



Deadworld

J.N. Duncan

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Jackie Rutledge has seen her share of supernatural killers. But her latest murder case is what recurring nightmares are made of. Brutally exsanguinated human victims, vanishing-into-the-ether evidence, and a city on the edge of panic mean that she and her psychic partner, Laurel, are going to need more than just backup ...

So Jackie is fine with any help rugged P.I. Nick Anderson can give—even if that includes the impish ghost and sexy vampire who make up his team. But Nick is hiding secrets of his own. And Jackie's investigation has plunged them both into a vengeful game reaching back centuries—and up against a malevolent force hungry for more than just victory...

Deadworld Details

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Author : J.N. Duncan

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From Reader Review Deadworld for online ebook

(Tori-Smexybooks) smexys_sidekick says

Originally posted at <http://www.smexybooks.com/2011/04/rev...>

Favorite Quote: "She could not decide if she was terrified or just wanted to strip him down to the gun belt and play 'ride' em cowboy'."

Blurb: She's as tough as anything haunting Chicago's streets. But to deal with an inhuman power that won't stay buried, this FBI agent needs help that comes at an immortal price. . .

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So Jackie is fine with any help rugged P.I. Nick Anderson can give, even if that includes the impish ghost and sexy vampire who make up his team. But Nick is hiding secrets of his own. And Jackie's investigation has plunged them both into a vengeful game reaching back centuries--and up against a malevolent force hungry for more than just victory. . .

Agent Jackie Rutledge and her partner Agent Laurie Carpenter are baffled by a young homicide victim who is found drained of all their blood. Their only clue is a penny dating back to the 1800's. When Laurie begins to get premonitions of the dead and evil concerning this case, Jackie turns her focus on Nick Anderson.

Nick Anderson, a private investigator, is up to his neck in this case but Jackie soon realizes he is not the killer. Further investigation into Nick's past shows his family's connection to similar homicides and his uncanny resemblance to his past relatives. When Jackie and Laurie attempt to question Nick and his office staff, they are stone walled. Jackie knows Nick and his staff know more than what they are telling her, but no threats or corrosion will give her the information she seeks. As the victims begin to pile up and Jackie experiences a devastating loss, Nick finally breaks down and tells Jackie exactly what is happening. Now it is up to Jackie and Nick, with some extra help, to stop a deadly killer who won't stop until he or they are dead.

Deadworld is a debut urban fantasy that is steeped in police procedural. J.N. Duncan takes the supernatural and mundane and twists them together to give us a unique prospective on vampires, ghosts, and the mortals who exist with them. Smoothly written with some wonderfully action packed scenes and nicely developed characters. Engaging dialogue though a bit wordy and redundant at times.

I found our protagonists, Jackie Rutledge and Nick Anderson, to be very interesting characters. Flawed and annoying at times, their emotional make ups are realistic in correspondence to the events of their past. I do feel that perhaps they didn't evolve as quickly as they should of. They tended to get mired down by their personal angst and it slowed the story down. We are given a great deal of information into Jackie's history, which explains a lot about her personality but I felt had no bearing on the storyline. Yet, we aren't given the same courtesy with Nick and I found that odd since Nick's past is a direct correlation to the events happening in the present.

The secondary cast fleshes out much better than our protagonists. They provide a much needed buffer against our main characters heavy emotional angst.

There is some chemistry and potential romances between a few characters but being this is urban fantasy, it's buried deep beneath the main premise. I did enjoy the little hints and flirting that happens through out but I appreciated that it's not consummated in the story. The characters aren't ready and it would have seemed forced had Duncan gone that route.

Our villain is appropriately nasty and evil yet with a biting sense of humor that made me smirk when I really shouldn't have. Again, we aren't given really anymore information about him then we were Nick so we are left twisting a little in the wind wondering why he is doing this. What exactly started this chain of events? Why Nick? We aren't really told anything beyond the bare bones and that was disappointing. It further weakened the the plot and I found myself confused and put out at the end.

All in all a nice noir fantasy debut series that shows promise.

Rating: C-

Lauren says

FBI agent Jackie Rutledge is at least as tough as any of the supernatural killers she's faced before, but when bodies start showing up exsanguinated and totally clean of evidence she finds herself faced with needing help beyond the FBI's resources. For this case she and her partner Laurel are going to have to rely on the Bruce Wane-esque P.I. Nick Anderson and his team of odd ball supernaturals. Can they trust him though? Nick's keeping secrets that stretch back over a century that may drag Jackie and Laurel far further into a twisted game of vengeance than they ever should have gone.

My impressions of J. N. Duncan's Deadworld are colored by his use of a few tropes that tend to really annoy me as well as an immediate degree of respect for his writing for using them in a way that takes them from annoying to genuine feeling plot twists and bits of character development. Jackie is six kinds of emotionally messed up and hard to like because of it, but then character development happens. She's still messed up, but it's an understandable level of messed up that she doesn't just magically get over all of the sudden. Laurel's most blatant characterization for a big chunk of the book seems based on her sexuality, but she's not written as just a bundle of stereotypes and gets nearly as much development as the main characters. Nick gets slightly less active development, the guy's a pile of secrets and guilt from cover to cover, but he gets a back story that shows why he has that guilt and a personality that almost gives reason to the secrets. That said, the villain is never given any reason for his actions aside from doing it for the sheer evil of it and to mess with Nick for no adequately explained reason. I will complain that there were some moments of dialogue that seemed completely out of character and threw me for a bit of a loop, especially towards the end. It's also a nitpicky little thing, it may be the stilettos or the leather pants, but I can't see Jackie as the cover model. It's also worth mentioning that Duncan didn't immediately shoe horn Jackie and Nick into a relationship, a definite plus in my book as they're both too damaged for something that fast to work out, but seems to be easing them towards something.

For the little things and the fact that I have problems with the lack of villainous reasoning, I give it a four out of five and wait impatiently for the October release of book two The Vengeful Dead.

John says

This was a very interesting story while I thought it was going somewhere, certainly up to the big twist halfway through. After that I kept reading eagerly, hoping things were going to come together, but I felt the plot didn't resolve; and, except for the car chase, the climactic scenes were hard for me to visualize. As you see, much of the trouble I had with this book lies deep in spoilerland. A few of my problems come up early on, though, and I can certainly talk about the characters.

There are two main characters, and each one has a much more likable sidekick, gradually and cautiously making up a team of four to take on a very evil villain. The series is named for Jackie Rutledge; unlike some reviewers, I found her quite believable as a skilled, experienced FBI agent whose personal issues (anger and a drinking problem, both stemming from inability to get past a childhood trauma) have reached the point of jeopardizing her job--her boss, also believable, has already put himself at risk covering for her. She's not easy to live with, nor does she intend to be.

Her partner, Laurel Carpenter, is also her best friend, but I just can't see her as an FBI agent. The bond between these two would read better as a same-sex married couple with Laurel in a very different line of work, not just because she's a warm, loving, helpful person but also because she's sensitive enough to commune with ghosts, lots of ghosts. She's certainly good at contributing information from her psychic sources and warning about danger before others see it. It's possible that the author realizes what an unlikely FBI agent Laurel is, because on page 94 he actually has the boss tell Jackie, "You should listen to her more. She's the most stable agent in this office." Hmm.

The private investigator, Nick, and his partner Shelby (who's a hoot and a half) are both vampires, and they're ex-lovers (he turned her decades ago to save her life). Shelby's the straight-forward, kick-ass character who tells you what she thinks (Nick, you're a coward), rides a motorcycle, and tears out after the villain when Nick is all hesitation. One reviewer even called him wishy-washy. But he knows that the villain, Drake, is a vampire with unique powers, much greater than his own, and will easily kill the agents if they get too close, so he tries unsuccessfully to warn them off and somehow (he doesn't seem to know how) end Drake's reign of terror without their help.

The reign of terror begins on page one, as Drake uses mind control to lure a 12-year-old boy to his death by bleeding him out (exsanguination) in elaborate fashion. Revelations about Drake come slowly and painfully in this novel; as soon as Nick starts to explain Drake to his team (Shelby, Reggie the visible ghost, and a fully human secretary in love with Nick), the scene shifts away, and so on. As many others have pointed out, it's *never* clear why Drake does these horrible things (view spoiler). I still don't understand why or how Nick, who was a sheriff in Wyoming in 1862, became a vampire. And why doesn't Nick drink real blood to get his full vampire powers, as Shelby urges him to do? After all, she drinks blood and never kills the source, so Nick's supposedly sacred vow makes little sense. Even Nick, weakened by synthetic blood, can use mind control, leaving a blood donor with an altered & happy memory; Drake is about to kill another innocent, so why not get your full strength?

Many more problems...how the FBI office easily accepts the supernatural in this case, for example, but especially the nature of the titular dimension of "Deadworld" (view spoiler).

Dark Faerie Tales says

Quick & Dirty: Deadworld misses the mark with an unlikable heroine and a forgettable supporting cast. As far as urban fantasy novels go, this one isn't a great success.

Opening Sentence: A misty rain swirled down into the darkness between the two brick buildings.

The Review:

FBI agent Jackie Rutledge and her psychic partner, Laurel, have been assigned to a new murder investigation. There is nothing normal about the crime scene or the way in which the victim was killed. As luck would have it, Nick Anderson, a private investigator, is already working hard to track the killer. Jackie, Nick and their rag-tag group of supernatural friends set out to stop the killer.

The introduction to this urban fantasy world isn't particularly well executed. The world-building is superficial and the foundation for a compelling plot never materialized. Urban fantasy tends to be character driven, but I was unable to connect with any of these characters. The narrative is tedious and the meandering plot developed far too slowly, causing me to lose interest. The characters fall flat and I just didn't care about any of them.

I think many readers might find it difficult to really connect with Deadworld's protagonist, Jackie. She lacks an authentic female voice. With a simple find and replace command you could quickly change the gender of the protagonist and no one would notice. Jackie isn't the type of dynamic urban fantasy heroine that I enjoy reading about. I don't mind reading about a flawed heroine with baggage, but if the personality and attitude are off - it just doesn't work for me. For a character with so many flaws, Jackie isn't remotely interesting or likable. Jackie's damaged past translated into some pretty outrageous behavior. Sleeping around with random strangers and getting drunk seem to be her favorite pastimes. Jackie comes off as brash, immature, bitter, miserable, and angry with no self respect. These are some pretty deplorable attributes for anyone, especially an FBI agent. I just couldn't find any redeeming qualities and I think her character really lacked authenticity.

Overall, Deadworld isn't particularly exciting and mostly unoriginal. This story doesn't know what it wants to be. It straddles the line between hard-boiled detective fiction and urban fantasy and ends up being Dresden lite. The characters didn't feel authentic, the plot lacked depth and certain aspects of the story were revealed too slowly.

Notable Scene:

Nick reached over and grabbed the mudroom door's handle. "Be wary. We're walking into a trap." She nodded, and Nick opened the door. At that moment, the ringing thrum of Deadworld began to abate. "He's stopped feeding."

The heavy, metal basement door was unlocked, and Nick shoved it open and leaped down to the landing. Jackie tried to run after.

Summoning up the bit of extra strength he could, Nick braced himself for the landing so he would keep from slamming into the opposite wall. He had both guns out pointing out across the basement floor when his feet touched down.

A single fluorescent light burned in the middle of the room, an all-too-familiar setup. Its blue-white glare cast a ghostly cone of light down on the cadaver's table, upon which the Agatha lookalike lay. She was still clad in Winnie the Pooh pajamas, and her listless arm hung over the side of the table, fresh blood dripping from the small puncture in her arm.

The Deadworld Series:

1. Deadworld

FTC Advisory: Kensington provided me with a copy of Deadworld. No goody bags, sponsorships, "material connections," or bribes were exchanged for my review. In addition, I don't receive affiliate fees for anything

purchased via links from my site.

Kathy Davie says

The first in the paranormal romantic fantasy series, *Deadworld*, set in modern-day Chicago.

My Take

Jackie and the FBI seem cool with it but we never do learn just why such a conservative outfit like the FBI has allowed a gay psychic on the team and appears to take Laurel seriously. There's no background given at all for this.

For the most part, the dialogue ran true. I did like the character of Jackie, for the most part; she is *such* a drama queen. *Not* what one expects from an FBI agent. Jackie is supposed to be such a tough little thing and good at her job. Yes, I know she's had a recent trauma...but, jeez...

Duncan drew things out just right, making me crazy to know the details behind Nick's Change, but there was so much of it that was just too pat, too formulaic. Duncan has a good idea going, but I'd really like to see him develop it into some depth.

On the other hand, Duncan seems rather half-hearted about the clash between Nick-Shelby and Jackie-FBI. It's like he's going through the motions because it's part of the outline for the story.

It's a common trope, that of the "otherworld" civilian desperate to keep the normals safe, and Nick's primary antagonist has picked up some new abilities that has Nick terrified.

Well, you know how that's going to go over with FBI agents of any sex. There is no way Jackie or Laurel are going to lie down and let some civilian do their job! So the clash is on.

Nick and Shelby are hunting for Drake before he kills again...hampered by Nick's insistence on the two of them drinking synthetic blood when the real thing would make the hunt easier. Meanwhile, Jackie and Laurel are trying to figure out how, who, or what is killing these people and leaving absolutely no trace while also hounding Nick and Shelby as to their involvement.

The Story

An old vampire has been playing games with Nick Anderson for well over 100 years now. Taunting him with his inability to save his loved ones, and now he's back, back with a nasty twist.

And Jackie has found pictures dating back decades which look just like Nick. The one of his father when he had been accused of killing five people back in the 1970s really has her...curious. Then she finds his "museum"...

The Characters

Jackie Rutledge drowns her past in work. The more the better. When she can't drown it in work, she drowns it in booze, the more the better.

Laurel Carpenter is her partner and a psychic who senses ghosts.

Nick Anderson was a sheriff in Wyoming. In 1862. Where his family was killed by a vampire, **Cornelius Drake**. We're given the impression that it was a hideous manner in which they were killed but there's really

only one detail that finally comes out in the end. Nor are we given any information as to why Drake would turn Nick into a vampire. Well, at least, someone did something to Nick as his family lay dying.

Shelby Fontaine was brought over by Nick in the 1930s when she lay bleeding out. Lovers for a time, Shelby and Nick work together in **Specialty Investigations**, a private eye firm specializing in ghostly issues. She just loves racing her BMW motorcycle.

Reggie is a ghost from Nick's sherrifin' days and helps out while **Cynthia** is a flesh-and-blood human in unrequited love with Nick and works in his firm as his secretary.

Belgerman is Jackie's boss and an incredibly understanding one. He comes across more as a stern, caring dad. Then there's the token asshole agent, naturally, a role well filled by **Pernetti**.

The Cover and Title

The cover confuses me. I know it's not Jackie, the primary character in this series, so it must be Shelby in the midriff-baring tank top and leather pants posed in her stiletto-heeled boots although I don't really see Shelby as the type to carry a gun. Then there's the catch phrase, "It's their town. We just die here..." I think this cover got away from another story...

The title is Jackie's introduction to a different world, an alternate plane of...well, not existence, for this is *Deadworld*.

Pam says

I'd give it a 4.5 and trust me, I don't give out 4.5 or 5 often. I'm too darn picky

It's a good beginning to a new urban fantasy series. Yes the main female FBI agent is often abrasive and hard-edged but as the story progresses we learn what in her own background...her own fears made her that way. While some might find her attitudes and actions problematic, I found her realistic, and hoped to see her change over the course of the book and come out a little different at the end. A better woman for what she'd experienced while working with Nick and company.

Then there's Nick and the people that work with him. They're interesting and unique and I couldn't wait to learn more about them. That's especially true of Sheriff Nick...he's a responsible and trustworthy man from a by-era who's determined to keep safe those he considers in his care.

I found the authors take on vampires and the paranormal world refreshing and creative. It was dark and a more than a little disturbing but the backbone of the story...the mystery of stopping Drake was never far from the surface. Everything else swirled around it, the pieces of the plot-puzzle seamlessly interlocking around him and his dastardly actions.

I for one can't wait for the next release in the series.

Jim says

It was kind of a neat idea in a lot of ways, but it kept shooting itself in the foot. The world is ours in every respect except in a few details. The first is that Laurel, one of the two FBI agents is a psychic. That's OK. Her partner knows & respects her power, which is also OK, but no one else seems to know she's one. At least

the sheriff in the beginning doesn't & no one else ever says she is. Kind of a big deal is made out of it. BUT then they find out some weird stuff about some people & all the agents, including the hard, tough boss FBI guy all seem to accept it without a problem. I'm not talking minor weird stuff, either. Major, I-don't-believe-in-this-crap, sort of stuff is accepted off stage, seemingly without a problem.

Details here, but it is a (view spoiler)

All through the book there were a lot of revelations that I thought were cheap shots like a mysterious character who is about to tell his story & then we switch to another view point. When we pick him back up, he's finished with the story & we're slowly getting it as the book progresses. That didn't work for me at all. Worse, (view spoiler) And worse, they didn't even hold together logically.

Fantasy writers can & should stretch my imagination, but please have the courtesy to have a logic that works within the framework of the book. I kept stumbling over problems from the very beginning & tried to push through them. I made it to about page 250 of 440 & just couldn't take it any more.

Pam says

This was a gritty and sometimes difficult read, but well worth the emotional investment. The characters in this book are interesting, flawed - certainly not warm and cuddly, but they settle into your bones and **MATTER** in a way that keeps you reading.

Thanks to J.N. Duncan for making the harder choices when it comes to the fate of his characters, I am so tired of there being no consequences to life...and death. Laurel and Jackie's relationship could have gone many different things, but I felt Duncan did a great job portraying the honest love that exists between friends and partners and the ongoing struggle to live with choices made and move on knowing that nothing is guaranteed.

Nick and his history were heartbreaking and provided the glue of the plot, the slow reveal of his and Jackie's humanity leaves good places to go in the next book.

My only complaint was I had to roll my eyes when "the hat" came out - read it and see what I mean- but it's a small thing to carp about and does not prevent me from highly recommending this book.

Gemma says

Full Review on bookchickcity.com

Thoughts

"Deadworld" is a rollercoaster of an urban fantasy book with characters that have so many issues, even Freud would have been lost in helping them. It's one of those books that you realise you have been reading for nearly two hours, without any breaks and you're still dying to find out more!

Before starting "Deadworld", I was expecting the usual run of the mill paranormal romance, where the big brooding alpha male would end up saving and falling for the tough as nails female, who ends up as putty in his hands due to the usual plot devices that are thrown into the growing market of books in this genre. But by

the end of the prologue, I was eating my words and scolding myself for judging the book by its cover, as this is most definitely an urban fantasy.

"Deadworld" was a surprise hit for me due to the fantastic plotlines, complex characters and edge of your seat tension. I would highly recommend this book for anyone who wants a bit of a change from the usual urban fantasy, or fans of Jim Butcher and M. L. N. Hanover (The Black Suns Daughter series). For a first book in a series it is one of the best I have read.

Matthew Quirk says

Incredibly cliché and predictable.

Every single trope comes true. The token gay character is raped and killed. The alcoholic FBI agent with daddy issues winds up in bed with the sexy conflicted vampire sheriff.

An absolute hate read, just to see how badly the author disappoints.

Tammy says

I just have to give this 4 stars!

J.N. Duncan is a new writer of Dark Urban Fantasy. This is his debut novel and series. I LOVED IT. I gave it 4 stars based on originality, true grit and believable characters.

Synopsis:

She's as tough as anything haunting Chicago's streets. But to deal with an inhuman power that won't stay buried, this FBI agent needs help that comes at an immortal price. . .

Jackie Rutledge has seen her share of supernatural killers. But her latest murder case is what recurring nightmares are made of. Brutally exsanguinated human victims, vanishing-into-the-ether evidence, and a city on the edge of panic mean that she and her psychic partner, Laurel, are going to need more than just backup . . .

So Jackie is fine with any help rugged P.I. Nick Anderson can give--even if that includes the impish ghost and sexy vampire who make up his team. But Nick is hiding secrets of his own. And Jackie's investigation has plunged them both into a vengeful game reaching back centuries--and up against a malevolent force hungry for more than just victory. . .

Duncan has a truly new take on vampires. He impressed me with his understanding of what a true/real friendship between woman FBI agents would feel like. He didn't try to lay on the sister/girlfriend love crap too thickly. He wasn't afraid to make Jackie, 'Jack', sometimes unlikable. On the other hand, the male protagonist, Nick, is NOT too freaking heroic to be two-dimensional. I am truly impressed and found this book to be entertaining as well as fresh.

The second installment, I believe, comes out in ~~May~~ October, (confirmed by Mr. Duncan below) and I am ready for it. I will be recommending this series to all my friends!

CJ - It's only a Paper Moon says

2.7

Don't know why I kept reading this book when I clearly knew by page 30 that I didn't like it. Couldn't explain what pulled me to finish it but I can certainly tell you that it wasn't Jackie Rutledge. She's a very unsympathetic character and I have to admit that I was sort of hoping that she would get killed off.

I guess that doesn't happen when you're the lead female.

Jackie is a bitch. An aggressive one at that. With a gun. She's scarred emotionally and how she ever made it past the final round of FBI psych evals is beyond me. I like my heroines to be a little angsty but I don't need full blown psychotic. Think Ashley Judd's character in "Twisted" combined with Sandra Bullock's character in "Murder by Numbers" with a healthy dose of fuck the world and there you go, you have Jackie. Minus the sympathy one would have for say, Sandra Bullock's character. Jackie is supposed to be tough but I think she's just self-destructive (view spoiler)

If you want a tragic and scarred heroine who is a little more likeable try or even better, try .

Plot wise there were a lot of holes why could the vampires feel the pull of the dead? (view spoiler) Why was Drake after Nick in the first place?

There were also continuity issues (view spoiler) and a few spelling mistakes that the content and copy editor should've picked up on.

Nick seemed like a good guy if not a bit of a sadist. He was also incredibly passive about the whole Drake thing. If Jackie and Laurel hadn't arrived on the scene then what would he have done? He was a weird hero. Nice, sweet but tortured and beat down. He's lost all interest in living and is only awaiting the inevitable but my question is, why didn't he just end it himself? Also, what he sees in Jackie is a mystery. She's quite a bitch to him. Shelby is no better but they have a history so it's easy to see that Shelby is the spur in his side.

The supporting characters, like the plot, weren't fleshed out that well and adding the unnecessary drama of Laurel (view spoiler) gave me a weird feeling.

It was a mediocre book with bad characters and the only thing that would make me go back for me is reading more about Nick. That and the series seems to have gotten a bit better judging by Goodreads ratings.

All Things Urban Fantasy says

Review courtesy of All Things Urban Fantasy

Jackie Rutledge made a bad first impression on me which didn't improve over time. Chapter one opens with Jackie arriving on a murder scene where a little boy has been discarded like trash in a park and her response

is all about her hangover: “She absently rubbed at her throbbing temple. There should be laws against committing crimes on Mondays...’Why can’t killers keep better hours?’” I don’t care how tough and jaded she is after years with the FBI, that’s never the kind of response someone should have at seeing a dead kid. And sadly, Jackie was just the first in a string of uninteresting, unsympathetic characters.

Jackie and her partner Laurel wanted to come across as the next Rizzoli and Isles. Jackie as the tough cop and Laurel as the softer influence in her life. Not so much. Laurel barely registers and Jackie was obnoxiously hard-nosed. Predictably, she had an abusive childhood that turned her into a promiscuous man-hater. She gets drunk and goes home with strangers most nights. One night in specific triggers a flashback while in the middle of rough sex. The situation was seedy to begin with as she’s begging some guy to hurt her, but then she reverts back to a horrific episode from her childhood and it got ugly enough that I almost stopped reading. I kept going only so I could write this review.

That scene and character aside, the writing was equally lackluster. Redundant and overly tedious are the words that come to mind. This book should have been half this length. At 400+ pages, it came across as bloated with a sluggish pace that did nothing for its rather flimsy plot.

Overall, I really wanted to like this book. The description sounded like it might be the next great police procedural urban fantasy with a dash of romance, but DEADWORLD failed on just about every level for me. Unlikeable characters, weak yet overly eager writing, poor pacing, and a plot that wasn’t nearly strong enough to support a book of this size. Not even the ghosts and vampires could redeem this one for me. I reserve my one bat rating for books that I find offensively bad. Since DEADWORLD only qualifies as not good, it scrapes out a 2 bat rating. Barely. The next Deadworld book, THE VENGEFUL DEAD, will be published in October 2011

Sexual Content:

References to homosexuality, rape. An BDSM sex scene that triggers and abusive flashback that might be considered rape.

Brooke Johnson says

When I sat down to read Deadworld, I truthfully didn’t expect to like it. Urban Fantasy is not my usual reading genre. I hate cop stories, vampires, graphic sex, etc. etc. etc. In all honesty, there was really no reason for me to buy this book, but since I had connected with the author through Twitter, I wanted to support him.

A lot of different readers have had varied opinions on Deadworld, ranging from hating it to loving it and everything in between, all for various and conflicting reasons. Some say the plot was gripping, while the characters were lackluster. Some say the writing is monotonous and disagreeable. Others say the exact opposite.

Jackie is hard to like at the beginning of the story. She’s tough, vindictive, impatient, and excessively angry at pretty much everything. Laurel, her psychic partner, is Jackie’s squishy counterpart, sweet, controlled, and kind. They apply the bad cop, good cop roles in the story. I loved Laurel from the very beginning. My inability to connect with Jackie because of her personality was rectified with Laurel. The hero, Nick, suspect in Jackie’s case, is a calm, collected vampire—one that I like. The author did a good job taking the usual vampire stereotypes and turning them on their head without losing the essence of vampirism. While some readers claim the characters lack depth, I came to love the main characters, even Jackie. The author’s characterization was phenomenal. I haven’t been that emotionally invested in a group of book characters in a

really long time. I felt their pain, happiness, and anger right along with them. I actually cried at one point. The characters are what made the story for me.

As I said in the first bit, there's a lot of graphic romance or mentions of it. One particular scene was painful to read, not because it was badly written, but just because of all the emotional baggage that went into it. I just felt bad for Jackie. That said, a decent romance blooms between Jackie and Nick, one where she's sober and not reliving her abusive past, so that was nice.

As far as the plot goes, it was so-so. The pacing was great for me, possibly slow for others, and the author put cliffhangers in the proper spots (I kept telling myself "one more chapter" for about thirty chapters while reading one night). I didn't find myself really caring about the plot itself. I was more involved with the characters. The bodies are piling up and both Nick and Jackie want to stop the killer. Nick's personally involved, and it's Jackie's job to catch the villain. I didn't find the villain particularly threatening, but he is deplorable.

The supernatural aspect isn't overwhelming as it is in most paranormal or urban fantasy stories. Even with vampires, ghosts, psychics, and the world of the dead, it felt like the world we live in, with just a little bit extra. The supernatural was a backdrop for the story rather than the story focusing on the supernatural bits. I liked that.

All in all, I really enjoyed Deadworld, more so than I expected to. It was a complete story for me with no real questions hanging over my head. I don't know if I'll read the sequel The Vengeful Dead when it comes out in October. The cover does look fantastic though.

Stacy says

Reviewed By <http://urbanfantasyinvestigations.blo...>

Jackie is an extremely angry and jaded person. She had an abusive childhood and now has intimacy and alcohol issues. Nick was ok for a male love interest. He hides a lot and is a bit frustrating to read about but he wasn't boring. The other characters were not anything special. Most were hard to get to like. There was a bit of action. I found the writing to be a bit over worded and the pace was slower than I would have liked it to be. Honestly a week after I read the book I had to go back to the description to remember what the book was even about so I could write my review. I like the cover but DEADWORLD just wasn't anything special to me and I would borrow from the library before purchasing it.
