



Thanatos Rising

D.P. Prior

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Too dark for science and too evil for theology, but some secrets refuse to stay hidden. Postgraduate student Harry Chesterton uncovers a trail of dark science that leads to the old monastery above the Welsh university town of Aberystwyth. With bodies beneath the cafe, residents oozing puss from puncture marks on their necks, and the disappearance of the University Chaplain, Chesterton's research into post-mortem consciousness is about to leap off the page. The Memoirs of Harry Chesterton were found by the author in an attic flat in Eastbourne along with Chesterton's final letter before crossing over into the world of Thanatos. Thanatos Rising constitutes the first volume of memoirs which recounts Chesterton's perilous investigations in Aberystwyth up until the time of his first disappearance.

Thanatos Rising Details

Date : Published August 15th 2010 by Createspace Independent Publishing Platform (first published August 11th 2010)

ISBN : 9781453764459

Author : D.P. Prior

Format : Paperback 88 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Horror, Dark Fantasy, Fiction

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From Reader Review *Thanatos Rising* for online ebook

Resa says

Harry Chesterton has come to the University of Aberystwyth to work on his doctoral thesis, a study in the paranormal and what happens when people die, specifically whether or not it is true that when we die we leave some of ourselves behind, like a footprint, some people stronger than others. While diving into the research of Dr. Blightly, Chesterton discovers he may have gotten himself in too deep and begins to discover that this world and a next are more easily crossed than he thought. Life and death are not as black and white as he has been led to believe.

The novel begins stiffly and I had trouble getting invested in the story but I am glad I pushed through the first few chapters and made it to the point where the story actually begins. Subtly scientific and overtly religious, you may need to brush up on your theology to understand some of the concepts discussed in this novel (such as transubstantiation). The letters of Chesterton give you a glimpse into the mind of a man who may or may not be going crazy, under the influence of drugs, creating his own fantasy world, or telling the truth. There are a lot of unanswered questions at the end of this book and due to its length it seems as though this book is more of a prelude to the rest of the series than a full-length start. The plot will pull you in and leave you with questions, but I would have liked to see a little more bulk in this first book to get a fuller picture. It's also very different from the novel described in the description. I expected a little more about the fantasy world and a little less of the inner-monologue, in fact, "Thanatos" is only really mentioned in the last three or so screens of book.

There were also several words, such as "crachach" that must of Welsh origin and my Kindle dictionary could not give me a definition, while I could infer from context I would have appreciated some kind of glossary for those of us readers who are U.S. natives. Prior does do an excellent job of using language to help show his characters as educated and intellectual, there were moments where I felt as though he was choosing every other word with a Thesaurus and it broke the rhythm of the text, making it seem a little awkward and unnatural. That being said, these instances were few and stopped occurring once the plot was finished being set and the real story got underway.

"Thanatos Rising" is more of a novella than a full length novel, but that just means it'll be a quick read. I think Prior has taken some interesting concepts and put them together to create a very interesting world. I look forward to reading the next installment of the series as Prior has shown great potential in being able to weave a story line. I only hope he includes a little more to the story. I enjoyed reading but the finish left me feeling a little cheated, like I'd read an extra long synopsis but been denied the meat.

Desley (Cat fosterer) says

Rather odd paranormal/horror type story, has a slightly gothic feel to it. I find it very hard to describe what this book is about, and half expected the main character to wake up at the end and say it was either a dream, or he'd had a bad trip. Not sure if I'd read anything else by this author.

Shenstone says

Mr Prior really knows how to tell a good story. Hopefully this will be the start of another enjoyable series. Looking forward to the next whenever it appears.

Robert Defrank says

A novella that's much better on the re-read.

I gave this one a try on the strength of the author's other works. I found the first reading difficult, dark and atmospheric but slow paced and cerebral, and it's only in the last two chapters and the epilogue that the reader understands why these macabre and fantastic things are happening and the enigma is explained. The forward promises a strange adventure into another world, perhaps even the land of the dead, and the payoff is only delivered at the end. At that point, you've got to go back and re-read to really appreciate it all.

A very good story, and a tantalizing first installment in what promises to be an exciting series, but it shouldn't be your first introduction to this author.

Melinda says

A Horror Story for the Educated that has Echoes of Stoker's Dracula

(Very Minor Spoilers)

How far would you go to get your PhD?

Are there any limits?

What price is too high? Your life? Your soul? Your friend's souls?

Harry Chesterton, a doctoral candidate, believes he is on a hunt for the existence of the soul. The only scientist to effectively measure the 'memory footprint' of a soul after death is Dr. Otto Blighty, a man kicked out of Oxford as a crank and a loon, as he wouldn't reveal his apparatus for measuring souls as he wanted his discoveries kept out of competitors hands. His peers (were there any?), deemed this ludicrous, and booted him out. He disappeared.

Harry has run him to ground in Aberystwyth in Wales. The entire town acts odd, as if they are actors in a play. Even though Harry is a psychiatrist, he starts having strange compulsions that sound a lot like mental illness, or is it something evil? He is fixated on Blighty, on a Discalced Carmelite priest and a former monastery high on a hill with a very ancient and questionable past. Every time Harry tries to hike to the old monastery, something happens - he blacks out, loses memory, and winds up in his apartment hours later, sometimes with injuries and a sweet smell pervading the room.

Mr. Prior isn't pulling any punches here. This is a straight up horror tale told as if written by a PhD candidate

about his subsequent hunting of an evil genius, Dr. Otto Blighty. Harry has been looking into Blighty's research and Blighty is not happy about it. When evil genius' get cranky; nobody is safe.

What do you do if you are an evil genius and a pesky but very smart doctoral candidate starts bugging you on your home turf?

Oh, btw, boy wonder thinks you are Superman. Will that keep him alive longer than a day or two?

You will have to read the book to solve this mystery and what is that sweet smell? It's kind of yummy and delicious. Makes me want to... Hey there gorgeous. My place. Actung!

The language may be thesis level, but anyone who reads the classics should handle it with ease. Come on people, this isn't rocket surgery. With a Kindle or other reader, the dictionary is built in. For print, if you have to, look up the words on your phone or computer. There is only 1 word too specialized or archaic to be in the Full Version of the Dictionary.

There is a lot of misdirection here, Prior is like a magician; he waves the fingers of his right hand so you won't know what his left hand is doing, but the clues are always sprinkled throughout the story. More answers will be coming in the next book. That's when he'll have to provide the details on Thanatos. The perfected version of humanity is quite intriguing.

Prior interconnects all of his stories, so to get some insight into who or what Harry is chasing, Otto Blighty, The Dreaded Lord of Verusia, you need to read some books. You get a much clearer picture of what the risks are to Harry's body, his sanity and his soul by reading:

Ward of the Philosopher
The Shader Series

BEFORE you read this book. You just can't appreciate the fact that Harry is unknowingly poking a cross between Carl Jung, John Dee and Satan with a stick so he can finish his thesis. Too high of a price for me. The suspense, the tension, the blood, the dead bodies, the reanimated are normal for Blighty. He is evil incarnate.

While, I agree the part about Thanatos was a teaser, the rest of the story very much reminded me of Bram Stoker's Dracula. When Jonathan Harker goes to transact business with the Count in Transylvania, he has no idea he has been set up by a creature of darkness who will steal his lady love and transform her into a vampire, while he is a bloodbag for three beauties. Chesterton is in the same position. I won't say more. Please read all the books. They are a rare treat.

The feeling of dread in both stories is identical. The clueless protagonists that are in way over their heads with little hope of success. The slow reveal of evil, without explicit details is so true to the gothic horror story that I thoroughly enjoyed it.

The only place the author went off the rails was when he included obscure references to arguments in Gnostic theology (to people who didn't study religious beliefs), are opaque.

“Ah, but the question, my dear Artaud,” I quipped, “is whether or not you subscribe to the Gnostic dualistic position or the monistic unitive stance. If the former, then perhaps you would be good enough to point me to the exit.”

“There is no exit,” she said in mock seriousness.

“Then I suppose we’d better order some wine,” I concluded, turning my attention to the list.

I am sure there are some of you out there snickering about the humor and simplicity of this passage. To most, it's as thick as a brick.

This is a minor quibble. I loved the story. It whet my appetite for Thanatos fully risen. Excellent job Mr. Prior!

Daniel Beazley says

This type of book would not be my normal choice of read but seeing as I enjoyed the Nameless Dwarf Chronicles by Prior, I thought I'd give it a go, especially considering it featured the malevolent, Otto Blightey.

The story follows the memoirs of Harry Chesterton and is set in the present day and age, exploring the big question of what happens after we die and how much of us is left behind. The idea of the soul leaving behind a footprint after it has gone is not a new concept but the way in which this has been written is quite clever and engaging. The method of telling the story by way of memoir was an excellent idea and only helps make the entire experience flow, adding a nice amount of suspense and life to the tale.

Even though it was only a novella there was plenty going on and a real depth to sink your teeth into. The ending was not a complete surprise to me but then maybe that was because I have already encountered Mr Blightey in Prior's other work and so had preconceived ideas of how this would finish; not that I was disappointed in anyway because of this though. In fact the only let down for me is that I cannot find book two of Harry Chesterton's memoirs anywhere, so get back to your attic Mr Prior and start digging around, I want to read some more!

Andrew Sturm says

While it was a grammatically solid book, it just wasn't my cup or Earl Grey tea.
