



Vowed

Liz de Jager

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The Blackhart Code:

Don't let the monsters grind you down

A Blackhart can see the supernatural behind everyday crimes. But some crimes hide even greater evils...

Kit Blackhart must investigate why children are disappearing from a London estate. However, their parents, police and fae allies claim to know nothing. And as yet more children disappear, the pressure mounts. Luckily, or unluckily, government trainee Dante Alexander is helping Kit with the case. Yet just as her feelings towards him begin to thaw, his life falls apart. As Kit struggles to unravel his problems and dangerous secrets, she meets fae Prince Thorn in her dreams – but their relationship is utterly forbidden.

Then Kit digs too deep, and uncovers a mystery that's been hidden for one thousand years. It's a secret that could just tear down our world.

Vowed Details

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Author : Liz de Jager

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From Reader Review Vowed for online ebook

Paul says

Last year I was fortunate enough to pick up a copy of the debut novel by Liz de Jager, *Banished* while at World Fantasy Con. It was great fun, so when the opportunity to read the next chapter in the adventures of Kit Blackhart, I jumped at the chance.

The second book in an on-going series is really the make or break novel, isn't it? There are fans out there that have had their expectations set by book one and are hungry for more. I suspect it must be a bit of a nightmare for any fledgling author. It's the literary equivalent of that "difficult second album". The second book has to deliver so very many things – move the main story onward, expand successfully on the original premise and set things up for further books. The good news is that de Jager has taken all this in her stride, and *Vowed* doesn't miss a beat. From the outset, we're straight back into Kit's story and she is still the chaos magnet she was before. It's quickly established that all manner of otherworldly related weirdness is going on, and it's up to young Miss Blackhart to sort it all out.

There is some wonderful evolution being displayed in Kit's character. The nervousness and uncertainty that she exhibited in *Banished* is starting to fall away. She is coming into her stride and is far more sure of herself and the limits of her powers. The Fae world is less of a mystery than it was before and she has come to understand the pivotal role that the Blackhart family need to play in shaping events. There is more certainty and determination in her actions. That sort of development is exactly what I am looking for in a protagonist. Kit is at the heart and soul of these novels, she can't ever stagnate, she needs to always be learning and taking on new challenges.

Vowed also introduces a new character in the form of Dante Alexander. Kit is forced into a partnership with Mr Alexander, and she quickly comes to realise that he has more than a few secrets of his own.

Prince Thorn hasn't entirely disappeared either. His presence is felt throughout and he actually pops up in person in a handful of chapters. He is still learning the ropes as the Guardian of Fae society, but finds himself torn between obligation to his new role, and following his own dreams. I suspect he will play a far larger role in book three.

My only criticism? I really would have liked more werewolves in the book. Aidan was one of my favourite characters in *Banished* and I hoped to see more of him and his family in this book. Aidan does appear, just not enough. I do so enjoy werewolves.

Oh, Liz de Jager. you're such a tease. Once again you've managed to tantalise with hints regarding the rest of the Fae world. The dragon lords of Chin and The Empress of Rus, all sound so bloomin evocative. I need to know more! I also need to know more about the Blackhart family themselves. Again, there are some wonderful hints about Kit's parents and the rest of the extended brood. Promise me that there will be more, pretty please with sugar on top.

The way things are going, book three is going to be, and I'll borrow an appropriate wrestling term here, a full on slobberknocker! If you haven't already discovered this exciting new talent in young adult urban fantasy, then I strongly suggest you seek her out. I'm more than happy to confirm what I already suspected, *Banished* wasn't a one off. Liz de Jager has some serious skills and I can't wait to see what she does next. Bring on the next book.

Vowed is published by Tor UK and is available now. This novel confirms that both books of The Blackhart Legacy are well worth your time. Highly recommended.

Sabrina says

A definite recommend for fans of Holly Black!

**The only major dislike for this novel was the jumping between Kit and Thorn - was a little disorientating and it ruined the pace and urgency of solving the child-catcher case.

Lucy Hounsom says

Vowed is the second book in *The Blackhart Legacy* and reunites us with kick-ass hero Kit Blackhart. I was impressed by Kit the first time around and I'm pleased to say that this subsequent adventure impressed me even more.

Vowed has the feel of a detective story, which contrasts nicely with *Banished's* straight-up action adventure. De Jager thus demonstrates her ability to inhabit different modes of storytelling and her pacy but measured exposition is a successful example of this particular narrative structure. We have a juicy mystery, elusive leads, scattered clues and no little excitement as Kit and Dante venture ever nearer to the truth.

On a deprived London estate, children are going missing. Suola, the Unseelie Queen, tasks Kit and – to her initial irritation – government agent Dante Alexander with tracking down the culprit. What sounds like a clear-cut objective swiftly becomes murky and Kit and Dante find themselves under pressure to solve the mystery before people start dying. They encounter a colourful array of characters both hostile and benign, get beaten up enough to make the reader wince, and drink more coffee than is good for them.

All this is told with de Jager's trademark wit; *Banished* was infamous for its devastating food porn and *Vowed* is no less so. Kit and Dante eat their way through a menagerie of breakfasts after each night's detective work and there is an especially memorable scene in which the hot werewolf Aiden teams up with the equally hot Dante to flip pancakes in Kit's kitchen. No, that's not a euphemism.

Joking aside, Liz de Jager is on top form here. *Banished* was a solid YA debut and *Vowed* takes the elements that worked in its favour and builds on them. We have good character development, great world-building and a new, intriguing addition to the cast in the form of Dante Alexander, who finds himself solving the mystery of his parentage alongside the greater mystery of the missing children. Dante is likable (silence, Kit), undeniably sexy and fascinating. The truth of his identity eventually interweaves with the wider narrative and ties in nicely with backstory explored in *Banished*.

I'm not a Londoner, but I thought de Jager's depiction of the impoverished estate was uncomfortably good, from its teenage inhabitants to the concrete stairwells and graffitied garages. It sets the benchmark for the rest of *Vowed's* landscapes, which are varied and well-realised. We have the Blackhart family town house, a memorable demon-run night club aptly called Milton's, the Dark Forest, which readers will remember from

Banished, and the eerie, labyrinthine ruin where the story culminates.

But it's character that drives this novel and *Vowed* sees Kit undergo some changes of the growing-up variety. Everything matures, from her vocabulary to her emotional responses, and de Jager handles each development with tact. This is a Kit who must assume a greater level of responsibility, a Kit whose mission requires her to be independent, resourceful and clever. She is not so much swept up by events, as she was in *Banished*. Rather she takes the initiative and deals with the consequences in a way that shows her to be far less naïve. This is not to say that she doesn't make mistakes. Kit is impulsive and headstrong – two innate aspects of her personality. She has a tendency to act before thinking and takes unnecessary risks. It's interesting therefore that she struggles to disobey the rule that forbids a relationship between mortal and fae when Thorn is so ready to do so.

This brings me neatly to the prince, a major character from *Banished* who has a lot less airtime in *Vowed*. It will disappoint some fans, no doubt, but Dante is a good distraction and Thorn has an important reason for being away. He's learning to be the guardian of the realm and this involves a deal of magical training. Now I love a good sorcerer, especially when that sorcerer happens to be a hot fae prince, so Thorn growing more powerful is a big yes in my book. (Let's not forget he can also turn into a dragon).

Thorn knows why the children are disappearing and attempts to communicate this to Kit in her dreams – it's not until the climax of the story that we see them reunited in the physical world. The resolution of the mystery is in danger of being a little far-fetched, an accusation that is probably levelled fairly frequently at fantasy. But the way in which it throws a morally ambiguous light over the whole proceedings is excellent and a real departure from the norm.

This theme runs throughout the novel and is yet another feature that elevates *Vowed*, setting it apart from *Banished* – a much more traditional story of good versus evil. Skirting spoilers, there is an ethically complex, but valid reason for the missing children, which completely throws Kit off her usual game. It's a situation that complements her growing maturity and she's well-aware of it, frequently wishing someone more experienced would take over the case. Interestingly, de Jager offers us an outsider's view of Kit and Dante in the form of the missing children's parents, who struggle to see the pair as capable. It's a touch of realism in a fantastical world and helps to put things in perspective for the reader who is all too easily swept up in events.

When reviewing *Banished*, I remember commenting on two intrinsic parts of Kit's character, the first being her magic and the short leash on which she keeps it. *Vowed* sees that leash considerably lengthened – Kit no longer fears her abilities and is far more willing to use them in any given situation. The second was her response to violence. This is one of the reasons why de Jager's a great writer. A protagonist's emotional response to violence, particularly the violence they themselves inflict, is too often neglected and perhaps that's part of a larger problem inherent in the genre. Rightly de Jager never lets us forget that Kit is seventeen and although her life is often a violent one, that doesn't mean she has to like it or enjoy dishing out her trademark punches. Kit may be more kick-ass than us, but, in her kindness and decency, we're able to see ourselves.

Liz de Jager has upped her game with *Vowed*. We have a tighter story, extensive character development and subtler themes. And, despite the slightly abrupt ending, the book is a whole lot of fun. It's a page-turner that leaves you flustered and anxious by turns but, most importantly, it leaves you craving more.

Milo (BOK) says

The Review: <http://thefictionalhangout.blogspot.c...>

The Blackhart Code: Don't let the monsters grind you down

A Blackhart can see the supernatural behind everyday crimes. But some crimes hide even greater evils . .

Kit Blackhart must investigate why children are disappearing from a London estate. Their parents, the police and Kit's fae allies claim to know nothing. And as more children disappear, the pressure mounts. Luckily, or unluckily, government trainee Dante Alexander is helping Kit with the case. Yet just as her feelings towards him begin to thaw, his life falls apart. As Kit struggles to unravel Dante's problems and solve their case, she meets fae Prince Thorn in her dreams - but their relationship is utterly forbidden.

Then Kit digs too deep, uncovering a mystery that's been hidden for one thousand years. It's a secret that could just tear down our world.

I can't resist a good urban fantasy, especially when it's set in London, and given how strong the first book in The Blackheart Legacy, Banished was I was really looking forward to seeing what Liz De Jager could come up with in the second act, and she didn't disappoint, delivering a wonderfully fun, fast paced read that really impressed. The characters are great and the world that's developing around them is awesome, with the mystery and suspense really helping to add to the mix of a fantastic novel that keeps you hooked from the beginning to the end.

Kit's one of the more fun characters whose journey I've followed in a while and her development is great to watch unfold here as she changes over the course of the novel, evolving and leaving a strong impression on the reader. She's kickass and a great protagonist for the reader to follow, especially with the curtain pushed back on the Fae World. We are introduced to more things than we were before, and it's good to see that the other characters that we spend time with are just as compelling, with newcomer Government Trainee Dante Alexander being a welcome addition to the book and Prince Thorn offering some perspective on the Fae side of things, offering up an interesting, well balanced cast.

Something that's also refreshing to see in YA urban fantasy is a platonic relationship between a female and male lead character that doesn't end up becoming a romantic one, with the friendship between Kit and the werewolf Aiden being one of the more fun parts of the novel, with both characters having some good interactions that were pretty enjoyable to read.

There's plenty of expansion on the world here as it starts to get more and more fleshed out in front of us. We learn a lot more about the Fae World, with some interesting teases dropped about things like The Dragon Lords of Chin that will make you want to discover more. There's a lot of mystery here with it feeling very much like a Detective novel, obviously firmly planted in the Urban Fantasy genre. The themes highlighted in the novel are more complex than its predecessor, affecting the characters and continuing their development, with the characters, not just Kit, really developing well. There's a lot of stuff here that makes me really excited to see what happens in the third act of The Blackheart Legacy, and it couldn't get here quickly enough.

I mentioned that I love good Urban Fantasy books set in London, and Vowed is no exception. When done properly, London can almost feel like a character in itself (See Tom Pollock's Skyscraper Throne Trilogy

and Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere* for good examples, and I'd also point older readers in the direction of Kate Griffin's *Matthew Swift Series* and the *Hellblazer Graphic Novels* from Vertigo Comics), and something similar is on display here, with the level of world building being played out very well. It doesn't feel like a bland, forgettable backdrop that could be changed with any other city and you wouldn't notice the difference, having its own unique identity, and coupled with the fascinating world building, the rich setting really works in the book's favour .

There's never a dull moment in *Vowed*, and readers of *Banished* will find more to love in the book's second outing. It's well plotted, fun, fast paced and intriguing, featuring some great lead characters set against a fantastic backdrop and once again, offers up an excellent read for fans of Young Adult Fiction.

VERDICT: 8.9/10

Rachel says

really loving this series so far and can't wait for the final one to come out next year.

the characters are really cool and enjoyed this second book even more than the first.

Wendy C says

Vowed (The Blackhart Legacy #2) by Liz de Jager

Vowed (The Blackhart Legacy #2) by Liz de Jager continues the adventures of Kit and the Blackhart family. In this installment, little kids are being taken from their homes and Suola, Queen of the Unseelie Court has tasked Kit and a trainee from the "Spook Squad" named Dante, at finding out who is behind it.

Dante is not all that he appears to be and in the beginning of the investigation, Kit isn't thrilled at all to be working with him. However, as the story progresses, they both grow to like one another and consider each other friends.

There is a bit of Prince Thorn here and there throughout the story. He is learning the ropes at how to be "the Guardian of Fae". Despite the fact that Prince Thorn has little face time in the book, he does come to Kit in her dreams, trying to warn her of the danger she is in.

Liz de Jager has done it again. **Vowed** is an engaging story with action, bewitching magic and entertaining characters. It definitely gives the reader what they want and more. **Vowed** is a must read for any fantasy book lover.

4.7 Stars

Mira says

Kit Blackhart is such an inspiring character. If I was in her situation I would have certainly gone insane. So in the 1st book she has to save a fae prince and then her house blows up, you know no big deal. She then has someone she trusts turn against her, creating a very stressful and intense day. So the next book picks up a few months later and Kit is on another mission, involving kidnapped children. This seems like a normal investigation but no, it instantly becomes complicated, meanwhile she is having dreams about the fae prince, Thorn. All of these things alone are enough to make ANYONE crazy but Kit stays calm and collected. I envy Kit's ability to stay calm through all of this hardship.

Liz de Jager does a great job keeping you interested. She adds many plot twists that keep you on your feet and I love that so much, I could not put this book down! Plot twists work so well in this book because many of the missions Kit goes on rely on trust and throughout *Banished* and *Vowed* Liz adds people who you can trust and some you're not sure of. And this makes for a very interesting book.

Overall this was an AMAZING book and everyone should read it, especially if you get bored with books easily.

Mieneke says

In a nice cyclical move, the penultimate book I review in 2014 is the sequel to the second book I reviewed this year. Full disclosure: Liz de Jager is a dear friend. This doesn't mean I haven't read this novel critically, because I have. Besides, she would kick my ass if she thought I'd cut her slack. But for the sake of transparency I thought it important to mention it upfront.

Vowed is the second book in De Jager's *Blackhart* trilogy and returns us to Kit a number of months after the ending of the last book. Having physically recovered from her ordeal at the end of *Banished*, Kit has not escaped unchanged, both magically and mentally. Her magic has bloomed and become far more powerful than it was before, while her heart remains somewhat the worse for wear after the events of the previous book and her separation from Thorn. Now located in London, the irrepressible Kit is working the family business and taking on assignments on her own. This brings us to the case at the heart of *Vowed*. Because this case she can't work alone. Her employer demands she work together with Dante Alexander, a member of the Spook Squad. And Kit is not amused with this development.

I loved the set up for *Vowed*. As I mentioned in my review for *Banished*, I was left wondering where on earth *Vowed* would take Kit's story as *Banished* didn't really leave a hook for the next book, so I wasn't really sure what to expect when I started *Vowed*. But Kit's situation at the start allows for an almost episodic treatment of the story, not quite the monster-of-the-week format *Buffy* employed to such good effect, but a similar independent, but clearly linked structure. It also means that one does not have to read *Banished* to understand *Vowed*.

Vowed's biggest draw, like the previous book, remains Kit Blackhart. I just absolutely adore her. She's such a fun, interesting character and she does one-liners with the best of them. The way she's trying to come to terms with what happened with her and Thorn made me ache for her, especially when she finds herself drawn to Dante and immediately starts feeling guilty over it. She swings between wanting to hide under her duvet and dealing like a boss, and it just felt really genuine. De Jager also manages to develop Kit's relationship with her family beautifully, even if we only see her cousin Kyle and Aunt Letitia "on screen". But through the things Kit says about her family and the telephone conversations she has with her uncles, the

reader gets a true sense of kinship and a close-knit family bond, which I loved. And of course there is Kyle. I was stoked to see him as much as we do, because he is my favourite of Kit's cousins. I love the geeky genius boy.

Kit isn't just close to her family. There is also her best friend Aiden, one of the Garrett pack. I love their friendship and the way that they are straight with each other and able to be angry with each other without it meaning the end of the friendship or being a big major drama. Also their howls of laughter whenever anyone suggests they might be more than friends is hilarious and never rings false. During *Vowed* Kit becomes close to her unwanted partner as well. She and Dante warm to each other and I liked their dynamics. It helps that Dante is a lovely guy with a fascinating secret. I look forward to see how his character is developed after the discoveries he makes in this book. I hope he gets to stick around, because he makes a great partner for Kit.

The case Kit and Dante have to solve is creepy and complicated, leading them to discover awful things about the way the world works and how sometimes we are powerless to stop them. I liked the way the investigation also allows us to see more of Kit's world and the creatures within it, such as Milton's, the club she frequents, and its numerous supernatural visitors or Professor Imelda Thorpe, historian and anthropologist, and Kit's go-to source on ancient pagan practices. I loved the breadth and scope of De Jager's supernatural world and the best thing about it is that it feels as if she's only shown us a quarter of Kit's world.

My one criticism of the book would be the fact that I figured out the identity of the Raggedy Man quite a bit before Kit and Dante did. I don't like feeling smarter than the protagonists of a book, I want to be in the moment of discovery *with* them. Then again, I know there are plenty of people who love beating the main character to the punch in solving the mystery, so this complaint is definitely of the YMMV-variety. In addition, the discovery of the Raggedy Man's identity was only the first step in locating the children and the resolution to the mystery broke my heart.

With *Vowed* De Jager has upped her writing game considerably; her strong voice remains and the story is even more tightly plotted. Unlike at the end of *Banished*, this time there is a clear hook into the next book *Judged*. I can't wait to see where De Jager will take Kit and company after the explosive ending of *Vowed*, but I know I will be there for the ride. You don't have to read *Banished* before picking up *Vowed*, but I recommend that you do, because it adds to the depth of the world and why miss out on a great story? *Vowed* is a high-octane, massively entertaining read, which had me laughing out loud more than once. Now when is the next book out? Because my Grabby Hands of Want™ are aching for it.

This book was provided for review by the publisher.

Sarah says

I feel like I have to put a disclaimer at the top of this review to say that Liz is a friend of mine, but I also want to say that I've done my best to be completely unbiased in this review. As an ex book blogger I know Liz expects honesty in reviews of her books and I'm sure she'd kick my arse if she thought I was being less than 100% truthful. Luckily Liz's books are just as awesome as she is and there is absolutely no need to puff them up or give them false praise! So now I've got that out of the way lets get down to the bit you've all been waiting for - my thoughts on **Vowed**.

So if you're reading this I'm going to assume you've already read **Banished** (if not walk away from this review now, go buy the book & come back here when you've read it!) and if you loved that then you're going

such likeable characters — love Kit, Dante, and Aiden. Liz de Jager's writing flows beautifully, and this was a joy to read.

Carol Keenan says

I loved this book, follows on well from the first adding more detail and depth to the characters. Tells a fantastic story with twists and turns and an unexpected ending. Is a very good second book in a series, doesn't read like a rushed continuation or like the author ran out of ideas, it is fantastic.

Plenty detail about new characters and creatures, enough twists to keep it interesting without losing the plot and more detail to each character in a way that makes them more likable.

Thoroughly enjoyable read and I can't wait to read the next in the series.

Michelle (Much Loved Books) says

I can honestly say that **Vowed** is one of the rare books that I can't wait to dive into knowing it is the second one of the series. While some other series struggle with the 'second book syndrome' and end up being not as amazing as the predecessor, **Vowed** has none of these problems, in fact **Vowed** was even better than **Banished**. With all the footwork out of the way Liz is able to up the ante and not only bring us some amazingly new creatures, but really lets her characters shine. We get to see Kit even more kick as than ever, we see a whole new side to Aiden (who I admit to loving even more within the pages of **Vowed**), but we also get to see different organisations working together.

Vowed is action packed full of magic, action, romance, and some seriously amazing pancakes ;). I really like how Liz has carried on with the awesomeness that is Kit and the Blackhart family, but has taken them away from situations they are comfortable with, and thrown them into a whole new situation. We still get the magic and the creatures, but in a more human environment with human and otherworld rules to follow and Kit soon realises she is dealing with a lot more than she realised.

Dante was someone who I was unsure about at first, I didn't know his intentions or why he was constantly around, but as the story develops we get to see why. As we get to know him alongside Kit I really did begin to like him, and just when I thought things were straight Liz throws another surprise into the book and we now are faced with a new interesting problem.

I have really enjoyed seeing how far Kit has come, as a person but also as someone with magic. She can seriously kick some ass but has a caring side to her too. Her magical powers have become even more impressive, and thank to training she is able to wield it a lot better. I can't wait to see what happens with her abilities in the next book

Vowed was everything I imagined it would be, and my only problem is that now I have to wait for the next book. It's going to be a loonnnnnng wait.

Jain says

3.5 / 5 stars ?

Virginie (chouettblog) says

Brilliant!

Sometimes even "Fairy Tales" don't have happy endings.

Full review up soon.
