



Cunning Devil

Chris Underwood

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**In a town where the monsters don't always have claws, someone has to look out for the little guy.
That's where I come in.**

They call me cunning man, conjurer, wizard, but mostly they call me Ozzy. If a witch is throwing curses your way, or there's something scary scratching at your window in the night, I've got just the charm for you.

Mostly, though, I find things. Lost treasures, missing loved ones, doesn't matter. If you want something found, I'm your guy. For a nominal fee, of course.

So when a grieving father hired me to track down a stolen family heirloom, I was happy to help. Trouble is, what started out as another garden-variety stolen property job just ended in attempted murder. Mine.

They made a mistake, though, when they put a bullet in my stomach and left me for the worms.

They didn't bury me deep enough

Cunning Devil Details

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From Reader Review Cunning Devil for online ebook

Alice Liu says

I'm always thrilled to discover a self published book that stands up to the leading authors in the genre (Butcher, Hearne, James, Aaronovich...). I'm saying it here: Chris Underwood will be one of the Urban Fantasy greats. Underwood brings out the complexities behind his characters and monsters in a way that compels the reader to anthropomorphize some of the oddest creatures. Yet, an air of mystery remain as he weaves complex plots that are full of action, impossible choices, and unusual alliances. What affected me most, though, was the compassion that Underwood coaxed out of his characters during moments of extreme chaos and ruin. Please write faster, Mr. Underwood...I need book #2!

C. E. Stokes says

Overall, a well written story. I enjoyed the depth and uniqueness of the characters. For some reason, I had trouble getting into the first half, but once they hit the Goblin Mountain, I started to get more interested.

I will check out the second book, mostly because I'm hoping to see more of Ozzy and Lilian's relationship development.

Gina says

What are you waiting for? Go buy this book! Cunning Devil has well-developed characters set in a world worth exploring. Conjure men, hedge witches and the like are not often the heroes of the average urban fantasy. Okay, so this setting isn't urban, but there's no 'village fantasy' genre...yet.

The Dealer is easily one of the most interesting characters I've met out of the 180+ books I've read this year. Is he Ozzy's friend, foe, or a bit of both? What's his motivation, and will he cost our hero more than Ozzy can afford?

Ozzy's root working abilities aren't fully-defined, and he may not have yet reached his full potential. It's not a showy magic, and it adds depth to Ozzy's character that he struggles with other magical options that may be open to him.

Seriously, read Cunning Devil. I read it through Kindle Unlimited, but I will gladly shell out the cover price for any future installments to spend more time in Lost Falls. It's worth it. Go. Now.

Raen says

Having just finished this book, I'm a bit too giddy to give a proper review without giving away loads of plot points and other such things in my excitement. I absolutely cannot wait for the next book in this series - there need to be more books like this, more authors like Chris Underwood, breathing life back into the genre that

has become urban fantasy - even though I would actually hesitate to call this urban fantasy. The only thing I can think of to say without giving things away, at the moment, is that reading this took me back to the first time I read Charles de Lint. Not that the authors are anything alike in writing style or content - more the feel it gave me. That sense of wonder at discovering something new and reveling in a new world with every page turn. I'm happy I found this book.

Barbara Howe says

Ozzy Turner is a man you don't want to cross. He is a cunning man, aka white witch; a magic user specialising in breaking curses and finding lost items or people. A man dedicated to protecting his community, the town of Lost Falls. What's the difference between the white magic he uses and black magic? Nothing. The only distinction is in what the magic is used for, and the line between is thin. Ozzy is human enough to sometimes step over that line, especially when given a good, hard shove.

In Chris Underwood's debut novel, *Cunning Devil*, Ozzy takes on a charity case, going in search of a stolen family heirloom—an antique silver child's rattle—after the death of a man's son. But nothing in this case is what it seems, and instead of thanking him for finding the rattle, the man turns on him. Shot and left for dead, Ozzy makes a devil's bargain to buy enough life to get revenge. His quest leads him deeper into trouble—literally, in an underground goblins' lair—as the battle he is caught up in wreaks destruction on Lost Falls.

The story is a fast-paced thriller, focusing on some other preternatural creatures rather than the ubiquitous werewolves and vampires. There's violence and gore but no sex, and the understated almost-romance has a certain squick factor to it. Other reviewers have compared the book to the Harry Dresden series, but I thought it closer in spirit to the Mercedes Thompson series, which I prefer.

Ozzy is a promising, likeable character, capable of both deadly revenge and acts of great kindness and compassion, including to a creature that had just attacked him and gouged him with its claws. His uneasy alliance with a former enemy makes for amusing reading. The second book in the series, *Pay Dirt*, has just been released; it will be interesting to see where this series goes.

This review was first posted on [This Need to Read](#)

Frank Bertino says

A Rollercoaster of Plot Twists

How cunning can he be? Oz is a cunning man. One who can use magic, intellect, and dare we say cunning to protect the community and help individuals. The Dealer is his nemesis or is he? A job to find a family keepsake turns into a kaleidoscope of changing targets and goals. I enjoy the intricacies of the plot. The main characters are fully formed and believable. I anxiously await the next book.

Avrin Kelly says

I really enjoyed this book. I did not expect the adventure to lead me where it did, but it was a welcome

surprise. My favorite character was the Dealer, I even had a nightmare about him while reading this book. All of the characters were well rounded and fleshed out. I really liked Ozzy, he's a character you can root for and he had a cool name. It was a really good read and I can't wait for the next installment to come out!

Sherry Wilson says

Don't miss out on this book!

Ever since I finished "Skin Game", the last Harry Dresden book 3 years ago (and with no sign of a new book coming out), I have been looking for a character I could enjoy as much as him. I think I found him in Ozzy Turner. Ozzy is a man trying to do the right thing even though the odds may be against him. There are strong, likable characters in this story. I can't wait for the next book in this series Anyone who likes Jim Butcher, Kelley Armstrong, or Kim Harrison should really give Ozzy a try!

Li Kim Min says

This is a pretty decent book and I managed to finish both books of the series in one go over 2 days. For some reason with the description of the main character Ozzy I keep getting images of Chris Hemsworth or or his brother in my head which sort of made this book extra amusing.

The narrative is pretty cool and I love the twists and turns taken as well as the surprise at the end although this author is very fond of dropping down hints for future use. You kind of get that feeling even in the very beginning that he over details odd characters which you just *know* is gonna be important later on.

The odd thing about this one though is the overuse of 1 single plot device and for book 1 it's the Dealer and in Book 2 it's his not yet mentioned here friend. Which also annoys me a little bit because in book 1 we don't see nary a mention of his "friend" but in Book 2 he's always in Ozzy's thoughts and it's the same with the Dealer. Wherein he's very much a plot device and present in Book 1, almost like a cockroach that won't go away, but in Book 2 we barely if ever hear a peep from him.

I hope if the author plans on continuing this series for a Book 3 they'll get better at integrating their plot devices and doesn't make it so jarring every time they introduce a new plot device.

Otherwise a very good read and I love that Ozzy's sister is in a FxF stable marriage and it's being treated like it's just a normal everyday kind of thing. Also a little bit annoyed about the fact that his coat hasn't had a clean and a wash and he wears it everywhere with almost no maintenance XD and it hasn't crumbled to dust yet from the wear and tear (and stink). LOL

But seriously worth a good read 8D and a fun romp into the UF universe where instead of a hardboiled cop/detective or a teen suddenly discovering powers. We're more in the territory of Wiseman/Cunningman of a small town in the middle of nowhere doing his best to keep his place safe from the outside world while keeping order amongst the factions of supernatural in Lost Falls.

Chelonian Man says

I have been reading sci fi and some fantasy for over sixty years, with a break of 20 years when work and other commitments meant I hardly read anything, except on Holidays, when I did I frequently felt disappointed.

But over the past 10 years I've discovered some new (to me) fantastic authors.

But Chris Underwood who has written other books under another name, who's books were fantastic meant that as soon as I knew he had written 2 more under another name I bought them and downloaded them to my Kindle, fingers crossed, could the author (then Chris Strange) keep up the standard he had set on his previous books?

Well I really enjoyed Cunning Devil, big twists and turns, not knowing what's coming next to those great characters.

I've read Pay dirt before writing this review, I couldn't wait, both a fantastic read, with exciting interesting story lines.

G L says

Like a good episode of Supernatural

Short and sweet: I liked it. If you ever liked Supernatural or enjoy urban fantasy check this out.

Pros: Well written, good characterization. Loved the inclusion of some less popular mythos and creatures.

Cons: Someone posted that this was a new contender for fans of the Dresden series...it is not nearly funny enough for that. Also the synopsis is somewhat misleading; the MC is less of a badass who can shrug off bullets and more of a super lucky scrappy type.

Bookworm52732 says

I'll be clear, I paid for this book on a countdown deal. I'm leaving this review because I know how new authors struggle without reviews. I don't know the author but I hope he's slavishly working on book 2. I'm only 25% into the book yet I know it can't possibly tank bad enough for me to retract this review. His character building is wonderful--I'm not giving any spoilers, just wait until you meet Alcaraz, Lillian and the Dealer. It's a glorious experience reading a book by a new author that doesn't need editing! I love urban fantasy but most of it isn't fresh anymore. This is, with new twists on old species.

I finished the book today (3-22) and my above review still applies with the exception of the couple editing errors I saw, certainly not enough to detract from the story or require another edition be uploaded. The downside is what it the hell am I going to read now? *sigh*

P Nore says

Very original and interesting story and characters

I read a lot of fantasy so I'm used to similar variations on the same themes. Underwood created a magical

environment that stands out from the pack. Moreover the story is well written with well drawn characters that I enjoyed spending time with.

Gavin says

This was a decent debut book by a new author, though it sometimes felt like the more interesting story would be the main character's backstory, which the book references repeatedly as it goes along. Still, the main character is interesting, and the use of some lesser known mythological creatures makes for a nice change from the standard urban fantasy fare. I'm looking forward to seeing what the author does next.

Stephen Gaudet says

Very cunning, very cunning indeed

A very different type of urban fantasy, with a well developed world. Rarely do we see a hero wrestling with the ethics and consequences of his monster hunting. This book was a refreshing change of pace.
