



John Golden: Freelance Debugger

Django Wexler

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FREELANCE DEBUGGER

John Golden is a debugger: he goes inside the computer systems of his corporate clients to exterminate the gremlins, sprites, and other fairies that take up residence. But when he gets a frantic call from Serpentine Systems, a top-of-the-line anti-fairy security company, John finds out he's on much more than a simple smurf-punting expedition.

With the help of his sarcastic little sister Sarah (currently incarnated in the form of a Dell Inspiron) and a paranoid system administrator, John tackles Serpentine's fairy problem. But the rabbit hole goes deeper than he thinks, and with the security of all of company's clients in danger, there's more at stake this time than John's paycheck!

John Golden: Freelance Debugger Details

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Author : Django Wexler

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From Reader Review John Golden: Freelance Debugger for online ebook

Stefan says

John Golden is a debugger. He goes into the computer systems of his clients and gets rid of the nasty fae creatures that have taken up residence there. It made me think of a wizard with high tech skills, a magical hacker, if you will. He works his magic inside a computer, literally. He does this with the help of his sister, Sarah, whose soul resides inside a Dell Inspiron laptop.

I loved this book. While I have not read a ton of urban fantasy, this book offered a fresh and unique perspective. It was like Harry Dresden meets The Matrix inside an episode of Dr. Who. After spending the last two decades in the IT industry I could totally relate to the details of the story. It definitely gives you a new perspective on viruses! :-)

One of the best things about the story was the commentary by Sarah which were done in the form of footnotes. It gave great insight into their relationship and gave peeks into future books.

I am hoping there will be more John Golden books in the future. He is my kind of hero.

Abhinav says

You can find the full review over at The Founding Fields:

<http://thefoundingfields.com/2014/02/...>

Shadowhawk takes a look at the first ever urban fantasy novella from Django Wexler, the start of a new series and published by Ragnarok Publications.

"A great mix of technology and magic, John Golden: Freelance Debugger is a hilarious, fun and action-packed novella." ~Shadowhawk, The Founding Fields

One of the things that I find crucial for urban fantasy settings is that they really need to make themselves come across as unique. There's only so many stories that can be told about vampires and werewolves and witches and wizards before they all start to merge together into one giant ball of CLICHE. A good execution of cliches and tropes can only go so far. I've read a handful of urban fantasy stories in the last couple years, featuring the above-mentioned characters and while there have been ones that I really enjoyed, there have also been ones that I didn't. For me, the most unique have been the Split Worlds novels by Emma Newman, which have all been rather good, start to finish. Their one defining thing: they are stories about Faeries and the Fae, a character/race/species type that I haven't yet come across in my reading all that much. And that's where Django Wexler's John Golden: Freelance Debugger comes in.

In this new series of novellas about the character John Golden, Django has created an alternate world where magic is real in the sense that faeries and gremlins and others of their ilk are real and very much a thriving subsection of the supernatural society. Particularly, the faeries in this world love to inhabit computer networks and exist in a pseudo-online sphere where they create burrows inside these networks. Essentially,

they are like a virus. And John Golden is a freelance debugger who is called in to clear these networks and his is quite the respected, and essential, profession as far as the IT industry is concerned.

When this story starts, John is called in by the head of a software firm that is about to launch a new AntiFae software. There has been a sudden faerie invasion in the company's networks, all under very mysterious circumstances, and so John acts the part of both investigator and clean-up crew.

John Golden: Freelance Debugger is a really fun story. For starts, John has some really great humour that is often front and center in his conversations with the other characters. He is somewhat of a typical urban fantasy protagonist in that regard (the two default states being either broody and dour or upbeat and cheerful), and his character arc, as well as his development here, handled very well. Being a first person story, we really get to go into his brain and see all the things that make him tick.

And speaking of going into his brain, he carries around a Dell Inspiron laptop that houses his sister's consciousness. A digital simulacra, Sarah no longer has a physical body. She exists only in the digital world. There's quite a backstory here that Django doesn't delve into much, but we get to see a lot of Sarah here nonetheless since she is a part of John's work and is both his controller and his backup and his partner. There are a lot of footnotes in the story and these provide a running commentary on whatever the scene presented on the particular page is. The story is all first person from John's perspective, but the footnotes are all first person from Sarah's perspective.

I loved that duality, to be perfectly honest, and I feel that I learned a lot about either character from those footnotes, not to mention all the commentary we get on the world that Django has created, and that was a really neat touch. Points to Django for that.

Emma Holloway says

4.5 Stars

I picked this story up because I was aching for something fun and quirky and entirely different from what I've been reading lately. This fit the bill admirably. And, since I've always suspected that computers are inhabited by otherworldly forces (possibly maleficent) and that IT specialists are a peculiar species of wizard, the premise of the tale did not overly strain my willing suspension of disbelief.

The best thing about this story is the narrative voice. It's told in first person by the main character (John Golden) with editorial footnotes by his non-corporeal sister and business partner, Sarah. The footnotes introduce an interesting rhythm to the text, creating a comic timing to the punchlines. At its best, the tone is snappy, smart and very funny. Occasionally it flirts with excess, maybe throwing in one footnote too many, but that's a small transgression given the overall quality. The plot is not overly complex but substantial enough to carry this short piece and showcase the world and the highly entertaining personalities in it.

Would I revisit this world? Absolutely. This isn't the same old, same old.

Mercedes Yardley says

This was a fun, fast book that was unlike anything I've ever read before. His sister's footnotes (once I figured out what was going on) were clever and enjoyable. I read this book in one sitting while drinking a hot chocolate. It was an absolutely enjoyable experience.

Åshild says

This might not be for everyone, but I just loved it!

Review 2: Had to go back to this and read it again while waiting for new John Golden stories. It was as great as I remembered - problem is I am now even mre impatient for the next one!!!!!!

Ryan Lawler says

This is an awesome book with a unique spin on incorporating the fairy realm into our own. John Golden works in IT, he is a debugger, and his job is to delve into computer networks and eliminate fairy infestations. When I say he delves into computer networks, I mean that he can move himself into a different dimension called a burrow where the network and the fairy infestation are manifested as a sword and sorcery medieval world, and once inside the burrow he can get to work exterminating the fairy presence. Its kind of like The Matrix meets A Midsummer Night's Dream.

This book is full of lots of geeky / nerdy / pop-culture references and plays on words (like when John Golden learned how to program in KOBOLD), and has been written in a unique way with the main character's sister providing something similar to director's commentary as footnotes to the story. I feel like the footnotes are a little too frequent and slightly jarring at the start of the book, but after reaching the first quarter mark they started to feel much more like a natural extension of the story. The humour is quite dry and understated, constructed from observations of how IT support is largely treated. If you have ever worked in IT or if you enjoy watching The IT Crowd, then I think you will really get a kick out of this book.

Sarah says

John Golden is a hell of a lot of fun. It moves fast, and has a relaxed, self-assured feel to it that makes it easy to just sink into and enjoy (once you get used to the footnotes). The world, while fairly narrow in scope, is very well fleshed out. Some stylistic things might be off-putting to some readers, like the technospeak and the footnotes, but you'll soon realize just how clever they all are. All in all, John Golden is a novella that could easily have been a novel. There's a lot here, and while it is a lot of fun, it really shows off just what Wexler is capable of as an author. He's confident, dynamic, and really sticks out. He takes saturated genres and he makes them his own. He did it with The Thousand Names, and now he's done it again with John Golden.

There are some novels you read and you just know the author had a ton of fun writing them, and so they are fun to read because of that. John Golden is one of those. I think Wexler must have had a blast writing it, and I ended up having a blast reading it.

Read my full review here:

<http://www.bookwormblues.net/2014/02/...>

All Things Urban Fantasy says

Review courtesy of All Things Urban Fantasy

Reading JOHN GOLDEN: FREELANCE DEBUGGER was in a way refreshingly different from what I've been reading in the urban fantasy genre. The main reason for even picking up this book was to find out how a freelance debugger 'debugged' computers of fairies. I was not disappointed. It fuses fantasy with sci-fi and modern technology, and come out with a fresh, sarcastic story that I wish was longer. There are a lot of pop culture references and IT jokes that will make any computer geek smile. I loved the way the insides of computers become a completely separate world in which the fairies exist. Making fairies into sort of personifications of viruses and other malware who create burrows in our servers is a great new take on fairies.

Aside from the most excellent battle against pesky fairies who want to take over our servers; the main characters, John and Sarah are a fun duo whose brother/sister dynamic was reflected in the unique footnotes at the bottom of the pages. At first I was confused about why there were footnotes with Sarah's sarcastic comments on what was happening to John in the main text. The footnote confusion was only temporary as Sarah is hilarious and really smart and I came to keep glancing down just to see Sarah's response to something John said. The footnotes add to the humor, worldbuilding and flavor of this novella.

With its sarcastic wit, pop culture jokes, and unique take on fairies I would recommend JOHN GOLDEN: FREELANCE DEBUGGER to everyone who likes a good quick adventure story. After reading this novella I await more John Golden adventures and I will for now blame any computer virus on those pesky pixies setting up burrows in the server.

Brian says

Freelance Debugger is a smart, quick mystery set in a world made from an interesting mix of cyberpunk and urban fantasy. I really dug this concept of the fae and their dependence on metaphor. I can't wait for the next installment to see the world get more fleshed out.

Side note, the book includes a lot of footnotes. The ebook is formatted with these inline and marked by dashes and italics. For the shorter footnotes, I actually preferred this to having to refer to the bottom of the page, sometimes the longer notes broke up the flow of the narrative a bit. That said, I think having them inline was a much better way to handle this than using hyperlinks.

I'm glad this was a short story because I couldn't put it down. The next John Golden book is due out in August and is going on my must read list.

Casey Blair says

As I was reading this on the train, people kept looking at me funny because I kept snickering out loud at pretty much all of Sarah's footnotes.

This novella hit every note just right. Hilarious, well-thought-out, fast-paced, and frankly, just plain fun.

Dan says

This can be described as cyberpunk, but with more awesome and less angst.

The footnotes were good, the characters were good, but the short-story thing didn't really work for me. There are five or six points where Sarah says: "This is referring to events from (other story), see there for more details", and of course (other story) isn't written yet. I think the intent was to make the world feel developed and lived-in, but what I'm actually feeling is cliffhanged.

Don't get me wrong -- there is a complete storyarc here. It's just all the links to nonexistent stories in the same universe, combined with how short-stories are naturally less complex than novels, made it feel incomplete.

Gef says

There is nothing exciting about working IT. Nothing. Django Wexler found a way to make it exciting though, and all he had to do was throw in a metric ton of sci-fi and fantasy to do it. Sounds about right. It's hard to pin down, but I suppose if you took *The IT Crowd*, threw in some *Johnny Mnemonic*, then you might wind up with *John Golden: Freelance Debugger*.

It's less than a hundred pages, and the Audible version I listened to clocked in under two-and-a-half hours. And the story just whizzes by with action and snark galore.

So imagine a world in which faeries are real and they have a knack for infecting technology. Enter John Golden. He's like a Ghostbuster ... well, a Faebuster. Just a blue-collar guy with a particular set of skills and his sister, Sara, backing him up on the job. While managing to provide a good amount of tension and daring do through the course of the novella, things are kept fairly light as far as tone goes. A lot of witty repartee between John and Sara, especially with her serving as a bit of a narrator or voice of reason through a series of footnotes that complement the story.

Kevin T. Collins and Jorjeana Marie do a great job bringing the characters to life with an instant chemistry that has them, if not battle weary siblings, at least a familial bond in battle.

There's a second John Golden book, which I'll be reviewing soon, and after that who knows. I'd like to think Wexler has more stories in this universe to come, because if not then this is a cruel tease of what might have been.

Mogsy (MMOGC) says

4 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <http://bibliosanctum.blogspot.com/201...>

I'm a tough sell when it comes to novellas. Even tougher when it comes to urban fantasy. Don't get me wrong; I love this genre, but the truth is there's also a lot of books and series out there. These days, ideas in urban fantasy have to be special and different enough in order to stand out and hook me.

But as soon as I read the description for this book, which is about a character whose job as a "freelance debugger" involves getting fairies out of computers, I knew it had me. Speaking as someone who is often convinced she has problems way worse than fairies mucking about in her PC, I think I need this John Golden guy in my life.

Django Wexler is also the perfect person to write this. That might come as a surprise if you've only read his epic fantasy, but I've discovered that he's also an amazingly versatile author. And as a former programmer and someone clearly used to being called upon for impromptu IT work, he definitely knows his way around computers and networks. He's taken that knowledge and mashed it up with elements from urban fantasy, creating a world where the land of the fae exists as part of a "Wildernet", and its denizens wreck havoc on our servers and systems by infesting them with their nasty "burrows".

I think the first thing most readers will notice is "Hey, there's a bunch of footnotes in this!" Wexler has decided to do something different here by using footnotes for humorous effect, having John Golden's business partner Sarah fill us in with her commentary in the form of annotations. Sarah is an interesting character, with her being a ... well, I think I'll just leave that little bit out as a surprise for now! In any case, I personally appreciated the footnotes as part of the book's unique flavor, though they did trip me up a little at the beginning. Ultimately though, it's worth your time to read Sarah's snarktastic comments, since they often add to the narrative or give you more details about the world. Not to mention she's downright hilarious.

I would recommend this to everyone. It's the perfect urban fantasy for computer geeks, with its IT jokes and references, but it's also fun for those who are not. Take me, for example. I wouldn't say I'm hopeless with computers, but at the same time what I don't know could fill an Olympic-size pool, and yet I still loved this book! It's quick, it's entertaining, and I have to say I got a real kick out of its geeky pop culture references and humor.

Can't wait for more, especially since Wexler has teased that the next book will have a gamer angle. I know his other fantasy series will likely take precedence, but I really hope he'll keep finding time to write John Golden stories. A premise this amazing simply demands further exploration!

Daniel says

?itava pri?a ima blagi prizvuk Neuromancera samo što nije tolko crno, plus imamo i dašak fantastike.

Likovi su zabavni, pri?a je dosta pitka i predvidljiva ali to nije smetalo previše.

U svakom slu?aju preporuka.

Kenny Soward says

You don't have to be an IT person to get this book, but it certainly helps with some of the inside jokes. A super fast, delightful read that genuinely entertained me for a couple of hours. John Golden debugs computer systems. However, It's not only viruses he cleans up, but faerie folk as well, those little buggers that get into

your system and take up residence in the circuits and gears. Awesome idea! Very happy to have chosen this one for my April TBR.

John's little sister, Sarah, steals the show just a bit with her crass but affectionate remarks which are noted in the footnotes
