



# Lightning Rod

*Vaughn R. Demont*

Download now

Read Online ➔

# Lightning Rod

Vaughn R. Demont

**Lightning Rod** Vaughn R. Demont

*Always stand. Never fall.*

*Broken Mirrors, Book 2*

*If I could offer one piece of advice now, as I fall past the eighty-fourth floor of Victory Tower, with the sky above me the swirling eye of a crimson hurricane, the blade of a goddess stuck in my thigh, and a man I used to love preparing to end the world, it would be this: Magic is not the answer to your problems.*

Sorcerers have always been feared in the City, their origins as unknown as the nature and extent of their power. When James Black, a young man fleeing an abusive lover, becomes a sorcerer, his old life is erased from existence, and his new life is indebted to powerful entities.

Escaping the man who abused him was supposed to be the end, but the very magic that freed him has put him on a collision course with the gods and the Sorcerer King himself.

And only one of them can survive.

**Warning:** *This is a work of urban fantasy featuring a gay male protagonist, with a romantic subplot and focus on magic, dragons, tricksters, sorcerers, and survival of domestic abuse. Please adjust expectations accordingly.*

## Lightning Rod Details

Date : Published October 9th 2012 by Samhain Publishing

ISBN :

Author : Vaughn R. Demont

Format : Kindle Edition 312 pages

Genre : Romance, M M Romance, Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Paranormal, Magic

 [Download Lightning Rod ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Lightning Rod ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online Lightning Rod Vaughn R. Demont**

---

# From Reader Review Lightning Rod for online ebook

## Julio Genao says

too much, and too little.

i haz disappoint.

demont was unable to reproduce the remarkable feat of juggling that kept all the, uh, *balls in the air* last time out.

where all the crazy and disparate elements of the story were remarkably balanced in coyote's creed, they're slightly out-of-whack here, with long stretches that had little energy to them followed by hectic pandemonium that simply wasn't as fun as it was in the first book.

i had minor problems with various aspects of the MC's dialogue and behavior and rationale; niggles turned into distractions, and by the end i didn't really believe in either his competence or his love for cale.

worst of all was a very heavy reliance on the whole previously-undisclosed-aspects-of-this-universe-suddenly-becoming-critical-to-the-plot-and-then-also-immediately-explained-at-length thing, which demont successfully used often in the previous book, but which felt like a real cop-out, here, owing to it being deployed far too often throughout.

which leaves me with a sexy romantic urban fantasy novel that was, frustratingly, neither romantic nor all that adventurous. or sexy. or fantastic.

so: two stars, which means "it was okay."

i couldn't believe in the characters, and wasn't engaged by the plot.

(when it finally arrived, i mean.)

---

## Nicole says

I devoured this book, much as I did Coyote's Creed, and all of Mr. Demont's other books, for that matter. I love his voice and his characters, whether they be stereotypes or too quirky to pin, they're all well-done.

The editing was good, with only a few typos, and there were some great one-liners. My fave is one of the coyote's, but James is an engaging character as well.

The only negative for me, was that I just didn't feel the relationship between Cale and his beloved. I mean, I liked both characters, and the idea of them together, but it felt like....words on a page to me. I kept feeling like it was just a dream or something. It kinda felt too sudden, or something. But it wasn't sudden! And if it had been, I would have believed it more. I'll probably reread this and see if I feel differently. There were some things which might repay a rereading, including that relationship.

Otherwise, great pacing, fantastic climax, and stellar story management (by which I mean the way in which events are managed so that the reader doesn't spend a bunch of time yelling at the protagonist about all of the obviously stupid blind spots he has that drive the action). All of the action was driven from events and forced errors, not plot manipulation.

I do think, however, that James should be owed some rather giant favors that no one ever acknowledges. I don't know how to hide spoilers so I won't go into it, but since it seems to set up a new story, it would be the one instance of plot contrivance I found.

I can't wait for the next installment!

---

## **Sadie Forsythe says**

3.5

Hmmm, how to start with this one. You see, I'm a little uncertain of my footing. I really enjoyed book one of this series (as well as House of Stone, by the same author) and, while this seemed an OK read, it just didn't stand up to the other two books by Demont that I've just plowed through. So where does that leave me and my need to review it?

Mostly I feel that the book didn't have that certain something special the other books did. The main character was a victim, and while he grew in strength and determination, he didn't have the humor I loved in some of Demont's other characters. In fact, I found that James never particularly endeared himself to me. I cared little for him by the end of the book.

I also thought the weave of the plot wasn't as tight. There were a lot of times that I either couldn't quite visualise what was going on or wondered how something happened. An example: at one point James had to cross into a magical circle and in order to do so he had to go through a fairly elaborate ritual. Shortly thereafter, someone else crossed the same circle with no such ritual. How? Similarly, Heath is stated to have been untrained, however, a very short while later he showed some pretty impressive skills. How?

In every Demont book I've read, the side characters haven't been as richly tapestried as the main ones. No real problem, that's just the way it is. But here it felt extreme. The primary antagonist only showed up sporadically, had no depth, was unilaterally evil and prone to evil villain speech. I didn't find him particularly believable.

Then there was the sex...or not sex as it would appear. I've really enjoyed Demont's ability to write a sex scene that is both gratifying and not overly pornographic...no that's not quite right (I don't mind pornographic), rather I mean, sexy without also stretching the realms of erotic possibilities to the point of fantasy. However, here the sex was rushed and undetailed. We were essentially just left knowing it happened. Meh.

Now, having said all that, the book does still have Demont's trademark geektastic comic streak. There's a Marvin (though I think I would have appreciated him more if the character hadn't felt the need to explain the reference to the reader). There were Dungeon's and Dragon's references. There were potshots at the LARPer's. The book is still a fun read. But, honestly, I don't think it stood up to Demont's other works. I'm told that the series redeems itself in book three though. So there's still hope.

---

## ♣ Irish Smurfétté ♣ says

3.5 Star Reviewage on Prism Book Alliance®

The way this story begins, I was wearing my “WTF” face, no joke. We’re dropped right into the fray, emotions and bodies flying this way and that. My “WTF” face was accompanied by a slight grin and, huh, I wonder if this, whatever ‘this’ is, will succeed.

I decided I wanted to find out.

I’m thrilled I made that choice by chapter two. That WTF feeling, a result of extreme randomness, started morphing into OMG, no way. I was feeling the desperation, the confusion, fragile hope, and the drive to survive. I was feeling Miles, and how deeply he was being scarred by life, while having no clue about what was to come. I was already wishing for his safety and happiness.

A bit of time passes and we get James. He’s experiencing what could be described as rescue, but at a great cost. Could he live with that? Could he change it? All the while, my emotional investment was being matched by the high level of creativity.

And the writing, yo, the writing.

*“They’re red dragons. They wouldn’t save me.”*

*The voice behind the screen gets a bit huffy. “And why is that?”*

*“They’re red dragons. They’re evil.”*

*A silver-scaled snout pokes over the top of the screen, a plume of smoke issuing from his nostrils with a snort. “Now that’s just racist. I’ve got two cousins who’re reds that donate to Greenpeace.”*

This passage demonstrates the modern world accoutrement that fills in the layers of magic, paranormal (granted, it’s all normal to them), olde world rules and mysterious creatures, some created millennia ago, and fabled enemies that inform most of the emotion experienced while reading this story.

There are some disjointed junctures throughout this story, some major points that turn on a dime or life-altering events that seem to be ignored in the immediate aftermath. That some of them do get a payoff later on is great, but the impact of those resolutions is somewhat dampened.

But then I’d remember “dragons” and let it go.

Demont once again does so well in tossing about the cultural references and, not just in offhanded comments or snarky comebacks but, the roles they’ve played in molding some of these characters and their personalities, and approaches to living life.

This story feels to me like the author is exploring themes, like grief, changing perspective, trust, loss, self-worth and whether you have it, lose it, or want it, and how to go about getting it, how it’s not always pretty

while it's happening. This book, compared to Coyote's Creed, felt more internalized in some ways, particularly with James being our narrator throughout.

Possibly the most enjoyable, and realistic, relationship portrayed in this story is the friendship shared between James and Dave. I think it's safe to say that, for each of them, one is the other's best friend in a long time, maybe ever. They care about each other, want to look out for one another and actually do it, going beyond just declaration. They know each other pretty well and it shows in a number of rewarding ways.

Somewhere around the halfway point and this story hops off the rails somewhat. A catastrophic event, brought about by one or more characters, is deemed nearly impossible to conquer. Ok, I can understand that, unintended consequences and all, but still. Further, one of the major supporting characters keeps popping up again and again and again, always bringing death and anguish with him, stymieing a lot of the progress made throughout the story, at least for me. By the sixth or so time, I was done. One too many times to that well did we go. And, except for a single reference, we're never really told why he feels so strongly the way he does, his motivation never adequately explained. His gleeful spewing of the hate and physical violence became an unnecessary frustration. You guys know me, I try not to judge characters, as they are all living and making their own decisions about their realities – 'good guy' shouldn't be treated any more favorably than 'bad guy', in my world. I think I'm more passing judgement on the usage of him more than I am for how often he upends James at every important turn.

I'm also dubious of the way a major character from book one, Coyote's Creed, is used. For most of his page time, until the end, he's portrayed by mostly highlighting his less important characteristics. It feels like he was carrying around a sign saying "sidekick here" and could therefore be treated casually, which doesn't fit his character at all.

Despite this final lament, most of the scenes between that character and James are impactful, exciting, and kept me riveted. Make of that what you will. I would love to see more of that partnership developed. Is it even possible?

This book was an uneven ride, even herky jerky here and there, but I still enjoyed more than I didn't. And I sure as heck will continue on in the series with book three, Community Service. Oh and the title of this book, and the next? I had to laugh at myself as to how long it took me to figure out the references.

---

## **Emanuela ~plastic duck~ says**

The blurb is accurate, so I'm not going to sum the story up. I like this series very much, but I think this installment is a little less impressive than the first book in the series. The not so good things first:

In the previous book there isn't a real romance between Spence and Rourke, but I could feel the connection between the two characters, they sizzled when they were together on the page. James and Cale are not so hot together, even if they clearly love each other. Their love was beyond my reach. I think it depends on the kind of love they shared. Spence and Rourke's relationship was much more earthly, while this main couple's is more ethereal, it's more a union of minds than an union of bodies, and that's difficult to convey. Also I think that James is one of the least forthcoming narrators I've ever met, but more about this later.

Another thing which was not so easy to follow was the magic and the Keth mythology. I confess I was confused, especially at the beginning. The second part, where the confrontation between our hero and his enemy became more prominent, was more interesting and easier to follow: the magic became real in the

world and it wasn't only theory or bad practice. James grows into his powers always by chance, he gets this illuminating moments when it comes to him, and it became a bit frustrating for me as a reader, it seemed a bit too convenient. I liked it more when James used his brain to get out of the occasional mess he gets in.

I said before that James is not a forthcoming narrator. This was also engaging and very interesting for me, because I really like to work with the main character to understand what's going on and I like to be surprised by the main character. There is a lot that James doesn't tell the reader and you find out abruptly sooner or later in the book, shedding a different light on what you've learned so far. One thing that comes to my mind is when James thinks of things Cale does with a warmth that reveals something of their relationship and something James feels deep inside. I found myself staring at my kindle in awe. That's why I blame James for not giving me a chance to really get into his relationship with Cale. I get that he's such in a deep sh!t, with an abuse relationship in the past and a general disquiet that he never really explains. James IS a scared rabbit at the beginning, but it's not easy to understand the reasons why he got into that downward spiral. What I liked though was that he doesn't become a fearless and invincible hero: his weaker and humane core always remains.

In the book James and Spence bands together and those are the funniest moments, really brilliant: the zombies, the train come to life, Spence's unquenchable libido, they promise great things for the sequel. I look forward to reading it.

---

## **Furio says**

This second instalment in the "Broken Mirrors" series highlights both the assets and the problems of the first one, "Coyote's Creed"; the same problems are to be found in the enjoyable House of Stone as well.

Mr Demont's talent as a storyteller cannot be denied even if the tone here is much darker and makes for a slower pace.

James is a very different character: while Spencer is a young man facing difficult external circumstances who can rely on his inner strength, James is a victim of abuse. He has huge self esteem issues that cripple him even while he is trying to move on; he is not whole and sound, his set of values appear much more shaky.

The author does not shy away from his pain and he actually manages to make it convincing. The author also realises that such a different character needs a different treatment but he does not really strike the exact tone and balance to portray James' inner journey and growth. He never confides in his friends but neither does he muse about himself for us to see his thoughts. He is so deeply hurt and so deep in denial about it that his struggles not only escape his friends' attention but also the reader's awareness: we can imagine them but we never understand why he befriends Dave and why he falls in love with \*\*\* (no spoilers from me).

Such a different lead implies a more sombre tone but this is fine as nobody really would wish a clone of Spencer.

We are not denied the fun Mr Demont excels at: setting is inventive as ever, action scenes are quick and well done, many dialogues sparkle with humour.

Side characters are nice enough even if Dave and Marvin are not fully rounded nor exploited as they could have been.

My qualm here is the same as in book one, only raised to power: the treatment of the supernatural lore.

I imagine the author must have a general picture of the powers that be in his world but such picture is impervious to our scrutiny. Magic and world building (literally: worlds get destroyed and built again in this book) are unclear and confusing.

It was a problem in Coyote's Creed but it is damning here as the whole of the plot revolves about a set of supernatural laws the reader cannot really understand. The gods are very vulnerable to man's magic but at the same time they always end having the upper hand, human magicians have the power to break the pillars of the universe but die because of wound.

In book one magic was just an added component that spurred a breathtaking action further so that it was easy to set misgivings aside but here magic is at the core of the plot and the result is messy. When James is on the road the story works just fine, when he is dealing with the supernatural things turn sour.

I will read book three because I love the story and its characters but as of now I hope Mr Demont will reconsider his whole supernatural lore and either make it simpler or less relevant to the plot. Possibly both, as nobody really likes lengthy asides to explain how complicated things work.

A second edition of his best works (House of Stone and Broken Mirrors) would be more than welcome.

---

### **Laura says**

I cannot begin to express how much I love this series - this book was the perfect continuation. The world building is amazing and the story just sucks you in. I need the next installment now!

---

### **Plainbrownwrapper says**

The plot was kind of a mess in this one, and I was never convinced about the love between James and Cale, but Demont's writing still drew me in. And I loved Spence, as always, and Hades was great!

This is more like a 3-3.5 than a real 4, but the overall style entices me to round up to 4. And I'm looking forward to the rest of the series. :-)

---

### **MLE says**

Really fun, and engaging sequel. I wasn't sure I would like the change in main characters, but I ended up liking James very much. His sense of humor, and inner strength made him an interesting, and well rounded character. The secondary characters were a varied bunch, and added so much life to the story. I love that magic isn't easy, nor is it a simple solution to all of James's problems. I also love that this series is not about a simple struggle between right and wrong, but about different factions and their differing goals. There is no hard and fast black and white, and I appreciate that. It made it feel much more real to me. I look forward to the next book, and seeing how James and Spencer end up working together (I'm thinking it's going to be intense.)

---

## Kaje Harper says

I had to get past my initial disappointment of finding myself in a different POV than Spencer's and two years further down the road from Coyote's Creed. At the end of the first book, I'd thought we might see the gradual evolution of the relationship of Spencer and Rourke through the series, but this is pretty much a new story with only a tangential relationship to the first. Spencer appears briefly, but not in his relationship at all, and the stories are not headed where I expected. This is not necessarily a bad thing.

Once I realized I needed to set Spencer and Rourke aside, I was drawn into the story of James, the abused guy whom Spencer sent off on the bus in book 1. That wasn't just a chance meeting, and James isn't just any guy. He turns out to be a sorcerer, and a powerful one. And in the process of making that discovery, he meets up with dragons, and the Recluse himself, Cale, the sorcerer whom the rest of the supernatural world is gunning for. But Cale is nothing like the overlord James would have expected. And there is a lot more to James than he realized.

This is a darker, tougher book than the first. There is abuse and loss, both emotional and real. There is growing love, but again this is not headed for a romantic HEA. The characters are intensely drawn and interesting. The plot is a bit convoluted, and the motivations sometimes seemed murky. This is a series that might improve on a second or more close reading, with better attention to detail than I'm giving it. I've tended to skim over details and read for the gestalt. But even at that level, it was an absorbing read, with an ending that again completed an arc but frustrated the romantic in me, and I immediately plunged into the third one.

---

## Tim says

Vaughn R. Demont once again returns to the City, his default setting for his array of urban fantasy stories, though *Lightning Rod* is a decidedly more mature entry in his *Broken Mirrors* series, taking a step back from the rogue's gallery to instead introduce a survivor. As is common with his works, *Lightning Rod* reveals another kind of supernatural denizen of his setting, though in this entry it's the kind that he's alluded to in all of his stories: sorcerers.

I believe that the first thing that needs to be said about *Lightning Rod* (besides that the title could be better) is that it's definitely not a romance, but an urban fantasy. To be perfectly honest, I read it more as an allegory for the aftermath of domestic abuse, and a well-done one at that, but I'll get into that when I do the "spoilers" section. The plot is split into four parts, covering almost three years of time, focusing on James's escape, recovery, training as a sorcerer, and his final battle with the antagonist. However, I do respect that James was written as a rookie, someone who fumbles and makes mistakes, and doesn't always make the perfect decisions. It can be frustrating for the reader, much like yelling at the screen when a TV character makes an obvious bad choice, but at the same time I feel it grounds him and makes him a hell of a lot more realistic.

The writing itself is solid, painting a very believable character and tracking James's moods and thought processes, showing us his vision of the world and the creatures that inhabit it. However, readers might get a little lost, as pure expository passages are at a premium, and while the references are plenty as in *Coyote's Creed*, they're much more specific here and might require an open window at Wikipedia, though he doesn't reference obscure. There's a Whedonesque influence here, with the protagonist struggling with morality, I'm curious to see what Demont does with it in future books.

As for the ending, I'd say it squeaks under the HFN wire, though the appearances of Spencer Crain hopefully ensure a continuation of the dynamic James and Spencer share.

Now onto the spoilers, which might get a little literary, but this is what drove my reading of the book by reading it as an allegory for surviving domestic abuse. Hey, some of us want to feel our English degrees serve a purpose, okay? ;)

(view spoiler)

Misc.

- Dave the dragon is probably one of my favorite characters in the City, followed only by Hades, who is just as much of a dick in Lightning Rod as he was in Last Paladin.
- A couple sex scenes, but they're disparate in tone. The romance is well-written, but it's certainly not the focus here. If you're only looking for M/M, you might have to adjust your expectations, as the book's warning puts it.
- I'd say that Lightning Rod can be read without reading Coyote's Creed first, but personally, I'd rather read them in order to get the full payoff from the scenes where Spencer guest stars.

**Bottom Line:** I lost sleep and called in sick to finish this one. That's definitely a 5 of 5 in my book. A fine work of urban fantasy.

---

## Jenni Lea says

This was a great sequel. It wasn't the light, fun read of Coyote's Creed but it was amazing in its own way. A fair bit darker than the first, it packed in a lot more feels. There was still that Demont humor I've come to love scattered around amongst the drama so I didn't feel cheated. It even brought tears to my eyes near the end!

Highly recommended series.

---

## Arshad says

A significant shift in mythology from the last as the focus of the narrative turns to the much-maligned race of sorcerers. Here we meet James, the abuse survivor on the run that was featured in Coyote's Creed, and learn more of his story.

The themes are similar to those of the first book, i.e. young man whose supernatural inheritance alienates him from the mundane world, and is forced to find a way to survive in the supernatural world and ultimately triumph. Spencer's journey was learning to stand on his own feet and live by his wits while separating himself from the attachment to his mentally challenged mother that holds him back, yet drives him forward. James follows a similar path, learning to find his birthright of power and wield it responsibly, though his psych-lim is decidedly darker: the pall of his abusive and domineering boyfriend, Heath, that shadows his

steps even after Heath is apparently out of the picture. James is dominated by fear and timidity, and the power his magic offers is seductive, offering him a way to make others hurt and perpetuate the cycle of abuse he has sustained.

He finds guidance in the friends and lovers he finds along the way. The shift in viewpoint makes for a refreshing read, without seeming repetitive of the first book, though Spencer's fourth wall asides about thematic tropes in fantasy and horror fiction are decidedly trumped by the even nerdier James' patterning of his magic against the mystic rules of D&D. The appearance of Spencer in the narrative at first seems unnecessary, but eventually his presence does serve a purpose, and possibly sets the stage for a closer relationship with James in future books.

All in all, I enjoyed the book, and stayed up late to read through to the end. The one element that doesn't ring true in all of this is the villain, whose twisted justification for his actions is not well enough established by his scattered appearances to be ultimately believable, rendering him something of a cardboard cut-out evil-doer with a long handlebar mustache. But it was still a good read in my view, despite its failings.

---

## Lady\*M says

### 3.5 stars

While I liked the book, I didn't enjoy it as much as *Coyote's Creed*. The reason is partly because the book wasn't as humorous as the first one, which is understandable because abuse is the major theme in the book. Part of it is the lack of clear laws of magic, which makes some of the stuff James does rather unconvincing.

As a story of abuse victim and his recovery, *Lightning Rod* works really well. The opening scenes were very powerful. James' reactions are authentic and heartbreaking and while symbolism is rather obvious, it's also spot-on. I liked how James gradually gains self-confidence and strength and hearing him say "I am no longer afraid of you" was uplifting.

I also liked the secondary characters, especially Dave and Hades (who *is* a dick, but a likable dick). It was also great to see Spencer again. I couldn't really feel the connection between James and Cale, but considering that this isn't really a romance, it didn't matter so much. Though I would really like the resolution of *some* romance in this series (I liked Roarke and Spencer in the first book, but the resolution of that relationship is also left pretty open).

What makes this book less enjoyable than the previous one is author's undecided approach to magic and world's laws. In a fast-paced novel like this, where there is not enough time for the reader to absorb the changes and explanations (when they are given), this is rather unfortunate and often irritating. It diminished my enjoyment in the book and investment in James' character, because, after a while, it became obvious that James, who could barely manage a few spells, would just pull the solution out of his ass (sorry!). Like with Spencer's mother, the loss of James' family is a heartbreaking consequence of author's world, though I hope James will have some kind of relationship with his brother in the future books.

All this said, *Lightning Rod* was still an enjoyable, quick read and I'm looking forward to *Community Service* in which both James and Spencer will be protagonists. The business of collecting souls for Hades will be interesting. ^^

---

## **Mel says**

This one is not about Spence (aaaah) but a new protagonist (oooh) and both will be starring in the next book (yaaaaaaaaay).

More info here.

---