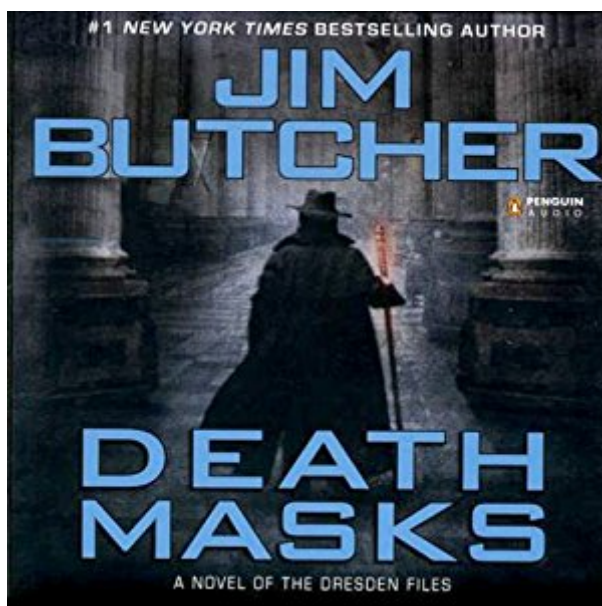


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Death Masks: The Dresden Files, Book 5



Synopsis

Harry Dresden, Chicago's only practicing professional wizard, is hired by a mysterious priest to find the stolen shroud of Turin. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Death Masks is the fifth novel in the Dresden Files by Jim Butcher. It takes place some time after the events of Summer Knight. The book begins rather unusually with Dresden being part of a daytime TV talk show in an effort to get information out of a contact. But things result in him being on-air with a priest all the way from the Vatican and a Duke of the Red Court, Ortega. He's there to issue Dresden with a formal challenge for a duel as a way to result the war between the Red Court of vampires and the Council of Wizards. And Dresden decides to accept the challenge for now. Immediately after, the Vatican representative has a case for Dresden that involves retrieving a stolen relic - the legendary Shroud of Turin. And thus Dresden is off to a great start in this little adventure. The book immediately has Dresden juggling between figuring out how to deal with the duel with Ortega and the mystery of the Shroud. And the case of the Shroud also involves Fallen ones also in pursuit of the Shroud and three of the Knights of the Cross being active in the city all at once. They're convinced that should Dresden pursue the Shroud, he'll die. But it's not like a prophecy of death is going to dissuade our stubborn wizard from his duty. A lot of the Dresden books involve a pretty respectable segment of the story dedicated to a case or a mystery and the way that Dresden pursues a case is only magical in its mundane simplicity at times. He doesn't resort to

using magic first in order to find answers. Instead he puzzles through things, asks questions and generally does the necessary legwork to get the job done. And I like how all that blends in with his magical stuff. Now to have a truly demonic antagonist and these three Knights of the Cross (including Michael) did make for an interesting exploration of a new side of this world. And it's not like the Knights are significantly magical. Sure they use swords as their primary weapon in this time of guns and explosives. But then they also wear bullet-proof armor and shock plates in order to augment the protection offered by their faith with some rather human defenses against more conventional weapons. It made for a nice contrast. And while I did enjoy the mystery side of things, a lot of the novel felt a little cramped, maybe because we had new characters like the other Knights but not enough space to tell more of their stories. So we tend to have them appearing at random points when danger is near because when else will the knights be called into action, right? Grave Masks isn't the greatest of the books but it was nice to go deeper into new territory with this exploration of religious icons and the powers they have in this magically active world. And we see Dresden being less silly than he has been at times in past books, and that's certainly welcome.

3.5 Who Else Could Want To Kill Harry Stars Five books in and the world and characters keep expanding a little at a time. I enjoy reading this series to a certain extent but the thing is Harry isn't the reason. Mostly I like all of the side characters more than him. Each doesn't get a lot of page time but the glimpses I see of them well usually the side character steals the show from Harry, at least for me. It isn't specifically Harry's fault I mean sure he is a wizard with a snappy wit, pop culture references and a keen sense of humor in the face of danger but here is a list of the side characters that make an appearance. BOB - Although he is a little out of it this time and didn't get his normal page time for banter the spirit/lab assistant to Harry housed in a skull almost always steals the show when on page. Micheal - *Swoon* I totally crush on The Fist of God. Good men are hard to find and he is the best of them. Anyone with a holy sword and Crusader Armor is interesting in my book. Molly - The Fourteen year old daughter of the Fist of God. She was hilarious, a little bit of a romantic and full of enough teenage rebellion to be interesting but not annoying she was one of my favorite new additions. Ohhhh, Molly said wisely. Those are fun-time handcuffs, not bad-time handcuffs. I gotcha. No! I protested. And how the hell would you know about fun-time handcuffs anyway? You're like ten. She snorted. Fourteen. Whatever, too young. Internet, she said sagely. Expanding the frontiers of adolescent knowledge. Shiro and Sanya - Holy

Crusaders and Michael's equals Shiro is like the Mr. Miyagi of the book much knowledge and a great sense of devotion to his cause while Sanya is very different from what you would expect of a holy crusader of God. IVY - Also known as the archive. Imagine all of the world's knowledge in a 7 year old girl. I'm thinking of the daughter in Dune, slightly creepy but infinitely powerful. I hope she shows up in future books as she was really interesting. "You know how to use magic?" I asked. "I prefer calculus." "But you can do it." "Yes." "Yikes. If the reaction of my wards was any indication, it meant that she was at least as strong as any Wizard of the White Council. Probably stronger. But if that was true, if you know that much," I said, "if you are that powerful, why did you hire a bodyguard to bring you here?" "My feet don't reach the pedals." •Waldo Butters - Medical examiner who has caught on to the supernaturalness of some of the some of the corpses coming in lately. A little on the unusual side, I can tell I'm going to love him in this series. There are so many more including staples such as Murphy, Charity, Marcone, Thomas and Susan. There are some and new additions including the Oracle, Ortega, the Fallen and Nicodemus. So many people for Harry to interact with it gets staggering at times. While I really like most of the characters of this series I sometimes find the plotting kind of thrown together. It sometimes feels jumbled crashing together until we get to the end. Don't get me wrong I'm entertained the entire time but I feel like I have a difficult time following parts of the plot occasionally. That said though Harry is an easy guy to root for even if the entire world seems out to get him and really it seems like the ENTIRE world IS out to get him. In this corner, one missing Shroud, one impossibly and thoroughly dead corpse, one dedicated and deadly vampire warlord, three holy knights, twenty-nine fallen angels, and a partridge in a pear tree. And in the opposite corner, one tired, bruised, underpaid professional wizard, threatened by his allies and about to get dumped by his would-be girlfriend for John Q. Humdrum. Seriously, tell me that isn't a lot to deal with. I will give it up to J.B. for the way he pushes the expectations of people's roles in the story. Sanya in particular is a Warrior for God but...he isn't quite what you would expect at all. I loved the twist to his character. The inclusion of the 30 pieces of silver that were paid to Judas as well was a fantastic re-imagining of how to incorporate Christian lore into story. I also very much liked the addition of a duel between Harry and a Duke of the Red Court and how the rules for that were incorporated. There are a ton of great ideas in the story. Possible even too many which is why at times it felt slightly jumbled to me at times. Still right now this is a series I could read a few and walk away for a few months then read a few more. I haven't fallen in love with Harry's character enough yet to want to plow through 15 books before I move onto

something else like has happened to me with a few of the other series I really love. Still Harry is a good dude to hang out with and go on a ride into crazytown. Also you can feel better about your life because I guarantee he has way more problems with romance, people trying to kill him and just paying the rent than you do.

Another great story in the Dresden Files series. The characters are colorful and getting more depth with each book. The only things that keep me from giving it five stars are the consistent plot hiccups that keep popping up. The character of Michael is suddenly back, after having disappeared in book four, and that was after suddenly appearing in book three! Also, the author has a habit of repeatedly describing familiar settings, or what should be familiar settings to anyone reading this series. For example, almost every book so far has had a detailed description of Dresden's apartment, his office, the police station, the tavern and even his VW Beetle. It's simply unnecessary detail to rehash with each new installment. Don't get me wrong. I am enjoying these books tremendously. These are just quibbles that may not bother other readers. These books are great fun.

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