



Dark Road Rising

P.N. Elrod

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View our feature on P.N. Elrod's *Dark Road Rising*. The first new Vampire Files novel in four years!

Vampire P.I. Jack Fleming is playing babysitter to Gabriel "Whitey" Kroun, a dangerously unstable mobster—and newly-created vampire—with deadly secrets to hide.

As Jack tries to unravel the mystery surrounding Kroun's undead state, he gets caught between his charge's violent outbursts and some syndicate torpedoes looking to rub them both out, leaving him vulnerable to an even deadlier threat—the return of an old enemy desperate to unlock the secrets of Jack's vampire immortality.

Dark Road Rising Details

Date : Published September 1st 2009 by Ace (first published July 21st 2009)

ISBN : 9780441017553

Author : P.N. Elrod

Format : Paperback 400 pages

Genre : Paranormal, Vampires, Mystery, Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Fiction, Horror

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From Reader Review Dark Road Rising for online ebook

Wayland Smith says

The Vampire Files is the story of Jack Flemming, reluctant vampire in Prohibition-era Chicago. This series is one of my favorite vampire tales, and there's a lot of rich detail in the characters and the world. P N Elrod uses the more supernatural version of vampires, which is the one I prefer, so I may be biased. The series combines elements of vampire/urban fiction and detective stories.

In this book, long-time supporting character and enigmatic gangster Gabriel "Whitey" Kroun takes center stage, or at least shares it with Jack. Jack found out recently that there was a lot more to Kroun than he had thought. Now, he has to try and unravel this mystery while not getting killed by the erratically behaving Kroun, and a team of Outfit hitmen who want Kroun, and anyone who helps him, taken out.

I really enjoy the series, and this is another great installment on it, although possibly and sadly the last. I really hope we see more of these in the future. As with most series, I strongly recommend you start at the beginning.

Gabriel says

Read quickly and enjoyed. Actually better than the other Elrod book I've read Lady Crymsyn, but had I not read the earlier one first, I would have been very lost in this one. I still think this could have been a lot more interesting had she maintained a single narrator throughout the entire book, but the climax was quite fun and that would have been nigh impossible had we just stayed with Mr. Jack Fleming.

And it's great to see such wonderful torture scenes written. Ones that are chilling only after you have invested so much time with the characters because just enough is shown. The rest is implied.

In any case, fans of the series will love this book. The rest of us can look for other series to sink our teeth in. Me, I'm going to look for the original hard-boiled detectives (I have some Raymond Carver to read) and spend my paranormal mystery time with the Dresden Files.

Melissa (ladybug) says

Finished this one last night. :D I love this series and was so happy to find this book. I hadn't read it yet, so double hurray!

Lori S. says

For some reason I had a hard time getting into and through this particular book. It's darker than some of the previous books and has the unusual structure of the switching between Jack Flemming's first person narrative and Gabriel "Whitey" Kroun's POV in the second person. Still, in the end, worth reading.

Julie says

This was the 15th of the novels in this series that I have read. They keep getting better. The theme of this is the dichotomy of personalities in us all. Both Jack and his new acquaintance, Gabriel, have to confront their dark sides and it is not pretty. That said, the book ended quite satisfactorily and, even though there are no new novels in the series at the moment, the door is certainly left open for many new adventures.

carol. says

Three and a half stars.

A genre-defying read--I'd call it urban fantasy, except most people assume UF refers to contemporary time, not 1930s era Chicago. Full credit to Elrod for a very interesting take on both vampires and detective fiction--to take both and set it in the midst of the 30s is unusual and fun. It's book twelve or thirteen in a series about the vampire hero, Jack Fleming. I made a good start in the series some time ago, but am sure I didn't make it up to eleven or twelve. Nonetheless, it gave me a relatively good basis to pick up and mostly understand the action. Apparently it takes place mere moments after the last ended, and as such, frequently refers to events from the prior book. Jack feels enough guilt and lingering trauma over prior events, however, that I was able to keep up through his reminiscences. I don't think it spent much time going over his early life, becoming a vampire and learning the ropes until the last few chapters. It was fast paced and very suitable for an afternoon reading in the sun (the best place to read about vampires, friendly or otherwise).

I've always liked Jack Fleming for attempting to be an ethical vampire, and the insight into the time period is fun as well. Elrod does switch narrators, between Jack and a newer vamp Gabe Kroun. It's a technique that often annoys me, but Elrod doesn't abuse it, and the perspective shift adds to the tension of the final conflict, as well as degree of emotion to the dilemma.

For those that care, there are a couple of reasonably done sex scenes, which I don't remember in previous editions--since it's been four years since the last book, I wonder if Elrod is feeling pressure to keep up with PNR trends? Still, one is appreciable for character development, and adds tension to plot issues, and both are appropriate within the character and the pacing. Overall, a great book in a very unique series.

Janet says

I went into this book with mixed feelings, unsure I wanted to read it after skimming the blurb on the back. I decided to at least read the first page—after that I wasn't making any promises. A couple of hours later I realized I was over halfway through the book. I guess I liked it!

Rachel says

Jack is back, and there's nothing like almost killing your best friend to screw your head back on straight.

Since there's no shortage of people waiting to unscrew it again, though, it doesn't stay straight for long.

Being the twelfth book in a series that's been running since the mid-nineties, it's hard to remember that all the events have taken place in just over a year—that's not a lot of time to go from being a live reporter to an undead nightclub owner and stand-in mob boss—and the author spends some time reflecting on Jack's changes in this book.

This would have been a four-star review, but for the change in storytelling. It's not the first time the author's juggled perspective, but the mixture of Jack's first-person voice and Kroun's third-person threw me a little.

All I can add is that my love for Charles Escott grows with every passing novel.

Summer says

This is the worst possible ending I could have imagined to the Vampire Files series. Seriously, let's just pretend the series ended with Lady Crymsyn.

Over the past few books, Elrod has broken Jack in every possible way with repeated torture scenes, an incredibly poor understanding of PTSD (surprise! you can't punch the suicidal urges out of someone!) and an increasing emotional distance from Escott and Bobbi.

Hell, Escott and Bobbi barely show up in this book, since the unholy cuckoo chick that is Kroun has elbowed them out of the pagetime. Kroun spends more time interacting with Jack and with Escott than either of them spend interacting with each other. Kroun even shoves his blood into Escott's face to save his life, while Jack was right there in the room. He spends a lot of time hogging what should be really emotional moments between the established characters, and he's not even a plausible or engaging character.

By the end of the book, Jack's self-loathing is at an all-time high, his friendship with Escott is described as being marred forever by a breach of trust, Shoe hates Jack, and Jack leaves town with Bobbi, abandoning his club and the few friends he still has. If you love the Vampire Files, don't read this book.

Mia Darien says

It absolutely kills me to rate it like this, because P. N. Elrod is one of my favorite authors, but I really just did not like this book that much. And that disappoints me greatly.

The Kroun story was interesting, but I don't like adding second character perspectives in First Person stories, and the whole Kroun line felt like an entirely different story with a little meshing at the beginning and none at the end. If the lines had somehow tied together, okay. But it was just. There.

Having Dugan show up was, eh, expected I suppose, but was not hinted at well early on and I think there should have been more. And then the 'held captive and tortured' thing was already done in the Bristow parts a couple books ago. Yes, this was different, but it lacked some punch cause it kind of felt the same.

The ending I found entirely unsatisfying. It was too quick, with little connection. I don't like the idea of Jack going to California, and Bobbi did not come off well in this book, to me at least.

I just finished the book and was incredibly disappointed.

Katie says

This feels as if it's likely the last book in the series. While I liked the different storylines in this book, I wasn't satisfied with the ending. After having built, broken, and repaired a friendship between the two main characters, they never really interacted in this last book, nor helped each other through their struggles. The other part that just...bugged...me was that Elrod has set up vampires to be able to heal from horrific injuries, yet no one ever thinks to heal one of the (new) main characters by removing a bullet that's lodged in his brain during the day when he is literally dead to the world. It DID wrap up some loose ends and was overall a fairly good book.

Kathy Davie says

1930s noir and a vampire with a heart who interacts with the mob.

P. N. Elrod is amazing in her depiction of the time period. You can see, smell, feel, and hear it as you read.

Lots of conflict for Jack this time around: threats from the New York mob, Escott's survival at stake, and the question of Bobbie's career and their future together combined with the mess Dugan makes of him...whoa...

Jamie Collins says

It's been four years since the last release of a Jack Fleming novel, but the action picks up mere hours after the end of that last book. The mysterious Kroun is still bleeding from a gunshot wound, Charles Escott is in the hospital with grave injuries inflicted by a friend, and Jack is still trying to cope with his psychological issues stemming from an ordeal with a sadistic gangster two books back. Jack can now envision himself returning to his "normal" happy life, if only he can survive mob assassins long enough to hand off his temporary responsibilities to a recovering mafia boss.

This was a good read, but a couple of plot elements felt like a rehashing of events that happened earlier in the series. The Kroun character was interesting, but his presence meant there was relatively little interaction between Jack and Escott, which is my favorite element of the series. For the first time (I think) the author switches points of view from Jack to another character, and it didn't work well for me.

If you like this series, you may be interested in the novella that Elrod has self-published that seems to be set immediately after this novel, entitled *The Devil You Know*. Elrod is selling limited edition, signed copies from her website. I thought it was a good read, also.

Kathy says

Poor Jack...that's what I think of when I read this book. The man has been tortured within an inch of his life

more times than anyone should be and is half the vampire he was as a result. I have to admit I'd like the old version of Jack back as the author really seems love kicking him when he is down and without all his vampire skills you have to wonder how long he last in this life...However having said that this book marks a real turning point in the series and I hope the author can at least give us some improvements in Jack's un-life in future novels, though I really hope Whity Kuron stays in Chicago where he belongs and he's really not a character I'd want to read a lot more about.

Carol says

Set in the 30s, with a vampire P.I. whose first job was investigating his own death, this series is a lot of fun. Chicago, the mob, and the nightclubs.

This time around, we learn more about Whitey Kroun. He's a mob boss who has also been turned into a vampire, but there are more questions than answers about his condition and situation. He has amnesia, and is trying to hide it to avoid looking weak. As I learned more about his past, I became creeped out, but so did he. He's supposedly a changed man, but we'll learn more in the future. Whitey becomes Gabe, a milder-mannered man who just wants out of the mob.
