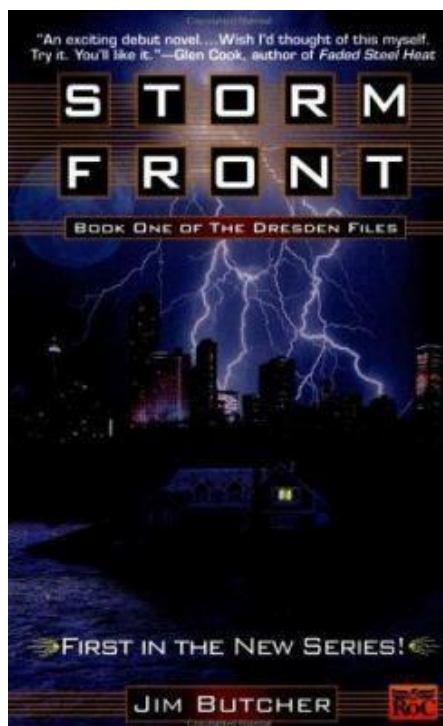




Storm Front

Jim Butcher

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Jim Butcher

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HARRY DRESDEN — WIZARD

Lost Items Found. Paranormal Investigations. Consulting. Advice. Reasonable Rates. No Love Potions, Endless Purses, or Other Entertainment.

Harry Dresden is the best at what he does. Well, technically, he's the *only* at what he does. So when the Chicago P.D. has a case that transcends mortal creativity or capability, they come to him for answers. For the "everyday" world is actually full of strange and magical things—and most don't play well with humans. That's where Harry comes in. Takes a wizard to catch a—well, whatever. There's just one problem. Business, to put it mildly, stinks.

So when the police bring him in to consult on a grisly double murder committed with black magic, Harry's seeing dollar signs. But where there's black magic, there's a black mage behind it. And now that mage knows Harry's name. And that's when things start to get interesting.

Magic - it can get a guy killed.

Storm Front Details

Date : Published April 2000 by Penguin ROC

ISBN : 9780451457813

Author : Jim Butcher

Format : Mass Market Paperback 322 pages

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

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Download and Read Free Online Storm Front Jim Butcher

From Reader Review Storm Front for online ebook

XX Sarah XX (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says

[Your bad Robin. See how well this went?:P (hide spoiler)]

Patrick says

I never got around to reading these books until *The Name of the Wind* was published. And when I first did, I was a little pissed. First person point of view. Magic based on thermodynamics. Gritty, realistic world. Arrogant wizard who doesn't know when to keep his mouth shut. It struck rather close to home....

Some people say that the first few books of this series were kinda rough. But I didn't notice anything particularly untoward about them. In fact, I burned through the whole series (11 books at the time) in about two weeks.

As a side note, James Marsters reads the audiobooks. And while his first one was a little rough, all the rest are very enjoyable.

Jessica ❀ ➡ Silverbow ➡ ❀ Rabid Reads-no-more says

2/7/18 - ON SALE for \$2.99:

<http://amzn.to/2yOviAo>

Reviewed by: Rabid Reads

3.5 stars

Lover of Urban Fantasy that I am, it may come as a surprise that before now . . . I have never actually . . . read Jim Butcher . . .

I KNOW. I'm such a poser.

In my defense, I haven't had much luck with male authors in the genre, and come on . . . we're up to what? FIFTEEN installments, with the SIXTEENTH already in the works, so yeah--DAUNTING. Cut me some slack. And besides, better late than never, right?

Also, I'm holding all of you partially to blame, b/c someone should have told me that around book 3 or 4 the series becomes seriously FAE oriented. So what's up with that, huh? I've said more than once that Fae are my FAEvorite, and based on the PUNS in *Storm Front* alone, I'm the one who should be feeling betrayed, not you.

snickers

Okay. I have adequately blame-shifted, so moving on.

I knew going into this that I'd be entering a longterm relationship with Harry Dresden. I was willing, but skeptical. Even with the image of **Paul Blackthorne** firmly planted in my subconscious, I knew from experience that commitment requires more than a pretty face.

Little did I know how right I was.

You see . . . longterm relationships are WORK. And often, the things you love the most about another person are the same things that enable that person to drive you NUTS.

I love how realistically flawed Harry is.

I hate how realistically flawed Harry is.

He gets himself into a tight spot, so he rationalizes:

"It wasn't as though I was actually going to be doing any black magic, I told myself. I was just going to be figuring out how it was done. There was a difference. I was helping the police in an investigation, nothing more."

But then he immediately calls his own bluff:

"Yeah, right. And maybe one of these days I'd go to an art museum and become well rounded."

He's also incredibly self-aware. He knows his weaknesses as well as his strengths, and he presents both sides very matter-of-factly. It was refreshing. There was no false modesty or self-deprecation. No melancholy search for affirmation. Harry Dresden just lays it all out in plain site, do with it what you will.

But that same openness allows you to see (over and over again) how hapless he is when it comes to the fairer sex . . .

You know . . . for a self-proclaimed, socially awkward wizard with very little relationship experience, Harry Dresden finds himself surrounded by beautiful, flirtatious women with uncommon frequency . . . *rolls eyes*

But then he gleefully reveals his boyish, mischievous side by the sheer delight he takes at pulling one over on someone who has underestimated him. *rolls eyes again, but this time while grinning*

One second I wanted to smack him on the back of the head, and the next, I wanted to ruffle his hair and kiss him on the cheek.

So that's Harry.

There's also Bob the (peeping) Skull, Toot the pizza-loving faery, Mister the cat, Mac the surly pubkeep, Murphy the hard case female cop, and glimpses into possible future interactions with a literal faery godmother and the mysteriously intimidating White Council.

The plot was . . . eh . . . *shrugs* I'm giving it a pass this time, b/c I'm pretty sure a lot of groundwork was

laid for future installments, and while this was a fairly entertaining read, it was also fairly predictable, and Bad Guy was just a stock power hungry Bad Guy.

On the world-building front, we were given a lot of hints, but nothing substantial, but that was okay, b/c so far, we've only been in the real world, so as much as I'd like to know more about the Nevernever (RIGHT NOW), there's plenty of time for that when we get there.

Overall, I definitely see this series being worth it (and not just b/c if I read this one, I will have read every, single one of the Big Deal UF series . . . which may or may not be a personal goal . . . *shrugs noncommittally*). Harry Dresden is a realistically likable character who I have a suspicion will turn out to be quite formidable, and Butcher lays a promising foundation with this first installment. Will it live up to my expectations? Only one way to find out . . .

My other reviews for this series:

Fool Moon (The Dresden Files, #2)

Grave Peril (The Dresden Files, #3)

Summer Knight (The Dresden Files, #4) by Jim Butcher

Amber says

This book was terrible. The kind of terrible where I had to force myself to read the last half in a day just so I could be done reading it. The kind of terrible that made me reevaluate all the ratings of books I have previously given because I remembered what type of book I save one star ratings for. The kind of terrible where I roll my eyes at least once per page. The kind of terrible where I literally throw the book across the room when I'm done both out of frustration and out of the primitive impulse that I needed to get it the hell away from me as fast as possible. *That* kind of terrible.

There was not a *single* aspect of this book that I felt was done well. It tried to be a fantasy/detective story (which I believe is an intriguing concept), but it kinda failed at being both. It certainly wasn't a great fantasy story; the whole appeal of this type of fantasy is seeing how magic is performed and, more importantly, how it interacts with our world. But while the rules of Butcher's magic system were somewhat well explained when they were actually brought up, I never really felt like the system as a whole was clearly defined, and because of this, I was never entirely sure what was and wasn't possible. Sometimes rules would be established, only to be ignored later. (view spoiler) And I swear that in just about every situation in which Harry had to use magic (and there weren't as many as I thought there would be considering this is a book about a **wizard**) he would say/think something along the lines of "I'm too exhausted/wounded to produce enough energy for magic." Yet he would still somehow manage to create magic. Every. Time. It got to the point where I really had no idea what his limits actually were or where he was pulling this energy from. (view spoiler), I had to read under the assumption that wizards can just pull some hidden reserve of energy out of their ass whenever they are in trouble, which both destroys the tension in these situations and completely confuses me as to what wizards are and aren't capable of doing. The magic that was produced in this book wasn't even that innovative or inspired: fireballs, protective walls, demon summoning, a couple of objects thrown around, etc, but nothing was used in a way I hadn't seen done somewhere else (and usually executed better). (view spoiler) Besides that, the magic just felt unoriginal and poorly defined.

This book wasn't a particularly good mystery either, in my opinion. For starters, I found myself actually

bored more often than not, which I think should be pretty hard to pull off considering we are following the exploits of a wizard who is solving murders. How do you make that boring? Beats the hell out of me, but Butcher managed it. There were only really three or four scenes that I would label as action/fight sequences. In 352 pages. Okay; I kinda expected more out of a wizard story, but whatever. Maybe the story is about all the exciting detecting he gets to do? No. He does little in the way of detective work besides make phone calls (the man makes *a lot* of frickin' phone calls), which is, you know, obviously what I was excited to read about going in. Not interrogating people or finding clues. Just phone calls. Other than that, he just kinda muddles around until a piece of the puzzle falls in his lap, which leads to point two: the revelations in this mystery were either blatantly obvious to everyone **but** the protagonist (view spoiler) or the evidence and background information leading up to it were so vague that I have no idea how anyone could realistically have connected the pieces. (view spoiler) Their reasoning felt forced and contrived, and I'm not sure how I could ever have reasoned that out on my own, which I think is bad mystery. When pieces are fit together, it should make sense with the background information given. We should go "I can't believe I missed that!" instead of "Oh. Alrighty then." The puzzle pieces shouldn't have to be forcefully rammed together.

But while not accomplishing either of the things it tried to be certainly didn't help this book's cause, the *real* reason I couldn't make myself like it is that fact that I really couldn't stand a single character. There were only a couple of characters, in my opinion, that even had the hint of a personality. Besides Murphy and Dresden himself (and possibly Bob the Skull, who was the only character I didn't want to punch in the mouth), the characters were either boring clichés (Carmichael, Mac, et al.) or sexist clichés (every single female character including, to a lesser degree, Murphy herself). But while Murphy was sometimes badass/a strong female character, her good qualities were vastly overwhelmed by her stereotypical ones and the fact she was a bully more often than not. Almost every time she interacted with Harry she either insulted, threatened, or physically abused him. Harry acted like it wasn't a big deal and that she was really a good friend even though she's aggressive, but I don't buy into that. (view spoiler)

And now for the man himself: Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden. Wizard extraordinaire and perhaps one of the most unlikeable characters I have ever encountered. He was (mostly) a competent wizard, but he was not a competent human being. The numerous aspects of his personality that I could not stand are perhaps best organized into a list.

1)His freaking **chauvinism**- I had heard about this going in, and I *told* myself I wouldn't let it bother me because that was just an aspect of this particular character. But it did bother me. A LOT. Part of my problem is that I expected *deliberate* chauvinism, chauvinism that was fictional. I mean, there were a few instances of a character pointing out Harry's tendency toward this, but most of the chauvinism was very subtle, and if Butcher's otherwise blunt, straightforward writing in this book is any indication of his skill, then I honestly don't believe he was capable of deliberately making the chauvinism this subtle. For example, almost every time a woman was described, the adjective "feminine" was used. "With a feminine pout..." or "with a movement that oozed feminine grace" or "she wore a look that made her seem more feminine." Every time he had an interaction with a woman. EVERY TIME. I'm pretty sure there was not a single female character that wasn't described as being overly feminine in some way. Another example would be how every woman was described almost exclusively by her looks, which were usually very "feminine": "Her delicate little lady's hands..." and so on, and they were all beautiful or drop dead sexy in one way or another. Besides Murphy, none of them had anything but the shadow of a personality beyond their looks besides the usual tropes: hooker with a heart of gold, timid housewife, etc. So I guess all of the female characters existed for the sole purpose of being sexy. There was even a scene where Harry had "accidentally" invited two women over at the same time; he was going out on a date with one, and the other was going to give him information on the case. It would seem logical enough that you would explain the situation to the one you are going out on a date with (who arrived first), especially seeing as how you weren't intending to go out with both of them. But Harry didn't tell her! He just ran around trying to get ready thinking "Boy, things are going to get catty in here." Because, you know, every woman reacts to these situations with a cat-fight. And the whole

circumstance was not only chauvinistic, but it reeked of some sort of sexual fantasy. It kinda felt like the opposite of that female teenage love triangle bullshit. Two women are about to have a catfight over me! Well, I see you aren't taking any steps whatsoever to prevent it, either. Don't flatter yourself, asshole. God, these situations and examples just didn't feel all that fictional to me. Whether deliberate or not, though, they annoyed the hell out of me. It is hard to like a character who constantly views themselves as superior than the opposite sex.

2)He was a tool- Sorry, but it's true. Passive characters also tend to annoy the hell out of me, and Harry Dresden was one of them. Every character ordered him around in one way or another, and he usually just took it. (view spoiler), and he barely puts up any resistance. "Doing this will probably get me killed, but okay." You aren't going to at least try to explain that you have very legitimate reasons not to do this? "She is probably just going out with me to get information, but okay." STOP BEING A TOOL! "I can't say no to a damsel in distress." First of all, this brings us back to the chauvinism complaint. Second, stop letting people walk all over you! It is hard to respect a character who is an active doormat.

3)His "snarky wisecracks"- These were sort of a hit and miss for me; sometimes they were hilarious, but more often they were annoying as hell. The problem was he did them ALL. THE. TIME. And because Harry was the first-person narrator, these "witticisms" weren't limited to dialogue. We had the joy of riding inside his head where we were able to listen to his snark 24-7. It just didn't work for me. It was partly because most of the time these wisecracks were not funny or charming. He's almost like a comic relief character without the serious foil character to balance him out, and comic relief characters by themselves are often more annoying than charming. Look at the fourth Pirates movie On Stranger Tides. Jack Sparrow crossed the line from witty, charming, and funny to annoying as all shit. That was because having comic relief characters without their foil DOES. NOT. WORK. Listening to it constantly isn't funny; it's annoying. Shut up. Most of his humor was also very juvenile and immature, and he would sometimes wisecrack at rather inappropriate times. (view spoiler) First of all, that isn't even funny. Not even a little. That is elementary school "You have cooties!" level humor. This is a book for freaking adults. It contains mature themes, swear words, and a dark tone and is *marketed* for adults. So do you seriously expect your audience to laugh at "You're gross!" playground humor? Second, (view spoiler) Very telling of Harry's character. And I don't like what I see.

4)His strange combination of self-deprecation and arrogance-

Okay. On the one hand, he would constantly put himself down and feel bad for stupid reasons. For example, he was getting vital information out of this one woman; talking about that topic made her upset, and she started crying. And he kept thinking about how horrible a person he was. You are not a horrible person for getting information that will save countless lives including your own. It wasn't like he was beating it out of her or anything; it was just a hard subject for her to talk about. You aren't a monster; get over it. Or when he felt bad for making another woman cry (there are a lot of crying women. Aaaaand back to the chauvinism) because he had revealed something about her while defending himself from her murder attempt. Again he felt like a horrible person. STOP IT! Why do you feel bad? You did what you had to do to stop her from **killing you**. If someone tried to stab me and then started crying when they failed, I doubt I would feel that sympathetic. For a badass wizard, he was pretty oversensitive.

But then on the other hand, bafflingly, he would show extreme circumstances of narcissism. He would feel bad for stupid reasons, but whenever he did something good or even slightly heroic, he couldn't seem to do so without acting like he was a martyr. "Did you guys see what I just did? Wasn't that heroic of me?" He couldn't seem to do anything vaguely laudable without giving himself a giant pat on the back for doing it. Ugh. Harry Dresden is just not the type of person I would like or respect, which is kind of a problem considering this is a series following his exploits.

To make a long, rambling rant short, I felt an extreme abhorrence for this book. It wasn't a groundbreaking fantasy, an exciting mystery, or a tale about a character I care to follow. I have multiple other issues with this book (like the writing style, featuring such gems as "I stood there in silence for a moment, but said

nothing."), but I've covered the ones that well and truly broke the story for me. I've heard that the series gets "really good" about four books in, but I don't think I will be finding out. Unless Harry gets a complete personality overhaul, I just don't see it happening. I'm not sitting through any more of Butcher's unoriginality or misogyny, thank you very much.

Nataliya says

Let me tell you how a **wisecracking Chicago wizard-for-hire with the most rotten luck imaginable** won a permanent spot in my heart, making me a **devout Dresdenite**.

'Twas a week before USMLE Step 1, the most important test for any medical school student as it pretty much determines which medical specialty you are supposedly smart enough to pursue. Basically, the stakes were high and the stress reached the previously unknown heights. By then my poor average-sized brain has been fully stuffed with all the medical trivia it was able to handle. ***Have you ever met an overcaffeinated, freaked out, sleep-deprived, shaky med student with bloodshot eyes and propensity to quote at you random basic medical science facts in a high-pitched shaky voice?*** If so, it was probably before Step 1, and this is an honest representation of what my friends and I looked like:

Lovely, no?

Anyway, physically unable to study any more, I stumbled upon this book on my Kindle app. **And this is how Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden, he of the magical staff and a black leather duster, entered my life.** Suddenly the anxiety was gone, and instead of *omg-it's-test-time-and-I-did-not-study-enough* customary nightmares I dreamed about Chicago magical world that night. In the week that followed, I got through most of the series - 11 books at that point in time. The stress was gone with the help of Harry Dresden's adventures - and on the test day I beat my goal score by one whopping point! :D

"A man's magic demonstrates what sort of person he is, what is held most deeply inside of him. There is no truer gauge of a man's character than the way in which he employs his strength, his power. I was not a murderer [...] I was Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden. I was a wizard. Wizards control their power. They don't let it control them. And wizards don't use magic to kill people. They use it to discover, to protect, to mend, to help. Not to destroy."

I loved this book despite all its imperfections. **Harry Dresden, a wisecracking, self-deprecating, Star Wars-references-dropping, never-knowing-when-to-shut-up, and unwaveringly good guy with a penchant for attracting trouble was someone I'd love to be friends with.** I even forgave him the annoying and eyeroll-inducing case of old-fashioned chivalry towards women. Plus, his assistant is an erotica-obsessed formerly-evil spirit living in a skull - how can anyone not love that?

"Harry," Bob drawled, his eye lights flickering smugly, "what you know about women, I could juggle."

This book is a **quick and delightfully pulpy read**, modeling Harry's personality and adventures on the **hardboiled crime noir detective stories with a generous helping of humor** set against the paranormal background. It does not aspire to be life-changing or profound, it does not try to be the capital-L literature (that was an excuse to use my favorite Pratchett quote: *"Susan hated Literature. She'd much prefer to read a*

good book."). All it does is take you on a fun and exciting ride, and that's what I love about it. Yes, sometimes it falls flat, or tries too hard, or gets a bit full of itself, but the feeling of sheer fun that Jim Butcher must have had while writing this story is palpable on each page, and it's awesome!

"Paranoid? Probably. But just because you're paranoid doesn't mean there isn't an invisible demon about to eat your face."

This is a "freshman" book, and is not perfect, but it is nevertheless really good. Jim Butcher's narrative voice gets more confident and more polished as the series progresses, especially beginning with book 4. But it was enough to keep me completely engrossed in Harry Dresden's world and read eleven books of the series in a little over a week. I love the Chicago mystical world, I love the characters, I love the fast, even breakneck pace, I love the detective noir touch, I love Butcher's take on mythologies. **I absolutely adore the wisecracking** - to me, it never felt annoying, maybe because it's a big part of my own (I assume, completely charming) personality.

"“You don't go walking into the proverbial lion's den lightly. You start with a good breakfast.”"

For all of that, I easily give it **four stars**. *(I'd be tempted to call Harry Dresden my literary boyfriend, but as I learned from the sequels, nothing good can possibly come out of that).*

"I don't want to live in a world where the strong rule and the weak cower. I'd rather make a place where things are a little quieter. Where trolls stay the hell under their bridges and where elves don't come swooping out to snatch children from their cradles. Where vampires respect the limits, and where the faeries mind their p's and q's. My name is Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden. Conjure by it at your own risk. When things get strange, when what goes bump in the night flicks on the lights, when no one else can help you, give me a call. I'm in the book."

Lyn says

Urban fantasy is a sub-genre that I have been very much enjoying for a few of years and Jim Butcher's Harry Dresden series usually tops the lists of readers' favorites and it has proven wildly popular.

For good reason.

Butcher first published Storm Front in 2000 and it was in this first edition that Butcher introduced readers to Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden, Wizard.

Butcher describes his protagonist as a kind of occult private investigator, being chiefly active in the Chicago area. Dresden's advertisement is as follows:

WIZARD

Lost items found. Paranormal Investigations.

Consulting. Advice. Reasonable Rates.

No Love Potions, Endless Purses, or Other Entertainment.

I'm coming to the party late, as I write this review Storm Front has over 160,000 ratings on Goodreads, so a lot of fantasy fans are already well acquainted with Harry and what a cool series Butcher has created. To

date, there are over 15 novels and scores of related media, and there are two upcoming novels already planned.

Butcher's talent was in creating a charismatic, cool urban fantasy character and then placing him (and the stories) in the category of mystery / thriller. This provides an almost endless assortment of possible magical / occult / fantasy settings for Harry to explore and Scooby Doo mysteries to solve.

Butcher's prose is evenly paced and his world building and magic rules forming skills are in good form and I will likely read more from him.

Kat Kennedy says

The Dresden Files is one of those books that's intimidating to approach. It has a hard-core fan group that will scream its praises from the top of the roof. Usually, I would approach with extreme caution. I rarely read a series when I've been assured that it gets good after six books. When people tell me that, I simply quietly encourage them to read the Fever Series and avert eye contact.

However, after a discussion regarding male readers and writers of the Urban Fantasy genre, I felt I should give this series a go since the UF male demographic tends to be on the small side.

The Dresden Files has an immersive, interesting world. It's magical lore is possibly the only original thing about it. Which doesn't say that much for the book.

It's exactly the same half-assed compliment you'd give to Meyers...

Don't get me wrong. Harry is a solid, interesting character and the mystery and action in this book was great. There were plenty of tense moments, laugh-out-loud moments, and clever, witty escapes.

But that doesn't mean that anything in this book was actually original.

Paranormal private eye? If there ever was a cliché in this genre - there it is. Can't they ever have a different occupation? If you have some magical ability is this your only career choice? Honestly. I think Anita Blake, Rachel Morgan and Harry Dresden would make GREAT pizza deliverers!

[image error]

Guaranteed they'd still manage to get in a shitload of trouble though...

What's the draw to being private detectives or retainers for police investigations? They're always struggling with money, almost getting killed to solve cases that don't pay, for people who don't like them and never really trust them. Insurance salesmen, guys. If people are going to treat you like dirt, you might as well be fucking them over equally as bad!

Besides, most of the characters in this book could have come out of ANY mystery novel about a rogue private eye solving mysteries and helping the police.

You have:

- 1) The toughass female cop with a heart of gold.
- 2) The asshole cop who gets in the way and hates the protagonist for no reason.
- 3) The surly bartender who knows everything and likes the protagonist. Usually more than he likes most people.
- 4) The sexy reporter who flirts with the male protagonist in order to get leads for a story.
- 5) The male protagonist who is awkward with the ladies, self-proclaimed non-lothario but still has at least one woman through themselves at him.

I appreciate characterization that encompasses flaws. Sometimes though, being *too nice* is a character flaw I get sick of in books. That's like going to a job interview and listing workaholic as a personality flaw.

Listen, Dresden. If someone explicably involves you in a murder case, doesn't give you enough information, doesn't inform you that they're an accomplice to the crimes, knows that your involvement will surely mean your death, and then tells you to go away and die somewhere else because they don't want your heart to burst out of your chest and stain their lovely carpet - YOU'RE OFFICIALLY ALLOWED TO BE A DICK TO THEM.

You know what you're not allowed to do? Feel like an asshole for getting information out of them that will save your life. That is NOT an asshole thing to do!

And maybe you don't have to put your ass on the line to spare every single other person when you're likely to die as a result.

[image error]

For goodness sake, let the immortal wizard and the warrior ranger take the fucking ring to mordor!

Just sayin' is all...

Over all, I liked this book. I will read more of these books - but I AM still waiting for the magic to hit me and turn me into a crazed Dresden fangirl.

[image error]

Yep, can't wait for the day...

Markus says

"My name is Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden. Conjure by it at your own risk. I'm a wizard. I work out of an office in midtown Chicago. As far as I know, I'm the only openly practicing professional wizard in the country. You can find me in the yellow pages, under 'Wizards.' Believe it or not, I'm the only one there."

Harry Dresden is Chicago's only wizard. One day he is contacted by a nervous woman who wants him to investigate the mysterious disappearance of her husband, whom she thinks has dabbled in the forbidden arts of magic. Shortly afterwards, Harry's contacts in the police summon him to a scene where a couple has been brutally and horribly murdered without any trace of the killer. The investigation takes him all across Chicago and its underworld, to encounters with crime lords and supernatural beings, all the while being observed by the watchful eyes of the White Council, who think that Harry himself is behind it all...

Harry Dresden is quite an interesting protagonist. Despite being a wizard, he's incredibly... well, normal, and he lives and acts just like any other guy would. He has his good sides and bad sides and plenty of flaws, and despite that he's not particularly complex, it's refreshing to read a book from the viewpoint of a guy like this.

Sadly, Harry is the only real character in the book. *All* the others are completely shallow and one-dimensional. Most of them are stereotypical and simplistic, and the female characters in particular are badly portrayed. And while some of these characters are really interesting despite all that, it's just not enough.

Storm Front is a book which attempts to do quite a lot and falls a bit short in almost every area. It's straightforward and predictable, lacks an organised plot, and contains whole chapters that are unfortunately quite boring. As a murder mystery, it lacks both style and suspense. As an fantasy novel, it's not much better.

But of course, there are positive things to say as well. It seems I spent two paragraphs mostly slaughtering the book, and that won't do at all. Because it was an enjoyable book to read. Despite its obvious issues, it was certainly entertaining. Sometimes it can even be a real page-turner. But like any expansion novel or any form of pulp fiction, it's primarily just mindless entertainment. It's not particularly complex, it's not particularly well-written and it's not particularly exciting. But if the opinion of the general public is correct and this is one of the weakest books in the series, then I am definitely looking forward to reading the others.

Of course, I should mention that urban fantasy is a long, long way from being my favourite genre. It's been a genre I've been skeptical to for quite some time, yet I still find it enjoyable occasionally. So if you're normally a fan of urban fantasy, I would recommend this book. If not, I'd say skip it.

Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says

3.5 stars. Final review, first posted on Fantasy Literature:

Storm Front has been on my TBR list for ages, but I've dawdled in picking it up, given the many disappointed to mildly encouraging reviews for this first book in the DRESDEN FILES series, a mix of urban fantasy and the noir detective genre. A lot of fans of this series say it really only picks up with the 4th book, *Summer Knight*. (I tried reading *Summer Knight* out of order last year, and doing that didn't really pan out for me. Apparently you have to live and grow with this series, along with Jim Butcher's writing skills.) But a couple of weeks ago I ran across *Storm Front* on my local library's shelves, so I decided it was finally time to give it a shot.

Harry Dresden is a down-on-his-luck wizard trying to make a living as a magical private investigator, in a version of our world where magic has recently become more open and powerful. He's an occasional consultant to the police on crimes with a paranormal aspect, and this latest job they call him in on ? a mobster and a call girl violently murdered by magical means in the middle of the act ? is a doozy. Unfortunately, several key players think Harry did it! It's highly inconvenient when you're one of the only people who have the magical ability to carry out a particular murder. Harry's only got a limited time to prove them wrong ... especially since several people would find it extremely convenient if Harry were dead.

I thought *Storm Front* was reasonably good for an urban fantasy and a series starter, though I suspect my lowered expectations had to do with my ending the book feeling pleasantly surprised. The subplots, including a Chicago mobster intent on keeping Harry out of the case, a woman with a missing husband who may be teaching himself black magic, Harry's troubles with the wizardly White Council, and more, were well integrated into the overall mystery. I appreciated that Jim Butcher creates an unusually interesting backstory around Harry Dresden, fleshing out his world, without feeling the need to fully reveal all yet.

Don't expect a whole lot ? just a fun, if sometimes quite dark, paranormal mystery with which to while away a couple of hours ? and I think you won't be disappointed. I plan to continue with the series, although it's not my highest reading priority.

Content notes: violence and some sexual content.

Robin (Bridge Four) says

Sale Alert Books 1-6 together for \$7.99 on 29Nov17 on Amazon

The buddy with a few of my friends at Buddies Books and Baubles

Harry Dresden is not your *sauvé* hero type, he has trouble with money, women, demons and keeping his clothing on. But he does have actual business cards.

Actually the clothing problem seemed almost worse than some of his other dilemmas. **You try fighting evil naked or in sweats and cowboy boots and see how well you fair.** He does seem to have a few wizard tricks up his sleeve and a pretty cool lab equipped with an awesome helper trapped in a skull named Bob.

I really didn't expect much from this book as it is the first in the series and really just an introduction to the world. That is all you get a simple intro. Much of the story is plot driven and a few things are expanded on along the way but most things are really just touched on briefly so that I was never overwhelmed but information. I'm fine with that as long as I can understand what is going on in the story and I definitely could.

Harry is helping the police discover who with supernatural powers killed a mob henchman and an escort in a compromising position. Harry has about three days to figure it out since the magical community is pretty sure he is the primary suspect. I guess wizards get a bad wrap.

The beginning starts a little slow but after about the 40% mark all the fun really starts and it is a pretty solid ride to the end. Enough hints are dropped about Harry and his past to make him pretty interesting and so I'm looking forward to seeing how that starts to play out throughout the series.

All and all a pretty good start and better than I expected because rumor has it that the series doesn't really pick up until book 3 or 4. What I do know for sure is

Audio Note James Marsters (Spike from Buffy the Vampire Slayer) does the audio and he was fantastic. It made my listening experience even better.

Jesse says

You know, the premise of this book actually sounded good. A wizard P.I., sure why not. I like wizards and I

like P.I.s, so what could be the problem. The problem was I over estimated this author's abilities.

The main character is like some kind of emotionally retarded uber-geek's idealized life. He lives in a basement and subbasement. He ALWAYS wears a black duster and cowboy boots (even when he's wearing sweats and a t-shirt). He has an abnormally large alley cat that likes to drink coke and doesn't get violently ill from the caffeine. He can't get anywhere with women, for no real reason at all. The first woman that broke his heart, he actually killed (but for good reasons, I mean she was evil). I could go on and on. The protagonist of this story is an immature weiner. He is a walking dorky cliché, that feels like he is some kind of Peter Parker wizard. Constantly bemoaning the weight of the world on his shoulders, even when it's actually not on his shoulders. Add to this the character's inability to have basic levels of trust for his friends/allies, lack of common sense, and a very low level of intelligence for someone that relies on brains and willpower for their strengths. And you end up with a guy that is very annoying to read in most any situation.

Now throw that character into a Noir Detective style situation. This is not a confident man, nor is he a physically tough man, and he lacks much in the way of street or even book smarts. I find it highly unlikely that this guy should have survived past the first 100 pages, let alone through all the other blunders he makes through the entire book. Take a gander back to the beginnings of the Noir Detective genre, and you'd be ashamed that this man besmirches the genre's good traditions. Sam Spade has no magic what so ever, but he could quite easily have out smarted and out fought this guy with his bare fists.

Don't even get me started on how annoying magic is in this book. Not since the magic of Terry Brooks' Shanara books have I felt magic meant little to nothing. This guy is constantly like, oh shit I don't have my wand or staff or special ring, so if I do my magic now I'll kill everyone. What the fucking good is magic that can't be used unless you've got your stick of power. If magic is going to be used the way it is in this book, as basically a crutch to hold the rest of the weak aspects of the book up (as it is in most non-awesome fantasy); then at least have it around to do its job and make cool things happen.

So to close, this book is immature and not fun to read. There was a time in my life when I would have found this book awesome, when I was going through that phase of life where you're 13, emotionally retarded, and just discovered AD&D 2nd edition. Which there is nothing wrong with, that's a phase that me and most other nerds went through. Then we grew out of it, because we matured in to adults. But this book isn't be lauded to me as "great writing" by 13 year old nerds and geeks, its being held up as a "Great Book" by adults, and that's who its marketed to. Look if you like this book and you're in Junior high then fine (though I could recommend better things for you to read that are aimed at your age group), but not adults. If your an adult and you think this is even just "good" writing (and again I'll state that most tell me its "great" writing) then I think you need to try reading some other stuff by much better authors. Go find and read Neil Gaiman, Joe Hill, Joe R. Lansdale, Walter Mosley, Warren Ellis, or Charles Stross. These are all writers that have written either modern fantasy/Horror or Noir and/or Crime fiction, so they are working on some similar concepts. Then if you don't find those to be far better book written by actual good writers, well then I'm just going to have to say that you and I may be from different planets or something.

This book is not fun to read. Its poorly constructed. The plot is about as complex as 6th grade math, and less original than that. The characters are 2 dimensional at best. Magic is used a focal point of the story rather than something to enhanced the flavor of original and real feeling plots and characters. At one point the author describes someone by saying he looks like Sean Connery's character from the Highlander, instead of I don't know just describing the dude as having a pony tale (since that was where those two character's physical similarities ended). Most of his other descriptions of characters are like police descriptions of people being given to me by the narrator which completely takes you out of the narrative. The author at one point even wrote "I was a wizard" when his point of view character is lamenting about going into a house or building to solve a problem and I was thinking "wait did you stop being a wizard at some point?". If you're

going to write in the first person perspective then learn to write in the present. Of course one would expect a decent editor could have fixed this, but I'm going to assume that decent editors get assigned to decent writers. Look, its not a good book. I didn't make it a bad book, it just is. I'm told that the book get much better after or on book three (so some day I hope to get a copy of his second book for free and see, though I have my doubts since I've read enough bad authors in my day to know they don't usually start becoming good authors, just more experienced bad authors) but that's a really spurious argument since I need ALL book I read to be good if not great right away. I'm not going to recommend an author to someone because his first work was really awful but if you just read two more books by him he gets good. Well then perhaps he should have just started with book three and spared us the bad books. Its bad and I don't recommend it to anyone who's not reading it as a goof to lampoon it in there own head. End of statement.

Hannah Greendale says

Click here to watch a video review of this book on my channel, *From Beginning to Bookend*.

Bill Kerwin says

The first volume in the Dresden Files series introduces us to our hero, Harry Dresden, a wizard who is also a private investigator and police consultant. It is written in a breezy, colloquial style that makes you want to keep reading, but except for a few interesting magical twists on the private dick genre (e.g., Harry's tipster is a faery, lured with a bowl of milk and honey and confined within a magic circle until Harry gets the information he needs), the book is thin on plot, lacking in wit and deficient in interesting characters.

Maybe they get better. I might read the second volume sometime.

Then again, I might not.

Siria says

I'm not going to pull any punches. This book is a misogynistic piece of shit.

All I knew about it before I picked it up was the very basic premise—a wizard in modern-day Chicago, who works as a sort of detective—and that it had picked up quite a cult following. I was expecting to really like it, but before I got to the end of the first chapter, my eyebrows had risen to meet my hairline. I kept reading out of some misguided expectation that things would get better, that there couldn't possibly be such a sustained level of misogyny coming from both the character and the authorial voice. Oh, how wrong I was.

The main character, Harry Dresden, repeatedly tells us that he's a chauvinist, yes, and shows no signs of wanting to change that. It would have been difficult enough for me to get into a novel with such an unpalatable main character, but the level of *narrative endorsement* of his viewpoint nauseated me. The female characters in the book are there only to cry, seduce, and occasionally mother. Some of them are presented as having power of their own, but if you take a second glance at them, that power is always

represented as secondary to male power, or a sham. Karrin Murphy is a hard-bitten homicide detective and Harry's friend, true; but she's undermined to constant references as to how "belligerent" she is, how small and lady-like her hands are, how she *cries* when he won't share information with her. Let me repeat that: *cries*. Bianca, the vampire—sorry, vampiress! must use appropriately gendered language!—is defeated because Dresden can see how she's truly ugly beneath all that fake beauty, and so she's humiliated and he can overpower her! All of them use their sexuality to get ahead—or try to, because clearly Harry is just too intelligent to fall for those silly women's wiles!

How about an explanation for the motive behind a murder:

I gestured toward the room. "Because you can't do something that bad without a whole lot of hate," I said. "Women are better at hating than men. They can focus it better, let it go better. Hell, witches are just plainmeaner than wizards. This feels like feminine vengeance of some kind to me."

Or how about one prostitute talking about another:

She shook her head. "No, no. Nothing like that. That wasn't her style. She was sweet. A lot of girls get like—They get pretty jaded, Mr. Dresden. But it never really touched her. She made people feel better about themselves somehow." She looked away. "I could never do that. All I did was get them off."

This isn't just Dresden being sexist. This isn't just showing us the thought processes of an un-reconstructed chauvinist. This isn't even just using noir tropes—because god knows there are a thousand and one ways of subverting those and reimagining them. This is holding up a clichéd, smug asshole of a main character as the kind of man every guy wants to be, and the kind of man every woman wants to fuck, as a mirror for how Butcher thinks. It's laden with sexist stereotypes that irritate me and in case you couldn't guess, it made me *very, very angry*.

The book also fails on pretty much every technical level I can think of: I have no idea why it's set in Chicago, or why the location was emphasised, because there's absolutely no sense of place to it. For all Butcher told us, it could all have been taking place in Seattle, or Denver, or Kansas City. The plot is silly, illogical, and by rights everyone should have been dead of Stupid within the first two chapters. The writing style displayed an absolute cloth ear for language. I'd imagine that he was trying to recreate the terse, staccato style of noir detective stories, but didn't realise that in order to do so, you need more than short, simplistic sentences. You need to be attuned to the rhythm of what you're writing, to know how to turn a handful of words to best effect, and Butcher neither knows how to do that, nor how to write realistic sounding dialogue at all.

I have not read such offensive drivel in a long, long time. Avoid.

Mike (the Paladin) says

Okay, some who have looked at my other reviews will immediately note I gave this book 5 stars which I

noted earlier I save for very special books. I plan to give the Dresden books (so far anyway) 5 stars. Why? Well while they are not Dumas or Dickens (but then again...I'm not sure I'd regularly be giving Dickens 5 stars, how much Dickens can we all really take anyway???) these are wonderful absorbing reads. Special Books.

I won't be giving a long synopsis of each book... I will say they are an original idea in what is rapidly becoming a glutted genre. That would be "Urban Fantasy". So far I've found a lot of Urban Fantasy I like, and a lot more I'd pitch on the discard pile of literary history.

Dresden is a wizard...he maintains a downtown office and advertises in the yellow pages (no parties please). He has problems with the Sidhe (pronounced "Shee") (some would say "fairy" but that is insulting to the very powerful Sidhe royalty...like calling Queen Elizabeth a "babe" or worse). It seems his mother had some sort of dealings with the Sidhe and left him a sort of Sidhe godmother (Bad fairy godmother????)... And that's only the tip of the iceberg.

No spoilers...but in Storm Front Dresden will meet a sorcerer who has some extremely violent and nasty tendencies, magic drugs, biased superiors, and..... well, anymore and I might give a spoiler...read the book, you'll love it!

If your only exposure to Dresden has been the short lived TV series then you have a great surprise in store and a whole list of great books to look forward to (in a way I envy you). While the TV series wasn't awful and I too mourned it's demise (there is so little on the idiot box that actually makes it to a decent standard of "watchability" [made up word, I know:]) it doesn't come close to the books...

This/these are wonderful books. Definitely 5 Stars.
