA and can now be found living with Father Bob, Sister Mary Veritas, a nun who can run laps around you on the basketball court, as well as the rest of the nuns at St. Monica's.

Ty may have taken on more then he can chew with his new client. Reatta and her six-year old daughter, Kylie are living in a hotel. They are about to be evicted. Ty instantly takes a liking to Kylie. What Ty learns is that the people in charge of the goings on with the hotel are Ty's old law firm agency and former best friend, Al Bradshaw. When Reatta is found murdered, Ty finds himself the sole custodian of Kylie. Join Ty as he takes the reader from the courtroom to the streets.

As far as lawyers go, Ty Buchanan is one of the good guys but don't let him know that. Ty thinks of himself as kind of a bad ass. Being the mean guy isn't always a bad thing as sometimes you need to be tough in order to get the job done. I have to say though that my favorite person in this whole book was Sister Mary Veritas. If it wasn't for the fact that she dressed like a nun, who would never be able to tell she is a full-fledged nun. From her sharp-witted tongue to her smooth moves. I thought Try Darkness was a good book and I know want to pick up a copy of Try Dying. James Scott Bell has a great talent as an book author.

C.J. Darlington says

Ever since his first novel came out in 1995, James Scott Bell's been an author to watch. "The Darwin Conspiracy", a sometimes tongue-in-cheek look at the evolution debate, put him on our radar. Two years later his legal thriller "Circumstantial Evidence" debuted, and since then Jim hasn't strayed too far from his suspense groove. In fact, when you pick up a Bell novel you can count on his trademark tag-line "The

"Suspense Never Rests" to be true.

That's certainly the case for his new Ty Buchanan crime/mystery series. In "Try Dying" (Book 1), Ty's character was established. He's a fighter, an attorney you don't want to push too hard. Yet we always suspected he had a softer side. Now in "Try Darkness" (Book 2), a little girl's mother is murdered and Ty becomes her impromptu guardian. Fatherly instincts Ty didn't even know he had bubble to the surface. He'll do anything to defend the young life under his care. Why was her mother murdered? What connection does the crime have with charges the mother was about to bring to the motel ready to evict them? As usual, there's much more going on than first meets the eye, and it's up to Ty to unravel the mystery and keep himself and his friends alive in the process.

Ty's character has developed, and he now gives legal advice to the poor and downtrodden. The pursuit of justice for his clients keeps him going and awake at night. He already lost everything in Try Dying, and he's still living at the St. Monica's community. So he has nothing to lose and little fear, a dangerous combination for his opponents. Not that he doesn't have his vulnerabilities--the wind's knocked out of him more than once. But like the crime fiction heroes of yesteryear, Ty Buchanan always clammers back on his feet. Even in the bleakest moments he'll press on--sometimes bleeding, sometimes barely able to see straight.

Every hero needs a confidant, and Ty's basketball wielding friend Sister Mary fills more pages here than in the first book. We're delving deeper into her character as she grapples with the struggle between her faith as a nun and the rules and regulations of the Benedictine community. Father Bob makes appearances as well, always available to offer wisdom and a caring ear to Ty.

Fans of Bell's previous inspirational novels won't be disappointed. In some ways the faith elements are even more prominent in this series, since the St. Monica's setting naturally sparks some spiritual conversations. But hard-boiled crime fiction lovers need not fear being preached at or hammered over the head with a "message". The story always takes center stage.

James Scott Bell's goal for this series was to write books in the vein of the great crime fiction stories of the 40's and 50's like "The Big Sleep" & "The Maltese Falcon". And for those weary of the gratuitous violence, sex, and language found in much of today's crime novels the Ty Buchanan series will be a breath of fresh air. Yes, bad stuff happens, but we aren't forced to watch it unfold in technicolor.

The scenes zoom. The plot zips. The dialogue zings. And the spiritual thread challenges us to re-think our worldview. It's almost like watching a movie unfold across the pages. As always, Jim is a wizard of surprises. Just when we think we might have things figured out he throws in a spiral we never saw coming. Nary a wasted word and packed with action, "Try Darkness" is even better than "Try Dying".

Michael Sova says

I read, on average, somewhere in the neighborhood of fifty to sixty books per year. They're mostly fiction, and primarily in the genres of mystery, thriller and suspense. I keep a list of everything I've read. I record the author, the title, and a few words that capture my overall impressions. I may say something like good story with some areas of weak dialogue, or fantastic character development, or, strong plot but weak ending. And for a lot of books, I just give my own rating. Most books fit into one of four categories--disappointing, good, very good, and excellent. The one word I used to describe Try Darkness by James Scott Bell was OUTSTANDING..

I first heard of Bell on an episode of the The Creative Penn podcast. It was a while ago and I'm sorry to say that I don't remember the context. I do remember being impressed enough that I immediately downloaded one of Bells books. I'm not sure why I chose Try Darkness. It is, I later realized, the second book in a series. I actually considered stopping so I could start the series from the beginning. That would have been a great idea had Try Darkness not been so incredibly compelling that I was unable to put it down. And now I have a problem. I really, really want to know what happens next. Does he end up getting the girl, who in this case is a nun? I can find out easily enough. Try Fear is ready and waiting for me. But what happened to the last girl? I know she's dead. I know Ty Buchanan, the hero of the stories, was accused of her murder. How can I move forward without having the rest of that story filled in first. To bad he doesn't have a book called Try Quandary. I'd go for that one in a heartbeat.

In Try Darkness, Buchanan is struggling to move beyond the pain of a lost love and a lifestyle he no longer desires. He's left the big L.A. law firm. His new office is a coffee shop. His home is a small trailer on the grounds of St. Monica's Monastery where he's not exactly welcomed by all. Buchanan tries to defend the rights of a mysterious woman who's being illegally evicted from her residence at a local hotel. When she is murdered, he finds himself in the role of lawyer and protector of her six-year-old daughter. Buchanan isn't sure who or what he's up against, but knows he's battling wealth and power far beyond his means, especially considering his biggest asset is a scrappy, basketball-playing nun with whom he's developing a more than spiritual interest.

Without exception, Try Darkness is the best book I've read in quite some time. The plot is perfectly crafted. The story is perfectly written. Bell has a true gift for storytelling and for language that comes shining through on every page. I cannot recommend the other books in the series because I've not yet read them. However, working on the assumption that they're at least half as good as Try Darkness, you may as well buy all of them now because you'll end up doing so anyway. I said it and I'll say it again. Outstanding!

Zak says

"The nun hit me in the mouth and said, "Get out of my house."

Ty Buchanan is living on the peaceful grounds of St. Monica's, far away from the glamorous life he led as a rising trial lawyer for a big L.A. firm. Recovering from the death of his fiancee and a false accusation of murder, Buchanan has found his previous ambitions unrewarding. Now he prefers offering legal services to the poor and the under-represented, from his "office" at local coffee bar The Ultimate Sip. A mysterious woman with a six year old daughter comes to him for help. She's being illegally evicted from a downtown transient hotel, an interest represented by his old law firm and former best friend, Al Bradshaw. Buchanan won't back down. He's going to fight for the woman's rights.

But then she ends up dead, and the case moves from the courtroom to the streets. Determined to find the killer and protect the little girl, who has no last name and no other family, Buchanan finds he must depend on skills he never needed in the employ of a civil law firm.

Bridget says

Losing his fiance isn't the only thing that has Ty down in the dumps. On top of his grief, he's also been

accused of her murder. The one time big shot trial lawyer is forced to hide out in St. Monica's.

His loss was horrible but now Ty wants to give something back. He is offering his expertise to those less fortunate. A woman and her child come to him for help. They are being evicted and Ty's old law firm is the one who initiated this eviction. Ty decides to work for her and do all that he can to stop his one-time co-worker and best friend, Al.

When the woman Ty is trying to help turns up dead, he decides it's time for drastic measures. He takes it upon himself to find the creep who murdered this woman and he won't rest until the case is closed.

Wow. I don't even think there are words to describe this book. I really enjoyed it. Now there's another author to add to my favorites list. If you like whodunnit's and court room books, you should read this.

Virginia says

Formerly a high-powered attorney, Ty now lives in a convent. Actually, he lives in a trailer on the grounds, where he spends his time playing basketball with a pretty young nun, Sister Mary, who has a competitive streak that surfaces whenever she steps onto the court. Ty is recovering from the loss of the woman he loved. Though he no longer works for a prestigious law firm, he does the occasional bit of pro bono work for the people he meets through Sister Mary and the convent's priest. When he's introduced to a young woman named Reatta and her six-year-old daughter, Kylie, he's touched by their plight: they're being thrown out of the only home they can afford so a mega-rich conglomerate can turn the building into a moneymaking venture. Ty goes to bat for them, but things turn ugly. Reatta is murdered while Kylie cowers in the closet. The helpless girl worms her way into Ty's heart, and he determines to take care of her – and to find out who killed her mother.

Few writers can craft a story like James Scott Bell, and this is one of his best. Legal details compliment the plot without making it too complicated for non-lawyer-types (like me) to enjoy. The characters are likable and multi-dimensional, and I cared about them. This was one of those books that I didn't want to put down, and Bell's witty writing made me laugh out loud several times – sometimes at his wit, and sometimes in sheer delight at the action. The clues unfold at a satisfying pace, and the tension is tight enough to keep the pages turning. Recommended for anyone who likes well-plotted legal dramas, or gumshoe heroes. I hope there are more Ty Buchanan stories in the making.

Stevie says

This is the first novel of James Scott Bell's that I've ever read. Before Try Darkness, the books of Bell's that I've read before have been part of the Write Great Fiction series (which he gives the most useful and sound advice).

AS far as this book is concerned, it is a different kind of pacing from what I'm used to, but in no way negative. His characters are rich and multi-layered. There were so many jaw dropping moments where I was screaming at the pages cheering on Ty Buchanan and Sister Mary as they upper cut various jerks in the nose. ;)

Lucky for my I have the next book in the series, Try Fear, which I intend to start reading right now even though it's 2:48am.

Bell is great about stretching out the facts in his legal thrillers but once he finally gives them to you, you're pissed you didn't get them sooner and wanting MORE. The last line in Try Darkness is the biggest teaser, and like I said, I'm just glad I had the next story nearby.

Laura says

Ty Buchanan used to be a top-notch lawyer in a fast-paced L.A. law firm. The death of his fiance' and a false accusation of murder sent that career spiraling downward. He now defends the poor out of his Ultimate Sip's coffee bar 'office' owned by Barton C. McNitt, and lives in a trailer on the campus of a Benedictine convent. A Father Bob occupied one trailer on the land, Ty the other.

One day Reatta came in with six-year-old Kylie to Ty's 'office.' She was poor and living at the Lindbrook Hotel, but the owner's, wouldn't take her money for the next month based on a 28-day-shuffle 'program' where they owners would shuffle their people in and out so they looked like a commercial tourist hotel versus a residential hotel so that tenants had no protection laws and the hotel could be sold with less red tape. This particular hotel is represented by Ty's old law firm and former best friend, Al Bradshaw.

Ty agrees to represent Reatta so she could stay living there, and went to the top of who was in charge, Sam DeCosse, who offers a settlement to make the trouble go away so he could acquire the building and make it into lofts, which Ty rejects upfront. After that meeting, Reatta is found dead and Kylie missing. Ty found her in the 'candyland' area of the hotel. He took her to live under his protection at the convent. Ty figured the Decrosse's were responsible for Reatta's death, possibly Sam Junior.

Ty wanted to tail Sam Junior, so he met a former client, Jonathan Blake Blumberg, aka B-2, who in an electronic devices entrepreneur, and he gave Ty a GPS to put on Sam Jr.'s car. B-2 also introduced Ty to EWT, electroshock weapon technology, a mini stun gun, called the iProd. He gave it to Ty, who slipped it into his shirt pocket.

Between the time of contacting the Decrosse family: Sam, his security bouncers, his stunning wife, Junior's activities, his former friend Al, and other unsavory characters, Ty is finding himself getting deeper and deeper in trouble, but has some idea of who is actually behind the murder. Throw in a kidnapping of Kylie by gunpoint, and things really get deep, which also involves the Sisters.

As tight as the DeCrosse family and cohorts are, is Ty able to dig through and figure out the real killer? Is it Sam, his son, Ty's former partner, or someone unknown what has done the murder and kidnapped Kylie? Is Ty still in danger?

James Scott Bell, pulls you into the book as he spins the plots. Is Kylie found again? Is the real killer finally flushed out? The suspense holds up to the end, with a surprise ending.

Stacy says

I'd say 3 1/2 stars. I enjoyed the main character: Ty. He had a good sense of humor. I somehow heard about this book (can't remember where) so I requested that the library purchase this book, since it was nowhere to be found. Strangely enough, our library borrowed a copy from Salt Lake County library so that I could read it! I enjoyed it. It was easy to get through. It wasn't a literary masterpiece, but it was a good, clean suspenseful story. I hadn't realized it was part of a 3 part series, tho when I requested it and I take it this was the 3rd. Didn't hinder me, tho (not having read 1 or 2). I think I would try and read the two others. I liked the short chapters! And enjoyed the writer's style. I always get mad during movies or books when stuff happens that I think would never happen. And that happened several times in this book! But it didn't make me mad. I don't really get why it's called Try Darkness tho. Maybe I'm missing something.

Jill Williamson says

Review by Jill Williamson

Ty Buchanan is recovering from his fiancé's death by living at St. Monica's parish in the hills of Southern California. Since he no longer works for the big law firm—and to help earn his keep—he offers legal aid to parishioners and the underprivileged. When one of his new clients is murdered, he finds himself in charge of the dead woman's six-year-old daughter. Buchanan is determined to find the killer and protect the little girl. He partners up with a basketball-playing nun and follows the trail all over Los Angeles. But the truth just might cost him his life.

Ack! I loved this one too. Not only that, but when I finished it (at two in the morning), I had to log on to Amazon.com and download the free sample to book three so I could keep reading. Great mystery, action, red herrings! I couldn't put it down. I love how Buchanan keeps making friends who help him out later. Great characters in this series. I highly recommend these books for readers who love suspense, action, mystery, and adventure. And if you haven't read Try Dying (the first book) start there.

Tory Wagner says

Try Darkness by James Scott Bell is a mystery featuring private detective/attorney Ty Buchanan. Having recently left a prestigious law firm to go out on his own, Ty focuses on representing the poor and other underrepresented clients. One of his first cases involves a woman who is being evicted from her apartment. She is subsequently murdered and Ty finds himself representing her six year old daughter. His old law firm is representing the opposition and Buchanan must use all his expertise and street smarts to protect her interests.

Larry Wegman says

Sequel to Try Dying. Also kept me reading.

