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F. Paul Wilson

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The first of three Repairman Jack prequels, revealing the past of one of the most popular characters in contemporary dark fantasy: a self-styled “fix-it” man who is no stranger to the macabre or the supernatural, hired by victimized people who have no one else to turn to.

We join Jack a few months after his arrival in New York City. He doesn’t own a gun yet, though he’s already connected with Abe. Soon he’ll meet Julio and the Mikulski brothers. He runs afoul of some Dominicans, winds up at the East Side Marriott the night Meir Kahane is shot, gets on the bad side of some Arabs, starts a hot affair, and disrupts the smuggling of preteen sex slaves. And that’s just Book One.

Cold City Details

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Author : F. Paul Wilson

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From Reader Review Cold City for online ebook

Benjamin Thomas says

Ahhh...it's a wonderful feeling to get back to Repairman Jack, one of my all-time favorite series, and one of my favorite characters. I'd finished the original RJ series over a year ago as well as the related series, "The Adversary Cycle" (some 20 books in all) and have been looking forward to diving into this prequel trilogy ever since then.

This first book of the trilogy is really a fairly straight-forward thriller novel, albeit with quite a complex array of sub-plots. It basically serves as a sort of origin story for Jack. We get to see how he gets his start as a fixer, how he learns to live off the grid, the budding relationship with friend and mentor Abe, as well as quite a few opportunities to see how he acquires his various skills (hand-to-hand fighting, lock picking, pick pocketing, shooting, etc.) that will come in so handy in the later series. This novel does set up the second and third books and while a variety of antagonists are introduced, their plot lines are not all concluded in this first book.

While some readers may want to start here so as to read the entire RJ series in chronological order (not counting the "Secret Histories" YA trilogy that takes place even earlier), I am happy to be coming to it at the end. Knowing Jack's future and having a good handle on the entire "Secret History of the World" makes it fun when Easter Eggs happen in this prequel trilogy. There's just something about elderly women and dogs that tends to affect Jack's life so when I see that here, I understand the nature of destiny and what is waiting in Jack's future.

Nathan Washor says

Original Review Here

What to say? This book was awesome! I typically read and review fantasy, so this was a break from the norm for me. Apparently this series delves into that genre later on, but there wasn't any of it in here. I'm glad I read it though as everything about it I loved.

I have never read a "Jack the Repairman" book by F. Paul Wilson before of which there are a lot already. This is the first of a prequel series to those other novels (which I will read). Consequently, I already knew Jack survived, but even without the fear of death on the plate, the book kept me captivated and rooting for our "hero". Since I knew nothing of what comes after, everything was new to me. I look forward to lots of "ah-ha!" moments as I "catch up" with the series.

The book takes place along the eastern seaboard of the US in the early/mid 1990s, but mostly within New York City. Our hero is a college dropout who is about off the radar as much as anyone can be. He lacks a social security number, a license, even a telephone. And that is exactly the way he wants it.

Every single character is rich in personality. Each is unique and has their own desires. Dialogue is fantastic – not once did I think to myself "who would say that" – and the conversations all flowed fast and smooth. The attention to details the author took with the characters is something only those who read other people very

well can manage. I was truly blown away by these aspects of the book. If you love great characterization, you will do flips for this book.

The plot was amazing too. There were always four or five things going on at once between multiple factions. From the mob and jihadist terrorists, to Latin gangs and tobacco runners, you never knew what was going to happen next. There was mystery and suspense on almost every page with new clues that lead to more questions while providing the answers you wanted to know. I can't forget to mention the love interest that came into play despite our hero's reluctance or his mysterious best friend who owns a successful sporting shop yet never has any customers. I can't give enough accolades for this book.

I rate this book a stunning 5 out of 5 stars. If you like mystery and thrillers you will devour this novel.

Jan McClintock says

Just don't get what all the fuss is about with this Repairman Jack series.

Shellie (Layers of Thought) says

Original review by John posted at Layers of Thought.

2.5 stars actually.

A book that goes back in time and sets the foundation for the popular "Repairman Jack" series of novels. He is the "urban mercenary" and fix-it man who helps victimized people that have nowhere else to turn.

About: Jack is a 21 year old college dropout who decides to sever all home and family ties and move to New York City. With absolutely no personal documentation or links to his past life, he moves "off the grid" and leads a solitary and hard-working life, being paid in cash and using only cash to live on. While initially working with a group of Latinos as a gardener, inevitably he ends up taking on some dodgy jobs – not hard-core crime but definitely not legal either.

Through a growing reputation for reliability and trustworthiness, he builds up a core of contacts who find him useful and who may be able to help him. Some might even become friends. But living life on the edge of society, he also comes across many unscrupulous and dangerous people.

In no time he encounters (or becomes embroiled with) interstate smugglers, a child slavery ring, a group of dangerous jihadists, the mob, a vengeful con-man and a pair of ruthless vigilantes – some of whom Jack aggravates. While already blessed with wits and plenty of "street smarts", he has to learn quickly from some of his new-found friends and contacts in order to stay one step ahead of his new enemies.

John's thoughts: This is a fun, action-oriented piece of escapism. A few bits of the plot and some of the characters aren't very believable, but it doesn't really matter in a story like this.

However - annoyingly, the jacket describes this as a novel and it isn't; it is a partial novel. After reading 360 pages you find out that nothing is answered, nothing has become clear, and you have to read more books in

the series in order to reach any sort of conclusion. Very frustrating. When I read a book that is clearly part of a series, I do expect there to be some loose ends or hooks that can provide a foundation for future stories, but I also expect the book to be reasonably coherent and to stand on its own. This one does not.

So I can't tell you about how cleverly multiple plot threads are brought together or how the story builds to an exciting climax, because I don't know. Which is a shame, because the Jack character is interesting and the story pulls you along at a good pace. I blew through the 360 pages in no time at all and was looking forward to seeing how everything turned out.

Given that I have no idea how anything ends up, I can only rate the book 2.5 stars. It's definitely one for existing Repairman Jack aficionados, or for people who like the sound of the character and are prepared to invest their time in a lengthy series of books.

Janice says

Book one of the trilogy has no resolution. I prefer each book to have some kind of closing, some miniscule way in which it's wrapped up. I enjoyed it enough that I'm eager to find out what the resolution is - so it's on to book two and three.

rick. says

I had heard good things about Repairman Jack, so I grabbed book one and dove in. Well apparently it's not that easy. This is book one of the Repairman Jack: The Early Years trilogy, not to be confused with the Young Repairman Jack trilogy, which along with the Repairman Jack (currently a quinquadecology) are all spin-offs of The Adversary Cycle.

Entering the series with Cold City [Repairman Jack: The Early Years 01] you will find a young man looking to lose himself in New York City, shedding his name and all contact with his past. At the start of the book he is working as a landscaper on a mixed-race (I'll get to it) crew when he gets bullied by one of the other men and seemingly has a psychotic break, nearly beating the man to death. Apparently this is not his first murderous episode having previously (and ritually) killed a kid who thoughtlessly killed Jack's mother. Our titular psychopath then looks up a family friend and gets involved in the lucrative field of trafficking stolen goods and worse.

From my vantage point he is aimlessly drifting from scene to scene. He stumbles into various characters but with the compartmentalization of illegal enterprises and cabals he never learns anyone's last names, history or true motivations. Most of the character development is based on the most base stereotypes of various racial/ethnic backgrounds. It is shorthanded and lazy writing. Realizing far too late that this is a prequel I imagine all of these are important figures and settings in the primary spin-off series. It is probably a highlight reel for anyone already familiar with the series, but on its own is frustratingly directionless, then ends with numerous unresolved story lines and cliffhangers. As a stand-alone story it falls short of recommending.

Side note about the Goodread blurb:

...one of the most popular characters in contemporary dark fantasy: a self-styled “fix-it” man who is no stranger to the macabre or the supernatural...

At no point in this book is there any hint of anything supernatural. It is shelved as Horror, Urban Fantasy, and Mystery and it is literally none of these things. It is barely a Thriller and definitely a Crime book, but only because Jack is committing the majority of the crimes. If you are curious about Repairman Jack my guess is to start with The Tomb [Adversary Cycle 02], and perhaps loop back to Cold City when you feel nostalgic.

Meggie says

Really great start in to the early years of young Jack, he is a fine new MC. I'm looking forward to the second book in Repairman Jack: The Early Years series.

Keri says

4.5 Stars F. Paul is a master at weaving a tale and controlling the elements to such a degree that we have a seamless storyline that spans over 20 years. This book is the first of a bridge trilogy that will span Jack's young adult years to Jack's place in the History of the World storyline. When F. Paul wrote the Tomb, Jack was a side character that wasn't supposed to survive the ending. He didn't actually kill Jack; he just left him there in the end severely wounded. F. Paul got such a response from his fans wanting to know what happened to Jack, that it spawned a 15 book series featuring Repairman Jack. But fans wanted more and F. Paul wrote 3 YA novels featuring Jack as a teenager and featured his famous fix'its as a boy that would eventually follow him into manhood.

Now Jack has come to NY as a 22 year old and cut off all ties to his family. Due to the murder of his beloved mother and the retaliation on Jack's part, he feels the only way to survive is to let go and become a loner. He promptly meets back up with beloved character Abe, whom he met as a kid and held on to his card. We also see Jack start to interact with characters that later will play roles in the History of the World. Jack also starts honing his fixit talents. Jack also meets Julio for the first time...meng. ?

If you haven't read the series, then this is a good place to start as we start to see Jack's life in NY start to develop. F. Paul mastery over keeping elements in line as we see hints of how little control Jack has had over his entire life. He doesn't know it yet, but he will. As you are reading, you can pick them out if you have read the entire story. If you haven't, don't worry, you won't be lost. All it does is reinforce how talented F. Paul is about staying true to his storyline. Just be aware this is a trilogy and the ending is left hanging to be picked up in the next book. Love the series and love that we don't quite have to say good-bye just yet to our favorite Repairman Jack.

Vicky says

This book is everything I love about Repairman Jack, but he isn't really Repairman Jack yet. F. Paul Wilson has taken the reader back to Jack's beginnings and we find out the hows and whys of Repairman Jack. We find out why he has chosen to live off the grid and how his mother died and what he did to avenge her. We see his attachment to his friends and how he discovers what he wants to do and be in his life. No mysterious "The Other," no weird aliens, this is just pure adrenaline with some philosophical musings thrown in for

discussion's sake. We meet Abe for the first time and find out how Jack came to depend upon him. Highly recommended for all Repairman Jack fans!

Kelly says

Really open ended conclusion, which normally pisses me off, but the book just rocked every point on the way there. I LOVED the characters, all of them. Even the villains. Such a mix too. Good guys with faults, good guys who seemed perfect, if somewhat driven, secret pasts and agendas, bad guys who should be thrown off the highest bridge wearing concrete shoes and bad guys who really aren't as bad as they'd like to think they are.

Intricate plot, but I never got lost in the threads.

Jack's personality is just pitch perfect. He sounds young, but he's not all over the page. He has confidence when he needs it, naivete when it suits. He's charming, reckless, sensible and a little bit scary. I found him utterly endearing.

I listened to this on audio and Alexander Cendese did a fantastic job. All the voices, all the accents. Nuance of character and situation. I'm tempted to splash some cash and get this entire trilogy on audio.

Mike (the Paladin) says

This book get's a five star rating, but just barely...do you know why it gets the rating just barley?????
BECAUSE I HATE _____ CLIFFHANGERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I!!!!HATE!!!!CLIFFHANGERS!!!!!!!!!!

If you're going to write a trilogy...I don't know at least tie up each volume!

Okay...whew *takes deep cleansing breath* now that I got that out of my system...

Here we have the first of a trilogy that's a prequel to the Repairman Jack books...and so far it's good. I placed this on my fantasy and urban fantasy shelves but there's no real sign of that in this volume. The Repairman Jack books tend to move slowly into that arena and in this book Jack is just "arriving". Getting to know the character(s) we'll become familiar with later and establishing his identity/non-identity for his "off the grid life" we see him just starting out on the road that will lead to his more of less knight errant/Robin Hood/Batman type character. He begins making money in a "minor" criminal way but (of course) gets "drawn in to something he'd rather...avoid.

Sadly the book ends with several people still looking for our hero with, less than benign intentions.

Did I mention how much I hate cliffhangers????

Anyway, excellent book, good story, good character and it's got me trying to make space on my "currently reading list" for the books I still have left on my "to be read list" from the Repairman Jack books.

Enjoyable, and recommended.

Aaron Rosenberg says

Repairman Jack has been one of my absolute favorite characters since The Tomb, so I'm always happy to read more of his adventures. And it was nice to read one that's early Jack, before he really became Repairman Jack. I only had three complaints about this book:

1. The Adversary. I hated the fact that every RJ book had to center around the Adversary, and this one is no different. It's completely unnecessary here, and gets in the way of what's otherwise a fun story.
2. The Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade syndrome: pretty much everything that makes Jack who he is occurs in this book, and I'm assuming the few that haven't yet will in the next two. It should take a lot more time and a lot more adventures to form him into RJ, not just one extended incident.
3. The cliffhanger. I'm fine with books ending by setting up things for the next book, but this book barely ended at all! It needed more closure for the immediate storyline.

All that said, I still loved reading it and will absolutely be buying the next two.

Jon Recluse says

Review pending

Zedsdead says

The first of three planned Repairman Jack prequels. I had expected three stories but it's clearly going to be one story in three books. By the end of this one, Jack has made an assortment of enemies--the Order, a human trafficker, a group of bloodthirsty Dominican landscapers, a skeevy con artist, and a small cell of Gambino mobsters--not one of whom has been sorted out.

Cold City begins shortly after Jack abandons his family and drops out of college to find his fortune in the Big Apple. We meet a few characters who appear in the main series (Abe, Drexler, Julio, Vinny Donuts, a Septimus goon named Kris, a woman with a dog) and a number of important characters that I don't recall. I can only assume they're Red Shirts.

It's all about Jack learning the ropes. We see his introduction to gun culture, learning how to stay off the government's radar and invest his ill-gotten gains, and stretching his legs in a couple of early fixes.

Cold City felt--*was*--incomplete, but it's a lot closer to the juicy fun of the early Repairman Jack novels than to the tortured contrivance of the last few, which were completely hijacked by the Adversary series.

Melissa says

I actually haven't heard of this series although it is popular. I don't often read "contemporary dark fantasy" so it makes sense that I might have missed these, but the premise sounded interesting so I gave it a go. Plus, this is the first book of 3 prequels and the book guaranteed me that I need not read the other books to get into this one. It's true. I didn't need to read the others. This book is also set in 1990s.

I will say I had a problem with Jack at first. I didn't connect to him. He was cold and a bit of a jerk. When he started making friends, some you could tell would become his self-made family, I really started to connect to the character. He started to show real compassion to the "innocent" and I believed he wanted to help. He was also young and just starting to feel his way through his life and his coldness made sense since he had a hard time trusting others. When that trust started to appear, it made his character much warmer.

I also had a personal problem with the racial slurs and prejudices within the book. I want to make this clear... I'm not saying that about the author at all. It fits his "bad" characters to say those things, and wouldn't have made the bad guys as bad without them. It's a personal thing and it seemed worse before I really got to know Jack. Perhaps because if that, it seemed more pronounced but it also seemed to lessen in frequency once Jack became more interesting. However, I will say that it did make sense for the characters. Again, it's just a personal problem many others may not have.

Even with these problems, and as I said above, once Jack got involved with his new friends I found myself rooting for him and much more interested in the chaos surrounding him. The adventure did have a feel to keep you wanting to know what happened next.

The ending is odd for me. I get that this is a trilogy of prequels, but it didn't give you closure on everything that was going on. There were many (almost too many) things going on, but yet they all seemed to fit together in one way or another. I say the ending is odd because in one way it does feel complete even without the conclusions to events currently going on. It also gave me a taste of what Jack becomes and I have to say that I am curious enough to pick up one of the other Repairman Jack books. This is odd for me because I crave closure in my books but didn't seem to hate this ending.

I give this book 3 stars. I think this is perfect especially for men who enjoy dark urban books with a lot of action. It is also great for those already into the Repairman Jack series. Even if you haven't read them, I think you'll start to get a feel for the character Jack and like his growth in this book.
