



Firstborn

Ryan Attard

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There's a war raging between the forces of Heaven and Hell; and, as if he didn't have enough to deal with from his own issues, his sister has chosen the wrong side. And now he's got angels, demons, talking pets and a Japanese monster to contend with. Begin following the misadventures of Erik Ashendale in this first full length novel of the Legacy series.

Firstborn Details

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From Reader Review Firstborn for online ebook

Sorin Suciu says

What a treat!

If you are a fan of Jim Butcher, but you always felt that there is room for a little more humour in his works, then do yourself a favour and add Ryan Attard's Firstborn to your reading list.

Although this story shares some elements with those of Jim Butcher (socially awkward magician who helps the police from time to time, sidekick prone to perversions of all kind) there are plenty of original elements to Firstborn, mixed with cheekiness and dipped into vast quantities of self-deprecating humour.

The magic system bears unmistakable traces of Anime and Manga, along with some of the more "traditional" traits. All in all, the author is very clever in avoiding the "superpower" trap, that in which magic can become the default (and boring) answer to all challenges. A wonderful balance, which makes it hard to believe that this actually a debut novel.

The dynamic between the main characters is pure entertainment. There is no love lost between Eric and his sister, Gil. This quote - "Hey Gil. It's been too long. Can I get you anything? Perhaps something to go." - is on par with any of Maggie Smith's dialogues in Downton Abbey, and it is part of what makes Firstborn such a delightful reading.

Krazykiwi says

So we have a wizard who's sort of out of the closet and working as a PI, with some contacts on the police force who know to call him when something weird is going on. And then bad stuff happens, and he needs to power up when the forces of heaven and hell drag him into a war they've been brewing up for millennia. And he has a smartass pervert sidekick demon familiar, trapped in an unusual form as a punishment. He's also hopeless with women--even when one is a succubus, a bit of a nerd, and has father figure issues. And he really likes his black trenchcoat.

Sound familiar?

The basic setup is large amounts of Dresden, with a dash of the Nightside and a sprinkling of Fix, spiced up with some Supernatural style dickhead angels and cutesy demons. But as awful as that could have been, it's pretty good.

The writing is pretty sharp, particularly the cat/demon sidekick who has all the best lines, and the major characters are refreshingly aware they're kind of badass but not invincible, so instead of parading around going "aw shucks, did I do that?" they are just trying to get stuff done without getting everyone *else* killed in the process.

I could probably sum this up with: If you recognise and like any of those references I just threw in there, you'll probably like this quite a lot.

No romance, no cliffhanger (but plenty of room for the story to continue). Really the only downer is that

despite this being a couple of years old, there's only one followup out (hey, this is not G.R.R. Martin here, in self-pub, a series that's lain dormant for two years tends never to get finished, so I'm cautious). Also that followup, from the blurb, appears to be more about backstory than a continuation.

I would definitely keep reading this series, if it continues. That said, this reads pretty fine as a standalone, so it's well worth picking up (not least because it is free now and then).

Patrick says

A beautiful blend of urban fantasy, detective pulp fiction, and action movie goodness! Firstborn brings together all the elements you would expect to see in an urban fantasy novel and more. With a few plot twists along the way to make things even more interesting, I was hard-pressed to put it down to go to work. If his future books are anything like this one, I'll keep coming back for more.

Heather says

I received this book for an honest review

Plot/Story:

Firstborn did not start out very well for me. From the start it reminded me of a story that I have been reading called The Dresden Files by Jim Butcher. There are a lot of similarities to the two stories, too many to call it a coincidence. I feel like the resemblance between the two may have tainted my own views of the story.

Erik Ashendale is a wizard, who, because of a curse, can't perform magic without a conduit. We soon find out that this wizard has a twin sister, who may or may not be evil. Either way, as most siblings, they just don't get along.

The whole thing was all over the place. I had to keep going back to re-read parts because Erik seemed to go from one place to the next without much explanation. The beginning starts off with Erik helping the police in a situation, but the whole first and second chapter seems unnecessary. Or at least, the things that happened in the chapter seems unnecessary. There are things that we find out about the wizard in the first two chapters, but I feel there could have been a better way to expose all of this.

He goes from helping the police to helping his sister, and this is where I got confused. One second he is talking to his sister, in the next chapter he is chasing after some creature. I had no idea what was going on until later in the chapter when it was revealed he was helping his sister take care of some creatures that had escaped her lab.

To be honest, I always found myself falling asleep reading most of this book. It only got better at the last two chapters, and that was the only time I found myself interested in the book.

Characters:

I like the characters. Erik was hard to figure out. At moments he was like a teenager, other times he seemed more like a man in his mid to late 30's. I spent most of the book trying to figure out how old he was, come to find out he was 23 and for some reason that just didn't make sense to me.

My favorite character was Amaymon, the talking cat/demon. He was funny, crude, and everything you would imagine a demon being.

Romance/Kills:

There wasn't much romance and most of the kills seemed downplayed. I found it hard to see what the author was trying to explain.

Writing:

The writing felt amateurish. At some points I felt like I was reading a book written by a high school student. There were a few mistakes that I picked up on throughout the book and one mistake that has my inner nerd ragging. There is a line spoken by Amaymon "Your so gay." No, I did not use the wrong your/you're, this was the mistake in the book. As you can imagine, it didn't set well with me at all. I literally stared at this comment for at least 5 minutes, hoping and praying I was seeing it wrong. Of course, this is on top of the other errors throughout the book. There are missing words and extra words. I feel like the story needs a good edit.

Beginning:

The beginning worked for me. I was interested in the story, even with it reminding me so much of Dresden Files. But somewhere the story took a different route and I lost that interest.

Ending:

The ending was fantastic. Really, I loved the aspect of Erik building his own group of magic welders to take on the evils of the world. It's the only reason I will even consider reading the next book.

Cover Art:

I am the kind of person that will judge a book by its cover. I can't help it, I just love cover art. The cover art for Firstborn was simple but enough to draw me in.

Blurb:

I don't think that the blurb on Goodreads really tells what the story is about. The whole heaven and hell battle doesn't really play out until near the end of the book. I was well past the half way point before I even knew angels would have a play in the story. I felt like there were two or three storylines mixed in and played out before we got to the main story of the novel.

Other Stuff

Opening Line: Maybe it was the black trench coat.

Highlights: The ending made me want to read the next book.

Lowlights: Needs more editing.

Final Thoughts: Not horrible, but not good, read at your own risk.

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Star says

Erik Ashendale decided not to follow in his father's footsteps and become a Warlock. Instead, he's a powerful wizard turned detective who helps others, for a fee of course – a wizard has to eat, you know. He also has a demon/familiar, Amaymon, who takes the form of a cat most times. After taking down some

Lizardmen who were holding a school hostage, he's been hired to protect a young college girl from forces out to take her for themselves. Erik realizes pretty quickly that this girl isn't what she seems. His sister is also after the girl, but he doesn't know why the larger forces of good and evil are involved. He's got to find out the truth, fight the mother of all evil, and save the girl from the forces who want to use her.

In *FIRSTBORN* we meet Erik Ashendale, his demon/familiar Amaymon, and Erik's sister Gil. The Forces of Heaven and Hell have come out to play and they'll stop at nothing to get what they want – the fledgling succubus Abigale. I love Amaymon, a snarky demon who takes the form of a cat. I think we all know if cats could talk, they'd be super-snarky. The characters are well-written and the mythology is very interesting. I enjoyed *FIRSTBORN* and I am looking forward to the further adventures of Erik Ashendale and Amaymon. I think readers who enjoy magical noir and who are fans of *The Dresden Files*, *The Occult Crimes Unit Investigation* series, and *The Nightside* series.

David Caldwell says

The first in a new urban paranormal mystery.

A wizard/ private detective is hired to find and protect a young girl. At the same time, a mystery draws him into a confrontation with his estranged sister. They both live under a curse. His curse is that his magic tends to run amok under most circumstances but he has amazing powers of healing. His sister knows all magic but doesn't have the raw power to utilize that knowledge. Now they must confront a powerful entity that is manifesting as Lust, one of the Seven Deadly Sins.

There will be comparisons between this series and Harry Dresden. They have similar jobs, appearances, and even personalities for the most part. There are enough differences that it doesn't feel identical but it also feels like they could be cousins. One small quibble is that the book reads like it is supposed to be taking place somewhere in the United States, probably California. But then British spellings are used in several places throughout the book. Not a big problem but it was slightly annoying. The last thing is one of the differences from Harry Dresden. Harry started off fairly low powered and has gotten progressively stronger as the series progressed. This gave the reader to be able to form a connection with him as a "normal" guy before he started saving the world. In this story, the main character is already at super powered levels (with just some control problems) so it is harder to connect with him. I would rate it 3.5 stars.

Joe Hinojosa says

Hidden away from the view of men, a war has been waging between heaven and hell, between angels and demons. Life on Earth depends on striking a balance between the two forces, and for ages it has done so. But now a new terror is emerging, tipping the delicate balance and threatening mankind.

In Ryan Attard's debut novel, *Firstborn*, we are introduced to Erik Ashenborn, a hero for hire who specializes in supernatural phenomena. He is a wizard from a magical family, one whose familial bonds have been strained, and one that is pushed to its breaking point when an unknown threat emerges.

We begin as Erik is hired to protect an innocent college student, a young woman who has caught the attention of demons. As he tries to protect her, he finds himself pitted against his twin sister Gil, a warlock who has aligned herself with angelic beings. Confused by the strange partnership, he nonetheless attempts to protect his charge, only to discover that she has a secret, one that she doesn't even know, one which puts her

in mortal peril.

You can read the rest of the review at <http://joehinojosa.com/2013/12/11/boo...>

Richard Myers says

Good book

A great book about a human/ wizard that finally comes into his powers but still needs some training. I recommend this book to everyone.

Amy says

Firstly, this book is extremely reminiscent of Jim Butcher Harry Dresden series. However, I still enjoyed the story and the slight differences in wizarding and circumstances. An easy read but still fun if you want something similar to Harry Dresden!

Michael (Mai) says

Overall, this is a fairly good book. There is tons of action (possibly too much), a snarky cat-demon, and a built in mythology as well as plenty of other good and bad things. This review probably needs to be a pros and cons list to accurately review. So here goes:

PROS

-Funny protagonist who doesn't take himself too seriously. In fantastical reads like fantasy and science fiction I always love it when characters are regular people who just have badass abilities. That's Erik for you. What he does annoy me sometimes, overall I like him because he has constant banter with the characters around him and even with himself.

-The monsters. They are super weird and really creative. There is so much description on one of the epic badies that I had to go back and re-read it just to get a clear image.

"This guy was larger than the ship we were on. The torso was a solid barrel of muscle and thick, slimy skin like a squid's. It had a pair of humanoid arms, each layer with muscles the size of a small car. Each finger ended with a thick, black hoof. Its head was a grey blob with a pair of pitch-black, saucer-like eyes and a row of dagger-like teeth. A pair of bull horns emerged from the sides of it's head.

The Alpha's lower half was just a set of eight tentacles, each as thick as the chimney on this tanker. Just one slap of those things and the ship would capsize. Its suckers had rows of teeth in them, which could probably rip off the metal sheets of the tanker."

-The Action. The plot is constantly fast paced with a lot of action.

-The repertoire of mythological characters. You've got the seven deadly sins, Lilith, angels, elementals,

etc...

-Amaymon. Erik's demon familiar who is often a cat. A snarky, lusty cat. Best character.

CONS

-The action. I know this is in both sections but it's important to address that while the story was action packed it also lacked a lot of the development that readers get during down time. After finishing the book I care relatively little about any of the characters because I saw very little develop even after Erik's awakening scene.

-The Ushi-Oni. It's the big Alpha that was described earlier. This CON is really me just being snotty. Ushi-Oni is a cow demon with eight legs like a spider not like a tentacle. (Sorry it's the Japanese Language and Literature degree in me) – You truly can ignore this CON. I just needed to point it out.

-Needs to be more polished. Some typos bothered me a bit

-Weaponized Vagina, During a fight, a female antagonist who is trying to kill Erik during sex, has a "member" or tentacle slime out of her vagina. She wields said "member" as a weapon. I almost stopped reading it there and thought "Of course a dude wrote this." Ridiculous.

I'm going to give this a three because of lack of development and the monster va-jj. I think that a lot of people will like it though.

Gregory Lamb says

Snarky Humor Mixed With Magic

Fans of the fantasy genre are going to love Attard's refreshing sense of humor. The dialog is snappy and contemporary with a cast of characters readers will enjoy meeting.

Erik Ashendale is a wizard for hire with magical powers he uses to rescue the innocent from evil monsters. His sidekick Amayomon is a talking cat, who Erik sometimes allows to morph into a street smart demon in human form. Armed with Djin, his special sword, Erik and Amaymon strike out on a mission to save the flirtatious succubus, Abigale, from evil demons and behemoth monsters. His estranged sister Gil enters the fight, taking it onto the high seas where some history behind their dysfunctional family of warlocks and wizards comes alive.

I thought "First Born" was a fun read, generally well crafted with a fast moving plot. I wouldn't recommend it for young teens due to some of the language content. Unfortunately there were a number of copy edit errors. Though the typo errors didn't distract me from the fun of the story, some readers may not want to read the other books planned for this series. I'm not going to let that hold me back though, I'm looking forward to reading more from this young creative author.

The publisher provided me with a copy of Firstborn in exchange for an honest review.

Sadie Forsythe says

I was caught off guard by the beginning of *First Born*. It is told in past tense first person and recounts quite a lot of action right off the bat. It honestly felt a little bit like someone's role-playing narration. There was just too much and this led to a bit of a WTF moment. But as I read on the voice became really distinctive. It reminded me a lot of the Guy Noir segments of A Prairie Home Companion on NPR. Do you know those?

In the skits Guy Noir is a private detective who recounts the events of his cases, some of them quite eyebrow raising, in an often placid tone. I sensed that here too. Erik blithely relates feats of his own death defying skill, strength and bravery as if they are little more than humdrum. It led to bit of a Lake Wobegone Effect. (This is the impression that everything about a person or place is superior to the average, even if it isn't really.)

But as I read the book more as a magical noir narrative like Guy Noir's, with the genre's known tendency to exaggerate events and flounce language, it put the narrative in context and made me laugh. I could see the humour in it, and there is plenty of humour. As the book progressed Erik also had a self-deprecating habit, such as referring to himself as the 'only wizard stupid enough to...' or readily referring to himself as brawn and not brains. This went a long way toward humanising him and countering the *praise me I just saved the world* effect that the first person narrations of heroic events created. It also helped that as the plot established itself the lengthy and largely unintended descriptions of his own awesomeness became less frequent.

The story is really interesting and after the first couple of chapters Erik and his familiar are really likeable characters. They are witty and sarcastic, often throwing scathing one-liners at each other to dissipate tension. There are any number of laugh out loud moments. Erik is also dedicated to helping those unable to help themselves. You have to appreciate that.

I suspect that there are going to be a lot of books in this series, probably seven if I had my guess. So there is plenty of time for the plot to progress and characters to carve their own niche. This one took a couple of chapters to settle, but rolled along nicely after that.

Edit 2014: I'm fairly sure that there has been a bit of a rewrite on this, or at least a newer version has been released.

Liz says

I had read this author's other book "Pandora's Chronicles" and I really liked it so I had to give Firstborn a go. And it was good!

A proper "man-book" - a few too many fight scenes for my liking but then again- they were still good. Thoroughly enjoyed the dialogue in between the wizard and the demon/cat! Very funny and witty. It's an enjoyable read, I do recommend!

Joulez says

This was such a quick read for me, I actually wasn't expecting to finish it quite as quickly as I did, but it was at times a book I didn't really want to put down.

This book was a good read, I enjoyed it quite a bit, I might be slightly biased to the cat, you stick a talking cat into any book and well am all over it. Especially one as snarky, sarcastic and deadpanned as this cat was. I think it was the cat that made me give this book a 4* rating, I am a very easily swayed person when it comes to animals in books.

The story its self was kind of good, I got a strong sort of Supernatural (TV show) vibe from it, but it was all just like facts. There didn't seem to be any background to the characters, to the abilities, it was just all so and so could do this, or they did that. Which isn't always a bad thing at times, it did make me want more from this book and am sure the author has the ability to do more with these characters.

I will probably end up reading the second book when I get my hands on it, I hope to definitely see the Characters a bit more in depth, but I really looked forward to reading for the cat.

Really enjoyed this book, there were moments that made me smile, the author did good work. :)

T.K. Toppin says

An interesting take on wizards and demon familiars. Reminded me a little of Jonathan Stroud's Bartimaeus trilogy, especially the tongue and cheek camaraderie between the lead character Erik and his demon, Amamayon. The story moved at a fast pace and was filled with some interesting demons and some eye-opening action scenes that made me wonder if Erik would survive 'this round' of excitement. I look forward to the next tale as I'm sure this is not the last for Erik and his companions.
