



Cat Flap

Ian Jarvis

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A contemporary Sherlock Holmes, the eccentric Bernie Quist is a consultant detective in the city of York. Christmas is days away and once again the reclusive sleuth will be quietly celebrating alone. His assistant Watson, a teenager from the Grimpen housing estate, has other ideas, mostly involving parties, girls and beer. Yuletide plans are halted when three chemists die and the fiance of one hires them to look into her apparent suicide. After discovering the chemist wasn't engaged, they're drawn into the mystery when their employer is killed. Added to this, Watson has a puzzle of his own - Quist is clearly hiding something and he's curious to know what. The investigation leads to a shady cartel of northern businessmen, a forgotten Egyptian cult and an ancient evil lurking in the medieval alleyways of York. Quist's dark secret is also revealed, and Watson doesn't know what terrifies him the most.

Cat Flap Details

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From Reader Review Cat Flap for online ebook

Dale says

It falls flat as a mystery, some may like the humor

Mixing detection, humor, and the Supernatural

My thanks to Steve and Timi at MX Publishing for my review copy of this book. You guys have been most generous.

Bernard Quist is a modern consulting detective on Baker Avenue in the city of York. His sidekick, Watson, is a young black man just nineteen years of age. Quist has a walk-up office across from a collection agency whose major-domo collector Kevin Selden is a skinhead with a dog named Klansman. Go figure...

The book opens with the murder of Lisa Mirren. There are things a bit odd about this death. It will not be the last. Three chemists die in odd circumstance. The firm is hired by the fiancé of one of the chemists only to discover they have been had. The girl's death is being considered a suicide, and the man is not her fiancé.

The story is too much of a farce to really appeal to me. The humor is sometimes rather crude and seems forced into place. The detection part isn't all that bad, but it still lacks focus since Bernie Quist is being directly compared to Sherlock Holmes right on the back cover. People talk of comparing apples to oranges. This is comparing apples to onions—that much of a difference.

The action is in a series of very short choppy chapters, seventy-three in total! Jump perspective is one thing, this is something else. I don't really get it; all I know is that I don't like it. Those who like humor may find this engaging, as a mystery lover I just can't. Sorry.

I will give the book two stars for the obvious labor the author put into writing this novel.

Quoth the Raven...

Mark Sohn says

Funny throughout, hilarious at times, this mystery thriller blends the worlds of Sherlock Holmes with the Supernatural. Set in and around York, the consulting detective Bernie Quist and his sidekick Watson must solve a series of brutal murders. There's a sinister organisation working against them and the police are

baffled. Add a hilarious Playboy SAS wannabe named Rex Grant and the scene is set for some unique and memorable action. Essential for thriller/supernatural fans.

Marvin says

Bernard Quist is a private investigator although he prefers the term "Consultant detective". He recently hired a young 19 year old black youth by the name of Watson to be his assistant. Lately the detective trade has been centered around tracking unfaithful spouses and working divorce cases. But when a somewhat seedy thug asks them to prove his fiancée did not die of a suicide, it takes them into serial killer territory with a string of murders involving employees of a pharmaceutical company.

Does Bernard Quist remind you of anyone in particular?

Cat Flap is a clever take-off on the Sherlock Holmes mysteries. But while Quist has a lot in common with the great detective there is plenty of reasons Quist is his own man. Ian Jarvis is clearly making a tribute of sorts to Sherlock Holmes but he is also successfully creating a detective that can stand on its own. This is a modern mystery complete with all the fixings of contemporary England but Quist seems slightly out of place. There is a reason for this but that must be kept a secret for now. Enter 19 year old Watson, a thoroughly contemporary but sometimes naive British lad with a sense for all the modern things that Quist seems clumsy around. There is an vast array of secondary and minor characters that add to the plot, perhaps too many. But it all makes sense in the end and the reader realizes that this was one clever ride.

But what really makes this novel work is the humor. It is a clever dry wit that shows up in the dialogue whether Quist is giving his eager assistant back-handed compliments or commenting on that which no one else gets. When the mystery takes a supernatural turn, the author is right there gauging the reactions of the characters and making a few odd quirks in the plot instantly understandable.

Overall, *Cat Flap* is a fun novel. It's hard to take it too seriously but easy to get caught up in the fun. While the Holmes pastiche beginning helps one get hooked, the novel soon becomes its own story. In fact, now that the character are introduced and developed, it might be good to dump the Holmes connection altogether in the next inevitable books. Quist is too interesting to play second fiddle.
