



Fated

Benedict Jacka

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Alex Verus is part of a world hidden in plain sight, running a magic shop in London. And while Alex's own powers aren't as showy as some mages, he does have the advantage of foreseeing the possible future--allowing him to pull off operations that have a million-to-one-chance of success.

But when Alex is approached by multiple factions to crack open a relic from a long-ago mage war, he knows that whatever's inside must be beyond powerful. And thanks to his abilities, Alex can predict that by taking the job, his odds of survival are about to go from slim to none...

Fated Details

Date : Published February 28th 2012 by Ace (first published February 1st 2012)

ISBN :

Author : Benedict Jacka

Format : Kindle Edition 304 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Magic, Fiction, Paranormal, Mystery

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From Reader Review Fated for online ebook

Mimi says

2.5 stars

Not bad, but too much like the Dresden Files. I couldn't shake the feeling that this book is basically Harry Dresden in London. But in many ways, it's what I wanted from Storm Front: Dresden's world and magic minus Dresden himself.

Review moved to <https://covers2covers.wordpress.com/2...>

Michael Britt says

Actual rating: 1.5 stars

This has a decent magic system and meh characters and an even more mega-meh plot (not sure if that's a real phrase, but I'm using it).

Due to Verus being able to see into almost every possible outcome to almost every possible future, to an extent, there just wasn't any tension to be given to the plot. I actually gained some of Verus' powers and was able to divine the future. I saw that no matter the outcome, I was just going to not care. Sadly, I couldn't connect with the characters and that was probably the thing that ruined my enjoyment most of all. I did give it an extra .5 stars because I really liked the villains, especially Cinder. I might give book 2 a shot but it's highly unlikely at this time.

Lois Bujold says

I picked this up because it kept getting cross-recommendations with Ben Aaronovitch's *Rivers of London* series. It has some tropes in common: contemporary London with secret magic, first person narrator. I think it could have something of the same relationship for me as Krentz's books do for Crusie's, methadone while waiting for a slower and more sophisticated writer. (I suspect Jacka is somewhat younger than Aaronovitch.) I'd probably have given this 3 stars, except a minor spear-carrier named "Bararrayar" flitted across the page at one point, which amused me.

Jacka also starts with his narrator/protagonist already fairly high-powered and knowledgeable, which means he has to catch the reader up on much more backfill than Aaronovitch's Peter Grant, who, along with the reader, begins at the beginning and learns going forward. The naive character, whether main or not, who needs everything explained is an *invaluable* addition to many kinds of narratives, I must say. Jacka has a rather charming secondary character, Luna, who serves some of this function.

Alex Verus runs a magic shop (another excellent old trope that gives excuse for several kinds of fun) in London, partly as cover for his other activities. Alex's particular talent is as a seer, with an interestingly limited ability to see into the future. This is not always as much help as could be hoped, and so thereby hangs

the tale. Since a lot of *other* powerful and not necessarily nice magical people would like to make use of this talent on behalf of their own agendas, bringing the plot to him, Alex frequently gets to be hero and maguffin in one. Luna, too, has unusual powers with decided downsides requiring clever work-arounds.

The magical (and other) world-building feels a trifle generic in this first novel of the series, and I'm not entirely sure why, since there are plenty of inventive details. I rather liked the concept of the sociopathic mages. It may all grow more complex as the series wends on, which I am inclined to give it a chance to do.

Kelly H. (Maybedog) says

The quote on the cover is by none other than Jim Butcher himself claiming that Harry Dresden would like the main character Alex Verus and be a little nervous around him. I'm not surprised that Butcher likes the book. It's got a very similar feel, almost too much so. The council is pathetic and he's on the outs with them anyway, dark mages are the evil force, there are young women to protect, etc. So it was enjoyable from the beginning.

Verus is mildly amusing, though nothing like Dresden. His magical gift is very well described and used and really works in an urban fantasy setting. The main character is very fleshed out and likeable, although his sense of morality is a little unclear through much of the book. But this is well done and Jacka shows a lot more than he tells.

The plot is interesting and moves quickly but for much of the book, Verus seems weak and powerless. He spends most of the time running and hiding during the first 2/3rds so during that time so there isn't enough intensity. There would be an action sequence that lasts a page or even a couple of paragraphs and then it would be over. However, the final battle is really good and well-played.

My one major problem with the book is that it is really quite sexist in a not-in-your-face way. (view spoiler) It fits with the story though so I see why it was written that way and the good woman, Luna, is brave but I wish he had made some of the many secondary characters into strong powerful women. What redeems him is that the author sets it up so that it looks like the central woman is probably going to grow strong and powerful throughout the next book.

All in all, a good first novel and I am eager to read the next one.

Carly says

****edit 11/26/13**

Fated has Jim Butcher's seal of approval. Need I say more? I can certainly see why it appeals to fans of *The Dresden Files*--there are quite a few similarities, especially to Harry's earlier adventures.

Due to my disapproval of GR's new and highly subjective review deletion policy, the rest (of my long, rather cranky review) is posted over here at Booklikes.

Felicia says

An excellent addition to the urban fantasy landscape. Alex, the main character, is a mage in London who rejects the magical establishment, and can see the future. Very well handled, his abilities, and super fun world building. Def if you like Butcher's books, pick this up!

Jilly says

Alex is a mage, a seer. He owns a shop in London and sells things like crystal balls and herbs. He tries to keep a low profile in a world with dark and light forces in the magical realm.

The majority (of mages) rely on word of mouth, though younger mages use the internet. I've even heard of one guy in Chicago who advertises in the phone book under "Wizard" though that's probably an urban legend."

A little nod to Harry Dresden. I'm thinking, coool, I like Harry. He's hilarious and sarcastic. I hope Alex is like him.

Well, he's not.

So, the majority of this book is info-dumping. Every little thing has to be explained like crazy, given a history on, and told about in detail. I don't mind that too much for a first book that is trying to set-up a world of magic. So, I could deal with that even though I was bored out of my mind several times.

The problem is that this book is like a kid coming to show and tell and not actually having anything to show. They just tell us about something they may or may not have at home. It's skipping the part that we want the most - showing. Nobody likes the "tell" part. Show us something good!

okay, here's an example of what I mean. An evil dude tortures a girl for disloyalty and Alex is forced to watch this happen in a torture chamber. He tells us the names of a few medieval torture devices that we have heard of (cringe), but then the girl is forced upon another device without a familiar name:

*I'm not going to describe what an agoniser does. You don't want to know.
After the first sixty seconds I couldn't watch anymore.*

This is it! Later the girl is a "weeping heap of bloody rags", but we have no idea what happened to her. He assures us that we don't want to know, but that is the surest way for me to want to know something. He doesn't know me! He doesn't know my life! How dare he tell me that he won't tell me what an agoniser is! So, of course I googled it. And, guess what? There is no such device as an agoniser. I found out that it is the name of a rock band. So, now, I am forever in suspended curiosity of what the hell happened to poor Lisa!

Later, a guy is killed and the remark is that he is just a pile of ash. How did he become a pile of ash? We don't know. This was a major evil villain in the book, but he was killed behind the scenes somewhere without us getting the satisfaction of being "shown" what happened.

All I'm saying is a little less history of every single person and magical object and a little more description of the action would be nice.

But, in spite of these things, I still liked the book enough to see if the second will get better now that we have a firm grasp of Alex's world.

If anyone knows what an agoniser is, please let me know asap. So far, I have come up with these ideas:

being forced to become a vegan

having a fruit cake thrown at your head

Lego fire walk

This:

Mike (the Paladin) says

YES it gets a "Big Ol' 5"...

I was intro'd to Urban Fantasy by the Harry Dresden books and (frankly) since I found them I've been trying to find other UF books I like as well. The Twenty Palaces series turned out to be pretty good...but their publisher dropped them. Rob Thurman's Leandros books are okay. I also kind of liked Aaronovitch's books. None were nearly up to (in my opinion of course) Mr. Butcher's Dresden books.

Now, while I can't say I like this book "as well as the Dresden books"...it is the closest I've found yet. I REALLY LIKE THIS BOOK. I have already ordered it (as the one I read came from the library) and the other two in the series that are in print.

Okay, that said what have we got here? Wwwwweeeeelllllll, this is the story of (and told by) Alex Verus a mage who runs a "magic shop". His "powers" aren't any great shakes when it comes to blowing things up, causing death or doing other "flashy" things. You see Alex is a diviner...he can look down the various paths that events "may take" based on decisions and actions taken by himself and those he interacts with.

He manages very well...and he tells a great story. I can recommend this book wholeheartedly. As I said, I've already ordered the rest of the series that's in print. I will quite likely move them to the front/top of my "to be read list", putting them right on the currently reading list when I receive them. Yes, a series of books I'm glad I was introduced to, I really hope this series holds up.

Yes, enthusiastically recommended.

Update note: I think it has held up. I've read all that are in print and look forward to the next which is due out soon. I can recommend these.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

Fated is a fantastic debut novel. This is what urban fantasy can accomplish, taking fantasy concepts and giving them a new spin in a modern setting. Jacka uses the concept of an age-old war between Dark and Light Mages and sets it in contemporary London. While many will think of Dresden and recommend this to fans of that great series, I don't even think it's fair to compare them outside of the fact that they are both male POV urban fantasy novels with magical protagonists. Jacka writes his own book here, and I loved him for it. Yes, it does have the somewhat smart-alecky, down on his luck magical protagonist, but actually Alex Verus and Harry Dresden couldn't be more different.

While I am not a big fan of witchcraft themes in urban fantasy, I love the idea of modern-day mages and magic-users. This book is for those who like to see the magical battles without all the spellwork and spellcasting along with it. And the one thing that felt so refreshing and delightfully distinct was the fact that Alex is a Diviner. His main ability is to see the future and shift through possible outcomes and choose the best one for his situation. This makes Alex more of a thinking man hero as opposed to a reactive/shoot first and ask questions last hero. His strength is his ability to assess the situation and choose wisely. He will be the first to admit that he's often out-numbered and out-powered by his adversaries, but that just makes me more loyal and root for him all the more. Because of the fact that he has been the punching bag, Alex has a lot of humility and grace for those who aren't strong. I respected his sense of right and wrong, even if he's not exactly what you'd call a Boy Scout.

Luna is an interesting secondary character. I felt for her situation, and I have a feeling that her relationship with Alex will continue to be pivotal in this series. In some ways, they aren't that different. Both isolated and ostracized for being different. They have a strong connection, even just on that level.

I found the storyline very interesting. Alex having to navigate through shark-infested waters of political and physically violent power struggles between Dark and Light Mages. Jacka endows his world with a lot of weight and texture. He takes the urban fantasy genre in a much needed different direction. Instead of treading on the overtrodden territory of vampires, werewolves and even faerie, he focuses on magic users and not the kind you usually see in urban fantasy novels. I found his insights into the social dynamics of Dark Mages quite enlightening and it felt very realistic. Although he doesn't dwell on it, there are some very disturbing and dark (no pun intended) aspects to their concept of power and how it's obtained and used.

This took a while to read because the print in my copy was tiny! But that doesn't mean I was bored. I was too sucked in to feel boredom. Urban fantasy is one of my favorite genres, so I do have high expectations, but this one exceeded those nicely. I was drawn into this world whenever I picked up the book to read, and I will definitely read more of this series.

I highly recommend this to fans of urban fantasy, especially those looking for something different!

Charlie says

5 stars!

I've had this book on my shelf for years and I wish I'd read it sooner, it was superb.

I used to read an absolute ton of urban fantasy but in the last few years I've read more epic and YA fantasy and I've only really got back into UF in the last year or so. This book has reminded me why I love urban fantasy, it's gritty yet magical and definitely a fun ride.

I adored Alex and co, he's bad ass without being ridiculously overpowered and his friendships felt honest. The supporting characters were fun too and I'm excited to read more of their adventures in future books.

Carol. says

One of these things is not like the other:

I'm just kidding. They're all totally alike.

It isn't long before you notice the first Dresden homage in Jacka's first adult UF book. Of course, my edition gives it away with the cover, where a quote from Jim Butcher plays a prominent role on the jacket. I can only assume this was so someone wouldn't sue Jacka for copyright violations on Butcher's behalf. Once you start reading, the parallels appear quickly, beginning with his protagonist, Alex Verus, noting there's a wizard in Chicago rumored to advertise in the phone book. I started to wonder, did this get its start as fan fiction? It clearly owes a great deal to Dresden, from the characters to the themes to various plot points. Don't believe me? You really need to read Carly's review which analyzes the similarities. Well, whatever--I can overlook it, right? I don't *hate* Harry Dresden. I like the modern UF detective noir, despite being somewhat formulaic in plot, because I enjoy discovering what the author does with a magic system, characters, setting, and tension. Unfortunately in this case, Jacka needs to do a lot more, both to individuate himself and to create a stellar series.

I enjoy a well-plotted book, however, I don't usually spend a great deal of time analyzing it, no matter what my review trolls say about 'nitpicking.' So believe me when I say that I noticed the prevalence of deus ex machina solutions, they're notable. Almost every scrape he got into was solved by the appearance of some untold facet of his skill (cheap, but acceptable (view spoiler)), a special magic device (view spoiler), or special magical friend (view spoiler).

The writing was in need of a beta-reader to smooth out the transition. World-building information tended given in info-dumps, which didn't particularly trouble me, but seems to be a hallmark of a craft-young fantasy/sci-fi writer. So we'd run into a situation, Jacka would tell the reader all about Harry's skill/history, and then Harry would use said skill to manipulate the situation. It was intrusive enough to be noticeable, but presumably will decrease in subsequent books as the investment in world-building pays off.

The underlying magical concept of a 'diviner' (not to be confused with that other awful book I just read) is an interesting one, and not one that I've yet encountered in UF. Harry is a type of mage who has the ability to read possible futures so I enjoyed learning how the author envisioned the skill working and its everyday implications. I do have the feeling that there is a fault line in the fundamentals of the magic system, but I'll have to check in after I take a statistics class. For instance, at one point, Harry talks about how he isn't able to predict the roll of a dice. Hm, okay, but he can predict whether or not someone arrives at his house on time?

Yes, I know, it's magic. But the rule of UF is that a magic system should have an underlying theory. So it seems a six-sided roll would have significantly less variables than someone arriving at a destination. I'm not entirely sure this one works, but I enjoyed trying to figure out the ramifications along with Jacka.

There is the requisite UF side-kick, a woman who would like to learn more about Harry's world and who struggles with a curse of her own. Because of her curse, she is placed in the "unobtainable love interest" position. Both Harry and Jacka are conflicted about her role; in one section, she's a depressed, nearly suicidal person; in another she's full of determination and in yet another, she is frightened and helpless. It was hard to get a sense of her or her history perhaps because, as Harry eventually realizes, he doesn't know that much about her. She plays useful plot functions of sidekick, potential love interest, and emotional cue for reader. As a female reader, I was hardly surprised, but it is disappointing that so few men write a woman I want to be. Readers will want to be Harry, not Luna. By the end, I did see some potential develop (view spoiler) so I'm hopeful Jacka can manage an empowerment plot for her in the next book. Sometimes it's that kind of lure that keeps me reading.

Ultimately, I think what kept me engaged was the magic system and the action. On the negative side, I was uncomfortable with the strong similarities with Butcher's work; it made me feel a little like I was watching a pirated copy of a movie or reading fan fiction, causing troubling feelings of participating in author disenfranchisement. On positive, I think I enjoyed it more than the first couple Dresden books where his chauvinism annoyed me right out of the story. It's likely I'll catch the next one or two and see if Jacka can take this someplace more interesting.

Two and three quarter stars.

Cross posted at <http://clsiewert.wordpress.com/2013/0...>

Bradley says

So I was just falling off the wagon and wetting my whistle with a bit of Urban Fantasy that was recommended to me recently, and I can honestly say that I got really drunk. (Not alcohol, alas, but on magic.)

I'd just been sifting through all the wonders of the Spacing Guild from Dune and the minor predictive powers of the Jedi recently, so imagine my surprise when I get to read about a Dresden-ish mage in London who can augur himself through all the twisty paths of time to answer important questions like, "Who's going to be killing me in the next fifteen seconds, and how can I get out of this damn mess?", or "This is a pretty nasty puzzle placed before me. If I can walk all the paths and figure out how to solve it without becoming a crispy critter, then go, me!"

I admit I laughed loud when Mr. Jacka gave an explicit literary nod to a certain mage in Chicago. It warmed my cockles. And it also set the tone for the mind-candy treat that I was about to gobble up.

The trick with these kinds of books is how to balance powerful magic against natural limitations and/or outside mitigations while keeping the reader enthralled with a good tale, and he did it. The plot put this poor neutral mage into the leading roll of a ping-pong ball between the white mages and the black mages of London, all of whom want him because of his powers of Divination and the fact that he was the only Diviner

stupid enough to have not headed for the hills when the storm began to rise.

Fun! Exciting! We've even got a bit of a love interest beginning to brew, and I think I like her problems a lot more than Alex's! Oh wait... this isn't her tale. But I'm guessing she's going to get a lot more screen time with a second book named Cursed. Goodie!

I have no complaints about this novel. It's light and fun and there's lots of action and even a bit of snark. Sound like UF? Wait! It's Good Urban Fantasy! I've only read one book so far, but it's shaping up to be as good as the best stuff of that little mage in Chicago. We'll see! I've got high hopes.

Gergana says

NEW REVIEW, 2018

Warning!: This review contains the usual random fanart and pointless comics done by me. Enjoy! All images can be found with better resolution here: <https://gerynh.tumblr.com/>

I wonder how explaining these books to people would go?

Ok, ok, I know people keep comparing Alex Verus to Harry Dresden. But you know what, now that I have finally read the first 7 books of the Dresden Files (thus becoming a specialist on the topic), I can safely say... I like Alex Verus a **LOT LOT LOOOOT** better.

Why?

EPIC MAGIC FIGHTS, POLITICS, COOL PLOT TWISTS, MAGIC EVERYWHERE, ONE LOVE-INTEREST, LONDON, PROTAGONIST IS A DIVINER AND IT'S AWESOME WHEN USED IN FIGHTS OR EVERYDAY LIFE, MAGIIIIIC!!!!

continues fangirling for a few more minutes

Ok, we all have reasons to resonate with some characters/stories more than others.

Me, personally, I adore books filled with more politics, action scenes, magic fights and ...ONE LOVE-INTEREST! Ok, it doesn't have to be ONE, but definitely not every single person with boobs that happens to pass near the main hero!

Back to the point ...I mean, back to the~

REVIEW!

THE SETTING

Best way to describe the series...

Don't expect police investigations or crime stories involving vampires, fairies, werewolves and others. Nor is the protagonist a powerful avatar, able to use all types of magic through martial arts.

But the world **IS** secretly inhabited by mages who have their own governing system. AND each mage can only use one type of magic...hmmm, maybe Dresden Files+X-men.

Types of Magicians

Cinder - fire mage, Anne-life mage and Sonder-time mage

You have the most common **Elemental** Mages who can use powers such as air, fire, water, lightning, force, etc.

Living Mages are mages who can affect living things (either to influence their mind, heal/mess up their bodies, etc)

And the final, rarest and strangest of them all are the **Universal Mages** - they can affect time, space, chance, they can see the past or the present, etc.

Anyways, most mages belong either to the Light or the Dark ...faction.

Levstas - a Light Mind Mage

Both factions can be equally evil and cruel (it's only a matter of whether you feel the need to hide the bodies or brag about them). There is a constant struggle for power and status, even among the Light mages. Therefore, enlisting/enslaving/black-mailing useful minions is a great pass-time for the big players in the magical society.

And having someone who can see the future in your team can be highly profitable.

THE PROTAGONIST

Alex Verus is a diviner. No, he cannot shoot deadly bullets made of air, disintegrate you with a touch or anything as flashy, but he can come up with other creative ways to hurt you ~~if he feels like it~~ and annoy the crap out of you while he's at it. This rare type of mages specializes in information- they can learn any new skills instantly just by checking into the future in which they've spent hours/days studying them; they can find out any dark secrets about you if they put their mind into it; they are hard to surprise, hard to kill and hard to be found if they don't want to be found. Random chances and free will limit the certainty of their predictions, but Diviners are the best at exploiting any situation to fit their needs.

THE PLOT

Nevertheless, being a neutral mage (not belonging to either the Dark or the Light faction), means that Alex Verus has plenty of time to mind his own business (a small shop selling books, herbs and other "magical" thing-a-ma-bobs), advise any confused novices and, of course, look through the future for the fun of it...sometimes resulting in answering his customers' questions before they even ask them.

Alex's peaceful and predictable life comes to an end when he becomes the center of attention for major players in the magical world. They all have one thing in common - they need a diviner (who hasn't gone into hiding yet) to retrieve an ancient, seemingly-impossible-to-get, artifact. Corrupt Council members, powerful Dark Mages, dangerous acquaintances from his past, are just a few of the new additions to Alex's list of people-to-avoid-at-any-cost. The only question is: should he run or will his curiosity be the death of him.(view spoiler)

WHAT BOTHERED ME IN BOOK 1 AND DOES IT IMPROVE?

-LUNAAAAA - One of Alex's few friends, an adept with a very dangerous ability, Luna is one of the main reasons readers can decide to turn away from the series. **GOOD NEWS** - she doesn't stay a useless wimp for long (only in the first 2 books). And neither does Alex keep treating her like a pet dog. XD
-Illogical decisions - The first book has a few, which I didn't notice during my first read (cause I was having too much fun!)

WHAT I REALLY REALLY LIKE!

Alex vs Onyx - All you need to know is that Onyx is a Dark Force Mage who absolutely despises Alex! Every scene where these two interact or fight with each other are priceless!

Romance - ~~It's not Luna~~. Rather slow (it takes a few books until you even realize there is one), but worth it! One of my favorite fictional couples of all time!

And Morden...I like Morden too...how many fanarts did I do?

AUDIOBOOKS

The audiobooks are pretty good! It took me a bit of time to get used to the narrator's style, but other than that, I have no major complains.

COVERS

"I LOVE THE BRITISH ONES!" is what I would've said, before THIS HAPPENED!

[image error]

WHY PUBLISHER!!! WHYYYYYY! Now I need to buy the new ones as well in order to have matching covers...you're so cruel...

I like the new ones too...

WEBSITE AND EXTRAS:

There is a WHOLE encyclopedia regarding the Alex Verus's world! Definitely worth checking out if you're a fan.

CONCLUSION:

Despite having read a HUUUUUGE amount of Urban Fantasies featuring male mages as protagonists, there's something about the Alex Verus series that totally captivates me: maybe it's the awesome divination magic that is used in a super creative fashion; maybe it's the world-building that might seem limited compared to other books, but it's very well thought-out, detailed and believable; maybe it's Alex himself. Whatever it is, I consider Alex Verus to be one of my top 10 favorite series of all time (and top 3 favorite Urban Fantasy series)

Will I recommend to friends: if you enjoy Urban Fantasy, then definitely **YES**

Paperback, Hardback or Audiobook: Paperbacks are perfect (wait for the new covers to come out if you're living in the UK). Audiobooks are great too, but it took me some time getting used to the narrator. Nevertheless, still worth buying and highly enjoyable!

RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are some other awesome Urban Fantasy series:

The Heartstrikers series!

Dragon Mafia + Humor + MOST LOVABLE CHARACTERS in the history of Urban Fantasy.

My review for book 1 and book 2

The Mercy Thompson series!

Rather generic (vampires, fairies, werewolves etc. with a coyote shapeshifter as a protagonist), but enjoyable with a good world-building! Honestly, I don't know how to sell it, not sure why I like it so much XD My review.

The Fever series!

Fae - the real, scary ones, Cool setting- Dublin, lots of eye-candy for the ladies, murder mystery, horror, gore and a gripping story! To be reviewed.

Not so favorite, but still good:

American Gods – Unique, rather slow, but imaginative and well-researched. If you're not a fan of Neil Gaiman's pretentious-sounding style though, I would stay away from it.

Women of the Otherworld – Enjoyed the first two books only – mystery, gore, murder and WEREWOLVES. Also, a love interest with questionable sanity.

Personally, I'm not a huge fan, but here are some of the more popular Urban Fantasy titles with a mage as a protagonist:

Dresden Files - DUH! Ok, half of the readers adore it, the other half hate it with passion! I tend to deviate between the two. Crime/Mystery/Urban Fantasy.

Iron Druid - Focuses more on pagan deities (Celtic, Norse, Slavic), fairies and other mythical creatures. Couldn't get into it, but it's the second most popular one, so...

Peter Grant -Very different and original. The style wasn't my thing, but if you're looking for a Fantasy/Crime book with an English twist, then go for it.

Daniel Faust -More of an anti-hero, a lot darker and gorier than the rest. Barely any magic though...

Prof Croft -A Harry Dresden Fanfiction :D that I enjoyed more than the majority of Harry's books! Nevertheless, lots of similarities with the Dresden Files...

? ?? ????? ?????????? ;)

?? ?????????? ?????????? My Review

????????? ????????????

OLD REVIEW, 2013: Truly amazing! One of the best books I've read for a really long time and I am already looking forward to reading Cursed, Taken and Chosen (and if I can find them, the 2 Ninja books as well)!

Thank you, Benedict Jacka, for sharing your work with us!

Laura (Kyahgirl) says

I have had this book in my tbr for a long time so when I saw the audiobook on Hoopla I gave it a go. I listened for three hours then put it away. There was nothing really wrong besides the fact that the main guy talked too much and nothing really caught my interest except for the giant spider. A lot of people really love this one so don't take my word for it. Its just missing something that my book palate requires, which I think could be defined as human relations or connectivity.

Lorelei says

A disappointing Dresden clone without the wit and sharp writing. The main character is fairly colourless and uninspiring with little to endear him and much patronising behaviour to annoy.

It reads like a young adult novel with some pretty stupid propositions, such as the opening line of chapter 11, "A lot of people think of captivity as something glamorous", are you serious? That is just ridiculous. Who on

earth thinks that captivity is glamorous? Why write such patent nonsense? Or my next favourite stupid generalisation, "Lots of people think 'mad' means funny". Who are these "lots of people"? Does Mr Jacka know them personally or are they just more colourless, poorly fleshed-out figments of his imagination?

The author also pulls his punches with the scarey and yucky stuff, "I can't describe it for you because it was too horrible" and the like...What's the point if you can't write it?

Ultimately though this guy suffers from the classic newbie error of writing about something rather than revealing it through the eyes of the characters, so there's a huge amount of info-dump and explainy explainy.

Someone needs to tell Mr Jack a the cardinal rule of great writing, "Show don't tell".
