



Aloha from Hell

Richard Kadrey

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All hail Sandman Slim, author Richard Kadrey's ultra-extreme anti-hero and recent escapee from Lucifer's overheated Underworld playground. In number three, *Aloha from Hell*, the ruthless avenger, a.k.a. Stark, finds himself trapped in the middle of a war between Heaven and Hell. With God on vacation, the Devil nosing around in Paradise, and an insane serial killer doing serious damage on Earth, Stark/Slim is ready to unleash some more adrenaline-surgingly edgy and violent supernatural mayhem—and even pay another visit to Hell if necessary—which is great news for fans of Jim Butcher, Warren Ellis, Charlaine Harris, Kim Harrison, and Simon R. Green.

Aloha from Hell Details

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From Reader Review Aloha from Hell for online ebook

Jason says

4.5 Stars

"When you're born in a burning house, you think the whole world is on fire. But it's not."

This has been one of the most enjoyable series to read for me, and I really was looking forward to reading this one. I love the small horror subgenre of Christian horror. Kadrey does a fabulous job at trying to bring as much real Christian religion into these fiction horror novels.

James Stark, also known as Sandman Slim is the ultimate antihero. He is after all, Lucifers private body guard. If you are not familiar with Sandman Slim, he is a man of magic that was sent to hell alive. He fought for his life, he fought for Lucifer's generals, and he fought for the fun of it. He was a gladiator that fought Hells' minions and then lived to tell about it. He was unaware that he was a Nephilim, half human and half an angel. This means that he is very hard to kill. He is also very good at killing. He is adept at hoodoo, hexes, and spells, which add to his ability to maim and murder. His heritage makes him a perfect soldier, as getting hurt only makes him stronger. He is also a bit psychotic as well, as he has internal conversations with his angel side that he keeps penned up like a battered dog.

Kadrey does a fabulous job at adding wit and humor to his writing. He likes to throw in clever snide remarks. This humor adds a great deal of fun to the action, and makes Stark a very likable bad ass.

"IF YOU'VE EVER wondered if your life has run off the rails, here's a handy quiz.

Is the only person left in the universe you can go to for help someone even God doesn't want to talk about?

Is the only alliance left to you with a gang that eats and shits chaos?

Are you about to drunk-dial the only guy in Creation who's probably more despised than you?

If you answered yes to any of these, then you should seek psychiatric help. If you answered yes to all of them, you're me."

The three books all center around Stark's plans and actions to try and destroy Mason, his archenemy. The man that betrayed him, sent him to Hell, and killed his woman. Like the other books in the series, this can be a graphically violent and gratuitous book. Sandman Slim is not a man to be trifled with. In a great moment of the book Sandman Slim is in a car chase during broad daylight. Even with hundreds of witnesses, traffic light cams, and innocent bystanders, he screams, he is so pissed off.

"This is the world. This is how it is," I'll tell them. "Jesus might have died for your sins, but a girl is burning for them. I'd trade every one of your fucking lives for one minute of hers. Don't you dare pray for her.

Twiddle your rosaries and pray for yourselves, because if she goes down, I'm the Colonel, the fryer's hot, and you're my barnyard chickadees."

This book closes up most of the story lines that were started in book one. That does not mean that this is the last time that we will be teaming up with Sandman Slim, as the conclusion of this book is anything but an ending.

I found a few inconsistencies in the way the story progressed that bugged me, but not enough for me to single them out. I found the ending to be sufficient. However, the name Sandman Slim was legendary

enough and I do not think that the ending furthers his notoriety.

I enjoyed reading this book. I loved it. I really like that Kadrey does not pull any punches with Sandman Slim. He is the monster that kills monsters, and we the reader love that about him. I also liked Kadrey's Butcher Bird and highly recommend his books to horror lovers and those like me that like their horror to have some faith.

Krazykiwi says

This is another one that worked even better as an audiobook than in print. Although, I seem to be a little alone in really liking this instalment in the series anyway.

Katie says

I really love this series. If you are looking for a great UF; look no further than Sandman Slim...I love the characters. I love Kas, Lucifer, Mustang Sally, Jack the Ripper, and especially Candy. I like that the story is angsty and full of action. Plus, all kinds of great quotes! "I'd bet the Pope's red shoes," is my favorite of this book. This installment has Sandman Slim going back to Hell to try and stop a war that will destroy both Heaven and Hell.... After all the dust is settled, Aelita is still on the loose - I can 't wait to read how the Sandman finishes her off! I need the next book...right now. If you like the Bourne series, and if you like Dresden then you will love this series!

Suz says

In fairness it took me a while to get into this one, but I suspect that had more to do with what was going on in my life than it did the book.

Once the story got going, however, it really grabbed me. Kadrey's wry, gritty humor is really hanging out there in this one, as is his deeply macabre imagination. Things changed for our anti-hero quite a lot by the end of this book and I'm looking forward to, eventually, seeing what Kadrey does with the changes.

Jeffrey Keeten says

Bung, bung, bung, bung, bung
Bung, bung, bung, bung, bung
Bung, bung, bung, bung, bung
Bung, bung, bung, bung, bung
Bung, bung, bung, bung, bung

**Mr. Sandman, bring me a dream
(Bung, bung, bung, bung)**

**Make him the cutest that I've ever seen
(Bung, bung, bung, bung)**

**Give him two lips like roses and clover
(Bung, bung, bung, bung)**

Then tell him that his lonesome nights are over

**Sandman, I'm so alone
Don't have nobody to call my own
Please turn on your magic beam
Mr. Sandman, bring me a dream
Bung, bung, bung, bung**

Whirrr whap whap tic tic tic screeeeech!

STOP THE RECORD!!!

Sandman Slim..... ain't that kind of Sandman.

He has just recently returned from HELL, after kicking Lucifer's ass around, so much in fact that Lucifer changed his name to Samuel and now resides in Heaven. That was an ass kicking long overdue. Sandman has returned to Earth to take up running his video store. Although Kasabian the Headless insists that Sandman may own the store, Kasabian runs it.

Did you catch that headless part?

Yeah, well Sandman and Kasabian had a disagreement...well... a little more than a disagreement. Kasabian shot Sandman, and Sandman cut his head off. There was some Hoodoo involved, and now the living head makes his way around on a skateboard with little feet.

This might be a good time to mention that you really need to read the books in order. Anything that sounds hinky or too out of this world will make perfect sense after a couple of margaritas and maybe one of those "funny" cigarettes I've been hearing about.

Anyway, Sandman is starting to get the yawns. *"It's so quiet and peaceful out here I'm getting bored with breathing. Maybe we'll get lucky and the world will go to Hell again. Fingers crossed."*

He missed chopping up demons like Margaret Thatcher missed bending House of Lord's ministers over her desk for a good spanking.

Sandman and I share a love of pop culture references.

"The Beat Hotel.... I't like a cross between a seventies swingers no-tell motel and the kind of hipster hot spot where rock stars stay when they don't want to be seen bringing home good smack or bad strippers. The rooms are comfortable in a Zen halfway-house kind of way. But the kitchens are decorated in bright

primary-colored vinyl like a Playboy-chic burger joint. The place looks like where David Lynch would meet Beaver Cleaver's mom for secret afternoons of bondage and milk shakes. I love it."

This description reminds me of the motels that the Winchester Boys from **Supernatural** always seem to find themselves holed up in.

Sandman and I also share a dislike of self-indulgent automobiles. *"I hate those luxury golf cars. Gaudy status symbols with as much personality as an Elmer's-Glue-on-white-bread sandwich."* Now he is speaking about a Lexus, but the one that I loath is the love affair that shallow, corporate zombies have with their BMWs. Could that brand of car be any more humdrum to look at? They are the beige of the car world in my opinion. They might as well have just bought the most plain jane Ford they can find and pay half. I had an ex-friend who had her BMW hit in a parking garage, and she kept going on and on about how upset she was, and I kept thinking maybe that car has some character now.

Sandman gets shot; no worries, he is some kind of half Nephilim, a race that doesn't exist anymore except in the DNA replicating in his own internal world. It is tough on nice jackets though. *"I pick up the coat. Finger the bullet hole. It's not bad enough to throw the coat away. Besides, I heard that **blood is the new black.**"*

He finds out that the soul of his recently deceased girlfriend has been captured from Heaven and spirited away to **HELL**. He'd be upset about all this except for the fact that he is almost out of Maledictions (hell's best brand of cigarettes), and he has been getting itchy feet over L.A. being way too tame.

Hell hasn't been the same **HELL** ever since Lucifer left. It was time for Sandman to go down, save the girl, and make a few attitude adjustments.

"Go to hell see if you like it
Then come home with me
Tomorrow night may be too late
The world's a mess it's in my kiss"
--The X

Nothing but irreverent, laugh out loud fun. Lucky for me Richard Kadrey has already written several more. This is the perfect book series to read when I need to take a long stroll away from the regular world. Sandman Slim ain't no angel, and for a little while I don't have to be either.

If you wish to see more of my most recent book and movie reviews, visit <http://www.jeffreykeeten.com>
I also have a Facebook blogger page at: <https://www.facebook.com/JeffreyKeeten>

Wortmagie says

Richard Kadrey ist mein Lieblings-Urban-Fantasy-Autor. Er ist einfach der Beste, wenn es darum geht, harte, witzige, makabre Geschichten zu schreiben, die Magie und Übernatürliches in unsere Welt

katapultieren. Bei ihm gibt es keine glitzernden Vampire, keine schmusigen Werwölfe und erst recht keine jungen Frauen, die sich in all ihrem Herzschmerz mit Wonne suhlen. Seine Welt ist die Welt von James Stark aka Sandman Slim, mäßig begabter Hexer, Nephilim und Ex-Höllengladiator. Er ist nicht nett, er hat ein Alkoholproblem und sein Motto lautet „Mit Hoodoo und Bullshit wird's schon gehen“. Kurz gesagt: ich liebe ihn! „*Aloha from Hell*“ ist der dritte Band der Reihe und ich freute mich riesig auf ein Wiedersehen mit Stark, seinen Gefährten und seinen Feinden!

Wieder einmal regiert die Langeweile in Starks Leben. Das Golden Vigil ist zerschlagen und Luzifer kehrte in den Himmel zurück. Seit er Los Angeles abermals rettete, war Stark brav und arrangierte sich mit dem Engel in seinem Kopf. Aber Stark wäre nicht Stark, hätte er nicht noch ein paar offene Rechnungen, die beglichen werden wollen. Da sich Luzifer kurzerhand aus dem Staub machte, versinkt die Hölle dank Mason im Chaos. Das könnte Stark natürlich egal sein, hätte Mason sich nicht mit Aelita verbündet, die weiterhin der fixen Idee nachjagt, Gott zu töten. Gemeinsam planen sie, Himmel und Hölle zu zerstören und dabei auch gleich noch Stark zu beseitigen. Sie spielen seine größte Schwachstelle gegen ihn aus und entführen Alice aus dem Himmel. Stark hat keine Wahl. Er muss ein weiteres Mal in die Hölle hinabsteigen. Sandman Slim kehrt heim.

Kennt ihr das Gefühl, wenn ihr ein Buch aufschlägt, ein paar Sätze lest und es ist wie nach Hause kommen? So empfinde ich die Bände der „*Sandman Slim*“ – Reihe. Ich habe stets das Gefühl, Stark so gut zu kennen, als wäre er mein Freund, mit dem ich mich regelmäßig auf ein Bier treffe. Er erzählt mir von seinen Abenteuern und obwohl ich mir recht gut vorstellen kann, worauf seine Geschichten hinauslaufen, überrascht er mich doch jedes Mal mit den Details. Er ist ein Bastard, aber ein Bastard, den man einfach lieben muss. Manchmal vergesse ich, dass er nicht real ist, denn er ist so realistisch und greifbar gezeichnet, dass ich mich ihm ungeheuer nah fühle. Für mich ist es genau das, was die Reihe auszeichnet. In der Urban Fantasy bekommt man es oft mit Charakteren zu tun, deren Eindimensionalität durch eine actiongeladene Handlung vertuscht werden soll. Richard Kadrey hingegen vereint Action, fiesen Galgenhumor und einen psychologisch vielschichtigen Protagonisten zu einem stimmigen Gesamtbild. Stark ist unter seiner harten Schale noch immer verloren und ziellos. Daher habe ich mich über seine Rückkehr in die Hölle überhaupt nicht gewundert. Offiziell steigt er natürlich nur hinab, um Alice zu retten, aber inoffiziell war es lediglich eine Frage der Zeit, wann er das Leben auf der Erde nicht mehr ertragen würde. Stark findet keinen Lebenssinn. Die Arena und die Spielregeln der Hölle waren mehr als 10 Jahre seine Welt und so sehr er es auch zu leugnen versucht, diese Welt ist ihm vertrauter als unsere. Er ist noch immer nicht über Alice hinweg und kann nicht loslassen. Mir war gar nicht klar, wie unheimlich präsent sie all die Zeit über in seinen Gedanken war; das wurde mir erst bewusst, als er ihr in der Hölle begegnet. Sie hat nichts von all dem mitbekommen, was Stark jahrelang erlebt hat und erdulden musste – und doch war es für mich so, als wäre sie da gewesen, weil sie eben nie aus seinem (Unter-)Bewusstsein verschwunden ist. Dass Kadrey ihre emotionale Verbindung auf eine Weise herausarbeitete, die sogar mich vergessen ließ, dass Alice seit vielen Jahren tot ist, spricht von einem Talent, das wirklich beeindruckend ist.

Trotzdem sehe ich „*Aloha from Hell*“ nicht völlig unkritisch. Ich fand, dass Kadrey die Szenen in der Hölle zu schnell abhandelte. Im Vergleich zum Vorgeplänkel war mir dieser Part zu kurz und etwas zu unübersichtlich. Ich weiß zwar, dass Kadrey großen Spaß daran hat, seine Leser_innen vor vollendete Tatsachen zu stellen, sie zu schockieren und ihnen Haarsträubendes um die Ohren zu schlagen, ohne eine Erklärung abzugeben, aber da die Hölle für Stark ein Ort ist, mit dem er viele widerstreitende Gefühle verbindet, hätte ich mir mehr Tiefe in der Handlung gewünscht. Außerdem verschenkte Kadrey meiner Meinung nach einiges an Potential, indem er ein Zusammentreffen mit einer faszinierenden Persönlichkeit aus der Geschichte oberflächlich und beiläufig gestaltete.

Letztendlich hatte ich aber doch wieder eine Menge Spaß mit Stark. „*Aloha from Hell*“ ist vielleicht nicht perfekt, mein Lesevergnügen war jedoch enorm. Und darauf kommt es schließlich an.

Ich hoffe wirklich, dass Richard Kadrey nie aufhört, „*Sandman Slim*“ – Romane zu schreiben. In Kombination bieten Stark und seine übernatürliche Welt eine schier endlose Fläche zur Entwicklung, eine bunte Spielwiese, auf der jede noch so obszöne Idee ein Plätzchen finden kann. Ich hoffe, Kadrey schreibt sie alle auf. Ich möchte mich niemals von Stark verabschieden müssen. Irgendwann wird sich das vermutlich nicht vermeiden lassen, doch noch ist es nicht so weit.

Das Großartige an dieser Reihe ist, dass sie so unberechenbar ist, obwohl man vor dem Lesen genau weiß, worauf man sich einlässt. Stark ist ein Wirbelwind aus chaotischer Energie, der am Beginn einer Geschichte selbst nie weiß, wo er landen wird.

Kadreys Reihe ist eine Bereicherung für die Urban Fantasy – es ist eine Schande, dass sie so unbekannt ist. Darum kann ich euch nur einen Rat geben: geht los, kauft einen „*Sandman Slim*“ – Roman und lernt meinen Freund Stark kennen!

Michael says

What can I say, I was on a Kadrey kick.

I did not enjoy *Aloha from Hell* as much as I hoped I would. Part of this comes from my own expectations. I was looking forward to more interaction with the earthly (read: alive) characters, especially the relationship between Stark and Candy. While there is a little of this, a good deal of the book takes place after Stark return Downtown to once again exact revenge upon Mason, the current ruler of Hell.

All right, I get that Stark is still pissed that Mason threw him into Hell in the first place and that he had Alice killed. However, when the person you are looking to avenge comes to you in a dream and essentially says "Dude, let it go already," maybe you should listen.

Stark can't, of course, because there is also this pesky universe to save. I think that my biggest disappointment was the time spent in Hell. Coming off of the vivid and imaginative description of Butcher Bird, spending time walking around with Stark in a Hell that is essentially a really jacked version of Los Angeles was just a let down.

My other problem was that Stark spends a lot of time walking around Downtown. Don't get me wrong, the descriptions are knock down, make me disturb the person next to me by snort laughing funny. It just seemed a bit tedious after a while. Stark does a little too much soul searching for me. The descriptions of the creation of the universe were interesting, but again, a little lengthy.

The end however, that was not what I expected.

I did enjoy the third *Sandman Slim* novel, but not nearly as much as the first.

David Brooke says

To read this at my website with pictures and in the dueling review format versus another book about hell navigate here: [http://www.adventuresinpoortaste.com/...](http://www.adventuresinpoortaste.com/)

Aloha from Hell is the third book in the *Sandman Slim* series, but above all accounts it can be read stand

alone. There are many references to the previous books, but important details are explained so you won't be lost. The book follows Sandman Slim, a man built with a bad attitude stuck between heaven and hell, who acts as a sort of detective between those worlds and our own. Slim doesn't necessarily want the job of detective, but since he's half angel he can survive a fight with demon or angel, so he's the only guy fit for the job.

Los Angeles is his home, and Kadrey adds a lot of flair to the already hellish place that is LA. Expect many explanations of why LA is already Hell, and why Sandman Slim belongs there. This connection makes LA a character onto itself and further defines Kadrey's take on Hell. The central story revolves around an old enemy of Slim's trying to take over Hell and Slim must leave the hell that is LA and go to Hell proper to make things right again.

To get there, just outside LA is Eden, ironically the only Earthly doorway to Hell, and it requires the help from a highway goddess who survives on gas stop junk food. It may sound silly, but Kadrey does a great job creating American myth to go along with what we know about Heaven and Hell. It's a great way to rewrite what we know about America, and it helps make Slim's already mythical world that much more grounded in a reality. Slim trudges through miles of desert to locate Eden. Nearly there, Slim comments,

"If I ever get out of here, I'm going to find whichever angel invented sand and make it eat this fucking desert while getting a Tabasco enema."

It's nonsense writing to some extent, but part of the joy this books bring is the slurry of anger and attitude Slim brings to the adventure. Kadrey does a good job writing in a pulpy way but also slings so many wtf moments it feels like anything can happen. That's a good and bad thing when reading the book as it makes everything very fan fiction esque, and things seem to just happen perfectly at the right time to keep the plot going. The fast action pace of the book is also a bit of a problem as it doesn't allow the character to be fleshed out beyond his archetypal detective character. But that's why this book is good and different from most. You know you're getting an adventure that's cheap, easy to read and enjoyable enough.

That said, Hell is an interesting place. Once past the door inside the tree of knowledge a set of rusty stairs leads down into Hell. Everything about Kadrey's Hell is grounded in reality. Once down the stairs, Hell looks just like Los Angeles, only on fire, with piles of trash burning and hellions running around chasing the damned. Things have changed since Slim first encountered it though,

"The sky Downtown used to be all bruised purples and bloody reds. A mean perpetual twilight. Now it's a solid mass of roiling black smoke. Lit from below, it looks like the belly of a black snake the size of the sky crawling over us."

Hell it seems has gone to shit, because Lucifer isn't the man in charge anymore, and Hell has become even more Hellish. In Kadrey's hell, instead of a land that has been created to show the worst case scenario as in Damned, Hell is what we know on Earth but burning and ruined.

"Sunset Boulevard looks like it was blow torched from below...The only thing still standing are the palm trees. They burn like votive candles in a dark nave, throwing more shadows than light. Smoldering fronds fall like burning snow."

Kadrey paints a very vivid place that's at once scary and beautiful. The description of hell is something akin to a video game. Things are described quickly and there's a sense of atmosphere, but Kadrey's focus is never about the surroundings. Instead, this book is about Slim breaking necks and taking names. It's an action book

first and a descriptive meaningful read a far, far second.

Edward Lorn says

I started reading Aloha From Hell on February 15th of this year. Here it is, September 20th, and I've just now finished it. What began as a read on my Kindle changed to the hardcover edition in July when I found it at the library. I made it to about page 100 before I had to take the book back so someone else could tear their fucking hair out. Finally, I downloaded the audio book, because MacLeod Andrews can make Cannibal Corpse lyrics sound like Catholic hymns. And whataya know? I actually finished this mother-humping book. Amen, and pass the maledictions!

Oh, how I loved the first two books in this series. The witty sarcasm, the foul-mouthed humor, action that explodes on the page... What in the name of Tom Cruise's bleached asshole happened here? Sure, Stark is just as sarcastic as ever, but the humor was like listening to an obese comedian tell his hundredth fat joke of the night. It was funny the first 99 times, but now it's just kinda sad. Doesn't he have any other material, for Cruise's sake?

Aloha From Hell drones on about religious bullshit and other godly mythos as Kadrey tries to figure out who God is and what purpose the deity will serve in his Sandman Slim urban fantasy series. As far as action is concerned, we get an anti-climactic exorcism, three or four gladius battles that seem ripped from the Sword Fighting Playbook of 1940, Stark driving a Ferrari Testarossa out of Hell and into a war with Heaven (literally pause the audio because I was laughing so hard at the mid-life-crisis-fantasy-porn), and a finale on par with the ending of the Richard Donner's Superman. Other than that, we receive roughly two billion conversations. There's so much dialogue in this book, I though I was reading a script. And, for the most part, the cast are not talking about anything worth a fuck. No! We get page after page of hellions whining about why Hell sucks, bad guys spouting off exposition, and good guys complaining about having to be good guys. By the time I was done with this (and I never thought I'd say this, but...), I was chomping at the bit for some of Peter Straub or Stephen King's infamous walls of text, wherein we get paragraphs that last two or three pages without a single shred of dialogue. I was actually tired of hearing people talk. More than once I thought, "Shut the fuck up and get on with the goddamn story, you mouthy pricks!"

This book is packed full of filler. It's bursting at the seams, really. I mean, for fuck's sake, it takes Stark until the 54% mark to get to Hell. The book's story doesn't even really start until halfway through the goddamn book! All the bullshit before he goes to Hell is superfluous. Wanna know how I know? Because I forgot everything that happened during the first section of the book and was not even close to lost at the end. I got the full picture, and I can't even remember the first fifty percent!

Oh, and Jack the Ripper's appearance was pointless. So very cliched and pointless. What about H. H. Holmes or Albert Fish, or someone who hasn't popped up half a trillion times in books about Hell.

See also: Hell being a twisted version of Los Angeles... **FUCKING GODDAMN SQUIRREL-MOLESTING MOTHERFUCKING CHRIST ON A TAMPAX YACHT, KADREY, SHOW SOME ORIGINALITY!**

(*takes a deep breath* Sorry, about that. Now back to our regularly scheduled review)

I almost rage-quit this pile of dumpster leavings five times since February, but friends kept telling me, "The fourth book is SOOOOO worth the trouble." You guys better be right, or I'm going to burn this book and use

the flames to light your pubes on fire.

Now, with all this cussing and fussing, I bet you're asking yourself how in the name of Tom Cruise's waxed weasel hole did it garner three stars from me? Well, the answer is this: There are parts in this book that I liked quite a bit. All the emotional stuff was handled expertly, and I even teared when Alice tells Stark how she really died. I got another sentimental boner while Stark was ranting about how God was just another deadbeat dad in his life. Any scene that was designed to tug at my heartstrings worked like a bodybuilder bench pressing bags of cotton. And that's what I don't understand, Mr. Kadrey. This is urban fantasy, not literary fiction, so why the huge emphasis on emotional content here? Some of your prose herein is fucking gorgeous, but when it comes to action and plot progression, Aloha From Hell eats all the ass with pancake syrup and sprinkles on top. Had the fight sequences been up to par with the tear-jerking shit, and the dialogue edited down a couple dozen pages, I believe this would have been the best book in the series. Because, Kadrey, dude, you had some important shit to say, it's just that most of it got buried under a metric-fuck-tonne of bloated text.

In summation: I don't know if reading this volume was worth it yet, so I cannot recommend Aloha From Hell, nor can I tell you to stay the fuck away from it. I will tackle that after reading the next book in the series, which, strangely enough, is a novella. Devil in the Dollhouse (book 3.5) comes before Devil Said Bang (Book 4), so to the Dollhouse I turn. It best not suck, Kadrey. Best not!

Three balls sucked out of five.

Kaustubh Dudhane says

"Karma is just loaded dice on a crooked table. Celestial pricks with wings and halos make the rules and the house always win. Always."

As I graduate from book two to book three of Sandman Slim, the author keeps on amazing and delighting me with awesome metaphors and out of the world insults. One of the funniest ones, I could understand was about his bodyless buddy named Kasabian (who is just a head because he was chopped off from the below the neck with a knife from Hell and kept alive with the help of some hoodoo and Lu love.) Stark always calls him Alfredo Garcia. I asked my best friend Google about it. There is a 1974 crime drama film called *Bring Me The Head Of Alfredo Garcia*. The synopsis on Google says - *"El Jefe, a powerful Mexican rancher, learns that his teenage daughter is pregnant with Alfredo Garcia's child. He gets furious and hires two henchmen to hunt him down."*

While finishing book two, I had realized that Sandman Slim has become a bit soft. (Yeah! He quit smoking and drinking which is bad.) The craziness was disappearing. However, he is back with a bang in *Aloha from Hell*.

Read this -

"If I ever get out of here, I'm going to find whichever angel invented sand and make it eat this fucking desert while getting a Tabasco enema."

Then he ups the ante -

"Jesus might have died for your sins, but a girl is burning for them. I'd trade every one of your fucking lives for one minute of hers. Don't you dare pray for her. Twiddle your rosaries and pray for yourselves, because

if she goes down, I'm the Colonel, the fryer's hot, and you're my barnyard chickadees."

The action is good while the best part about the book is the dialogues. There were at least fifty odd laugh-out-loud moments. I have loved every moment of the book. Once, I would like to thank Milda Page Runner for introducing me to this wonderful series.

Carol. says

[what the leader of Hell might really be like. I was impressed. I got it. (hide spoiler)]

Maggie K says

This series is actually really fun-I was worried I would find it too violent, and while it is violent, it doesn't really seem gratuitous under the circumstances, more action-packed. And Sandman has certainly learned the hard way that showing mercy to demons just never ever works...

In this addition, Stark finally gets his chance to go after Mason--but what will be the cost? Will it change the whole balance of heaven and hell? Will Stark lose everything he has fought for? and will it really even help Alice? Should he even care?

I found the ending very satisfying--while nothing was perfect, Stark has made the right choices for a change

XX Sarah XX (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says

Actual rating: 4.45 stars. *Such a ridiculously low rating. Shame on me and stuff.*

So. Embarrassing Confession Time (ECT™): there was a point when I reading my boyfriend's latest adventures this book when I actually considered going for a 3.5-star rating.

I know, dear boyfriend #4572 Cary, I know. I should probably go hide in an undersea cave or something. To atone for this **most ignominious behavior** and stuff. Yeah, I have to admit this wasn't one of my mostest gloriousest moments. **In my defense**, I must say that this instalment feels a little like, you know, a, well, how could I put it nicely, um, errr, what's that obscure word that **starts with an f and ends with an r**? Can't seem to remember now. Early signs of Alzheimer's and all that crap. Sorry, what? *clueless barnacle whispers inaudibly in my lovely little ear* ~~Bloody shrimping filler~~ is the word I was looking for? Are you sure? Seems a bit **melodramatically excessive** to me, but there's a slight chance you might not be entirely wrong. Maybe. I mean, there's a slim possibility that the first 80% 70% of this book could be not exactly fascinating. Or **supercalifragilisticexpialidociously titillating**. And perhaps a little not super-exciting, too. But that is all highly hypothetical, obviously. And would have to be confirmed by extensive and intensive research at the hands of an **intergalactic, multi-species, much-limbed team of challenged scientists**.

Had this instalment actually been of the filler type (which has yet to be proven, remember?), its last 20% 30% would have **more than made up** for the supposed lack of stimulating substance. Because the whole **Convergence** business was slightly awesome (view spoiler) and the **Tartarus** thing was bloody shrimping fantastic (view spoiler). Then there's the **action and violence and bloodshed and stuff**. And the twists and revelations and surprises, **oh my!** I'm not talking about good surprises here, obviously. **Good surprises are for wimps**. This deliciously noir world is pretty much all bad stuff all the time. A delightful, **never-ending loop of things getting downhill from there**. And don't think you can get away from bad stuff just because you've just been killed dead. You can always get **excruciatingly dead**, you know.

See? Even good old Bikram agrees. So put a gleeful smile on your face and go pet the fluffy Hellhounds. You're going to have lots of fun getting chopped into tiny little pieces!

So yeah, this **Not Filler of an Instalment** (NFoaI™) does turn out to be kinda sorta shrimptastic ~~after all~~. And, to be disgustingly honest, it's not only because of the **fiercely scrumptious** last 20% 30%, either. I mean, this world. **THIS world**. My black, withered heart lurves it so much. It keeps getting **darker and twistier and complexer** (yes, that is a word) and therefore, more delectably delectable. Also, there is the slightly wondrous **plot**. Which keeps thickening beautifully and stuff. And Kadrey's gloriously sensational bam-take-that-in-your-~~lovely~~-face **writing**. And the crazy-good-hilarious **dialogues**. And the ever-growing cast of **magnificently splendid ~~wicked-weirdoes~~ characters** is magnificently splendid: my girlfriend **Candy**, Allegra, Vidocq and **Kasabian** (aka the mostest awesomest corpseless head ever) are as **fabuloustastic** as ever. By the way, I may want to adopt **Muninn** in the near future. Especially now that I know he is Spoiler Spoiler Spoiler in his spare time (view spoiler). Also ~~kidnapping~~ **adoption-worthy**: Mustang Sally (view spoiler) and Medea Bava. Because **slightly duplicitous supernatural chicks are the new black**. And let's not forget Spoiler Spoiler Spoiler (aka *the ottoman repairman*)! Such a cool, good-natured guy! You really couldn't ask for a better **travelling companion**!

What? Don't believe me? Think the bullshit is strong in this one? I wonder why. The ottoman repairman really is an enchanting chap. I mean, he had lots of fangirls in London, back in the good old days.

And then there's my boyfriend. He's so **kind** and **loving** and **compassionate** and **noble** and stuff.

*"John Wayne wouldn't shoot a man in the back, but that's **my favorite target**."*

Sigh. How can you not fall head over pincers for a guy who says that kind of thing? **He really is a charmer, my man**. He's never disrespectful, either. Or unpleasant. He doesn't know what the word snarky means. Recklessness is a concept completely foreign to him. And he abhors violence. **The guy is perfect husband material**, if you ask me. Okay, maybe not so at the beginning of this book. I mean, my Stark is feeling a **bit down** here. Probably because he **hasn't slaughtered things for a few weeks**. Which, you have to admit, is pretty dispiriting. I'm pretty sure anyone in the same situation would fall into a **deep depression**. Who/what is to blame for this most revolting turn of events, you ask? Why the **haloed bastard** of course! My boyfriend has a problem, you see. He has to **share his glorious little head** with one of the *supercharged assholes* (aka the ~~asshole~~ angels). No wonder he wants to *punch his own brain* all the time. I would, too, if a *divine squatter* was trying to have me play **freaking hero** 24/7. When all I wanted to do was go all **homicidal maniac** on everyone and everything.

Because harboring murderous feelings towards humanity is the key to eternal youth and beauty, my dear Battie.

But worry not, for my boyfriend won't let his current predicament deter him! No he won't! He is **bloody shrimping Sandman Slim**, for shrimp's sake! He is ~~better~~ stronger than this! He is not about to let a haloed bastard **bring out the best in him!** So he reunites with his ferociously kick-ass self, does the **Convergence/Tartarus Thing** (CTT™) (view spoiler) and gets—very logically—his **lethal groove** back. **Behold Sandman Slim 2.0!** Spoiler spoiler spoiler! And spoiler spoiler spoiler! Oh wow, my boyfriend is the new **Spoiler Spoiler Spoiler!** Which makes me Spoiler Spoiler Spoiler's girlfriend! Talk about an evil upgrade! My life is now complete! I can now ~~get slaughtered in peace~~ **die happy and stuff!** (view spoiler)

» And the moral of this **Well Well Well Looks Like this Kinda Sorta Filler is More Refreshingly Filling than Ninety Eight Percent of the Crap I Usually Read Extra Super Crappy Non Review** (WWLLtKSFtMRftNEPofCIURESCNR™) is: you know you've found ~~one of your soulmates~~ when his acting ~~like a boring ass~~ a little disappointingly ~~80%~~ 70% of the time doesn't dampen your **all-encompassing animal lust devotion** for his **deliciously ruthless, antihero-ish little self**. QED and stuff.

- **Book 1:** Sandman Slim ★★★★★
- **Book 2:** Kill the Dead ★★★★★
- **Book 3.5:** Devil in the Dollhouse ★★★★★
- **Book 4:** Devil Said Bang ★★★★★
- **Book 5:** Kill City Blues ★★★★★
- **Book 6:** The Getaway God ★★★★★
- **Book 7:** Killing Pretty ★★★★★
- **Book 8:** The Perdition Score ★★★★★
- **Book 9:** The Kill Society ★★★★★
- **Book 10:** Hollywood Dead ★★★★★

[Pre-review nonsense]

Sigh. Looks like my new boyfriend kinda sorta suffered from a sudden attack of **Acute Filler Book Syndrome** (AFBS™) here.

Yes, it is indeed sad and slightly heartbreaking and stuff, **BUT! BUT BUT BUT!** See my **Not That Crappy Rating Up There** (NTRUT™)? It should tell you something! Yes it should! What should it tell you, you ask? Why to get ready to dance, **obviously**.

► **Full My Boyfriend Might Be a Little Under the Hellish Weather but He Still is His Deliciously Delicious Self Ergo I am Still Somewhat in LURVE with Him Crappy Non Review**

(MBMBaLUtHWbHSiHDDSEIaSSiLwHCNR™) to come.

Sarah says

Sandman Slim is the man Mike Hammer wishes he could be. Slim is so hard-boiled he's practically stone at this point, and the baddest shut-your-mouth since Shaft graced the screen.

"Aloha From Hell" is the book you go to when you want a non-stop ride of snappy dialogue, gruesome characters, and L.A. the way we always knew it was deep down. Fresh from saving the Earth from High Plains Drifters (that's zombies to you uninitiated folks - and if you ARE uninitiated, go pick up the first book in this series pronto), Slim's got to mosey his way down to Hell and stop an old enemy from wreaking havoc on everything the Sandman has ever cared about.

I gotta tell you, I'm in mad love with the way Richard Kadrey writes. Every time you expect a hoary old genre cliché to come rampaging across the landscape, he turns it on its head and kicks it out the window. I've read all the Sandman Slim books at warp speed, because once you get into the story (and make no mistake, you WILL be sucked in) there's no coming out. Set aside some solo reading time, and enjoy your time in Hell.

Tabitha says

WARNING - There are SPOILERS in this review! Don't read it unless you really feel like reading a rant of poopy pants-ness.

I have to start out that I really enjoyed the first two books in this series, so this being book three I was expecting great things. I know some people will probably be shocked that I have such a low opinion of it.

The entire reading experience to me this time around was completely lackluster. The entry action scene of Stark and Vidoqc robbing a house for an item that really ended up being of no import to the story as well as the demon that attacks them outside the house. I felt like there was a bit of that throughout.

So we have the mystery portion in the first half the novel where they are trying to figure out what's going on with this 'possessed' boy. Did it really need to take up that much of the book? Or better yet did the trek through hell really require the second half. Yes, it probably did - but for me it was like plucking lint off of a pair of black pants...tedious.

Aelita was mentioned plenty of times but was never seen. These big things that happen, her kidnapping Alice, her at the end killing one of the 5 beings that make up "god". I feel like those were bigger things that just were under handled.

The trip to hell, I liked how he ended up getting in, meeting Mustang Sally and going through the garden of Eden - but this hell itself, and the trip through it - I found it boring. Oh I wish I had a writers skill to be able to describe and define all the reasons why I was so aggravated. I just don't articulate myself well... but lets see - I think it was because the whole second half of the book to me was just "more of the same" page before it.

Stark's humor didn't hit the high points for me that the previous two books did. Don't get me wrong I'm not giving a low rating just because it didn't stand up to the other two books in my mind but mostly just because I felt like the story in this one fell flat and just didn't do it for me. I'm sure it will rock the socks off of a lot of other fans.

Were big things done? Yes! of course, he got laid by a new girl, decided he'd finally be emotionally moving on from Alice (thank freaking Hades), met Jack the Ripper, destroyed the Kissi again, got rid of the angel alter ego (which should provide some interesting fodder for the next book I'm sure), got Mason to kill himself, ended up being the ruler of Hell in the end *shoulder shrug*...was it too much? - or was it not enough. I don't know I'm just a Debbie Downer when I think about this reading experience.

Does someone need to bring me a sammich to get me to shut up?

Arun Divakar says

While it is set in Hell, the overarching mood that Michael Kadrey brings out in his book is not one of hope but neither is it of hopelessness. It is about something much more uplifting and enriching : kicking some serious demon ass ! Kadrey's James Stark does not have the time nor inclination for a lot of introspection or deeply rooted observations into the pointless rat race of human existence. His objectives are fairly simple : find out someone, anyone and everyone who piss him off and wipe out their existence. Stark who is also known as Sandman Slim is a connoisseur in the highly sophisticated art of demon slaying and he comes out – all guns blazing in the third instalment of Sandman Slim series.

The lacklustre second book had almost put me off the series. Whoever heard of a badass who tells everyone he meets that *'I am a badass and you better not mess with me.'* without doing a thing to prove his point ? That was all that the second book was all about. Even the presence of Lucifer wasn't enough to salvage the second one from the deep, dark pits of average ! Kadrey remedies this in his third book where Stark is back to doing the thing he does best : killing ! An exorcism gone wrong brings Stark face to face with his arch-rival Mason and it forces him to return to Hell for that *mano a mano* that he has been postponing for two books now. Stark uses all his strength, skill and intelligence to extract that final round of vengeance which really should have been done in the first book itself. On the way to Mason he stops for a while in Tartarus (the darkest region even for Hell), gets to fight again in his beloved arena, spends time with one incarnation of the grand old man in the sky and clears his path like the hero of a Michael Bay movie. While it is not fully back to form, this third book in the series shows sparks of how interesting the first one in the series was.

On to the next one in the series now.

Danigerous says

Warning: May contain spoilers!

This one was by far the best in the series. Unlike the other two books, there was not a single moment where I questioned my picking up the book.

So here we go again with James Stark and a new chapter of his story. There isn't much 'stage' time for his sort-of sidekicks Kasabian, Vidocq and Candy, though. They are present predominantly till mid-novel and

then they are only mentioned here and there, while the plot mainly focuses on Stark, who, by the way, gets sent to Hell ... again. The good news is, this time it's on his own volition. The reason? To save Alice, who it turns out is dragged there by his archnemesis Mason and his partner in crime the looney tunes angel Aelita. I actually missed her, I always burst out laughing trying to picture her screaming 'Abomination!' to Stark. Also here we get to meet all different types of deities and having read that Kadrey based his writing on researching mythology books, I believe he did check his facts on all of them, so, it means the reader gets educated a bit on mythological creatures.

My favorite part should be when Lucifer's generals rebel against Mason and his intention to conquer Hell. The description of the armies was amazing, only if it were longer! And this time Kadrey outdid himself in gruesomeness - having Jack the Ripper skinned alive, sorry dead but not terminally, if that's the way to explain the term, and hanging from a hook, yikes! So, I won't go on and share more facts from the book in case you lose interest, just go and read it! All I'm going to say is that the end was quite promising and if Richard Kadrey puts a real effort into it, another mind-blowing read might come out!

J Edward Tremlett says

After the hellish events of Kill the Dead, it's understandable that Stark — also known as Sandman Slim — just wants to take it easy.

The Devil's back in Heaven, his inner Angel's behaving (mostly), and things are finally coming around with Candy the bloodthirsty monster (on the wagon, we hope). He's not having to bust his ass as much anymore. It's been so long since he killed someone he can't even remember when it was, or why. Heck, even his dead girlfriend's ghost is telling him to quit mooning over her and move on.

But he knows it's only temporary — the calm before one hell of a !@#storm.

His number one enemy — Mason, the bastard who had his girlfriend killed and tossed him into Hell alive — is Downtown, gathering power. Hes got most of the great demons on his side, now, and it's only a matter of time before he organizes their massive armies into an attack on Heaven. And whether he wins or loses, the repercussions could shatter reality, or at least screw it up to the point where Stark's long-overdue idyll would be seriously ruined.

That looming threat isn't quite enough to get him off his ass, of course. But when his friends bring him into an exorcism gone seriously pear-shaped, the aforementioned bastard makes an appearance and reveals he's got the one thing that Stark still gives a damn about. His old girlfriend's soul is trapped in Hell under Mason's lock and key, thanks to one of Stark's least favorite angels. And if Sandman Slim doesn't come on down and save her in three days' time, she's going to find out how ugly Downtown can really be.

Is it a trap? No way it isn't. Does he have a choice? Not from where he's sitting.

Does he have to like it? Hell no, and when he gets back Downtown, there's going to be Hell to pay.

Of course, getting back downtown's going to be interesting. Mason will be watching all the usual entrances, and will probably have any number of traps and traitors waiting along the way. To do this, Stark's going to have to think way outside his usual box, call in some favors from people and things he'd rather not invoke, and do something he's spent a long time trying not to do.

Die.

One of the great strengths of Kadrey's Sandman Slim novels is that, just when you think you've got Stark's world figured out, he always another level or layer of complexity that works seamlessly with what we knew before. Aloha from Hell continues in that tradition, and delivers a gloriously profane, high-octane horror action story that takes our hero from life to death and reveals an afterlife that's both demonically different yet eerily familiar.

Hell and L.A. will never look the same again, especially when Sandman Slim gets through with them. But what shape will be in when they get done with him...?

If you loved the previous two novels in the series, you will definitely want to find out.

(From a review, here)

Ian Hall says

A very good book, nearly a great book that's why i gave it 4*. Exciting and brutal and really enjoyable to read. This series keeps improving with every book. The ending was a nice surprise. And i look forward to reading the next one. A solid 4* im trying to be more strict with giving 5* to books so 4 it is.

Nicholas Karpuk says

Can I not get readable urban fantasy where the protagonist isn't an eye-rolling jackass? I'm dead serious here, I'll take recommendations.

I've made this comparison in previous reviews, but it's still on my mind how often I compare this series to the Dresden books. Both series contain fast paced stories that use a lot of my favorite fictional elements and have fairly quality plotting. Both also make me wish they existed in a third person structure, because I don't want to be in either character's heads.

And while Dresden is a doofus, nerdlinger horndog who thinks he's a bad-ass wizard, Stark is a much more direct power fantasy. Stark (that name, ugh, it's like it's the protagonist name he dreamed up when he was 12) seems almost like a parody of Snake Plisskin, which isn't helped by a audiobook narration that sounds like Christian Slater in full Jack-Nicholson-aping mode. He also tends to make a ton of references, but only to media prior to about 1980. Lots of references to old sitcoms and 70's movies.

And it's worth doing some back-of-the-napkin math on this one. The first book was released in 2009, and seems to be set roughly around that time, since he uses a smart phone in the first book. Working backwards using the timeline provided, that would put his birth somewhere between 1978 and 1982. So he's roughly my age. People my age don't make these references. These are the sort of references someone like Richard Kadrey, born in 1957, would make. So it makes me wonder why he didn't just set the stories in the late 80's to early 90's. You'd lose virtually nothing, since no one in the stories uses technology for anything beyond getting directions.

While I don't need my books to be funny, even when they're trying, I'm growing a bit exhausted with his whimsical similes. I really should have taken note of more of them as I went, because there were several in this book that made me yell, "what does that even mean!?" My brain ejected all the worst ones, so the only one I can think of to quote now was something like, "He howls like I pissed on his Batman #1..." They're all deeply specific, kind of weird, and at this point not always making any sense. (Also, a pedantic part of me wanted to point out that Detective Comics #1 would be more valuable.)

What's odd is that these problems don't extend to most of the supporting cast. Almost everyone else ran somewhere from tolerable to rather likable. The problem is almost entirely the protagonist, which leads me to believe that the whole narrative would function much better without getting into his head. I mean, really, aren't most people probably a bigger douche inside their own head?

But now I struggle the same way I do with Dresden. A part of me is irritated, and another part is looking up the next book in the series. Maybe that's just a defect in my character.

And as stated previously, readable trash gets 3 stars. That's just how it is.
