



Out Law: A Dresden Files Novella

Jim Butcher

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In Jim Butcher's riveting fantasy novella *Out Law*, a wizard faces a demonic enemy who seeks to feed on the world.

After the Windy City is decimated by the Battle of Chicago, Harry, a wizard, reunites with John, an underworld criminal kingpin known as the Baron of Chicago. John needs Harry's help with redeeming one of his men, Tripp, a lifetime criminal looking to become honest.

To help Tripp navigate his legal woes and get a second chance, Harry and his ragtag allies have to tangle with the Lurker, a supernatural force with slithering tendrils that possesses cats, lions, birds, and baboons. Indeed, the Lurker is a bloodthirsty nemesis whom Harry set loose when he took out the vampires of the Red Court to save his daughter.

A mix of guns, cars, and criminal elements fleshes out this alternate world of castles, runes, and spell-armored leather jackets, whose fight scenes are cinematic and concrete. Magic and other supernatural elements are juxtaposed with everyday features like offices and court proceedings—for instance, Harry teaches his apprentice potions while wearing a robe procured from a thrift store.

Evocative descriptions, as of a demon's laugh that makes Harry want to scrape his eardrums until they burst, animate the story, as do its witty exchanges. Harry is a brash and endearing hero, though prone to some bravado: he dismisses the Lurker as "yadda, yadda, your basic Lovecraftian nonsense." Irreverent humor enlivens the brisk and rollicking storytelling, whose various plotlines weave together and move toward a climactic confrontation wherein Harry deploys diplomacy and his wits.

One part of a bigger, ongoing battle against dark magic, the gripping fantasy novella *Out Law* follows Chicago's only professional wizard as he fights an ancient Aztec demon and a Las Vegas bookie.

JOSEPH S. PETE (May / June 2026)

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