



# A Shot in the Dark

*K.A. Stewart*

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## A Shot in the Dark K.A. Stewart

Jesse James Dawson is a Champion, putting his life on the line for those foolish enough to bargain with demons and fighting to save their souls. But even a Champion needs some downtime, so Jesse takes his annual camping trip to Colorado for some male bonding over friendly games of paintball.

Unfortunately, the fun and war games are interrupted by a pack of creatures summoned up from the very depths of hell by an entity Jesse prayed he'd never see again. With the lives of his friends and a teenager's soul on the line, Jesse's only hope may lie with an even more dangerous enemy--his personal demon, Axel..

## A Shot in the Dark Details

Date : Published July 5th 2011 by Roc

ISBN : 9780451464101

Author : K.A. Stewart

Format : Paperback 306 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Paranormal, Demons, Fiction

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## From Reader Review A Shot in the Dark for online ebook

### Denise says

Six months after his latest challenge fought as a Champion, Jesse has recovered from his injuries and is heading out on his annual camping and paintball trip to Colorado with his brother and closest friends. Instead of fun times and male bonding, however, what awaits them is a pack of hellish creatures and the demon who controls them: The demon Jesse dubbed the Yeti when he fought him years ago and was almost killed in the process. Now the Yeti's back and Jesse must face his worst nightmares to send him back to Hell once more in order to save his friends and himself.

A fun, action-packed ride from start to finish. Axel is becoming a more and more intriguing character and things are moving in the background that I'm very much looking forward to seeing develop further.

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### Katrina Michaels says

Very enjoyable

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### Nicole says

A great second installment in Stewart's Jesse James Dawson series. I continued to really enjoy Jesse as a character, as well as his colorful friends and family. I'm especially intrigued with where the Axel storyline will go!

Love Stewart's tone in both these books. She brings a very different and fresh perspective to the genre. Definitely worth a read - I'm looking forward to the next book!

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### June Kramin says

A five star review just doesn't express how much I enjoyed book #2 in this series. I wish I hadn't waited so long to dig into it. My reading range covers everything. I love a good series and a character you have to love. Jesse's sense of humor is priceless. Demon slayer? Why the heck not. Loved it - digging right into #3 & will start nagging for #4.

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### Blood Rose Books says

<p><span style="font-family: Georgia,'Times New Roman',serif;"><span style="font-size: medium;">You will need to read the first book in this series, <span style="color: #00ff00;"><strong><a href="http://j9books.blogspot.ca/2011/07/k-... style="color: #00ff00;">A Devil in the Details</span></a></strong></span>, before this book as it explains what it means to be a Champion and

the overall battling for other people's souls idea. Plus it was a great read so why not enjoy it.

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<p><span style="font-family: Georgia,'Times New Roman',serif;"><span style="font-size: medium;">K. A. Stewart is back with Jesse James Dawson and this time it is a beast from his past that is after his soul:</span></span></p>

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<p><span style="font-family: Georgia,'Times New Roman',serif;"><span style="font-size: medium;">Jesse James Dawson is just looking to get his life back to normal after his last demon fight, but things seem to be out of perspective, he just doesn't feel right. He is hoping that his annual guys trip will help put things back on track. He should have known things were going to go wrong when Axel all of a sudden shows up after being absent from his life for months, pretending to be his friend and not a Demon that wants to claim his soul. Jesse just blows him off but he is now on edge about everything. Even the trees on the mountains cannot seem to calm him. Jesse's secret about what he does for a living on the side is about to be exposed to all his friends and a literally a demon from Jesse's past is out to get him and is skirting the demon rules to do it.<br /></span></span></p>

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<p><span style="font-family: Georgia,'Times New Roman',serif;"><span style="font-size: medium;"><br /></span></span> <span style="font-family: Georgia,'Times New Roman',serif;"><span style="font-size: medium;">I should have not waited this long to continue on in this series. The only positive about this is that the third book was released in 2012 and it looks like the fourth book will be sometime this year so I am happy I do not have to wait to continue on in the series. Although Stewart's books (so far) have been on the shorter side of things between 2-3 hundred pages, she is still able to create a complex plot as well as interesting characters. The flow of her books are fast paced that you won't want to put it down and will be seeking the next book in the series he draws you farther into Jesse's world, family and life.</span></span></p>

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<p><span style="font-family: Georgia,'Times New Roman',serif;"><span style="font-size: medium;">Jesse James Dawson is one of my favorite characters in all of the urban fantasy genre. I love his wit, humour, ever resilient nature and dedication to follow the teachings and rules of the samurai way. He is loyal to a fault and is more than willing to put his life on the line for others. I mean that is what it truly means to be a champion. The thing that also makes Jesse unique is that he appears to be "only" Human. He does not have any magic to assist him when he fights off the demons for the souls that they possess and this makes him very unique in the guardian world.</span></span></p>

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medium;"> </span></span></p>

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<p><span style="font-family: Georgia,'Times New Roman',serif;"><span style="font-size: medium;">I love that Stewart has brought not only a male lead to the urban fantasy genre but also a different idea and perspective of demons that really goes back to basic, promising your soul in exchange for something in this life. It is always interesting to see what the people that Jesse help have traded their soul for, sometimes it is to help other people, but in the case of some of the teenagers he helps they want a cool car. I really liked that we got to see more of Axel in this book, and got to find just a tidbit of where he ranks in the demon underworld and you have to wonder what Jesse is in for when Axel decides to go for his soul. I am also interested in the underworld and the hierarchy that is done below. I hope that Stewart is able to give us more information about it in her future books.<br /></span></span></p>

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<p><span style="font-family: Georgia,'Times New Roman',serif;"><span style="font-size: medium;">K. A. Stewart is not a well known Urban Fantasy author but I personally think this series is a must read for those who like this genre especially if you like a male lead in your books. Stewart know how to create an interesting plot and great character. I cannot wait to get my copy of A Wolf at the Door. You need to pick up this series.</span></span></p>

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<p><span style="font-family: Georgia,'Times New Roman',serif;"><span style="font-size: medium;">Enjoy!!!!</span></span></p>

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<p><span style="font-family: Georgia,'Times New Roman',serif;"><span style="font-size: medium;"><strong><span style="color: #990000;">If You Like This,</span></strong></span></span></p>

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<p><span style="font-family: Georgia,'Times New Roman',serif;"><span style="font-size: medium;"><strong><span style="color: #990000;">Check These Out

Too:</span></strong></span></span></p>

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<p class="separator" style="clear: both; text-align: center;"><span style="font-family: Georgia,'Times New Roman',serif;"><span style="font-size: medium;"><a href="http://j9books.blogspot.ca/2010/11/ch... src="https://images-blogger-opensocial.goo...\*" alt="http://j9books.blogspot.ca/2010/11/ch..." width="131" height="200" border="0" data-orig-src="http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-qXZS6jjYlk..." /></a> <a href="http://j9books.blogspot.ca/2010/11/m-... src="https://images-blogger-opensocial.goo...\*" alt="http://j9books.blogspot.ca/2010/11/m-..." width="128" height="200" border="0" data-orig-src="http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-a0Z4ux0ZArw..." /></a> <a href="http://j9books.blogspot.ca/2011/07/k-... src="https://images-blogger-opensocial.goo...\*" alt="http://j9books.blogspot.ca/2011/07/k-..." width="125" height="200" border="0" data-orig-src="http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-3WQME5lbE\_k..." /></a></span></span></p>

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## Shelley says

\*Rating\* B-

\*Genre\* Urban Fantasy

\*Review\*

A Shot in the Dark, by K.A. Stewart, is the second release in the Jesse James Dawson series. Jesse is a champion by trade. He fights for those who are too stupid to realize that selling your soul to a demon for 15 minutes of fame and fortune is a very bad idea. He has already had a dozen such challenges in the 5 years since he became a champion including saving his own brother Cole.

This time around, Jesse, Cole, and best friends Marty and Will will travel to the Colorado Rockies for their annual paint ball getaway. It is supposed to be a time for fun and adventure after Jesse and his student Esteban were lucky enough to walk away from their previous misadventures. But, it turns into a fight for their very survival when wild creatures attack them as they arrive at their destination.

For Jesse, he will once again come face to face with the one demon he has had continued nightmares about for the past 4 years. A nightmare about a demon named the Yeti who he barely survived fighting against. Jesse will have to figure out a way to save his brother and friends from zombie like creatures who were once human but now answer the call of the Yeti.

Jesse is part of a group of Champions that was put together by Ivan Zelenko. Jesse doesn't know the true number of existing champions because Ivan keeps things close without revealing too much about his network. He knows that two such champions were killed before he could fight the demon responsible.

\*Note\* I would love to see Stewart put Jesse with a few other champions like the Russian Svetlana who is the only female champion in existence against the demon hoards. Maybe later in the series?

But, Ivan's group isn't the only ones out slaying demons. Jesse meets Cameron a priest who works for the Order of St. Silvus. They are Holy Knights that are under the auspices of the Catholic Church. They seem to trying to discourage the champions from challenging demons while a war is brewing downtown. A war that could end human existence as we know it.

K.A. Stewart is a female writer who seems to understand the man's point of view which is refreshing. Her character Jesse, while being snarky and hard core, believes in the code of the bushido and is a trained samurai warrior. He is married to Mira who is a powerful witch, and has a daughter named Annabelle.

It's a nice change of pace reading about a male protagonist in the female dominated Urban Fantasy genre. Since I haven't read any of the Harry Dresden series novels to this point, I can't honestly compare the two characters point by point.

One of the more interesting characters of the series thus far has been Axel a demon who has a claim against Jesse's soul. Axel makes appearances throughout the story including the ending that leaves the reader with several different questions. Hopefully, Stewart will answer them when the next book comes out.

K.A. Stewart

Jesse James Dawson

1. A Devil in the Details (July 2010)

2. A Shot In The Dark (07/05/2011)

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## **Contrarius says**

As with the first volume of this series, it's still refreshing to see a hero who isn't embarrassed about being a good guy. There's a good heart to these books.

A Shot in the Dark has more action than the first book, and perhaps more moral complexity as well. It, like the first book, is an entertaining read. I won't give away any spoilers, but it is good to see how Jesse deals with one of his own greatest fears from the past -- and to see how his relationships may be changing in future installments of the series.

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## **Bastard says**

A Devil in the Details was K.A. Stewart's debut novel last year in 2010, first in the Jesse James Dawson series; a very promising start to her career. I was a bit skeptical when I decided to read the book as the blurb and description didn't sound too appealing, but after a couple of chapters I could tell that this series would quickly become one of my favorites in the genre.

Let's forget plot for the time being, that can be hit or miss. The current main draw to the series is the compelling first person narrating voice Stewart has created, in many regards similar to that of Harry Dresden. And how many times haven't we stumbled upon people looking for something similar to Dresden? Well I finally found a series that I could endorse for fans of Dresden, particularly to those that enjoy that narrating voice. Keep in mind that I'm strictly recommending this on the merits of that aspect, nothing to do with plot, characters, setting, magic, etc. In Jesse James Dawson you'll find a honorable character, full of wisecracks and humor remarks, and also a flawed character which in many ways Dresden also is. And yes, he gets beat up quite badly on his way to kick just a little bit of ass.

In all, Stewart has created one of the best male first person narrators in the Urban Fantasy scene in my opinion, to the point that I thought the book was written by a man. Not because men are better writers than women, but because of how easy it felt to identify with the character me having two balls and a stick. It was a testament to how well the author wrote a character of the opposite sex, which is not an easy task.

Plenty of action, plenty of humor, a stable loving family, and a good mystery with its twists was a recipe for a successful novel.

A Shot in the Dark was released earlier this summer, and sequel to A Devil in the Details. Let me get this out of the way, did not enjoy it as much as the first one, but still very much enjoyed. It has more to do with my tastes more than anything. The second books was a bit more of a horror book in a secluded cabin scenario, which in all I'm not a fan of those. But that aside, everything that I enjoyed in the first one, was present in this one. The world keeps expanding and more dimensions get revealed.

With that said, the author needs to be commended for shaking things up and writing something slightly different from the first, keeping the world fresh and exciting. A bit slow in the beginning but once the action starts in this one it doesn't stop until the very last page. So in all, I really can't complain much about the secluded cabin scenario because it delivered many cool action scenes and those are most welcomed.

K.A. Stewart is an author to watch out for and very much looking forward to the next Jesse James Dawson installment.

<http://bastardbooks.blogspot.com/2011...>

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## **Will Knight says**

Originally posted at Bibliophilia, Please.

Jesse James Dawson. Husband. Father. Badass. Champion. The one man you want in your corner if you happen to be stupid enough to sell your soul to a demon.

Demons are out there, even if you can't see them. Ready to offer deals. To give you what you desire, for the measly price of... YOUR SOOOOUL! And if you make the deal, you're screwed. Literally, figuratively and any other kind of -ally you can think of. Go ahead and get a thesaurus; I'll wait. \*fools around on phone\*

Ok. Appreciate how deep in it you are? Well, do not despair! Ok, do despair a little. But don't lose all hope! Champions are here to save your sorry ass. A secret society of people devoted to help those desperate or stupid enough to sell their souls. Some sell their souls for cars, or money. Others do it to save sick sons or a dying mother. It doesn't matter. If you sold your soul, the Champions will help you.

In comes Jesse. His story starts when his brother made a deal, and the only way Jesse can help him is to put his soul as collateral and fight the demon. If he wins, the demon loses claim on the soul. If he loses, both souls get taken and eternal damnation, hell, brimstone and torture.

You'll love Jesse. I see him like the illegitimate son of Harry Dresden and Atticus O'Sullivan. I haven't looked (and I won't, damn it!) but I'm sure there's some slash fiction out there for just such an encounter. I'm sorry I put that mental picture in your head... unless you like that sort of thing. In which case, you're welcome.

The writing is great. Fast paced, funny, strong, emotional. The story and plot are what brings everything together. Demons are not behaving normally in this book, as if demon behavior is in any way normal, and it makes you wonder what's going on. The author does a very good job of drawing it out, while giving you enough action and information both to make you care about the characters and to try and figure out what's happening.

The cast of characters feels very real. They all play a part in helping you connect to the world, and to Jesse. Giving you glimpses into the life of the man, as well as the trials of the Champion. It's also very interesting to see how his domestic life is affected by his responsibilities as Champion. Watching Jesse's struggle to stay alive, solve the mysteries surrounding him and save the soul of someone who's way over his head. It makes you wish you could jump in and help him, want to give him advice when you glimpse something and want to spare him some pain, or reach in and kill that stupid demon making his life hell.



Jesse's wife is awesome and supportive (and a witch), and it was such a relief to know that I, as a reader, wouldn't have to deal with family debacles and fights. Still, the worrying, the suffering, the fear of not knowing if Jesse's coming back after a challenge is all very real. I care about all the characters (Even the demon Axel). That's good writing right there.

Now that I've mentioned Axel, there's no putting the demon back in the bottle. He's a pretty cool character. Mysterious, powerful, creepy as hell (pun intended). He's bound, for some reason, to take Jesse's soul. He sometimes helps and sometimes hinders. He's quite... well, quite weird. And in this second book, his creepy levels went up a few notches. I have some ideas of where that may be going, but I'm pretty sure it's going to be totally different to what I'm expecting. But if I did guess right, I'm gonna be doing a little jig 'case I love figuring this sort of thing out as much as I love being all flabbergasted and shocked. And this is a good series for it.

I really, really, really like these books. Can't wait to jump back in with Jesse into book three, A Wolf at the Door, and find out what's going on. The Demons seem to be going all ape-shit and ignoring the rules in this book, and it's all about to burst in the Champions' face. And you really don't want gooey, demon blight running down your face. Ugh.

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### **Melindeeloo says**

Even better than the first. I enjoyed this a great deal, it was action packed and did a good job of solidifying the cast.

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### **Stephanie says**

Another fun "romp" with Jesse James Dawson, demon slayer.

Jesse and his buddies head up to mountains of Colorado for a long weekend of paint ball and male bonding. Unfortunately, Jesse's arch nemesis, a demon also known as "The Yeti", is planning an ambush attack on Jesse and his crew. It's up to Jesse to find a way to stop the demon and get everyone safely off the mountain.

This is a fun read for anyone that enjoys a snarky, kick-ass demon hunter. It's the second in the series but if you're not too rigid about reading series in order (like me) you could probably read it as a standalone and still get most of the story.

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### **Ron says**

Three stars is a gift. Despite excellent storytelling and good, if simplistic character building, A Shot in the Dark is so silly it's funny. (Confession: C. S. Lewis in *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature* warns us not to review books of a genre we don't like. I don't like urban fantasy. This book confirms that opinion.) Zombies surrounding an isolated cabin in the night? Been done . . . about a million times. And who goes into the Colorado Rockies unprepared for the lions and bears who really are there?

Stewart is better than this. She's good--really good. I hope she employs her obvious talent elsewhere.

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## Mike (the Paladin) says

I, like a lot of other people found Urban Fantasy some years ago. Also like many other people I was introed to UF through Harry Dresden. Interestingly enough I find that many of us who like Harry Dresden and like Urban Fantasy disagree on other UF series. I stumbled on these a while back when I read the first paper back *A Devil in the Details*.

What do you know. I like these. I'm planning to order the next.

So, who is Jesse James Dawson? As I explained to our senior pastor when I arrived early at our small group meeting at Panera and she sat down next to as I was reading this book...It's about a Katana wielding warrior who tries to live by the Samurai or Bushido code. He is contacted by or finds people who have traded away their soul to a demon and then puts his own soul on the line to save them. He fights the demons with his sword and as he does damage to the demon "leaks" black "stuff" that then forms a sort of gate which sucks the demon back to hell.

The senior pastor said she missed that in seminary. I told her it was a minor.

Here you will probably role your eyes a bit at some of what Jesse does as I think he's heading down a road he ought to see as doom laden.

I can recommend these. Good reads, a snarky hero and lots of action.

Recommended. Enjoy.

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## Jon says

3.5 stars

*A Shot in the Dark* continues a few months after *A Devil in the Details*, with Jesse James Dawson mostly recovered from his last demon death-dance and tornado tango, but still suffering from nightmares of an earlier near-fatal demon fight. His annual Colorado camping trip with his buddies should provide ample opportunity for rejuvenation and recreation... What should have been a relaxing retreat quickly turns into a siege reminiscent of the Alamo . . .

*A Shot in the Dark* provides a good mystery, a few thrills, a new take on zombies, MacGyver-esque innovations in demon fighting and a peek into the true identity of Jesse's favorite demon sidekick, Axel (hint: read *To Reign in Hell* by Steven Brust or Milton's *Paradise Lost*). This is a strong sequel to last year's *A Devil in the Details* and a great summer vacation read. Just don't forget the holy water, mirrors and swords.

Read more at [FantasyLiterature.com](http://FantasyLiterature.com)

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## Cathy says

I really dug this book. It had me completely engrossed right away, right back in the world without any hesitation. Jesse's voice is so authentic, I never for a second doubted that this was a real guy and that these things were really happening, just like in the first book. Stewart has a real gift for making the things she's writing about seem completely real, whether it's something that is based in reality, like Jesse's home life or the Colorado woods, or something as terrifying as his nightmare come back to life to hunt him down again. I like the fact that when he gets hurt, he's hurt, he's no superhero. He has nightmares because of the terrifying things he's had to do and seen, but he still keeps trying to help people because he's one of the few people who's aware of the problem with demons and has the ability to do something about it and he thinks it's important work. He's a champion by choice, not by some magical calling or fate or destiny. He's human. It's also a terrific balance of banter, action and darkness, keeping things from getting too serious or too silly in any moment. And Axel is a great character, of course, seeing how that's unfolding and trying to figure out what's going on in the demon world is fascinating.

There is an inevitable comparison to Jim Butcher and Harry Dresden because Jesse is a guy and there a bantering, witty style. And if you like Harry then you may well enjoy this too, but it's not really the same thing. Sure, Jesse is tall and skinny and a bit awkward in some ways, and Harry does like to use a sword sometimes, but they're really totally different guys. Jesse is a modern samurai swordsman with tattoos, not a lick of magic, a happy marriage and a sweet five year-old daughter. Other than skinniness and a similarity in wit he really couldn't be any more different from Harry. There are tons of snarky urban fantasy heroines out there these days and plenty of room for all of them if they're well done. And there is definitely room for this samurai swordsman on my shelf as well, I'm a big fan and I can't wait for the next book to come out.

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