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Oliver Twisted

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Towards the end of J D Sharpe's novel, its hero remarks to his friend Dodge, 'My name is Oliver Twisted and I am more than a boy. I am a warlock and a Knight.' The story of how he has made this move from mere boyhood is entertainingly told, author's tongue firmly in author's cheek, with just enough echoes (direct and indirect) of the original novel by Charles Dickens (and well timed to coincide with the bicentenary celebrations of the latter's birth). From the moment of his workhouse birth, it is clear that while young Twisted has the potential to become the force which will 'end the darkness that had sunk deep into the heart of the kingdom' he also has the potential 'to become the greatest evil ever known'. Sharpe skilfully moves her narrative between these dualities, principally through the device of having Oliver participate in the ongoing battle waged by the Brotherhood of Fenris (Evil) on the monster-slaying Knights of Nostradamus (Good). It is fought in a London which, far from being a place of wonder and opportunity as Oliver had hoped, is a crowded landscape of 'vampyres, ghosts, goblins, pixies, demons, witches, warlocks...' Amidst this heady mixture some of the now transformed Dickensian characters divertingly come and go: watch out especially for Mr Brownlow, Nancy and a decidedly lupine Bullseye. It is all very inventive, occasionally very gruesome and, beyond argument, a most welcome variant on the over-bitten theme of adolescent vampire fiction.

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