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John G. Hartness

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The police are stumped.

Halloween is coming, with an ancient evil on the horizon.

The vampires are the good guys.

This is not your ordinary fall weekend in Charlotte, NC. Vampire private detectives Jimmy Black and Greg Knightwood have been hired to keep a young client from being cursed for all eternity, but end up in a bigger mess than they ever imagined.

Suddenly trapped in the middle of a serial kidnapping case, Jimmy and Greg uncover a plot to bring forth an ancient evil into the world, and enlist the help of a police detective, a priest, a witch, a fallen angel and strip club proprietor to save the world. This unlikely band of heroes battles zombies, witches, neuroses and sunburn while cracking jokes and looking for the perfect bag of O-negative.

Hard Day's Knight Details

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Author : John G. Hartness

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From Reader Review *Hard Day's Knight* for online ebook

Ryan says

(For the Audio Book) The reader was so bad he made the author's work sound like it was written by a second grader. Wow that was rough! I know people have loved this book and the continuing series but I think I'm done.

Katy says

Book Info: Genre: Urban Fantasy

Reading Level: Adult

Recommended for: Fans of urban fantasy who've been looking for something a bit less serious

Trigger Warnings: violence, children being kidnapped, and in danger, killing

My Thoughts: I came to urban fantasy through a series by Glen Cook, then Simon Green, and finally Jim Butcher, so I've been reading urban fantasy since before the genre was named. I love the stuff, so I was so excited to grab these books when I noticed them. I just love the fact that the vampires are the good guys in this book (although I have some friends for whom that will turn them away from the book).

Something I've been wanting to read for awhile is more-or-less silly urban fantasy, and that's what we have here. While there is a real Big Bad, at the same time Jimmy and Greg are more bumbling than heroic, and more antiheroic than heroic. They are trying to be the good guys, but Jimmy is willing to do pretty much whatever it takes to make his goals, while Greg wants to think he's Batman. It's hilarious. This is a great example:

“Greg realized that he had an audience, and sprang to his feet, swirling his cape dramatically.

At least, that was the idea. It's hard to swirl properly when part of the cape is tangled around your feet and another corner is draped over your head, but he gave it a hell of a try.”

Then there is the fact that being a vampire has left them the same as when they were turned.

“I've never been what anybody would call smooth, and turning into a vampire, much to my disappointment, didn't turn me into some super-suave sex machine...”

All in all, I enjoyed this book quite a lot. It loses one star just because of the really bad editing. But if you've been looking for an urban fantasy that doesn't take itself quite so seriously, this is a good place to find it. Lots of fun!

Series Information: *Hard Day's Knight* is the first book in the Black Knight Chronicles.

Book 2: *Back in Black*

Novella 1: *Movie Knight*

Book 3: *Knight Moves*

Novella 2: *Black Magic Woman*

There is also a book of short stories called *Knight (un)Life* - Black Knight Shorts Vol. 1, which I do not

currently have. He has a number of other books, including his Bubba Monster Hunter books, a number of which I currently have as well.

Disclosure: I picked this book up for myself on free promotion on Amazon. Some time later (almost a year I think?) I noticed it was on NetGalley and accepted it there, since I already planned to read it. All opinions are my own.

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Badea Maria says

I really tried to like this book, I did. Even after the poor beginning, I checked the reviews and gave it a second chance. And a third, and a fourth...

The problems with this book are:

1. The characters - they are very poorly developed and Jimmy Black is not exactly likeable. He sounds like a teenager with pimples who has no clue what he's doing or why.
2. The language is basic and I have encountered more than a few weird grammar constructions. It might be just me, but "I had to eat something" sounds better for me than "I was going to have to eat something" (or something similar).
3. The female characters are just like some cartoon Barbies with no personality whatsoever. They don't seem to think for themselves, they change their mind without any logical explanation and so on. I recommend the writer to read Characters and Viewpoint by Orson Scott Card.
4. The description is very, very poor. I recommend the writer to read "Description" by Monica Wood - I think it's a must. And I think a good description would manage to give the reader the 3D image that is completely absent from this book.
5. The dialogue is basic and it doesn't sound like real life dialogue. It gives you the impression of watching a

B-movie. Again, I recommend the writer to read Dialogue by Gloria Kempton, it might help a lot.

6. The plot has no twist, no surprise, nothing... You have to torment the characters more, make them fight more, surprise them more. Take one of the villain and make him be the closest friend of the hero or somebody he knows, or... I don't know, something... Surprise me, don't make me watch a linear plot. "Plot" by Ansen Dibell is a very good book that might help. Also, Jim Butcher's blog about writing.

7. The main characters don't seem like real detectives, or vampires - just some teenagers who have no clue what they're doing and that's alright, BUT doesn't explain why the other characters allow their involvement in the whole story.

SPOILER AHEAD!

8. There are a lot of contradictions in the text, and I mean A LOT. In the beginning, Jimmy and Greg cannot defeat Belial in the girl's body. At the end, Greg defeats her all by himself in her very own body... which is supposed to give her A LOT more power. Again, Phil tells Jimmy that the forces that will awake are out of their league, THEN he defeats Baal almost on his own. And so on... I recommend the author to draft character sheets, plot sheets and to keep track of everything all the time.

This would be all, I guess. I do hope this review will be helpful for the writer because I am a future author myself and I rather have a bad review that helps me grow than a very positive one that doesn't tell me a thing about my style, my evolution and my chances of improving my writing.

michelle+8 says

This book has plot holes you can drive a truck through. A Mack truck. First off, the vampire lore, what we are given and what we see, is full of contradictions. Midway through the book we are told that vampires do not sleep like the dead, but that makes the kidnapping in the first chapter totally inexplicable. We're told that vampires do not have supernatural agility, then they do. One of the main characters spends most of the book tripping over his own feet, then pulls off some impressive gymnastics in the final scene. And apparently vampire strength comes and goes on a minute by minute basis: first our hero can't break a plastic chair, then he crushes a pair of solid metal handcuffs into a little ball. First he gets beat up by a girl, then he lifts her, and her chair, into the air with one hand.

There are other contradictions, like why did Detective Law have to go buy a cross necklace, when she was described as already wearing one? And there are a ton of dangling plot points. What happened to Tommy? The little girl witch? The little girls in the forest? Detective Law and the vampire mojo? Lilith and the supposed danger of drinking her blood? Were we just supposed to forget all of these?

But it was really the ending that did it for me - or rather, didn't. First off, they found the bad guys because there was one link between the missing children, but then we find out that she wasn't even involved when the kids disappeared?? How does that make sense? Then, something important happens to explain how we can expect a happy ending - but the author totally forgets to tell us it happened. He just refers to it later like we're supposed to know. Trust me, I flipped back and read it again, and he didn't mention it. Finally, worst of all, one of the main problems apparently doesn't get resolved, and no one seems to notice! It's not a little thing, either! I kept waiting for a footnote to say, oh and that got worked out, but nothing!

All in all, this book was a major waste of an evening. My husband keeps saying the second one is better, but I'm seriously doubting that I'm even going to give it a chance.

Oh, and one other thing. 5'9" is not short, and definitely not comparable to Danny Devito. Devito is 4'9"!

Ami says

3.5 stars

My mood deteriorated even further when I heard a voice behind me say "It's about time you woke up, bloodsucker." I mean, seriously, why do people have to be so rude? It's a condition, like freckles. I'm a vampire. Deal with it. But we can do without the slurs, thank you very much.

With that kind of narration in the first chapter, I am hooked :). I really must thank Goodreads because it has given me so many recommendations. I stumble into this title when I'm browsing book recs on the right side, when I'm writing my review on one urban fantasy book. Seeing that this is with male lead (which is rare) and only cost \$0.9 at Amazon.com, I figure, heck, why not?!

James Black is a vampire -- he's 36 years old, but was turned when he was 22, so he looks young. His partner at Black Knight Investigation is Gregory W. Knightswood IV, James's best friend, who's good with computers. Oh, yes, when they were turned into vampires, they DID NOT change into handsome vampires (or sparkle :p), but stayed on the last condition they were in. So James still has skinny frame and Grey is still pudgy.

The two vampires are the good guys (although James admit that he still likes to drink directly from human). They have a priest, Mike, as friend (who used to part of their gang, before James and Greg turned into vampire). They occasionally ask help from fallen angel, Phil, who also owns a strip club. And in this story, they are trying to find missing kids, who turn out to be part of sacrifice plan to get a high-power demon into Earth. To complicate matter, is a female detective, Sabrina Law, who is hot on the case.

The book is choc with hilarity, especially the first several chapters. I chuckle along, reading quips after quips coming from James. Though after they investigation moves along, I feel like it sort of losing the 'fun'. Then again, they're facing a very powerful demon, so it has to be serious.

A couple of reviews are pointing out the plot-holes; but I'm never good with details, so I don't pay big attention to that. However, one thing does feel a bit over-the-top ((view spoiler)) and the sort-of path to romance in the end feels forced. But in overall, this is a good read, and entertaining for under 200 pages. I will probably check the next title.

Celine says

Has anyone noticed that vampires are always sexy? In contemporary fiction you can tell someone is a vampire when: he sparkles/has enough sex drive to feel the need to hit on anything or anyone that crosses his path/is so damn gorgeous you can't resist him. Now, lets throw that image overboard. You're about to meet

the dorkiest vampires in fiction.

When Mr. Hartness was talking about his book on a forum on Goodreads, I knew I had to read this book. The concept of two fanged creatures that have super strength and yet not the perfect physique and countenance we are used to seemed perfect to get a break from all those vampire books out there. He has also been so very kind to tell a bit more about his extraordinary characters in a post below, check that out too!

Jimmy and Greg have been best friends since well, about forever. So logically, when they both are turned into creatures of the night, they rent a basement and live together as private detectives. When a lot of mysterious disappearances start to happen they end up in a mess they had never expected. I won't spoil the plot too much, but it involves zombies in trunks, unreliable witches, fighting some demons from hell and a conversation with God.

I really liked the bantering between our two "heroes". They both seem so.. human. At the end of a long night of doing detective work, they like to kick off their shoes, get a bag of blood and game a bit. They're not super brave and do get scared at times. There even was a tiny bit of romance in the book, which I thought was extremely cute and I liked how that turned out.

There's a lot going on in *Hard Day's Knight*, making this book nicely paced. Action scenes are alternated with talking and other bits and pieces that tell us more about the background of the boys. The sometimes a bit heavy side of the book is brightened by the completely inappropriate commentary of Jimmy. Some of his sarcastic remarks really made my day.

The only critique I would like to point out is that this book is too short. I wanted to know more, hear more background, be more sucked into this story. I really liked these guys, but I wish I could connect to them more. It could be a case of minor FBISD (First-Book-In-Series-Disease), and this problem will disappear in the next book of the *Black Knight Chronicles*, *Back in Black*. I would definitely read another book by this author.

Faith Hunter says

I seldom read self-published but this one was good enough to pass along to my agent. I liked it! (yeah so I was happily surprised)

Emily says

First off, you have to respect a book and, by extension, an author who credits a series of amazing teachers in the dedication of the book. I'm just saying.

Second, one thing that the world needs more of (and I am not being sarcastic so do not look at me like that) is snarky vampires. The world of vampire books has a sad tendency to take itself very seriously and to be Seriously Unamused if others don't share that seriousness. *Hard Day's Knight* does not suffer from this affliction, and reading the story was an excellent way to pass time if I may say so myself.

Vampire Jimmy Black is having an unfortunately bad day when we first meet him. He's been abducted by an

obnoxious weasel of a guy who's managed through bullying and general insensitivity to piss off a seriously powerful witch. The witch laid a death curse on him and his entire family, and Jimmy turns to his partner in robot detective business, Greg Knightwood, to mastermind an escape. The plot thickens as it becomes apparent that this isn't schoolyard heartache at all, but seriously bad news for everyone.

The dynamics between Jimmy, Greg, and their friend, Father Mike (they call him Dad) are awesome. They were friends in high school, and now they have a working relationship that includes trying to solve mysteries. They snark, they argue, they make fun of each other; every page was full of excellent one liners and I really enjoyed watching them get their digs in at one another. Take this gem, from a sparring match where the issue of Greg being a dork has just come up:

"Dude, you still wear Underoos. Your geek-fu is so much stronger than mine it's ridiculous. You are the Mister Miyagi of geek-fu. You are the geek ninja. You are the first person in history to be granted a P.H.Geek from Oxdork University."

Love it! Jimmy and Greg's retelling of how they became vampires is my favorite "being turned into a vampire" backstory I've come across so far. As Jimmy and Greg barreled towards dealing with the bad guy and saving the day I couldn't help but get more excited as to how they would figure it all out, or hell, if they would figure it out.

People who take their vampire stories super seriously will probably develop a case of hurt butt over this story, but that just makes it better in my opinion. Anything that simultaneously lampoons a genre and celebrates it at the same time is excellent in my book.

This is the perfect summer book- smart, funny, snarky (have I mentioned this book is snarky?), and adventurous, with just enough self-reflection to keep things on track. We learn a lot about Jimmy, Greg, and Mike, and I was happy to learn that the second book, *Back in Black*, is already available so I can keep reading. It doesn't get better than that!

Nancy D Miz-Firefly aka Sparky (Paranormal Junkie) says

I'm a sucker for sarcasm. And smart-asses. And heroes who get the daylights pasted out of themselves for a good cause. And nerds, especially nerds going through World of Warcraft withdrawal. Sarcastic smart-ass nerdy vampires who get the daylights pasted out of themselves for a good cause with a penchant for Maddon and Halo? I never stood a chance.

I'm still not sure how he did it. It's hard to Pidgeon-hole the vibe. Lighter than most Urban Fiction. Certainly, less gritty and less graphic. While keeping the drama front and center, and the fists flying. Is there such a thing as UF Lite?

I can't help but draw comparison between Greg Knightwood, "Hard Day's Knight" Main character and Harry Dresden. Greg is snarky, sarcastic, can't catch a break and cannot sit idly by while people are in trouble. If Butcher's work was more toward the comedic end of the spectrum- well, it would be nothing like this, but every time Greg opens his mouth I hear Harry Dresden. And I flat out loved it. I look forward to getting to know Greg and Jimmy a whole lot better.

Rane says

There's nothing better than having a great laugh and *Hard's Day Knight* was packed full of humor and action with two adorable vampire leads in Jimmy Black and Greg Knightwood. Both are just your average vampire joes who happen to get themselves into some major trouble without trying very hard.

John Hartness created a fun world with vampires and your everyday creatures of the night just trying to make an everyday living, while trying not to get staked in the process. Much of the world was based on the old school lore of vampires, with a few questions some have asked and never have gotten an answer to like How do vampires have sex or do vampires poop?

""Hey guys, is it true you can't, you know, get it up unless you've fed recently? I mean it makes sense, it is a blood flow thing." Cue sound effect of crickets chirping"

These burning questions are sorta answered by our vampire detective duo, which after being turned decided that the vampire life sucked, and wanted to help others. With the help of their bf priest (aka Dad) Mike-Jimmy and Greg go out to fight crime. And pretty much get their ass kicked and do a little ass kicking themselves. We first meet our duo when Jimmy is tied up by a punk teen whose been cursed by a witch, sadly their new case isn't as cut as dry when they find out there maybe a demon involved whose out to bring hell to earth..Jimmy and Greg just can't get a break!

""For a skinny little gamer-geek he'd done a good job tying me up. I guess that's another thing we can thank the Internet for -- unlimited access to fetish porn has improved the knot-tying ability of men who can't get dates."

Fun and fast paced this book will have you laughing and enjoying the action, the story was very easy to get into with Jimmy's voice very enjoyable with his thoughts and sense of humor. While the story was quick there were two glaring troubles in the book.

Not all perfect-grammar-wise myself there were a few typos that were pretty stand-out and an info dump of Greg and Jimmy's past and being turned to vampires that could have been spread throughout the story then just laid out for the reader in one big chunk.

Even with the few little bumps along the way, the book turned out to be just down right fun!

""...we're detective vampires. We're the good guys. Like Batman, only with dietary

restrictions."

carol. says

More than anything, this book reminds me of a teenage boy; gawky, awkward, and the wispy remnants of childhood sweetness around the edges. Maybe a few spots on his face, and a tendency to cover seriousness with annoying flippancy, but with the potential to become something interesting in a few years.

The mystery driving the story is mediocre; it is a fairly predictable case of possession and summoning. It's been used in quite a few urban fantasy books (both detective and a couple of PNR) and there's nothing that makes it stand out in HDK. What's slightly unusual is the narrator and his best buddy are a couple of "average Joe" vampires who retain a lot of their humanity. 'Humanity,' that is shown in a tendency to play Xbox in their boxers, constantly engage in repartee, and basically live in a bachelor pad strewn with dirty clothes. One has delusions of heroism, displays a tendency to wrap his pudgy body in spandex and an utility belt, and is rather sweet in his earnestness. Harness has the witty banter down perfectly, but while I appreciate humor and the occasional running joke, these two banter all the time, both with each other and within the narrator's description. Fun, if you want a book that isn't particularly serious or dark--think Robert Asprin's Myth series--and without a lot of tension. It definitely made me laugh a time or three.

There are still a few lumps and bumps in the plot, particularly as it pertains to the investigating female detective. She seems obsessed with placing James in handcuffs with little provocation within minutes of meeting him, and the ploy to involve aid the guys' involvement in the case is pretty thin. Her instincts are right, however, as James isn't a particularly law-abiding vampire. Here too he displays a teenage-only level of scariness--mostly deception, robbery and vandalism.

There's a feeble attempt to develop some romantic potential with the detective, but Lilith is a much more interesting and believably created lust interest. The other side character that is interesting is Phil, the fallen angel. The role and resolution he plays in the plot is very satisfying.

The structure of the book is unusual, with some of the longest exposition-type character background being given in the end as everyone prepares for battle. That was a new take for me in storytelling, which I appreciated, but I'm not sure that it worked particularly well. It was kind of pace-destructive to be giving background on turning into a vampire before heading into conflict.

Overall, I'll put the next book in my TBR list, but will likely look for it at the library.

?Susan? says

I read this book in between two gruesome crime thrillers and it did the trick to lighten the day. A silly paranormal with some corny characters. All in all not bad, so if your looking for a fun paranormal series this may be for you. Nice Vampires and witches.

Dan says

The main characters were converted to vampires when they were teenagers. Fifteen years later, they haven't matured at all. This is a Two Stooges vampire story.

There's a bit in the beginning that bothered me. A policewoman is asking questions about the crime the main characters are investigating. They describe her as "having balls" and "a real ball-breaker"; then they vandalize her car, and a witness's house, in order to "keep her busy". They make no effort at hiding their identities when they do this. The point the book seems to be making is: *these dudes are so badass they can wreck a police car and not care about the consequences.*

By the end of the book, she's flirting with one of them. (sigh).

JK says

Wow.

First off I feel there are two pertinent pieces of information I must share for this review. First, I love Jim Butcher's Dresden Files; it's my absolute favorite series and within the series is my favorite book. Secondly, I really am on the verge of hating vampires. I think they are overused and have become glorified sex obsessed humans in recent literature.

What's the point in knowing those two pieces of information? Well, the main characters in this book were vampires and I thought it [Hard Day's Knight] was on par with Butcher's Dresden Files. Now, that should give a bit of perspective on just how impressed I was with this novel.

I'm also moving the sequel to this onto my "release day read" list and on said day I will probably gobble it up in one sitting like I did with this one.

What makes this book so great was the characters. It's a relatively small cast for this first book, but they were all great. James Black, the character who's [whom?] we read the book through, is just plain awesome. Ya know, I've read so many urban fantasy novels and I'll keep reading them, but one of the main problems I see in these books is that the protagonist is always made out to be a badass. The authors go on and on about how awesome their character is and why - usually because of some clothing or weapons they carry or some traumatic past experience, but in the end it's always rubbish. Their characters are supposed to be these great, just plain ol' badasses, but they never are. This is where John Hartness excels with his characters. He doesn't need to talk about how awesome they are describe every pain staking detail about them, he let's their actions and their words speak for them. What Hartness has created here, is a genuine, monster ass-kicking badass.

His partner, Greg Knightwood, is equally awesome. He's a goofy, lovable vampire that you'll not expect much from at first, but will grow to really enjoy. He is definitely a great match for James Black. In fact, he's more than the typical sidekick and doesn't suffer from being left out of the spotlight. We've also got their friend Mike the priest, Phil the fallen angel, Lilith the ultimate feminist, and Sabrina the straight as a razor's

edge detective. So that's the cast of the good guys, or the mostly good guys, and they seem like types of characters used before you say? Well, yes, we've seen these types of characters before, but we've seen every character type before. The different here is that Hartness has managed to actually capture what's great about them and make the characters feel real. They're not just forced cliches an author feels he or she needs to include in their book. They are real characters.

As for the story, it's your hero saving the day by having his butt kicked and then proceeding to kick some butt himself. It's simple, but effective and doesn't suffer from a convoluted plot or forced cliches. It's just good fun. What's also nice is that there were little things here and there that feel like hints of what could come in later stories. Mr Hartness has done what many authors have forgotten about - foreshadowing. He didn't try to throw every single idea into one book, but opted to show you that he had more ideas ready. Another great thing about the story, or characters?, was that there was stupidly, out of place sex scene thrown in for kicks. I love an author that understands that sex does not make for a more interesting book. I can't begin to describe how happy I was to not have to read about sex. Oh, and no true love at first site BS in this novel either.

Oh there's even a small appearance by God and ya know what? It's not groan worthy and is actually very touching - and that's coming from an atheist.

Only bad thing I can say about the book is that there were a few noticeable errors in the grammar department. I would have also liked to see a little less of the game references. Don't get me wrong, I love my 360, but for some reason I just didn't want to read about it. Maybe it's because it was just some of the largest gaming series listed... a lesser known title here or there would have me believing the guys actually played it.

Elspeth says

Wow, what a fun read...what the author lost me on with Xbox game geekiness he gained by tossing in a plethora of dorky themes not to mention a great running gag.
