



Darkest Night

Will Hill

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The brave men and women of Department 19 have fought Dracula at every turn, but now Zero Hour has passed and the ancient vampire is at full strength.

Inside Department 19, the Operators are exhausted and fractured. Jamie, Larissa, Matt and Kate are each struggling with their own demons. *When the friends need each other most, they are further apart than ever.*

Outside the Department, the world reels from the revelation that vampires are real. *Violence and paranoia spread around the globe and, when it finally comes, Dracula's opening move is more vicious than anyone could have imagined.*

A final battle looms between the forces of darkness and the last, massed ranks of those who stand against it. A battle that will define the future of humanity. *A battle that simply cannot be lost...*

Darkest Night Details

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From Reader Review Darkest Night for online ebook

Toastdavies says

Spoilers ahead for the Department 19 series.

Oh man, this is a sad one to write. Although I enjoyed this book and I love this series, this book was certainly a letdown compared to the other books. So let's begin.

One of things I disliked in this book was Jamie; he is the same character from book one. The same woe-is-me, angry hormonal teen who lashes out at everyone and everything. It was acceptable in book one when he was just a teenager, but in this book that shouldn't be a thing. He disowns his own father who sacrificed everything he loves to save his family. There is virtually no character development here. Larissa is also a problem. After all the things Jamie and her have been through, she really leaves after one comment from Jamie? That's not Larissa in the slightest. She'd tell Jamie to snap out of it just like she did in Zero Hour. It really makes no sense. Another problem I have is the first 300 pages. Months pass with nothing of note happening. That also makes no sense. Dracula is supposed to be this tactical mastermind, yet he waits almost a year before attacking. The only reason this happened is so the blacklight vampires could get stronger. Dracula should have attacked right away. I would really have enjoyed a post apocalypse novel where the humans have to rise up against Dracula. But no. Waiting 200 days before attacking takes all of the impact out of Zero Hour. Zero hour might as well be Zero hour + 200 days. When the clock reaches 00:00, it should mean something. This makes it mean nothing. Also, Dracula is super weak. I was expecting something like curing Dracula or getting the demon that turned Dracula to kill him. But it's just a by the numbers fight. Also, with the whole roster of Blacklight being vampires, it takes all of the tension out of the fight when if they get wounded badly they can just heal up magically and be back in the fight five minutes later. I wish there were some important character deaths. Julian's death did impact me. I would have liked to see the Carpenter family reunite. But Jamie stopped that from happening. Also, Jamie killing Dracula is wrong. Jamie and Dracula have no history before Carsaccone. Valentin however, has over five centuries of history. What made the Alexandru-Jamie fight so tense was the history between them. Alexandru has a huge history with the Carpenter family. Jamie and Dracula have no history. It would be great if Valentin killed him. Kate is also underused. Why didn't she fight? She has been in only half of the major battles in the series. Why?

I know I've complained alot about this book, but it still is a blast to read. It's a great book full of great action and character moments; so that's why I'm giving it a three. Check it out if you are a fan of the series.

Jacob says

There was a moment, about 30 pages in, where I realised that this series was no longer fun. There is a challenge for stories about the actual end of the world that you have to make it seem possible that humanity might lose, even though we all know that won't happen. This however took it to a whole other level, it seemed literally impossible for this to end well for these characters, and in all sincerity, Jamie's bullshit reached an impossible level of stupid, and I just wanted someone to slap him. He essentially became Bojack Horseman without the faint flickers of happiness. So that was a bit rough.

As the end to this story I have to say I was pretty disappointed. There were various plot points made throughout the series that never amounted to anything or just ended abruptly, it became clear that Hill didn't know what to do with a lot of the characters so he just took them out of action, and then there was so much

left unresolved or explained that it doesn't seem like an ending at all, but that he just gave up at the end.

Like A Dance With Dragons, this was bad enough for me to realise just how awful some of the elements of this series was. Don't get me wrong, I never thought I was reading high art here, but I put up with a lot because I thought something interesting was going to come out of it. That did not happen here, and I feel disappointed because while I joked a lot about it, I really did care about what was happening here. What made the series work was the overall idea of people becoming better versions of themselves by working together, and that we don't have to face the horrors of this world alone, but Darkest Night literally wipes away everything the other books, particularly Zero Hour, worked so hard to do, and I cannot understand why. It's like one of those Tibet sand Mandalas that was wiped away before a picture could even be formed.

There was something special in its slapstick pessimism, but Hill seemed to have forgotten that people actually need hope to keep going, our survival instincts of one foot in front of the other only takes us so far. This book was literally the myth of Sisyphus, and I ultimately wonder what the point was if it was always just going to end like this.

Also, demons and werewolves exist here, why does no one care about that?

Gilly says

I've heard too many times how people get bored of a series of books by the time they get to the third book and how each book became very monotonous. Well, not this series book after book kept me enthralled, each book making me want to read the next!

Each book continued to shock me thinking what next? Will Hill isn't afraid to kill off his main characters so by the time I reached the fifth and final book I was asking myself who is going to be next?

Another 700+ pages but every page keeping me gripped. Don't expect for the final battle to cover every page of this book. Will weaves, loyalty, trust, love, loss, betrayal, survival and humanity into every part of this book. How will Jamie retain his humanity now he's a vampire? What lengths will D19 and the other organisations go to in order to destroy Dracula?

The build up to the battle, which starts well over half way into the book is full of fantasy / horror as always. Will is content up to then in scaring readers, making them think what they might do in these situations. Then he grabs you and lifts you up into the final battle, you will not want to put it down, you will hear yourself breathing heavily, sighing in disbelief and shouting out to the characters. Finally you will feel the dust settle as the book draws to a conclusion that left me in tatters.

I can safely say this is the best series of YA fantasy/ horror books I've read in a long time, any teenager would love them but adults will love them too.

Definitely 5/5 and now my only question is what the hell am I going to read next !!

Toby says

I think it's a great book. It's awesome with all the weapons, But: WARNING! THERE'S BLOOD.

Obaid Haroon says

A few years back I judged a book by its cover. I picked it up, read it and loved it. That book was Department 19. The first of its name. And now I've finished Department 19: Darkest Night.

The series has been amazing. It evolved from a child-like innocence into a deep dark series that provokes you into asking questions of yourself and the world around you. The series as a whole has been tremendous. Each book getting better and better. Until the last one.

On an absolute scale it was great, but compared to the previous ones it wasn't as extraordinary. It seemed a little rushed. Months passing over a few pages with nothing of note happening. Characters staying the same before doing a complete one eighty. The big finale being essentially the same as book four. But to be honest these were all thought of after I had finished. Whilst I was reading none of this bothered me so I'll consider them almost non-existent. So why write it at all you ask? Well it's the build up.

To this.

Now this is the one thing that really bothered me. That annoyed me enough that WHILE I was reading I was thinking "that's not right at all". You may have guessed it. The love story. Yes I'm a closet romantic.

It's not the failed romance that annoyed me. Shit happens. People break up. It's HOW it went down that irks me. Let's recap.

They met under crazy circumstances and shared a passionate kiss before she willingly backed him up as he went against Alexandru. Good start.

They had ups and downs like every couple before she used what may have been her last words to tell him "I love you". Definitely emotional.

Distance strained the couple. He threw himself into his new team and she got a little carried away with the freedom her vampire side gave her in USA. But they came together at the end.

Secrets come to light and jealousy abounds before he gets bitten and she literally flies him back to base and threatens to kill everyone if they don't save him from, what she believes to be, a fate worse than death.

Then after all of that. After everything they've been through. All the shit they've faced together. He makes a single dick comment at a very emotional time in his life (and we all know he's not the most emotionally healthy guy in the first place) and she leaves? That isn't Larissa. Not even close. She would've beaten him up to get the truth out of him. Hell she's done it before. She went on and on about how much she loved him only to run away?

No, Larissa is not one who gives up. I liked the book but the entire romance bit was mishandled from the start. And the end? They both confess to loving each other still, both are human. And neither of them are...I just can't.

There are very few times I disagree with an author's work. Many times I hate them because they kill characters I like but never have I ever thought "they did this wrong". Until now.

Darren Hartwell says

Back in 2005 a certain US author released a book that transformed the merciless, blood thirsty vampires that I had grown up watching on TV, DVD, etc. (Hammer's Christopher Lee Dracula movies, Fright Night, 'Salem's Lot, Blade, Buffy) into pouting, lovesick 'teens', almost like a Mills & Boon with vampires. And of course, due to its success, many other writers followed suit. As far as I was concerned, vampire fiction was dead in the water as far as Young Adults were concerned. And then, towards the end of 2010 I was incredibly fortunate to read a copy of a book by debut YA author Will Hill, and from that moment I was absolutely, completely hooked on a book (and subsequently a series) in a way that hadn't happened since the Harry Potter series ended.

That book was, of course, Department 19, and with it Will Hill had well and truly reclaimed the vampire from the mushy bollocks of the sparkly brigade and made them scary again. And vicious. And blood thirsty. And ruthless. And just plain bloody brilliant.

Yesterday saw the release of Darkest Night, the fifth and final book in a series that in my opinion has just got better and better with every book released. With that first instalment, Hill set the bar pretty damn high for YA action and for YA horror, and ever since he has raised that bar higher and higher, leading to me naming him the Sergey Bubka of YA fiction, when I wrote my review of Zero Hour. With Darkest Night Hill tears up all the records and leaves the competition standing.

I've lost count of the number of times I have heard bloggers and reviewers moaning about dreadfully poor 'third books in trilogies', or series that have gone on one or two books too long. That can never be said about the Department 19 series, and Darkest Night is the most fitting and perfect end to that series that I have love so much. Hill continues to shock his readers, and let's face it, after the last few books we pretty much know that no one is safe, and there is no guarantee that any of our favourite characters will make it through to the final page. Jamie, Larissa, Frankenstein, Matt, Kate... will they all be alive and well come the final page or...?

Darkest Night is also far much more than the final battle between the members of Department 19 (and their various international compatriots) and Dracula and his legions of the undead. In fact, if you're expecting 700+ pages of the battle to end all battles then you've obviously not been paying attention in the last few books. Will Hill weaves all kinds of themes into his D19 story: loyalty, trust, betrayal, love, loss, survival and humanity, and it is the latter of these that jumps into the front seat in Darkest Night. With Jamie now a vampire, will he manage to retain his humanity following the climatic battle at the end of Zero Hour? What lengths will the leaders of D19 and the other international organisations go to in order to defeat Dracula? And just how low will humankind stoop in the name of war?

With these themes central to the first half of the book Hill adds so much realism to what is essentially a fantasy horror tale (or is it?). We all know the atrocities that man is capable of committing in the name of war: Syria; Kosovo; Iraq; Northern Ireland... the list goes on and on, and it isn't always the perceived main villain(s) committing these diabolical acts. Sometimes it is the supposed good guy, always claiming that they may be doing the wrong thing, but it is for the right reasons. It is exactly this that Hill weaves as significant strand through the first half of Darkest Night. He isn't content with merely entertaining or scaring his readers - he really wants to make them feel uncomfortable, and have them asking what they would do in a similar situation.

And then, of course, comes the final battle. I urge you not to start reading past halfway unless you devote

another few hours to the book there and then, as you really will not want to put it down! As battle scenes go it is up there with Helm's Deep, the Attack on New York, the Battle of Rourke's Drift, and the The Bride vs the Crazy 88s in Kill Bill vol 1. It is bloody, brutal and completely unforgiving (for the characters and the reader), and when the dust finally settles the world will never be the same again.

Thank you Will Hill for creating this series and its world and characters. I have never looked forward to and simultaneously dreaded reading a book so much since Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, and you have not disappointed. I look forward to reading whatever journey you decide to take us on next.

Becky says

I love the Department 19 series, have followed it since the start. I met Will Hill at YALC in London a few years ago and he signed the first book for me and was really nice and approachable. I then met him again last year at the same convention and I got another Department 19 book signed (which made a change as his new book 'After the Fire' had just come out so everyone was getting that signed – also another great book, check out my review here) Will asked me if I had read this book yet and I had to confess that I hadn't, with all my coursework for my Open University degree I haven't read as much over the last couple of years, but I promised him it was a priority and that I would definitely review it when I was done. (I kept my promise Will, sorry it took so long though).

I have had this book by my side for a long time, I would have it on the side table in the living room, then carry it upstairs to bed to read before going to sleep but it never really happened. I would end up doing coursework or being too tired to read. But I was still desperate to find out what happens to Jamie and his friends.

Then the best idea occurred to me – my husband wanted to go and watch the football the other week and I usually go with him as it's just the odd game, but I usually take something with me in case I get bored. Well the tables in the pub are too small to spread out my coursework – so I took this book. Best idea I have ever had! In the 90 minutes +20 minute break, I managed to read the first 160 pages. I was so absorbed in the book, I didn't even notice everyone cheer when Chelsea scored a goal – and that includes my husband and his mate sitting right next to me. Everything around me just disappeared as I was fully submerged in the world of Department 19.

As it has been a while since I have read the others in the series it took me a few minutes to remember who everyone was and what was going on, but I soon found my feet and it was like reuniting with old friends. And now I had started reading, I had to keep going, I put off my coursework assignment that evening and read more when I got home. I squeezed in another hour the next day when I should have been doing housework, and by the next weekend I had finished all 731 pages.

Although the book was quite long, it never felt like I was having to trawl through it, the words just flew off the page and wrapped themselves around me and carried me along, everything was relevant, everything kept you engaged, everything made you want to read more. There are a number of storylines going on at the same time, but the transition between them is smooth and clear – luckily because I am easily confused! But I knew exactly what was going on in each one.

So Zero Hour has passed and Dracula is back – and oh boy is he back with a bang. He wants the world to know he means business and what better way to do that than create utter carnage and mayhem. The officers in Department 19 are stretched to their limits, relationships are breaking down and missions are becoming more dangerous. I really liked the twists in the story, without giving away spoilers – Larissa's decisions made me want to cry but I also understood her motives and I really liked her development as a character. Jamie has some serious issues and sometimes you just want to shake him and tell him to snap out of it, but overall you can't help but like him. But my favourite character has to be Valentin – so smooth, so self-assured, and so mysterious!

If you are at all squeamish then parts of the book may make you want to turn away, there is quite a lot of

blood and gore and Will Hill doesn't mince his words – he just says it straight, but in doing so it doesn't seem unnecessary. I hate it when people put blood and violence in just for effect – but in this book it feels real, it makes everything that much more believable and helps you to empathise with the characters – understand exactly what they are up against.

This book really emphasised why I love Will Hill as an author, he is an amazing storyteller whose characters and worlds come to life around you. Everything seems believable, every situation will have you wanting to know more and feeling like you are standing next to Jamie and the Department 19 officers, waiting for instructions, ready to work alongside them and fight Dracula. This is a world that will stay with me for a long time and one that I know I will go back to again.

However I am cross with Will Hill for one of those deaths at the end – why did you have to do that!? Actually made me scream 'No!!!' when it happened. How could you Will, how could you? – I'm not going to say who though because that would give it away.

Overall an epic conclusion to an amazing series. I can't wait to see what Will brings out next. Definitely worth a read – I highly recommend.

Adele Broadbent says

I'm sooo glad that the finale was just as mind blowingly amazing as the previous four books in this series. I think it will remain my favourite series for a long, long time.

The build-up to the battle with the oldest vampire on Earth was intense, as was the battle itself. And the final face-off with Dracula was a heart pumping, page turning blast! Many relationships built along the way were changed by the end of this book, as they would and should be. Jamie did lots of soul searching in this book, and found himself, arrogant, selfish and stupid - and he nearly pays the ultimate price.

A must read series. I'll think I'll start again at the beginning.....

Linda Armstrong says

This book was nowhere as exciting as the previous book! The entire book seemed rushed to finish the series and the ending pages was a complete letdown.

B says

Wonderful end to the series

Kirsty says

I love that this series stays across from beginning to end. I loved it from the first book and stayed so excited for every book across the series. It is rare for me to get beyond the first book in a trilogy lately so for me to get through five books and still be excited is a rare thing and says an awful lot about how awesome these books are.

I won't tell you too much about this book because I will spoil things and simply say the quality of this installment was exactly what I had come to expect from Will Hill. The action pulls no punches and keeps you on the edge of your seat throughout. The story is fast paced and exciting and the resolution at the end is very satisfying indeed.

All in all a series I wouldn't hesitate to recommend highly.

Kushnuma says

I received a free advanced ebook copy from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Darkest Night is the last book in the Department 19 series.

Blacklight and all the other Operators around the world are preparing for a battle against the most powerful vampire in the world: Dracula. Many of the operators aren't even sure if they will make it out alive...

This book was really long, but I still did not get bored of it. I loved all the action and the preparation for battle. There were many deaths as expected, some of which made me slightly emotional.

Thanks again to NetGalley and Harper Collins for providing me with this copy.

Nigethan says

Masterfully written, Darkest Night is an absolutely stunning conclusion that surely cements Department 19 as one of the very best YA series around.

Full Review at The Bookbag:

<http://www.thebookbag.co.uk/reviews/i...>

Lord Nikon says

Oh man, this is a heartbreaker to write. And it looks like I'll be the odd man out as everyone else is gushing about this book. Sorry Will.

I loved this series. Books 1-4 offered me lots to enjoy, with great characters, world-building, energy, and pacy plot. I loved the slow build to Zero Hour, and the urgency of that.

The thing is, Zero Hour was up at the end of Book 4...which brings us to my first issue with DARKEST NIGHT. As the book starts the time counter (which in previous books had been counting down to Zero Hour) starts counting past Zero Hour (Example: Zero Hour plus 91 days). Not only that, but that counter makes it to around the 200ish days past Zero Hour mark...which is just over of 6 months. So Zero Hour, the hour of Dracula being back to full strength and has threatened humanity with its doom and their subservience passes, and nothing. So not only does Dracula not attack, he waits SIX MONTHS. Narratively this gives Blacklight and the similar world organizations the time to do all the things they need to do to prepare. That's a big plothole to me. The attack should have come far sooner. 6 months is a LONG ass time to be twiddling ones

thumbs if one is a dark evil monster with doom on his mind. So basically you can say that I read the first few hundred pages in disbelief that nothing was happening on that front. I'm not asking Hill to rush the confrontation...but then Zero Hour should not have been weighed on so heavily and so EXPLICITLY held up as the "final hour" in the previous books if it was going to be the final hour + Six Months.

Which kind of brings me to another thing I disliked. The leads, moreover Jaime himself. In most YA series, if a character ages over the course of the books, especially a teen one going through traumatic occurrences and being forced to grow up, they do so. The Harry Potter leads go from moderately spoilt young teens to angsty, hormonal, angry older teens, and finally to young adults who've been through hell and have grown up as a result. They make adult decisions, and understand why other older adults make harder decisions. Jaime does none of this. Jaime is the same arrogant, angry, Woe-is-me, teenager he was in book 1 in book 5. This should not be. Let alone the stuff he's been through, but the time that has passed should have honed him into something better. Someone more responsible. Someone not prone to lashing out at everyone in his vicinity to advance the plot. I hated Jaime in this book...he makes piss poor decisions, lashes out, apologizes, rinse and repeat. There is literally NO growth to his character. I mean his father disappeared and faked his own death to protect his family from the forces he KNEW would go after them...and Jaime's response is to lose his shit and not forgive his father. He treats a heroic man who saved his life with the contempt reserved for men who leave their families willingly. Julian never did that, but Jaime treats him like he did. The angst present in Jaime at his age should not be. He should have grown out of that, not especially because of what he went through.

Do we need the Night Stalker stuff? Not really. Why should I care about Kate and Matt's fathers getting the wrong end of the stick like a sitcom and proceeding to work against the cause? What about Matt and Natalia? Hamfisted romance, if you ask me. It's not organic and doesn't feel that way. And Matt's discovery of the cure is a bit too trite. It happens fast and then is the catalyst for the Blacklight to be even in a position to fight Dracula. Which felt shoehorned.

Basically there is a lot of filler before we get to the meat of the ending with the fight against Dracula proper in France. When we get there, things are good. There is a big battle, and even though the stakes (Heyo!) have been lowered, by the fact that everyone is a Vampire and can basically heal if they are not destroyed utterly...it still feels urgent and good.

Does Hill stick the landing in his 5-book epic Vampire monster series?

Eh, yes and no. Dracula has been built up as Mr. Powerful. He's been shown to be IMMENSELY strong. So much so that even one of his earliest turned lieutenant's (Valentin) can be thrown around like a ragdoll. So I WAS expecting that the only way to beat him would have been something out of left field. Something no one was expecting, least of all Dracula. Something that would not just feel like the good guys triumphing over him. A trick (like Neville taking out Nagini, removing the last of Voldemort's horcruxes and allowing him to die traditionally)...but that was not to be. This really does come down to Jaime and Drac...and after Drac has pretty much mopped the floor with him, he's bested by a wooden cross rammed into his throat (and then a sword to the heart while he's lying there). So I'm meant to believe this guy who is faster than anyone else in the room...who is walking up to his defeated enemy lying prone on the ground...is not fast enough to see the cross being shoved towards him? I...I don't get it. I seriously don't. I'm not saying I could come up with something better, but beating a guy who has been professed to be SO overpowered for 4 books with something so conventional was a huge letdown. It's only redeemed slightly in the fact that the darkness that made him (back in Book 2, I think) is the thing that grabs him back down.

Larissa and Jaime don't end up together. I heard this was the case before finishing the novel...and you know what? I'm glad. Larissa can do MUCH better than Jaime. He's a bit more grown up at the end, but there is still something SO childish about how he acts around even his friends at the end. Again, no growth.

The best thing about this novel...is that Valentin lives. If there was ONE thing I wanted from this series from the moment he turncoated to Blacklight's side...it was that Valentin would get to live. He's probably the best and most realized character in the whole series, and a boon to Hill's talent at writing...he's nuanced, and interesting, and easily on par with someone like Sirius Black for fan enjoyment level.

So, I'm sorry Mr. Hill. I loved most of the books in this series...but this one fell more flat than I wanted it to. Somewhere in these 700+ pages was a great last book, but it's buried amongst a lot of filler, a few plot holes and the angst of one young man who hasn't grown up.

Zach says

You'd think that the final book would be the most exciting. It had plenty of excitement, don't get me wrong, but a significant portion of the book was devoted to the ethics of being a vampire and the angst between Jamie and Larissa.

Also, with how evil Dracula was, he didn't really do as much as everyone was afraid that he would do. I was looking forward to a world domination thing with an anti-Dracula resistance.

Still, plenty of action and a fun read. Though I wish it hadn't been as vague about Jamie and Larissa at the end.
