



# Unquiet Dreams

*Mark Del Franco*

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## **Unquiet Dreams** Mark Del Franco

Fueled by a mysterious new drug, Celtic fairies and Teutonic elves battle for turf and power-with humans caught in the middle. As the body count rises, Connor Grey uncovers a vast conspiracy that threatens to destroy not only the city, but the world.

## **Unquiet Dreams Details**

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# From Reader Review Unquiet Dreams for online ebook

## Kathy Davie says

Second in the Connor Grey urban fantasy series about a down-and-out Druid with very little power in Boston.

### My Take

Lots of misdirection in this one and an interesting peek into gang warfare from street to the upper levels of society.

This is good experience for Conner (as I sit here in my easy chair) as he discovers the hard way how the little people feel, how they're treated. He used to be one of the elite. Thinking the same way. I have to wonder if del Franco is setting us up for a future installment where Connor takes a top position.

Oh, that's a good one. I love Meryl's remark about getting more evil eye repellant up as she's infested with Christian missionaries. I suspect a romance down the road between Meryl and Murdock. I have my doubts about Keeva. She screwed up in *Unshapely Things* and she does it again here. I'm curious as to how she'll muff it in the next story, *Unfallen Dead*.

Poor Murdock, everybody makes him as a cop.

It's typical police work. Lots of late night visits to bars, nightclubs, and back alleys. Pushing and poking at the powers that be. Examining everyone's angle.

Whoa, I can understand Connor's backhanded appreciation for the black mass in his brain that won't allow him to use his magic anymore. I...I guess it's a good thing when it saves the world.

Cute. Connor and Meryl are having this running conflict about dating. Shoe's suddenly on the other foot and I'm curious as to where it will go.

Snicker...I love Connor's statement at the end to Nigel. And it was so true! And so typical of a governing body.

### The Story

Gang wars do have their unintended victims, but evidence uncovers drugs and then the possibility of a real estate grab. When one of the victims turns out to be a rather prominent activist, it really hits the fan and Connor uncovers more than expected with the pissing contests just getting messier and messier.

The fallout ranges from Briallen's appointment of Connor as a Guild Director, which upsets all the right people and the Guildmaster's command that Connor ferret out information on some dangerous people against the High Druid's advice.

Damn lucky that he's now a Guild Director, however temporary, when he comes under fire.

### The Characters

**Connor Grey** is a disabled Druid, kicked out of his cushy position at the Guild and really feeling the kicks to his ego in this one. It's certainly a good lesson in being polite to everyone you meet. Stinkwort, a.k.a., **Joe**, is

a flit and has been hanging about Connor since before he can remember. He's a foot tall with wings and the ability to teleport. **Lady Briallen ab Gwyll** is a powerful Druidess in the world of the fae and she's Connor's friend. She's also named him as her alternate for the Guild board if she ever has to be out of town. **Virgil** is a gargoyle who drops cryptic comments to Connor. **Callin Grey** is his older, screw-up brother who lives on the shady side.

**Detective Leo Murdock** is the cop that Connor works with on fey cases. In *Unshapely Things*, his essence changed, which is all for the good in this story.

**Keeva macNeve** is the new Community Liaison Officer from the Guild and the Guild and the local police get on as well as the cops and the FBI.

### *Druids*

High Druid of the Bosnemeton Circle, **Gerin Cuthbern** leads all the druids and druidesses in New England. A major jerk. Somehow he missed the memo on equality AND manners. **Meryl Dian** is the Guild's archivist and a Druidess with a strong dreaming ability and she and Connor have become friends. **Nigel Martin** is a powerful Druid and was Connor's mentor; Connor was his prize pupil. Since the accident he wants nothing to do with him and belittles him every chance he gets.

**Hala** is a drys. They are essence incarnate, the heart of the oak. Almost a goddess to the druids. The essence of Float.

### *The Dananns*

**Ryan macGoren** is the current fairy golden boy. Handsome, rich, powerful, no morals, and a Guild Director. Just the guy for Keeva. The **Clure** leads the Cluries, a clan of hard-drinking fairies who specialize in chaos. They either start the party or know where one is. *I'll bet they end every party...* **Gillen Yor** is High Healer at Avalon Memorial and is an Old One as is Briallen; **Maeve**, the High Queen at Tara. **Guildmaster Manus ap Eagan** is *the* power in the Guild and he's dying. **Tibs** is a brownie who's been with him for almost ever and is Connor's buddy in and out of bed.

### *Elves*

I suspect that **Janey Likesmith**, a dark elf with the Office of the City Medical Examiner is going to become a part of the cast. The Marchgraf, **Alvud Kruge**, is an elf activist working to clean up the Tangle, the worst part of the Weird. Trying to get beings off drugs, employed. He was also a member of the Guild board. Now his wife **Eorla**, Marchgräfin Kruge, is agitating for it. **Donor Elfenkonig**, the elf king. **Bergin Vize** is an environmental terrorist elf who couldn't handle the power coming off a ring.

### *Street Gangs*

**Moke** and **C-Note** are trolls and rival gang leaders facing off. Moke leads the **TunnelRats**, dwarves, while C-Note heads up the **TruKnights**, all fairies and elves. **Banjo** leads a gang of dwarf mercenaries and can see the future. **Dennis Farnsworth** was in the wrong place while **Crystal Finch** simply got lucky.

The street gangs are mostly race-restricted with the fairies sticking to their own, the elves and dwarves to theirs and the humans to theirs. It's when you get to those upper levels that it gets much trickier. **Croda** was a troll who worked as a cleaning lady at Unity for Kruge.

The **Weird** is a neighborhood in Boston to which the fairies, elves, and things that go bump in the night gravitate.

## **The Cover**

The cover is a bit hokey with its graveyard scene and the tilting tombstones, but it is accurate for its finale with Connor at the cemetery.

The title is a bit lame as it simply refers to the *Unquiet Dreams* that Connor and Meryl are each having.

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## **Angela says**

*Unquiet Dreams*, Book 2 of Mark Del Franco's Connor Grey series, is a decent enough followup to the first one. In this episode, Connor's called upon to investigate the death of a human boy who has connections to local non-human gangs--a case which he fears is related to the gruesome murder of a high-profile elven community leader. Working through both these cases gives Connor a good hard look at the upper echelons of the Guild that turned him out after the accident that crippled his powers, brings him across the path of his brother, and may, just *may*, be handing him a further clue about what exactly has happened to his magic.

In terms of overall quality this series isn't standing head and shoulders above its urban fantasy compatriots, but that's fine; Connor's character development arc as a previously arrogant man humbled by his magic's loss is the interesting thing here for me. And I'll also admit to liking the angle of dwarf and elf gangs in this novel, as well as the added data about the backstory of how denizens of Faerie came to live in "our" world. I could do with a little bit less of Connor trying too hard to convince himself he's not an asshole anymore HONEST, but one hopes that as the series progresses and he becomes more comfortable with his maturity, he'll stop that.

Still interested and will check out the third book when I can. For this one, three stars.

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## **Nicole says**

Very imaginative, and the climactic scenes are snazzy.

I like Connor, the main character, a druid with mysteriously damaged powers.

I also like his friends: Murdock, a human cop who's acquired some strange new personal energy (known as essence in the vocabulary of their world); Meryl, who's an astonishingly powerful druidess with an endless supply of sarcasm and whose description sounds as if she'd love to hit the mall with Abby from *NCIS*; and Joe--AKA Stinkwort--a flit (small fairy), who is a funny and adorable sidekick.

I also like that Connor and Meryl are still in the flirting stage and that she gives him a hard time about his attitude.

The plot was very political, with lots of backstabbing and evasiveness.

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## **Ami says**

When Connor Grey got a phone call at 7 AM from his friend, Detective Leonard Murdock, about a dead teenager who seemed to be dropped from the sky, he didn't expect that the kid would ended up as a part of another investigation by the Guild: the death of a one of the directors at Boston Guildhouse, Alvud Krudge. Soon, the two deaths brought Connor and his group of friends: Murdock, the hip researcher Meryl Dian, and

oreo-loving flits, Joe, into a conspiracy that threatened to destroy the Guilds and Consortium, with humans caught in the middle.

I must say that the second book flows better for me than the first. Maybe because all of the world-building with its technical jargons have been introduced in the first book. This time, it is easier for me to get into Connor and his relationship with Murdock, Meryl, and Joe. There is a couple of twists here that I don't see coming, one being Connor having a big brother (that is a "whoa" moment for me) and the climax when the brain of the conspiracy is revealed. A good mystery with a touch of magic and the Fey universe, as well as characters that I'm quite fond of (most especially Joe, the flits, love him!).

I love how Connor starts to learn about how his past arrogance when he is still a Guild member is wrong, that the true friends he has are those who still stick with him even if he no longer has ability (except for sensing essence). I would love to know more about what the mass in his head is all about (how it can help him now), the progress with Murdock (I think he will become more than just a human detective, much like Karen Murphy in Jim Butcher's *Harry Dresden* series), as well as, uhm, can I count a small romance between Connor and Meryl?!? \*grin\*

I'm a fan of Jim Butcher's *Harry Dresden* and I definitely enjoy this too. It's a good addition to a VERY FEW urban fantasy series with male protagonist. I'm looking forward to reading book #3 and #4

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## **aPriL does feral sometimes says**

If the following paragraphs sound familiar, it is because I copied some from my review of the first book in the series, *Unshapely Things*. This second Connor Grey murder mystery follows the same plot pattern set in the first mystery, except the story is even more dramatic and graphic.

'Unquiet Dream', the second novel in the six-book Connor Grey series, was a fun read! A genre bender, it's a murder mystery series set in a fantasy alternative universe with humans, fairies, elves, dwarves and trolls. There also are the cutest little things called flits - who rarely are larger than a foot tall. But they carry swords, and they are not to be messed with.

Hundreds of years ago an unexpected convergence of universes occurred which destroyed the world of the fey. Reluctantly, they live among humans now in neighborhoods in big cities. Each type of fey has a different set of magical abilities. The fey are monitored by The Ward Guild which is governed by Queen Maeve, High Queen at Tara in Ireland. Anywhere fey are concentrated there is a guildhouse. A diplomatic corp as well as a police force work out of each local guildhouse.

Connor Grey is an ex-guildhouse police detective, once a powerful young druid with a high profile in society and the media. Now he collects disability at age forty and lives in poverty in a cheap apartment. He lost a struggle with an environmentalist elf at a nuclear reactor. The elf had a power ring which somehow bottled up most of Grey's druid abilities. To supplement his disability checks, he works as an amateur detective. He partners often with human Detective Lieutenant Leo Murdock of the Boston Police Department.

Most of Grey's previous friends dropped him after the power ring incident, but a flit, Stinkwort, continues to help him. Sometimes. If Grey has oreo cookies in his kitchen. Grey doesn't eat oreos, but he makes certain to stock them anyway. Flits for some unknown reason will attach to someone or a family, regardless of cookies, but Grey kinda likes the flit. Grey also has a powerful druid friend, Briallen verch Gwyll ab Gwyll, who once

was his teacher. She is beautiful, and very old, so her druid powers, based on her personal essence, are enormous.

The druids often find themselves playing the peacemakers between the elves and the fairies, who hate each other. However, in this novel, the druids are working against each other as well as the against the fairies and elves. The murder of a respected elf has completely roiled the Boston Guildhouse politically. Since the dead elf, Alvud Kruge, was a famous Boston Guild council member who was internationally prestigious and important, the entire community is shocked. His death also means there is an empty chair on the Guildhouse council. A troll was also murdered with Kruge, both of their bodies discovered in the worst part of the Weird, the fey district of Boston, called the Tangle. Plus a human gangbanger's body was found a few blocks away. He was wearing the colors of a gang known to be selling powerful drugs. The Guild are not convinced all of these murders are connected.

When Connor examines the dead boy's body, a human, Connor's nose tells him the murdered troll's blood is on the kid's shoe. Because the kid is human, his murder is Murdock's case, which is also why Connor is there on the case. But the Guild refuses to believe Kruge's murder would be in any way involved with human drug dealers. Prejudice of the fey against humans, and especially against a druid who has lost his powers, is extreme.

But Connor is unexpectedly appointed to the Guild Council as a temporary replacement for his good friend Briallen, a Guild councilor, who was called away and unable to help elect the replacement for Kruge! Connor uses his new position to snoop around the Guild's records, as well as sneaking into the investigation of Kruge's murder.

It isn't long until Connor has druids, elves, fairies, trolls AND the gangs all trying to stop him from finding out what is really going on! Plus, omg, Conner's semi-alcoholic ne'er-do-well brother suddenly turns up....

The story is a little slow in the beginning, but the world-building is interesting, for the first few chapters. As the plot unfolds, the pace of the mystery picks up until at the last chapter the crisis is literally one which might change the world! (view spoiler)

This is a fun beach read.

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## **Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says**

For a full review, check the Bitten by Books website: <http://www.bittenbybooks.com/>

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## **Rhianna says**

Connor Grey used to work for the Guild. But as a druid who has lost his powers he's not much use to them anymore. They still play their silly games and politicking. When Connor comes in to consult on the murder of a young gang-member in the Weird he has no idea what a twisted web of intrigue he is about to get sucked into. A turf war between elves and fairies is brewing not just in the boardroom but in the streets and everyone caught in the middle is suffering. Just because Connor doesn't have his druidic abilities anymore doesn't

mean he can't stop the madness.

I shouldn't have read this book. I had a hard time with the first in the series. Mostly because the author, in my humble opinion, hadn't separated his own voice from that of his character. It happens sometimes in the first book of a series and then the author gets stronger in the second. Thankfully that was the case. Connor seemed more real to me this time around and I was able to get drawn into the story this time. Del Franco is a good writer, he can set a scene and I like his dialog.

What doesn't work for me as a reader is the plots of his stories. They feel muddled and patched together. I like Connor and his supporting characters but both books have left me with no sense of where this is all going. Will Connor ever get his powers back? At first I thought that was what was the ultimate goal of the series but now I am not so sure. I don't think I can remain interested if each book is just another weak drug related mystery. There are better stories of this ilk being told by other writers.

For now, I'm done with this one. If you like a male protagonist in a great urban fantasy series I would suggest trying Nightlife (Cal Leandros, Book 1) or WebMage (Ravirn, Book 1) which I enjoyed more.

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### **Roberta says**

This book depending on who you ask could be considered urban fantasy or a paranormal. I read the first novel in the series, and I liked it, but the second is a great improvement. Del Franco is a talented new writer who really has improved from his first effort. In his universe the Fey have come over and are openly living in human society and have for quite some time. His main character Connor used to be a detective with the Fey Guild, but he was kicked out when he lost most of his powers in a freak accident. Now he is a druid who can only look at essence (the way Del Franco describes magical energies) but not manipulate them. In this book, he is involved in a mystery involving the death an important guild official and a teenage human gang member who no one cares about. Read the story, to find out what happens.

The series reminds me a bit of Kelly McCullough's Code Spell series as well as Simon Hawk's Nightside only better written than Nightside. If you like either one of those series, I think you'll like this book. Also, if you're fond of Jim Butcher's Harry Dresden, I think you'd like this series only in this book, the main character isn't growing in power in a world that doesn't believe in magic, he's trying to figure out how to regain his power or live without it in a world where he used to be a powerful person.

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### **Tammy says**

We know more about the Weird, more about elves and fairies, more about the pre-Convergence world. We get some neat insight into Connor by way of meeting his brother (!) and learning about his family. We get a lot about druidism in this universe, which, for a magic junkie like me, was awesome.

What we don't get is any sort of progress at all about Connor's magical ability. He seems very resigned to it now, and while that's good it doesn't do much to add tension to the book. He can't spend all his time going on about what he's lost and how he wants to kill Bergin Vize, but I'd like to see him trying more things. Especially with Leo having this new and strange aura and abilities, it would seem that Connor would be giving a bit more thought to his own issues. I don't want him to get his powers back with a snap of his fingers



or anything, but I do want him to try, to struggle, to do anything. Saluting the sun is great, but it isn't enough. Give me something.

There was a really cool little moment when Joe tells Connor that he knew Carda (the troll woman) back before the Convergence and that she "used to eat baby rabbits like popcorn." Joe said it with affection, and it was treated as a normal thing, which, I guess, it was. Connor acknowledged this same thing. I like this about del Franco's books--he accepts things.

A weird thing that struck me was that at the end of the battle Connor left with Meryl, and they left Leo lying there unconscious. That's out of character for Connor and I have to wonder if it was some sort of editing mistake where del Franco and his editors just forgot to mention "and after they settled Leo comfortably in the ambulance and bought him a lollipop and a romance novel..." because it's totally weird.

Meryl Dian is just cool. Seriously. And the Marchgräfin Eorla Krüge is badass. More, please.

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## **Kristin says**

This book deserves 4.5 stars.

I *really* like this series. I enjoyed the Jim Butcher books that I've read and this is similar, but I have to admit I like this series more. The characters are appealing and I like where Del Franco's going with Murdock's character. It's great that he doesn't reveal everything about each character in the first book, that we continue to learn more about each of them as the series progresses.

In this book, a human teen is found dead as is a powerful elf, and though the Guild doesn't seem to think they're related, Connor believes differently and goes about trying to find the connection while managing to get involved in other politically-charged issues with the Guild. Del Franco also introduces us to fey and human gangs, a powerful new drug that has just hit the streets, trolls and other supernatural beings that I'm not going to discuss so as not to give away any plot points.

I've seen some people complain that there's no progression in finding out what's in Connor's head but in book one we're told that it has already been a year since this all happened and that no human or supernatural doctor can figure out what's wrong. Also, this is only the second book in the series and the whole premise of the series is that he's a formerly powerful druid investigator who solves cases with the Boston P.D. after losing his powers on a case and being sacked from his job at the Guild. Additionally, we find out that Connor's band from entering Germany, where Vize is believed to be, so for right now there's not much he can do about it, and he still has to earn a living!

I actually like the fact that, while Bergin Vize is mentioned briefly, the book isn't about Connor hunting him down and getting his powers back. It's also interesting how, though Connor doesn't have his powers and instead has a dark unknown mass in his head, both facts are able to affect how he handles situations and how certain powers and spells do or do not affect him.

Very slight spoiler about the addition of a character ahead! (view spoiler)

Finally, it'll be interesting to see if Del Franco eventually has Connor go after Vize (I don't see how he cannot) and if he'll allow him to get his powers back. It would definitely take the series in a new direction if

he does, to see the changes in Connor, if he'd go to work at the Guild again, and how he would deal with past and current relationships. Though I kinda hope this doesn't happen for at least a few more books, it's too much fun to read about a practically powerless druid living in the Weird and working with a human normal.

I can't wait to read the next two books in the series, which I've already bought.

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### **Chris says**

Very good urban fantasy in which Connor encounters trolls and dwarves and tree spirits, oh my!

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### **Levaria says**

I love the blend of urban fantasy and mystery. The writing is engaging and the plot moved swiftly. It's a great mix of magic and sleuthing.

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### **Jensownzoo says**

Another good entry into this series. The gee-whiz portion of world-building was mostly taken care of in the first book, so this one got to delve into the relationships a little deeper as well as explore the world a little more. I must say that the big plot twist actually surprised me...usually those things don't. Will have to reread someday to see if it was because I was truly bamboozled or if there were a lack of clues. Now, onto the third book!

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### **A.M. says**

Book 2 in the Connor Grey series.

Things haven't changed that much, Connor is still struggling with the black spot in his head. He is flirting with intent with Meryl and he has made contact with his brother, but things are strained between them. He still helps out Murdock who after the finale of the last book has some issues with his bodily essence. His aura is messed up and affects his physical strength. No one knows what is going on with him.

They start with two deaths; one, a street kid, a human and maybe part of a gang, and the second, is more of an explosion than a death. The scene is very gruesome. The remains are identified as Kruge, a high ranking elf and a member of the Guild board. He has been campaigning for years to clean up the Weird and help people who live in the Tangle; the worst section of it. This is an unpopular decision with property developers who would prefer to just move people out.

Keeva pushed them both off the influential case, but the more they investigate, the more they think the two are linked, but politics boxes them in at every turn. Plus Connor is distracted. Briallen had named him her druid alternate for the Guild meetings and never changed it after he lost his powers. She is away and he causes some consternation when he attends in her place, but luckily, is given an all access magic Guild rep ID card. Phew... just as well. He needs it. There is major conflict between all the factions: druid, elf, fae, dwarf, unseelie, human and solitary fae.

And there is a new drug on the streets called Float. It is more dangerous than recreational because it has a compulsive behaviour altering affect. It may be supplied by the gangs, one recently taken over by a new troll in town.

Everyone has to attend Kruge's funeral, setting it up for another huge finale.

There is more back story and more information about existing characters, a couple of new characters and a lot more input from other races.

On a rethink, I upped it to four stars. It deserves more than some other books I have given three to recently.

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## James says

Well, happy St Davids Day! Yeah, I know, when you read this there is a damned good chance it won't be St David's day any longer, but hey, it is now and that's what counts. Oh, the book? Sure, that counts too. This was a good, fun read - I enjoyed it a lot more than it's predecessor with everything seeming to come together brilliantly in an entertaining tale. One of the easiest **Four Stars** I have ever given.

The plot line was intriguing and worked really well with the blurb - which is amazingly one of the first times this has ever happened. Normally the blurb is forgotten all about as I read it, but as I read this I was constantly questioning everything in regards to the blurb - how does X effect the world like the blurb says? What part could Y possibly play in effecting the world? A drug, what could that possibly do to effect the world like the blurb says? And the best part? I never got close to figuring it out. The finale was truly surprising and entertaining to boot!

And the characters? Well, Connor Grey is growing on me - I can't quite remember my opinion on him for the previous book, but I know that I wasn't that fond of him particularly. His character seemed to chime right this time around, and with the ensemble cast around him he brought this tale to life. Murdock was amazing - and I love this new essence he has -, Joe is a brilliantly quirky character and with other characters like Moke, The Clure, Meryl and Keeva as well this was cast you really started to love.

The one character that really stood out for me though was Briallen. She did not make an appearance yet was still captivating all the same. I wanted to see her, get to know her and what was going on. She was like the elephant in the room all the way through the book for me, like the star of the show you are really here to see and are putting up with the standard act as you wait. That's how good she is - and that is not me slating the rest of the book, I'm just trying to put into perspective her role for me in this book, she is so good that she makes the rest seem mundane.

What I really like - and If I am honest am a bit concerned about - is the lack of development regarding Connor's disability. Normally in books like this it turns out to be a cool new power etc etc, but it still stays the same as a disability. And on one hand I love that, but on the other hand I still wish that it would unleash super powers every now and again that he kicks ass with (almost like Richard in the SOT series - amazing power, but can't use it when he wants to). Anyway, I think this is something that certainly puts this book in a different league from it's competitors - really entertaining concept, and something I am looking forward to developing in future books.

So should you read this series? After the previous book I think I would have said look elsewhere if you are new to the Genre, but now... now I think that this series is a leading light for the genre (so far) and you should appreciate. Of course, there are better books out there in this genre - and if you are new, you might be better reading them first. BUT, you wouldn't go wrong with these either :)

## **Kati says**

I highly recommend this book to every urban fantasy fan. It's excellent - it has an intriguing plot, it's set in a very interesting world and the characters are simply lovable. Connor, Meryl, Murdock, Joe... We learn more about them and they become richer and more colorful. A fantastic continuation of a great series!

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## **Stefan says**

Book was read in english, but review is in german. Sorry to those who cannot comprehend it... ;o)

An diversen Stellen habe ich Rezensionen gelesen, die besagen: „Der erste war besser!“ Und allzu oft ist es ja auch tatsächlich so: Ein Autor hat eine tolle Idee für ein Buch und wird entweder sofort vom Verlag beschwätzt, doch lieber eine Serie daraus zu machen, oder aber dies geschieht, nachdem das erste erschienen ist und es reißenden Absatz fand. Deswegen bin auch ich bei Folgebänden immer gern etwas mißtrauisch, insbesondere wenn der Opener so gelungen war, wie »Unshapely Things« rechne ich unwillkürlich für Band zwei mit Schlimmem.

Meine Erwartungen wurden in dieser Hinsicht enttäuscht, denn tatsächlich gelingt es Del Franko im zweiten Band nochmal eine Schippe aufzulegen und er hat sich nicht auf den Lorbeeren für den ersten Roman ausgeruht. Tatsächlich hat man den Eindruck, dass er seine Welt jetzt bereits deutlich besser kennt und virtuoser darauf spielt als im ersten Teil. Deswegen kurz vorab: Auch »Unquiet Dreams« weiß auf ganzer Linie zu überzeugen!

Als das Telefon früh am Morgen klingelt, weiß Druide und Privatermittler Connor Grey, dass das kein gutes Zeichen ist. Und tatsächlich ist sein »Partner« Murdock vom Boston Police Department an der Strippe und fordert Connor als Consultant an. Im Weir, dem heruntergekommenen Fey-Bezirk, wurde eine Leiche gefunden: menschlich, männlich, jugendlich, möglicherweise Gangmitglied, also eigentlich ein »ganz normaler Fall«. Dummerweise sind die Todesumstände »eigenartig«, deswegen man Grey hinzu holt. Während die Ermittler noch grübeln, stolpert man über eine andere Leiche und diesmal ist das definitiv ein Fall für die Gilde, die sich exklusiv mit Fey-Straftaten befasst, denn der Tote ist ein hochrangiger teutonischer Elf. Und die beiden Fälle scheinen zusammen zu hängen und Fey-Drogen sind ebenfalls mit im Spiel...

Und so wird aus einem scheinbar einfachen Fall ein Komplott, welches droht, das fragile Gleichgewicht zwischen den Fey zu zerstören, die Gilde in einen Machtkampf sondergleichen zu schicken und an den Grundfesten der konvergierten Gesellschaft zu rütteln.

Das Konzept bleibt dasselbe: Grey, des größten Teils seiner Fähigkeiten beraubt, bemüht sich trotzdem seinen Weg im Leben zu finden und dabei vielleicht auch noch etwas Gutes zu tun. Wir begegnen selbstverständlich diversen Charakteren aus dem ersten Roman wieder, es werden aber durchaus auch neue eingeführt und wiederum versteht es der Autor vortrefflich, die beiden klischeebeladenen Genres Fantasy und (Privatermittler-) Krimi zu etwas Neuem zu verweben, das mehr ist als die Summe der Einzelteile. Die Charakterisierungen sind so gut wie im ersten Band, allerdings merkt man meiner Ansicht nach deutlich,

dass der Autor seine Welt noch besser im Griff hat, denn trotz der fantastischen Einlagen wirkt das Setting noch realistischer, noch glaubwürdiger, als in »Unshapely Things« und so kauft man ihm auch das Auftauchen so unwahrscheinlicher Lebewesen wie Trolle unbesehen ab.

Der Schreibstil ist kurzweilig, weist trotz des stellenweise düsteren Themas einen angenehmen Humorlevel auf und führt einen auch noch weiter in die für den Leser immer noch weitestgehend unbekannte Welt der Fey ein, ohne wie ein Geschichts- oder Politikwerk daher zu kommen. Grey weiß Bescheid, aber Del Franko wirft dem Leser neben der Kriminalstory ständig Fleischbrocken zu, die man puzzleartig zusammensetzen kann, um nach und nach ein globaleres Bild der Welt zu bekommen. Was bei anderen Schreibern vielleicht aufgesetzt wirken könnte, meistert der Autor souverän. Auch Running Gags nerven ebenso wenig wie Dialoge, denn die sind aus dem Leben gegriffen und gewisse Frotzeleien zwischen den Haupt-Protagonisten kann man nachvollziehen, hat man sie doch selbst in ähnlicher Form schon einmal gebracht oder gehört.

Gegen Ende zum Showdown geht es richtig gut zur Sache, was im restlichen Roman nicht so ist, der verzichtet nämlich weitestgehend auf die Darstellung von Action und Gewalt, vom Mord eingangs mal abgesehen. Auch die Auflösung ist überraschend und das ist dann auch der einzige, kleine Schwachpunkt des Romans, denn ganz überzeugen konnten mich weder der präsentierte Übeltäter noch dessen Motivation. Das mindert den Lesespaß allerdings nicht wirklich.

Mark Del Franko hatte mich mit dem Erstling »Unshapely Things« auf Anhieb für sich eingenommen, auch wenn ich zuerst an eine Harry Dresden-Epigone glaubte. Die Parallelen sind unübersehbar, aber es wäre in hohem Maße unfair, Connor Grey einfach nur als eine Kopie des Chicagoer Magiers anzusehen, denn in den Erzählungen um den Bostoner Druiden stecken jede Menge Eigenständigkeit sowie neue Ideen und es ist eine deutliche Charakterentwicklung zu bemerken. Und zu meiner großen Freude muss ich feststellen, dass Del Franko es schafft, auch über den ersten Band hinaus originell zu bleiben und sich sogar noch zu steigern. Das lässt für folgende Romane hoffen!

Auch hier, wie schon beim ersten Band: Wer auf Urban Fantasy mit Privatermittlern steht (oder auch: wer auf Urban Fantasy und Privatermittler steht, letztere auch in einem ganz normalen Krimi), der sollte dringend einen Blick auf »Unquiet Dreams« werfen (allerdings schlauerweise erst nachdem er »Unshapely Things« gelesen hat) und wird garantiert ob des famosen Garns nicht enttäuscht.

Wer Elfen, Fairies und Trolle in ihrem »natürlichen Habitat« einer herkömmlichen Fantasy-Welt sehen möchte und dazu vielleicht noch ein wenig klassische »Sword and Sorcery«, der ist hier falsch.

Auf meiner Leseliste steht aber definitiv der Ende Januar erschienene dritte Band: »Unfallen Dead«.

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## **J'aime says**

I had some reservations about this series after reading "Unshapely Things" (in particular the Fey politics) that made me unsure of whether I would continue the series. When I started Unquiet Dreams, I thought I'd stop here since those same issues are suddenly the focus of the plot. However, Del Franco is an excellent writer. I was pleasantly surprised that I got caught up in the story, and blown away by yet another superb ending.

Instead of roiling in the background, Fey politics take center stage. Connor is called in on the murder of a sixteen-year old human boy. The scene indicates he was dropped in the center of a field by something with wings. Meanwhile, across town, a high-ranking elf and guild director is brutally murdered. Connor is sure

the cases are connected, but the Guild refuses consider it. The annoying jurisdictional fighting between police and Guild from book one is now a plot tool that will shake the Guild to its foundations. In another twist, Connor is summoned to the Guild Master and asked to investigate another guild director. He's knee-deep in political maneuvering, and being treated as nothing more than a lowly pawn. Pawn is right on the mark, as a careful game of chess quickly ensues and draws the reader in. The surface similarities of fey politics to today's world are still there, but we get a deeper look at the divisions between the Fey and within the Guild itself. Yet, Connor never forgets the dead boy who deserves justice. In addition to a clever plot, several character developments made for great reading.

I loved the budding romance between Connor and Meryl. In addition to spicing up the book with witty dialog and flirting, Connor also gains another ally. His relationship with Murdock is strengthening, and the powering of Murdock's essence after the final battle of book one is a great new twist to the character. What does it mean and could it answer questions about Connor's own disability? Joe has solidly taken on the role of side-kick, adding a lot of humor, without weakening the character and some new players are introduced. The ending was fantastic. All the threads came together cleanly; I love a good battle and Connor's sharp comments about the Fey being blinded by their own power and arrogance were right on. Pawn takes king. The ending hints that maybe Connor is finally getting some grudging respect from those he used to hobnob with, which is a welcome development.

Though the ending of book one was excellent, the story was resolved by temporarily giving Connor his powers back which I thought was a bit of a cop out. Here, Connor comes out on top through strength and intelligence, despite his lack of power. But, the aftermath leaves his world changed. This book was excellent, but one thing kept it from being five stars. I really want to see some progress on Connor's power block. It's getting old that no one understands it, but yet it figures prominently in the plot. Connor's learned how the other side lives, he's learned some humility - it's about time he got his power back to truly shake up the Fey. Highly recommended series.

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## **Schnauel says**

I liked this book a lot better than the first one. It felt like its own thing rather than *The Dresden Files* lite.

The story was interesting, though I'm afraid that story arc about how and why Connor lost his powers is going to become annoying fairly quickly. I find my tolerance for the long drawn out story arc with little resolution is fairly low ever since *X-Files*. But I could be wrong. It's early yet.

It was fun to see more of Meryl. She's probably one of my favorite characters, though honestly I enjoy all the main characters, Murdock, Joe, and Connor. I think I'd like his high powered druidess friend, too, but we didn't really see much of her in this book. I liked the hint of sexual tension with Murdock in the last book, though he's straight, so nothing could come from that anyway. Still, I missed it.

I liked the introduction of Connor's brother, I think it'll be interesting to learn more about that relationship, both the history of their interaction and how Connor's loss of power will affect things.

The world continues to be very well developed. I like all of the political intrigue and I like that even as Connor tries to avoid it he starts to play the political game.

Also, Meryl kicks ass. I'm just saying. And she's exactly the kind of person Connor needs in his life.

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## Shelley says

Synopsis: Connor Grey's druidic powers may be diminished, but he is still able to consult for the Boston Police Department. Now Murdock and Connor try to link the murders of a gang member to a high-ranking elven diplomat. Both are caught in a power struggle between Celtic fairies and Teutonic elves. Grey traces the source of these hostilities to a powerfully compulsive drug called Float. Which, of course, leads to a conspiracy that could destroy the fragile unity of the fey and human communities.

This book moved a lot slower than I liked for the first 200 pages or so. First, Murdock and Connor are called out to investigate the death of a human boy who died wearing the colors of a gang. It appeared the boy was dropped from some height. Which then leads them to the death of Alvud Kruge who had been trying to unify the races together. Of course, Keeva, who has been drugged with Float, finds every way possible to stall the investigation into Alvud's murder. Of course, they are put in their place and refused access to the information concerning Alvud's death.

Then, of course, it took the entire book before the real villain was exposed which after you read it, makes a lot of sense in so many different ways. I was actually hoping it was Keeva since she is a nasty piece of work, but no such luck this time around.

I like the interaction between Murdock and Connor, and NO, I don't want the writer to take his personal preferences and put them into this book. It's even more interesting now that Murdock seems to have gained some essence in his body after almost being killed in Unshapely Things. Unfortunately, or fortunately for the series, Connor still has a block in his brain that nobody can figure out. It keeps his powers diminished, but not unable to protect himself. And, NO, he actually does NOT get his powers back in this book. He is given a boost from a source that leads him to stop the destruction around him.

Of course, this wouldn't be a good series without Meryl, the snarky but courageous druid that Connor has a thing for. Joe, the flit is back, and we even have a sighting of Connor's long lost brother who comes and helps save the day.

Overall, this is a good read, but not a great one. There is only two real action packed sequences, and they come near, or at the very end.

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