



Paths Not Taken

Simon R. Green

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John Taylor just discovered his long-gone mother created the Nightside—the dark heart of London—and intends to destroy it. To save his birthplace, he will have to travel back through a very distant—and probably deadly—past.

Paths Not Taken Details

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Tulipa says

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Chichipio says

The first three quarters of this book were almost painful to read. Too much self-fulfilling prophecy for my liking; especially because, this time, it was John himself the one doing it, instead of his enemies. After what he saw in the previous book, he should know better.

I know that John is supposed to be more bluff than brains, but some of his decisions here set a new low, even for him. The whole thing with Merlin came up a bit out of the blue. They talked to him a little, then, without further consideration, decided that there was no other choice but to do what they did. Hmm... not quite. We've seen John try a lot harder with much more uncooperative and unapproachable beings. Then, even as John's bad decisions cause Suzie to start looking more and more like bad-future-Suzie and Eddie's warning echoes ominously overhead, he still decides to keep going because he *has* to find the truth. Whatever happened to John's promise to his friends? He doesn't even stop to draw a parallel between his actions and those of his enemies—how messing with time to stop something can cause that very event to happen. Nope, why bother, right? And I'm still bitter about what was done to Suzie. If someone should bear the scars for John being an idiot, then it may as well be John himself. But no, throughout the whole book John is always restored to his original normal-looking self by some or other deus ex machina.

Towards the end, after they reached the very beginning of the nightside things improved a little, but I felt that it was a little too late in the book to make up for all the earlier flaws.

I will keep reading the story, but I really expect to see a more insightful John in the next book. I know that in the first book he said that he couldn't see a clue even if you'd smack him in the head with one, pointed and said "hey, that's a clue!" but still. He always was stubborn but never this dumb before.

M says

Ok im fine with a book that forces a hero to do horrible things because it's the only way to stop some Great

evil or because it's the only way to save their own lives. But Taylor's just a selfish A-hole. Honestly, i would buy Pretty Posion (evil succubus that enjoys leading the good to hell) as the hero over Taylor, at least she's honest about what she does and Why. He lies, tricks, and kills people throughout the seris when he really doesn't have too. He doesn't even try to find an alternative (unless you're his friend) Otherwise he'll just cry about not having a choice

WARNING SPOILERS BELOW:

When he kills Merlin and tricks his girlfriend into helping him, he doesn't even, for 1 second, try to think of something else. There were tons of ancient powers in Merlin's time that could have helped or he could have lied and say he knows when Arthur would return to get Melin's help. But no, his first choice is to trick a 16year old into murdering her boyfriend and dying horribly. Also the book ending is retarded. if angels from hevan and hell warn you that, if you don't kill your mom before you where born humanity won't survive and you saw a future where You destory the world. You're a delusional tool for being self righteous about not killing her. He risks the entire world, not just the nightside, to save his own A**.

Chris says

We're really getting into the meat of this story, and something tells me that I'm gonna have to order the most recent book at some point.

John Taylor has a mission. In the last book, he was tasked with finding out how the Nightside got started, and his search revealed a secret that had long been hidden - the identity of his long-lost mother. He'd wanted to know all his life, and now that he does, he'd do anything to stop her.

His mother is a dangerous woman, and he knows that the best way to find out how to stop her is to go back to where it all began. Which means, of course, time travel.

With bounty hunter Shotgun Suzie (also known as Oh Christ, It's Her) he dives into the deep past of the Nightside, hoping to find a way, any way to prevent the apocalypse that he knows is coming....

Now that Green is really getting the story moving, he does what he does best - beat up his characters. In all the books I've read from him, he has consistently endeared himself to me by being utterly merciless to his characters if he has to be. No matter how much you like them, if it serves the story to have them maimed or killed, then that's what's going to happen. While we're nowhere near the overall climax of the Nightside series here, you can get that feeling of foreboding from knowing that soon, very very soon, everyone is going to start suffering horribly.

I can't wait....

Jason says

5 Stars

Paths Not Taken by Simon R. Green is the fifth book in the Nightside series. These stories are classic noir like private eye mysteries in an urban fantasy setting. They are perfect for my interests today. I have been reading a lot of urban fantasy lately. Combine my new favorite genre with a detective noir like story and you have made me something special. I loved this book. I loved the writing of Green. I loved the world of Nightside. And I especially loved our main character (can't call him the good guy), John Taylor.

This is an intimate story, a story about John Taylor and Suzie Shotgun. It is also about Nightside as we get to learn more and more about it as our heroes travel back in time. Nightside is a remarkable and favorite fictional city of mine. I haven't gushed enough about how much I love this series and our dark hero John Taylor. This is Urban Fantasy at its finest. I mean come on Paths Not Taken features the son of Lillith partnered up with an almost unkillable Shotgun toting assassin standing together ready to die for each other as they face down Hellspawns in a place a long time ago. How freaking sweet.

These marvelous urban fantasies have worked because of the amazing place, the scary and relatable hero John Taylor, and his equally interesting friends and associates. I love the humor, the action, and the writing.

Paths Not Taken explore the dark city of Nightside. It opens up more of the past of our hero John Taylor. It answers some questions that we have had since book one. These are really well written books that are fun and imaginative and I cannot wait to read more. I really enjoyed this book and highly recommend it. I look forward to reading more from John Taylor and the Nightside series, it is a favorite of mine.

(less)

Alexander Draganov says

Very interesting and original Nightside novel, which has awesome monsters, epic fights and shattering revelations as John Taylor and his friend Suzie travel through the past, in order to discover the true origins of the Nightside; the Wild Hunt was especially marvellous chapter. The character development is also quite strong, as well as the romantic touch. My only complain is that the characters sometimes seem way too powerful for the tension of the story, this is a problem Green had in some of the "Deathstalker" and a common flaw of fantasy authors (from David Eddings to Stephanie Meyer) - to make their heroes unbeatable. I have to admit, however, that in the thrill of the Wild Hunt or in the presence of the horrid Shadow Men I felt actually scared for John! I wish more moments like those, possibly because I am quite vile :D

Still, the book is so wonderfully weird and well-written that it remains fun reading and I will surely continue reading the series. Can't wait for the big battle with Lilith.

Graylark says

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1. If Merlin was powerful enough to send them back in time, why didn't he just send himself back in time to save Arthur instead of wringing his hands over it?
2. If they had Merlin's heart for time travel, why didn't they just go back slightly in time to before Kae arrived, and make preparations against Kae, so that their plan for Merlin would go accordingly and nobody

would die?

3

Rachel says

Okay, forgive me for saying so, but these books are not high art. But they are fun and quick reads. This one has John Taylor going back in time to see the creation of Nightside, to help him figure out how to stop his mother Lilith from destroying it in the present. It has a strong focus on Suzie Shooter, her relationship with him, and the knowledge John has of her possible future.

You know, fun, interesting ideas about time travel, love the pop culture references (how many lines are quotes from other sources?), good read. :)

Timelord Iain says

Storyline really ramps up here... I wasn't aware the first story arc ends in book 6 when I read this...

Alondra says

4 Stars

Another fun time with John Taylor, as he attempts to go back in time to save the Nightside and his friends from the wrath of his mother. Lilith has returned, as we know; and she is up to no good. He takes along a couple of friends, and makes many enemies along the way. His reputation seems to proceed him. The confrontation between John and Lilith was exciting to see, as he realizes how alien she truly is.

Kat Hooper says

Originally posted at FanLit: <http://www.fantasyliterature.com/reviews/nightside-series/paths-not-taken-simon-r-green>...

Warning: Contains spoilers for previous NIGHTSIDE books. If you haven't read them, please start at the beginning with Something from the Nightside. Otherwise you'll be lost.

Paths Not Taken is the fifth book in Simon R. Green's NIGHTSIDE series. In the previous installment, Hex and the City, John Taylor investigated the origins of the Nightside and discovered that Lilith, his own mother, was its creator. Now, in Paths Not Taken, John and Suzie Shooter travel back in time to discover why and how Lilith created the Nightside. That might help them figure out why she now wants to destroy it and how they might be able to stop her.

The best part of Paths Not Taken, as usual, is the setting. This time it's fun to learn what the Nightside was like throughout history, not just by being told, but by actually going back to experience it. (If you thought the modern Nightside was bad, you should have seen it in the 6th century!) As we go backward in time, the past

mixes up with the possible futures John has already seen in a previous book (thus the title Paths Not Taken) and we see how John has been unwittingly influencing events all along. We get to visit some familiar people and places and we learn what happened to Merlin's heart, where the Lamentation came from, and how Suzie becomes disfigured in the future John has been worrying about. Green purposely creates all sorts of time paradoxes which will make your head spin. I'm just starting to realize how well he planned out the NIGHTSIDE series.

Paths Not Taken suffers from the same problems this series has had from the beginning, mainly the repetition of ideas and language within and between books. Green repeats himself so often that I wonder if he has certain phrases typed into a macro. For example, "... I opened up my inner eye, my private eye ... and it was the easiest thing in the world to....", "... they all remembered they had urgent appointments somewhere else.") This was a real problem for me, so I've decided to take a break from NIGHTSIDE before revisiting it in the next book, Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth.

I'm listening to the fabulous audio production narrated by Marc Vietor. I wouldn't think of reading NIGHTSIDE any other way.

Julie says

To me it's always very interesting and very brave when an author creates a good character that does bad things to good people because he has to and he knows it. He can look someone in the eye, tell them that he's so very sorry, and then do something utterly horrible to them because it has to be that way.

Very rarely do authors continue with that kind of harshness with the hero through a whole series of books. Usually the character buckles or makes an exception or something magically happens that changes the circumstances so he never has to do it again. That doesn't happen in this book and I loved that.

One of the only characters I've ever read like this was Roland from Stephen King's The Dark Tower series. (I always ask people who have read the series if they would have dropped Jake that first time. It always gets interesting answers.)

The character of John Taylor in these Nightside books not only drops Jake every single time, but he peers over the edge to see where Jake lands below.

I can't wait to see how this is all going to end.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Paths Not Taken (Nightside, #5), Simon R. Green

Paths Not Taken by Simon R. Green is the fifth book in the Nightside series. Originally published: August 30, 2005.

I'm John Taylor. I was born in the Nightside, that square mile in the hidden center of London where it is always the hour of the wolf, where gods and monsters walk side by side and where every dark question ever asked can be answered—for a price. ...

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Behdad Ahmadi says

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Hidekisohma says

And we are back! to the continuing adventures of captain Gary Stu. Honestly, I find it very amusing that i'm still reading these books. The main character is so terrible it's actually laughable. With the exception of Harry Dresden, I am hard pressed to find a more self important magical Gary Stu than this guy. Every time I think he's shown the extent of his overpoweredness, he outdoes himself! And this time, it involves time travel. Oh boy. This is going to be interesting.

So this time, Gary (I will be calling him Gary even though his name is John), wants to see how the nightside was created (an idea brought up last book) but before we do that, we need about 60 pages of filler with a 40 year old guy whose past and future selves try to kill him. It really has no bearing on the story and just has to do with time travel. So..yeah that's there. You can basically forget about it once it's done because it's never mentioned again once the actual plot gets underway. That is what we call "Padding".

Anyway, so Gary goes to get 'power of the novel' guy. What i mean by that is in pretty much every one of these books, Gary teams up with a random powerful guy from the nightside. Whether it be madman, billy bones, or in this case, a guy who basically has a suped up version of force persuasion. Like, his power is, he can walk up to you and convince you that you don't exist. Yeah, I know, this book series has a lot of broken OP characters. But none are so OP as Captain Gary Stu. So with persuasion guy and of course Shotgun Suzie, they head off to go to the past to discover the origin of the nightside. They go to father time who sends them back in time because he's captain gary stu and everyone does everything for him. Whether it be person, wizard, or god. All fall before Captain Gary Stu.

For some reason though, they don't get far enough back in time and they end up in the days of camelot. There they realize Merlin should be able to help them. But Arthur just died, so he doesn't want to. Okay. So....they need Merlin's help. What is plan B? that's right. Kill Merlin and rip his magical heart from his body and use that magic to travel further back in time. I honestly wish i was joking.

When persuasion guy goes "hey, this is a REALLY bad idea. we can't go around murdering people just to sate your curiosity Gary," Which...in all honestly is a completely normal and rational reaction. But you can't question Captain Gary Stu! So they beat up their friend and send him back to the present. Because he dared to question Captain Gary Stu's logic of murdering Merlin and causing the death of his innocent Druid

girlfriend. Did I leave that part out? Yeah. She dies too trying to save Merlin. But Captain Gary Stu can't be bothered with such things as guilt or repercussions! He has far better things to do. Like going further back in time.

But oh no! they fall short again! What on Earth will Captain Gary do now?? Well, OBVIOUSLY the answer is beat up Poseidon and have him tell them that they need to speak to a forest god. So he visits it (it turns out to be that forest god bum from Hex and the City) and even though no mortal has ever beaten him in a race out of the forest, of course he wins, because he's captain Gary Stu.

The forest dude is angry and is going to kill Gary anyway, but he doesn't because a random sorcerer saves him and sends him all the way back to the beginning of the Nightside. So FINALLY we get there and Lillith is there being all....Lillithy. Suddenly 2 archangels show up and are like "hey, we can't get into the Nightside by ourselves. let us possess you for a few minutes." Suzie and Gary agree and they go in. Lillith is super weak due to just making the Nightside but Captain Gary Stu stops the Angel from killing Lillith because he says AND I QUOTE "I couldn't let her die because of something she hadn't done yet and might never do. Humanity had to have its chance, but so did she."

Um...bro? THAT'S GO%\$#@ LILLITH. This isn't some guy named Bob who one day MIGHT rob a bank. It's seriously the frickin'....ARE YOU SERIOUS?! I'm...i'm trying to wrap my head around this. You're trying to tell me that you can't let Lillith die because she hasn't ended the world yet? Because it hasn't happened yet? I just....that's like saying "oh no, we travelled back in time to 1944 Germany, but we can't kill Hitler yet because he hasn't created giant Robots that run on orphan blood yet. It's not our place to kill him." I just...are you mental? Is there seriously something wrong with you Gary?

Look. I understand that if Lillith were to die in the past you wouldn't be born. Fine. If you want to say "I didn't want to die, I know it's selfish, but i just couldn't willingly kill myself" Fine. I will totally accept that. It's a character flaw, but one we can all relate. but NO They had to go and make it seem like he was doing the right thing. Like always. because he is CAPTAIN GARY STU who can do no wrong.

So they eject the angels and don't kill Lillith, but they weaken her. They go back to the present and Gary says NOW they have to kill Lillith. Because I hate this guy.

This book. God this book was even more exhausting than the others. This guy is such a terrible, awful, garbage main character. He is such an OP piece of nonsense I can't even. His power is "he can find anything" That is the most broad power I can think of. He has used this power to find people, locations, weaknesses, bonds to worlds, bonds to time, singular points of life connecting to power center. He can literally have this power mean whatever he wants whenever. That would be like me having the power of communication but having it mean that i can not only speak every language ever, but i can transfer thoughts to anyone in the world, make anyone say anything at any time, scramble phones, emails, make anyone hear what i want them to or see any body language. But, i can also manipulate the communication between the brain and body and make them having spasms and brain aneurysms. You see how without a specified set of guidelines that can be REALLY broken? and that's the biggest flaw with these books. Captain Gary Stu's powers are too ill defined and broad. Also apparently everyone including gods are scared of him. Because he is super powered Gary Stu man.

The other problem is Shotgun Suzie. Guess what her superpower is? Figured it out? She's got a shotgun. Yep. that's her power. She can shoot stuff. Fantastic i know. And her character is one of those damaged "i was sexually abused and now no man can touch me". Because god forbid we have a female character that's just you know....strong without being sexually broken. And this is something they bring up CONSTANTLY as she's supposed to be his main squeeze. But wait! We can't have him squeeze her, because she's so damaged and nobody can touch her. And on top of this, he's so chauvinistically protective of her it's like oh my god.

After all this, will I read the next book? Honestly, probably yeah. Why you may ask? Because it's entertaining. It's like a train wreck. I honestly can't look away. It's hilariously awful main character writing, but i like the world that's created. I DO have to say that the author has some good world building skills. But his main character is like something a 12 year old would make for his first Dungeons and Dragons character.

Here are several reviews on the front and back cover of the book.

"an incredible world" "a macabre and thoroughly entertaining world"

You see how NEITHER of those mention the main character? Yep. that's because he's terrible. But the world is good. And with that, I rest my case. What will Captain Gary Stu and his revolving crew of "not important as me" sidekicks have in store for us next time? Well i will definitely find out because man, this stuff is too ridiculous to stop. 2.5/5 lowered to a 2 because of Captain Gary Stu's idiocy.
