



Cursed

Stephen Leather

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An exciting short story, part of the Jack Nightingale series by bestselling author Stephen Leather - thrillers with an occult twist.

Jack Nightingale - lives in the shadows, fights in the dark.

Ex-cop turned private eye Jack Nightingale is used to dealing with tricky situations. He's faced down the powers of hell a couple of times, too. In this new short story, he's called in to help a policeman who's lying at death's door. The doctors can't work out what's wrong. But the dying man's colleagues swear blind that he was cursed by a gypsy during the Dale Farm clearance. And Nightingale could be his only hope.

Jack Nightingale is the hero of Stephen Leather's supernatural detective novels. There are five books in the critically acclaimed series: NIGHTFALL, MIDNIGHT, NIGHTMARE, NIGHTSHADE and LASTNIGHT.

Cursed Details

Date : Published December 20th 2011 by Hodder (first published January 1st 2011)

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Author : Stephen Leather

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From Reader Review Cursed for online ebook

Ellen says

It's always a pleasure to read anything by this author. He's a great storyteller. All his stories are captivating and perfectly paced to keep you reading. And his unique sense of humor is hilarious. Stephen Leather never disappoints no matter what genre he writes in.

Cathy (cathepsut) says

"Ex-cop turned private eye Jack Nightingale is used to dealing with tricky situations. [...] In this new short story, he's called in to help a policeman who's lying at death's door. The doctors can't work out what's wrong. But the dying man's colleagues swear blind that he was cursed by a gypsy during the Dale Farm clearance. And Nightingale could be his only hope."

A nice appetiser for the Jack Nightingale novels. Should appeal to fans of Jim Butcher's Dresden series.

I have some issues with it though. Nightingale comes across as a bit of a naive dope. And the author happily uses every cliché ever known regarding race and the social situation in the UK. I guess it's supposed to make the story feel real and contemporary, but it gets old fast.

The writing is witty and has a nice amount of sarcasm, although some of the conversations come across as a little stilted.

I liked the overall feel of the story well enough though and might be tempted to pick up one of his novels.

Anika Kalia says

I mean like really? I got this ebook for free. Since I like thrillers so thought of giving it a try. When I started it looked promising. But later on wasn't impressed by the short story. The worst thing is that it portrays a bad concept of patients being treated with superstitious activities instead of the right expertise of a doctor. A patient who is not being cured by a doctor is cured immediately by the use of the concept of voodoo dolls and superstitious curses. Oh c'mon I don't like it when superstition and supernatural seem to belittle science. It doesn't seem real. This was the first short story that I read by this author. Maybe he has good books to his credit but this one definitely didn't impress me.

Midnight says

I was privileged to receive a copy of this prior to release and I have to hold my hands up and admit I'm an enthusiastic devotee of Stephen Leather's books; I admire his ability to tantalise and enthrall a varied spectrum of readers and this short story appealed greatly.

Police sergeant Simon Roach became critically ill after working at the Dale Farm clearance; doctors had used the most powerful antibiotic cocktails available and they'd had no effect. Convinced he had been cursed, his colleagues call in Jack Nightingale, a gumshoe plying his trade in London from his South Kensington office. Jack's previous experience in the supernatural heebie-jeebie world is the officer's last chance for help.

This is a tale of around 13,000 words so is sufficient to whet the appetite of those unfamiliar with the previous Jack Nightingale books (*Nightfall* and *Midnight*) and stimulate interest in *Nightmare*, due for publication in January 2012.

Stephen Leather writes with the confidence of the accomplished author he undoubtedly is so the story flows easily; his novels are well plotted, thoroughly researched and are always entertaining. The Jack Nightingale series is no exception and also provides an eerie twist to crime novels.

This short story delivers an excellent appetiser and is highly recommended. It is free on Kindle at the moment!

Suzanne says

Set around a Gypsy curse, placed on a Policeman at Dale Farm .. Didn't like it ..

T. K. Elliott (Tiffany) says

An enjoyable short story in the *Jack Nightingale* series. You don't have to read it in order, or even to have read the previous books in the series. I read the first book in the series ages ago, and this has prompted me to get back to it.

David Batterson says

I enjoyed this short read. I hadn't read any of Stephen Leather's work before, though I found *Cursed* a pleasant read that took a little over an hour to wrap up.

Cursed is an understatement though! I had to take a shower after I read this book for fear I was turning into a snake. Creepy! If you haven't read it, you don't know what I mean! ;)

Gary says

An introduction to the character of Jack Nightingale an ex cop. A very quick read and because of that fails to build up the characters or the plot itself. Don't be put off though I have read Stephen Leather's other work and it is worth a look.

Sarah Baines says

I have to say it - the Jack Nightingale series is one of my favourite and Cursed didn't disappoint. I have read Cursed before a long time ago but I suddenly had the urge to read all the short stories as I've read 1-5 of the novels. Fabulous stuff.

Karolyn says

Enjoyable

Quite enjoyed this short story, bit of supernatural involved but the writing style is easy to follow and good storyline ,

Bradley says

First the good news, this was free.
It is all downhill from this high point.

The story is quickly populated by hot topics for Daily Mail readers. Failed multiculturalism, travellers, benefit cheats, obesity, BBC bias, feckless youth. Feels like a check list was being used.

The storyline is an ex-cop, Jack Nightingale who, being acquainted with things supernatural, is tasked with lifting a gypsy curse from a cop currently fading fast in the ICU.

There are a couple of lines explaining how the ailing cop, named Mr Roach had the nickname Scrambled. It was not worth the padding.

So pleased was the author with this bit of invention we are then introduced to a character with the nickname Jack, which does not even begin to be a nickname.

If this sounds bad, it is worse than that.

The very thin story is pinned together by the unlikely event of the hero's secretary having a smattering of Romany.

I just kept reading, not in the hope it would improve but too see how poor it could get.

Soul-destroying is the answer.

The ending transcends bad. I will not ruin the surprise, there isn't one.

I would have to be paid to read more from this author, free is not incentive enough.

One star, deserves considerably less.

Lillian Cummings says

Love Jack Nightingale he might use the grey side of the law but he does get the job done. He has been given the task of trying to save a cop's life after he was cursed. Jack knows that he can't find the cure he will lose whatever friends he still has on the force. Jack just hopes that he can be on time and find the old woman before it is too late.

A great thriller

***Amber* says**

Years ago I read *Nightfall* and never realised it was a series, so it was a nice surprise when I was reading *Cursed* and started to realise it was familiar. This short story was an enjoyable read and the fact that I barely remembered the first book in the series was not a problem, *Cursed* can be read without reading any of the others.

Cait says

I've been borrowing the Jack Nightingale series from a guy at work and he mentioned that there were some free ebooks featuring the character available online. I checked where they slotted into the series and after finishing the second book I dutifully loaded up this one on my Kindle to check it out.

I have to admit that I didn't think this one was as good as the first two books in the series. My major sticking point is that it opens with Chalmers going to Nightingale for help which just didn't gel with the character as I'd read him in the first two books. Perhaps if I'd read it after the third I might have felt differently. I think a better opening would have been a random police officer or acquaintance of Jack's asking for his help on this mysterious case.

As far as the actual story goes though it made for a nice quick read. I'd finished reading *Case Histories* by Kate Atkinson earlier in the evening and wanted something to occupy myself while my husband and I watched *Starsky and Hutch* in bed. This one lasted for exactly one episode of the TV show. Just under half of the book is comprised of the opening chapters of the first book which seems rather illogical considering most people going for this book will already be familiar with Nightingale. I'd rather have read the opening of the next book in the series.

This story worked well as a short story, I don't see that it would have been possible to extend it into a full Nightingale novel (unless it was part of a subplot). It would have been nice if it had linked in to the other books in the series a little better, rather than just mentioning characters who we've seen before in passing. I would have liked it if we'd got a bit about Jack's sister or something to tie it in a little better.

On the whole, not bad for what it is, but had I picked this up before the first Jack Nightingale book I wouldn't have bothered with the rest.

Brooks says

Like every urban fantasy character Jack Nightingale is snarky, and generally only interested in actions that will benefit himself. This was my first introduction to the character so it was surprising to me that Jack has no real magic himself, but relies on the help of powerful friends to fight against magic. Unfortunately, nothing was really explained about the Gypsy magic curse that was used.

The story itself is short focused almost exclusively on the title character so side characters only show up briefly and are best forgotten for their minor roles. The story is well-told, but doesn't really add anything to the overall Jack Nightingale series and could be easily skipped over.
