



The Fixer

Jon F. Merz

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The members of the Council believe that vampires can coexist with humans. Some vamps disagree. That's where Lawson comes in. He's a Fixer. When a nosferatu gets delusions of grandeur about taking over the world, it's his job to take them out -- with extreme prejudice.

The Fixer Details

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From Reader Review The Fixer for online ebook

Rachel V. says

I can't believe it's been 15 years since the Fixer first released. I had just started reading ebooks on my netbook (yeah, that was before all the ereaders and tablets were everywhere) and I came across a free book called Dead Drop. I like action books so I read more about it to see if I would be interested. I read it was about a Vampire Assassin who was also a ninja. I thought, ah come on, really, all that in one person? This has to be a joke or something horribly cheesy. I put off reading it for a few days but then kept coming back to it. I finally thought, ok, I'm going to try it, if it's no good I'm not out any money. So I was maybe two pages in when I realized that it was not cheesy or silly but that it was a full on action adventure story. That's when I first fell in love with this Vampire, Assassin, ninja, named Lawson and I haven't stopped loving him since. He's a fixer, an assassin who works for the Vampire Council. It's his job to make sure that Vampires are not exposed to humans so if a Vampire is causing trouble and drawing attention it's up to him to put a stop to it and he goes all over the world to do it. I read everything Lawson as soon as it's released. I love the action, the guns, the military type stories, his tough as nails girlfriend, the stories with his friends who have become his family, his sense of fairness, equality, his toughness, and just everything about him. This is one of my all time favorite series and I'm so glad that I chanced upon it and I appreciate Jon F. Merz for giving me such great stories.

Dorothy says

I've read "first novels" and "early effort books" whose author's poor grammatical skills are ammended by their ability to tell a good story and produce characterization strong enough to involve the reader in spite of the book's faults. For such promising novels, I can excuse sentence structure like "I knew your reaction would be worth coming out in this miserable rain for" and I can forgive an occasional lazy redundancy of word choice found in a sentence like " Her hips ground in to my face as she rode my face..."

Unfortunately, In my opinion, the Fixer by Jon F. Merz is not such a novel. The character "Lawson" is presented to the reader as a seasoned covert operative. He is a vampire born of a race of vampires who coexist in the shadow of humanity as a separate and hidden species. Lawson's task as a fixer for the (Vampire) council, is to police the activities of vampires who may reveal their species existence to mankind with the usual consequences - The much higher numbered human population would seek to "destroy all monsters" and upset the "Balance" between vampire predator and human prey.

I don't consider this premise to be terribly original. The Fixer was published in 2002, and as an avid reader and film fan, I'd come across this underground vampire society concept well before it was popularized by the novels of Ann Rice in the 1980s. (Even the Blade franchise follows a similar vein)

But even a less than original premise can be excused if the story works and the characters are strong. Frankly, I've read along happily as well defined characters surmount the duel obstacles of poor plotting and flimsy world building to conclude a novel that shouldn't work technically, but does evoke empathy in the reader.

My dissatisfaction with the FIXER is rooted in my view that the protagonist is not believable. (And let's face it a readers of vampire novels have well flexed suspension- of- disbelief muscles) I cannot accept Lawson as a centenarian, vampire with a human's life-time as a black Ops veteran in the face his sloppy detective work, poor operative decisions,(He readily tells love interest Talya, a human, that their mutual quarry is a vampire)

and well... his constant whining. On several occasion during the first person narrative, Lawson describes himself as reacting "like a fourteen year old boy" to Talya. I find this to be an apt description of Lawson's behavior in general. Lawson's background and training is given as lengthy, Marine/special forces tough, dangerous and intensive. But for all of his training Lawson doesn't seem to know what to do in a tight spot and allows situations to worsen through his own failure to deliver. He repeatedly allows himself to be distracted and taken unawares by Talya and others. His approaches to his suspects are conducted with an admitted lack of skill, and little viable reason is given for these outrages breaches of form in so highly trained an operative.

As the book continues and the missteps mount, Lawson's descriptions of his training and career come across as mere braggadocio, rather than expository character development.

Of course, as in any novel, the protagonist can't succeed in his mission at this first attempts. (that is if the book is to exceed 43 pages). However, in my opinion, ineptitude on the part of the main protagonist as a plot driver is a cop-out on the part of the author. It reveals a lack of skill and imagination. Which are essential attributes to a horror/ fantasy novelist.

It's possible that the author wished to give Lawson an air of vulnerability. Perhaps even an element of humanity, by making him fallible. As Lawson repeatedly admits his fear of Cosgrove, I surmise, that this main antagonist character was meant to seem that much more menacing. He, Cosgrove, must be truly dangerous if a bad-ass such as Lawson could be frightened by him. Again, this might work if Lawson was convincingly bad-ass. Or if Cosgrove were less of a standard "trying to take over the (vampire) world" megalomaniac so common to comic books and daytime soap operas. Ultimately, I found that in the Fixer the author, through the character Lawson, talks a good game, but fails to deliver convincing characterization and good plotting.

There are several more books in this series and I see very good Amazon reviews for these as well as the Fixer. I troubled myself to find and purchase The Fixer, which is currently out of print, hoping to find a gem and read the entire series. I Will not now purchase the remaining books.

Although it is possible that, in later books, the author mended the mistakes of the first novel I find too little promise in the Fixer to drive my actions forward to purchase the next books.

Fallon says

This book was originally released in 2002 and this cover is a lot better than the original. I digress, Lawson is a vampire, I didn't really realize this was going to be a vampire book, but the vampire aspect isn't the lure we typically think of. They are an evolution of humans, they need human blood but aren't allowed to kill them and those who do, or those who break other rules set by the council, are met upon by fixers. Lawson is the fixer for the Boston area which happens to be the capital of the vampire 'government'. He has a nemesis, Cosgrove, who is in town to usurp power and to mess with Lawson, of course.

The writing in this book was pretty good, however, there were so many errors in typing, words were left out or doubled, there were redundancies and this book has been out awhile and re-released, some editing should have gone into this and it would have been SO much more enjoyable. The story was good, there was a lot of back story and 'flashbacks', but this was the first book in a series. There were some really slow sections and then again some pretty good action scenes. I wouldn't really classify this as a paranormal series as much as a spy/mysteryish type book. The characters are pretty well written, but there wasn't a lot of room for surprises

you knew what was coming, how it was going to end, but it's the journey that counts I suppose. I did like the book and I'll read the next one, I'm just hoping there are a few less editing issues.

Grahame says

Cliché Yep this book is a collection of clichés. I have to agree with most of the one and two star reviews given previously to this book. The clichés are not so much vampiric as private detective/spy clichés. And I mean every one. Including the ones that contradict each other.

Hero is a 130-year-old vampire but seems to have the mental age of about 23. He is almost irresistible to women when he turns on the vamp magnetic effect. However, confronted either of the two by the female protagonists he acts and talks like a 20 something geeky kid.

He works for a seemingly incompetent and ambivalent controller and governing body. Weird arguments with these parties and other characters where the hero ends up holding the shitty end of the stick every time and accepts his lot with a "Oh man this always happened to me." And then pages of maudlin introspection for example; Hero wants villain vamp to be targeted. After resistance and inaction the vamp council agree and gives him the job. He then says this is bad as this guy is hard to take. So they offer him extra crew to help. He turns it down because.....wait for it".....grand cliché ...ta da.....cue music.... HE ALWAYS WORKS ALONE!!!! So they say fine get on with it. Then he is sad about being under appreciated and used because he has to take on super vamp on his own????????????? . (Which I am sure is what he wanted, no demanded.) Then enter many pages of the maudlin introspection.

Puke. This is only one of the many classic detective assassin clichés that you get bombarded with. Are you getting sick of me using the word cliché yet? Well you should be and you will be getting the idea about the book. The clichés are mixed in with these ridiculous circular arguments and also amazing (read ridiculous) insights to the detective and assassin role and equally amazing insights from his mentor the great Zero "Didn't I tell you hotel rooms are often traps?"

His control is useless being disinterested and lazy and just plain dumb. Okay the controls are ex agents given the role due to their good service. So how did this one get through the years of agent training and then live and succeed through hundreds of years of being an agent and then end up fat dumb and happy? After hero gets his butt handed to him for the second time he is convalescing in hospital. Control visits him. Hero asks for a bodyguard while he recovers. Control thinks it is not necessary!!!! Then comes one of those whiney circular arguments. Explaining anything to control is like teaching algebra to a dog. Also Hero also isn't good at explaining being a maudlin cliché factory.

The author seems to have meticulously researched these insights of the detective assassin genre by watching movies and reading crap novels of the genre have. In fact I think this book is a classic Mickey Malone detective novel from the 1940s with a vampire element thrown in, but not as good.

His amazing detective ability leads him to stake out a city nightclub because, well nightclubs are super vamps usual hunting grounds. There are probably a hundred nightclubs in the city but he guesses right first time and that very night the bad boy turns up. Man what are the odds? I mean couldn't the author have even a simple device like a tip off? Nope. Just go to one and the bad boy strolls right in. Lazy.

He has trained for years and has 30 years actual "fixer" experience yet his fantastic skills seem to be in the leaping in the air while wielding a weapon (loosely wielding because they usually get taken off him early in the fight) variety rather than in locating and eliminating the target variety. To locate the target in his world you just seem to go somewhere on a hunch and wait about 5 minutes and target will appear. Of course he then has no workable plan so everything comes down to a chasing around jumping in windows while the super vamp makes taunts about taking over the world.

Then he meets a beautiful female ex KGB assassin. The clichés here are hip deep. She is beautiful and has been trained in everything by everyone. She has worked in every cold war battleground as an assassin. During the Soviet Afghan war she took out a 14-man Afghan guerrilla team that the Soviet Army could not catch one by one. Man! Teenage wet dream. Again her training also leads her to use the same hopeless strategy the hero does. Man that KGB assassin training must have sucked. No wonder they lost the cold war.

This book was a bunch of clichés put in a box and shaken up.

Enough!!!!!!! Get the sample before you buy

Elaina Myers says

Interesting character and plot

This is an interesting story about a vampire enforcer (e.g. police officer/ investigator/ assassin) and a seemingly straightforward situation that steadily becomes more complicated.

Carol says

I personally thought this was a bad as* any book I have read. These books are all written with each individual authors imagination and I thought it was really good. I just borrowed the next in this series and can't wait to start reading it.

Kudos to the author on his great imagination and for sharing his talent with all of us. I would gladly recommend this to anyone!

Joe Hempel says

If I were to go on story alone, I would give this book 4 stars. But formatting plays an important part in an eBook, and there was just so much that was poorly formatted that I can't overlook that. It was like I purchased a pirated copy, with odd line breaks, chapters that jumped from 2 to 19...the chapters are there, just regular text inside paragraphs so you HAVE to search for it and edit the book yourself. Also there are question marks at certain points that didn't seem to belong...and it just seemed like a converted text file....not a book.

Otherwise, it's really not an enjoyable read. The story itself was actually quite good. Although the character

descriptions are lacking, the action kind of speaks for who they are. The action scenes are described REALLY well, and the authors training in Ninjitsu really comes through...one thing I hate is a fight scene that doesn't make sense..this makes sense.

Use of momentum, pivot points, and reaction were a sight for sore eyes. This is definitely a different take on the Vampire...and I loved it. Screw Twilight....Lawson is my type of vampire!! I will be buying the next book in the series because the world is intriguing to me. And I'm purposely not really saying anything about the plot in this because it was well done, and I don't want to spoil it for anyone that might check this out!

Chris Scala says

I found this book perusing my local used book store and picked it up because it looked like an quick, entertaining read - and it didn't disappoint. I got the impression that this was one of the author's first forays into writing. It's a bit on the disposable read side, the writing is a bit rough, and the editing was somewhat spotty but overall it wasn't too distracting and I enjoyed it.

Lawson is a Fixer for the Vampire Council, a shadowy group that governs vampire interaction with humans, with the main goal to preserve the secrecy of their existence. Lawson's job is essentially to kill rogue vampires which threaten that secrecy. The plot is simple - a vampire bad guy wants to do bad_things, and Lawson must stop him. It's urban-fantasy-noir, with a wise-cracking hero and a despicable villain. I'll say no more - it delivers pretty much what you'd expect, with the occasional twist and turn.

***Warning: mild background spoilers ahead:

The premise of the vampires in the book is similar to an idea I've had in the past: what if vampires aren't supernatural, perhaps a viral infection of some sort which makes them thirst for blood, gives them super strength and makes them photophobic etc. etc. etc. Merz goes a different direction: Vampires are a separate branch of humanity that diverged some time in the past and derive part of their sustenance from human blood - with other attendant mutations such as longer life, fangs and an allergy to wood.

I immediately went in search of the other books in the series, so it's worth a read!

Radella says

This is a story with the works- a KGB trained assassin, an arch nemesis hell-bent on resurrecting ancient evil in a bid for total world domination, love, betrayal, and a healthy dose of fighting. And did I mention vampires?

Lawson is a vampire, and his job as a fixer is all about preserving the balance between human and vampire. Of course, the vampires don't want the humans to know about their existence. So when the psychotic Cosgrove shows up in Boston, Lawson tries to take him out. Things go sideways, as these things are wont to do, with all the betrayal and ancient evil a reader could possibly want.

I found that Merz's writing style was not only highly descriptive, but also very readable. The way some things were described were just too clever; I didn't want to put this book down. Lawson is an interesting character- he's been around the block, but he's not fearless- and that's part of what makes this story work.

Cosgrove makes a truly worthy nemesis, not a watered down villain, with all the crazy you could possibly cram into a character. The plot, while not unique, was handled in such a way as to keep the pages turning, just to find out what happens next.

An excellent start to the series!

Rebekah (Silver Lily) James says

Anyone who knows me can tell you I don't generally like the newest wave in vampire novels, so how did Lawson, the central figure in this series, who is very much a vampire, end up being my newest literary crush? Because even if Lawson wasn't a vampire, he would still be interesting.

The Fixer is the first in this series. I admit, I was pulled in by one of the latest books - Kensei which is several books later in the series, but now that I have discovered it I have downloaded the rest of them as well. The Fixer balances just enough of a story line with introducing you to the work. From the first word, you are drawn into the action - and Merz does a wonderful job of setting the scenes, and creating a complex, and complicated character. The world Lawson lives in is dangerous, but you feel for Lawson. He didn't choose his life, it chose him, and while he would have chosen differently, he doesn't waste a lot of time pining over it either. The tension is high, and there was a point where I was seriously concerned about Lawson making it to the next book - which is saying something since I already had read another in the series.

The series has been compared to being a supernatural Jason Bourne, and I will agree that Merz definitely has been channeling Robert Ludlum. I have even turned a few friends who aren't normally paranormal readers onto this series.

For the digitally inclined, these are available on both Nook and Kindle format.

Anachronist says

Synopsis:

When a bad, big, psychotic vampire called Cosgrove returns to Chicago, one thing is sure: there will be blood and murders galore. Cosgrove doesn't disappoint his faithful allies and enemies - soon enough the Council, a body supervising all vampires living in that area, condemn him to death. Any death but the sooner the better. Lawson, one of vampire Fixers (so kind of law enforcers) and his Control (so kind of boss) McKinley are given the order to find Cosgrove and drive something made of wood straight through his dark, scheming heart. The balance must be preserved and there is no balance with such psychos as Cosgrove.

Unfortunately killing him is easier said than done. Firstly, nobody knows what Cosgrove looks like now. Then our baddie has an interesting plan of his own and plenty of other vampires are cooperating with him secretly. When Lawson's best friend is murdered in a club there's no looking back, though, especially when a female assassin Lawson falls in love with, Talya, joins the hunt and is kidnapped as a result. Will vampires manage to clean their ranks? How many lives will it cost? Will humans finally find out the truth about vampires?

What I liked:

This novel was highly readable, I really was sucked inside the plot and the more I read the more I wanted to know about our sad vampire protagonist. Lawson was an interesting character mainly because he was so flawed - an experienced law enforcer who is hardly fearless and has a very unpleasant fund of memories- anyway that's what made this story work for me. The world Lawson lives in is dangerous but he didn't choose his life, it chose him, and, while he would have chosen differently, he doesn't waste a lot of time pining over it either. Well, being so very flawed and in love he whines a bit but not too much.

Talking about the love interest of the main lead I must mention Talya, a big asset of this book. She is an Asian girl – half Chinese, half Kazakh – which I found original. She used to work as a KGB secret agent and now she is a freelancer assassin, also something you hardly expect from a 'damsel in distress', usually met in such books. She has a brain of her own and she knows what she wants – another feature I appreciate in my heroines.

Apart from that Merz did, in my opinion, a wonderful job of setting the fighting scenes. They seemed real and gory but not overly so. I also enjoyed several mentions of Musashi Miyamoto, a Japanese swordsman and r?nin and bushido, the code of samurai. I like Japanese culture very much and it was like a 'hello' from a distant friend.

Finally let me tell you that I appreciated the idea that the vampires in this series aren't some weird type of supernatural creatures but just another species that evolved alongside of humans. That alone opens up many more doors which, I hope, will be explored in next parts.

What I didn't like:

This novel was published for the first time in 2002. That's exactly ten years ago. It makes itself felt. In other words if you look for a terribly original premise, keep looking because you are bound to be disappointed by this one.

My other complain is that this book could really do with some more extensive editing. I'm not a native English speaker and still I noticed some strange mistakes: e.g. a faulty sentence structure like "I knew your reaction would be worth coming out in this miserable rain for" or an occasional redundancy of word choice, like " Her hips ground in to my face as she rode my face..." (and it was supposed to be one hot sex scene, imagine that! it simply made me laugh out loud!) A rookie writer mistakes, more often found in low-quality fanfic nowadays than in officially published books (although there are exceptions to this rule).

Now my main complaint. I really couldn't swallow that Lawson, a centenarian and a vampire with a several decades spent as a black Ops veteran, was from time to time so incredibly sloppy with his detective work. First he readily told his love interest, a human woman after all, that their mutual quarry is a vampire when the mere existence of vampires was supposed to be the biggest secret. He often took really poor operative decisions, allowing the main baddie to escape with ease and flourish. Ok, he was in love, but honestly, you should have expected a better control from such a professional. Also on several occasions Lawson describes himself as reacting "like a fourteen year old boy" to Talya. Well, doesn't it sound silly? His background and training is given as lengthy, Marine/special forces tough, dangerous and pretty comprehensive but for all of his training Lawson doesn't seem to know what to do in a tight spot and allows situations to worsen through his own failure to deliver.

Final verdict:

The world building was interesting but not especially original. The characters were complex but not very captivating. Still I want to give this series one more chance. Idealistic, I know...

Fred says

This was a pretty good read. It was something totally outside of my normal type of books but I'm glad I read it. I think this counts as Urban Fantasy? Maybe? See I'm not even sure what to call it. Either way, it was good. I'll definitely continue on into the series to see what happens. The book ended with a good deal of momentum and so I hope that isn't lost as the series goes on.

I love that the Vampires in this series aren't some weird type of supernatural creature but instead another species that evolved alongside of humans. Great idea. That alone opens up soooooo many more ideas and doors.

Gene says

Great!

Very enjoyable introduction to a new fictional hero and heroine. Hope to see more of both in action. Read it!

Vanessa Bostick says

Great book!

Looking forward to reading more!
Good background information and history.
Kept you wanting more. Good with details and suspense. Good read!

Dusty Craine says

I've really been putting this review off. I've had several exchanges with the author via Twitter and I like him based on our interactions but this book was just not my style.

The premise is interesting enough. Vampires walk among us, don't adhere to many of the stereotypes associated with them - they can be out during the day, they can't turn into bats or smoke, etc. But they do exist and humanity cannot know about them. Knowing would affect the balance. It would produce mass hysteria and likely result in the vampires being hunted or an all out war between the two groups. And that's where the Fixer's come in. They answer to a council who can order hits on vampires who are upsetting the balance and being too overt.

All things considered though, I wasn't a big fan of the book. It seems far too telling. Like another reviewer mentioned much of the book is used laying the groundwork of the universe Lawson lives in. Much of the

book is flashbacks, establishing the rules of vampires in the Lawson universe, explaining their powers, etc. As a result it suffers from lack of focus. It has a very disjointed feel. I felt like an English teacher would have left the note "Show me. Don't tell me." on the manuscript.

Lawson himself is not likable, in my opinion, he's extremely cocky and maybe that trait alone is what turned me off. There is also a brief sex scene that was uncomfortable for me to read. It just felt like I was reading smut. It's entirely a personal preference thing but for me it made my skin crawl.

I really wanted to like this book. And I may even give book two a shot just to see if it's more enjoyable once you have your sandbox established, but if I have to read one more book that is more than 10% about what stupid misconceptions humans have about vampires I may actually set it down. Something I'm not at all prone to do.
