



## A Time of Torment

*John Connolly*

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## **A Time of Torment** John Connolly

Dangerous and driven private investigator Charlie Parker returns in the latest gripping thriller of internationally bestselling author John Connolly's series, in which ungodly fears haunt a strange and isolated community.

Jerome Burnel was once a hero. He intervened to prevent multiple killings, and in doing so destroyed himself. His life was torn apart. He was imprisoned, brutalized.

But in his final days, with the hunters circling, he tells his story to private detective Charlie Parker. He speaks of the girl who was marked for death, but was saved; of the ones who tormented him, and an entity that hides in a ruined stockade.

Parker is not like other men. He died, and was reborn. He is ready to wage war.

Now he will descend upon a strange, isolated community called the Cut, and face down a force of men who rule by terror, intimidation, and murder.

All in the name of the being they serve. All in the name of the Dead King.

## **A Time of Torment Details**

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Author : John Connolly

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## From Reader Review A Time of Torment for online ebook

### Zoeytron says

Copy furnished by Net Galley for the price of a review.

You might want to steer clear of the Cut. It's a cloistered area and the folks inside don't cotton to those who stray inside its borders. Burning bodies, the art of discernment, an individual with two sets of sets of dentures - one for smiling and the other for something else. Beware the Dead King. His raspy whispers and mindless chittering are a harbinger of bad things to come.

The denouement is done to a tasty turn. Not too rushed, not too drawn out, but just right. Charlie Parker. Still with the haunted eyes, and his two daughters . . . one living, one watching.

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### Petra says

Well, this was a lot more fun than I had expected! *A Time of Torment* is the 14th Charlie Parker thriller, but the first one that I have read, and I have to admit I wouldn't have picked this up if it hadn't been for the publisher inviting me to read a free copy. My main reason for that: Charlie is a private detective who died and was sort of reborn, and there are plenty of otherworldly elements to this story, which is something I wouldn't usually be desperate to read. But I've actually enjoyed this so much I've bought *The Charlie Parker Collection 1* containing the first four in the series so I can catch up now.

I was able to follow this without any problems, but I really wanted to have more details about Parker's sidekicks, Angel and Louis, and more information about Parker's daughters. So in that respect, reading these in order would have no doubt been preferable. However, this was strong on characterization and John Connolly's command of the language is absolutely fantastic. It was easy to get a good sense of what the characters were about. The descriptive passages built a vivid picture in my mind and coupled with the witty dialogue, it quickly became addictive reading. This was full of atmosphere and rather creepy and dark with a fair bit of violence and gore. It wasn't a fast-paced thriller. In fact, it took a while to get going, but Connolly's skillful writing was so enjoyable that I didn't mind the slower build-up at all. Very entertaining with a good mix of thrills and supernatural aspects, brilliant characters and great humor.

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### Sue says

After reading *Night Music: Nocturnes Volume Two*, I became a strong John Connolly fan. I've also heard about the Charlie Parker series in the past but never managed to get to it. Well NetGalley has corrected that reading deficit! And deficit it has been for Charlie Parker definitely took me to another region of reading where mystery and the paranormal intersect. I recently finished a Pendergast novel in a series that sometimes walks in the same area, but Connolly treads much deeper here.

What a mixture of darkness and insight....I am going to have to go back and read earlier books in this series, learn more about Parker, his world and the ethos that drives him. This book and series might be too dark for some, but the mythical/fantasy element offsets it enough for me (as opposed to some of the thriller series I

have stopped reading) as well as Parker's apparent underlying goodness.

I like the mythical elements which remind me of old English and other European influences never far away, sometimes so deeply ingrained that they are forgotten or ignored today. But not by Mr Connolly. In that way it reminds me of aspects of American Gods that I loved so much.

I do recommend this book (and likely the series I have yet to explore further for myself) with the caveat regarding violence. But remember justice for those who have been harmed is involved, justice against those who seem not to care about anyone. This adds perspective.

4.5\* really.

A copy of this book was provided by the publisher through NetGalley in return for an honest review.

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### **Karl says**

This is an Advanced Uncorrected Proof, On sale date August 2, 2016.

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### **Jon Recluse says**

Let me begin by stating that I do not rate John Connolly against other thriller authors. It's simply not done. I rate John Connolly against John Connolly. His work stands alone in the field, and even a good John Connolly book is head and shoulders above anything else currently being written in the genre.

That being said, *A Time of Torment* is, in my humble opinion, the weakest in the Charlie Parker series. A man who stopped a pair of bizarre killers, only to have his life systematically taken apart, his reputation destroyed, falsely imprisoned for the lowest of crimes, and targeted by a brutal group intent on turning his incarceration into a living Hell.

Finally freed, he knows his days are numbered, and he turns to Charlie Parker to expose his tormentors, the deadly conspiracy that stems from an isolated community known as The Cut, and the dark secret it hides at its heart.....the entity known as The Dead King.

An engaging enough plot, and a faster than usual read, with a strong start.....Parker forming an uneasy alliance with the Collector, one based on the threat of Louis, in order to use his nemesis against those Charlie hunts.....and a powerful finish, where Charlie's daughter, Sam, displays her growing talents to devastating effect, showcasing her cold, lethal intelligence.

But in between these points lies the problem.....the main characters of the series, Charlie, Louis and Angel, are mere shadows drifting in and out of the story, and the tale suffers the lack of heart, humor and depth they normally bring to the table.

Surely just a stumble in a series that raised the bar on thrillers.

As always, I look forward to the next book in the series with my enthusiasm undimmed.

This was an eARC from Netgalley.

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## Char says

With a decidedly darker bent than the previous books in this series, Charlie Parker rolls on.

Beginning with the story of Jerome Burnel and ending with the story of an isolated area of West Virginia called the Cut, John Connolly deftly weaves this story of the Dead King. Despite the fact that Angel and Louis are again here, A Time of Torment lacks the often humorous slant those two bring. This is a very dark book, indeed.

Even though this story took its time, I never found myself bored. In fact, I adored the slow build of atmosphere and the depth of the characters. However, I had hoped to learn more about Charlie's daughters, and I did, just not as much as I had hoped. The end of this book, though, gave me such a case of the chills I could barely hold my Kindle.

I'm not sure that I can tell where John Connolly is going to take Charlie and his daughters in the future, but I think it's going to be an even darker place than any we've visited so far. His story is winding down now; he's aging and showing the signs of all his various battles, both mental and physical. Never a super hero- Charlie is human, and as such, there's only so much his mind and body can take. I think his journeys are coming to an end now, but with so many unanswered questions, I fail to see how he's going to get to the finale or what that will consist of, exactly.

I feel no need to worry though. I trust John Connolly is going to make Charlie's last adventures worthy of our time. I only worry that my heart might not be able to take the final outcome.

My highest recommendation to fans of Charlie Parker and John Connolly!

\*Thank you to Net Galley and Atria for the advance reader copy in exchange for my honest review. This is it.\*

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## Emma says

It's stunning to think how many years i've spent with Charlie Parker, more than most other literary creations, and he's certainly much closer to my heart than any other detective. Every Dead Thing was one of the first crime novels I ever read and still sits in my top 5. I recommend it without reservation to anyone who can take the very dark themes it explores.

In this instalment we see Parker transformed, his very essence revitalised and ever so dangerous. For once it feels like the effect he has on the reader is truly reflected within the story, people SEE him and they know he is an agent of change. Whether for good or ill depends solely on the actions of that individual, they will be judged first on this earth, and as ever in these novels, these people deserve it. Connolly again proves his ability to delve into the dark and degenerate, yet another small town in America sin deep in depravity and death. The cleanup is enthusiastically assisted by Louis and Angel, with a few other surprises; all the gang are here and it feels like home.

On to A Game of Ghosts...

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### **Sara says**

I'm getting tired of writing the same review for John Connolly over and over and over again. I remain devoted to his wonderful dark poetic prose and his equally wonderful, wounded warrior Charlie Parker and his companions Angel and Louis but dear god am I getting tired of these stories.

I don't know when exactly these books stopped being about Charlie, possibly the coolest "bad" good guy ever written. Once upon a time you could follow Charlie into the darkest pit of human depravity and watch from the shadow while he, often with the help of hitman Louis and cat burglar Angel, dealt swift and terrible justice to the absolute worst of the worst the world had to offer. You could revel in the blood shed because there was something weirdly grand and sweet about it. Charlie's darkness was tempered with a thin beam of pure, uncorrupted belief in the better angels of human nature. He hated, but dear god did he ever love too.

Now, as with the last nine hundred books in this never ending series, we spend 95% of a "Charlie Parker" thriller with literally everyone BUT Charlie Parker. We meet character after character who we are told are doing really evil depraved things because of course its evil and depraved to sell children on the black market and use women for breeding stock but its not terrifying the way it once was. We see all these things but we don't really know or understand them. We don't care.

Literally nothing happens to advance the over arcing story here (Charlie may or may not be some kind of supernatural something who's supposed to battle another supernatural something and now somehow his daughter is also involved somehow) but that doesn't really matter since we don't really even know what that story even is. As usual Charlie and Angel and Louis arrive twenty pages from the end to dispense justice and witticisms and bad people die horrible and there's some demon or something and on the very last page once again some frickin' something is watching from the dark blah blah blah...

God these books make me tired....

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### **Fuchsia Groan says**

Tras catorce entregas, espero entusiasmada cada nueva novela de Charlie Parker, y por mucho que Connolly repita esquemas, o que no aporte aquí demasiada originalidad a la historia, ya que quizás no encontramos en este *Tiempos oscuros* una historia novedosa o un villano memorable, leer esta serie nunca decepciona: su escritura es fantástica, sus protagonistas tremadamente carismáticos, y el tratamiento que le da al Mal fascinante: *Hay un tipo de maldad que ni siquiera se opone al bien, porque el bien es irrelevante para ella. Es una abyección que radica en el corazón de la existencia, que nació con la materia misma del universo. Está en la descomposición hacia la que tienden todas las cosas. Existe, y siempre existirá (...)*

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### **Monnie says**

Okay, 5 stars it is - but only because I can't find a way to give it 6. Or, put another way, Charlie Parker rocks!

Actually, Parker started kicking otherworldly butt something like 13 books ago. I'm almost embarrassed to say I'd read only two others (Nos. 1 and 11), but based on how good those two were, when the publisher offered me the opportunity to read this one in exchange for an honest review, I wasted no time saying yes. And my honest opinion now that I've finished it? Wow.

To love these books does take a strong sense of imagination (it's no accident that I used the word "otherworldly"). Parker, you see, actually died - but he remains among the living. That experience left him in a sort of purgatory; he operates as a private detective in this world but is aware that there's another, darker world (dimension, if you will) filled with mostly evil entities. Yes, it's *Twilight Zone* stuff, and engrossing as all get-out. And if you're wondering, no, it's not necessary to have read previous books to enjoy this one; it's been a while since No. 11 for me, and I didn't feel lost at all.

The story begins as Parker is contacted by Jerome Burnel, a man who heroically kept some folks from being killed but in the process killed the perpetrators. But not long thereafter, he was tried and convicted for having pornography in his home despite insisting it was a set-up. Tortured unmercifully while in prison, he's now out, convinced he's still got a target on his back. Before someone hits it, he wants Parker to hear his story, which involves a cult-like community in an isolated part of West Virginia called the Cut.

Parker and his two cronies agree Burnel is telling the truth about his wrongful conviction and take on the investigation - and then learn that Cut members are highly protective not only of their own, but of an evil entity called the Dead King. That gives the Parker team pause (not to mention a great line):

*"...as far as I can tell, there isn't even a rapper called Dead King, and those guys pick up on all the good names."*

But alas, just the mention of that name is enough to strike fear in the hearts of men and women (and not infrequently, those who slip up and mention it end up tortured and killed in very unpleasant ways). That means yes, there's plenty of murder and mayhem here, so this book isn't for the squeamish.

Besides a really kinky plot and edge-of-seat action, I got a personal kick out of the fact that some of the action happens in places near and dear to my husband and me, like Portland, Maine, Columbus, Ohio (including my favorite German Village section and Go Bucks) and historic Lewisburg, West Virginia. Scenes take place in other interesting spots as well:

*"It was the kind of bar where everybody knew your name, as long as your name was Motherf\*\*\*er."*

Hmmm; truth be told, we've spent time in a few of those as well.

The character development is outstanding and the excellent writing, as well as the action, is nonstop. The ending is satisfying, although there's a loose end that no doubt will be tied into the next installment. Bring it on!

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### **Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says**

A Time of Torment is one book that I have been deliberately delayed writing a review for. Not that the book was in any way bad, it's an utterly fantastic book. And, that's the problem. I just didn't know what to write.

All I wanted was to tell you all that John Connolly has done it again. He has written a book that is so excruciating good that it's almost painful to finish it.

For those of you that have never read a Charlie Parker is it good to know that this is book 14 in the series and I would advise not to read this book without at least have read the previous book or at least some book before. The journey Charlie Parker is on; his personal crusade is much easier to understand if you have read the books before this one. He is a man haunted, by the death of his wife and child, killed several years ago by a serial killer. However, his dead daughter is still with him, and she also has a connection with his new daughter. His friends are dangerous but loyal and Parker is fighting a battle against the darkness. And in this book is it the Dead King he is going after. And doing so is he going against the Cut community.

The book's story is slow but in a good way. Everything takes its time and it suits the story so well. There is no rush. Everything happens for a reason, there are some revelations that I never saw coming and then comes the final confrontation towards the end.

John Connolly writes in such a way that makes me slow down my reading, I don't want to hurry the story. This is not a book that I feel should be rushed. Connolly's command of the languages is utterly perfect! There are few authors in my experience that can write like Connolly do, to utterly capture the reader's attention and keep it until the end.

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### **Meredith says**

4.5 stars

A Time of Torment is the first John Connolly/Charlie Parker book that I have read, and I must say that I was completely taken in. This is a multi-layered, well-written thriller with complex characters.

When accused sex offender Jerome Burnel is released from prison, he contacts private investigator, Charlie Parker. Burnel maintained that he was innocent and felt like he was being framed. He shares his story with Parker because he believes that he doesn't have long to live. Shortly after meeting with Parker, Burnel disappears. The only clue that Burnel leaves Parker is that of "The Dead King," which Parker eventually traces to a ruthless Appalachian community called The Cut. Multiple stories come together bringing Parker to a dark world filled with magic, violence, and greed.

I want to know more about Parker and his daughters, so I need to go back and read the first 13 books of the series. A Time of Torment is not for the faint-hearted—there is quite a bit of violence and gore. It's unpredictable and filled with suspense. I highly recommend.

Thank you to Atria/Emily Bestler Books and Netgalley for the opportunity to read this book.

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### **Liz Barnsley says**

We are at Charlie Parker 14 now and honestly this series just gets better and better, each novel adding layers to the last, the mythology that John Connolly began creating way back in "Every Dead Thing" is brilliantly

imagined, incredibly dark and insanely addictive. When I go into a new instalment my expectation is always high and this author meets and exceeds it every time, *A Time of Torment* was no different in that respect.

This had a slightly different vibe to it, shaking things up a bit, *A Time of Torment* is a slow burner full of tension and brimming with atmosphere. Following Charlie and his indomitable sidekicks Louis and Angel on the one hand as they track and deal with some very bad folk, on the other we have the Cut – an isolated and inbred community hiding a terrible secret, who keep the wider world away using fear and often violence. When Charlie hears a strange tale told by a man named Jerome Burnel, the two sides are set on a collision course that brought me to one of the most chilling endings Mr Connolly has yet achieved in this series. Now the wait for more begins once again. I hate that part.

The Cut as a concept was extraordinarily chilling, the characters within it endlessly fascinating and very scary – with his usual flair for setting and descriptive prose, the author paints a picture and leads you towards the inevitable clash, the journey is once again dangerous and taut, completely riveting I was utterly gripped and fully immersed back into Charlie's world once more.

The mythology deepens, Charlie's daughters, one living, one dead are becoming increasingly important to the whole – this layer which speaks to the ongoing saga is incredibly alluring and honestly creepy. Shiver. The relationships between all the main protagonists are constantly in ebb and flow over the course of the entire body of work so far – the absolute creative genius the author brings to the core storyline is what inspires comments like “the best crime series currently in existence” although for me personally I don't like the crime tag for these when taken on its own. Yes it is crime in a lot of the elements but it is so much more, an epic and increasingly spellbinding series that has too many facets to call it any one thing.

On a personal note one thing “*A Time of Torment*” did for me was knock Stephen King off his perch, from this point on I will happily tell anyone that asks that John Connolly is my favourite author – I would dump a new King book for a new Connolly book in under 10 seconds, if he wrote a book a month it would not be enough for me. As an emotionally charged reader I need an emotionally charged novel and this is what I get every single time, so what can you do except acknowledge that and so I have.

Character driven, literary and always always bang on the money, from my point of view the Charlie Parker series is the best series currently in existence. Forget the crime tag.

Highly Recommended. And then some

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### **Jean says**

Imagine my surprise when NetGalley approved me for John Connolly's new Charlie Parker book, *A Time of Torment*. I hadn't requested it. It wasn't even on my radar, honestly, because I had never, ever read a single book by Mr. Connolly. That changed in a hurry because I am not one to look a gift horse in the mouth. I read the series debut, *Every Dead Thing*, and while it had its moments, I was not smitten with it. Still, I had heard that the books get better and better as the series progresses, so I was looking forward to proceeding with number fourteen. Before I go any further, I wish to thank NetGalley, Atria Books, and the author for providing me with a copy of *A Time of Torment* in exchange for my honest, unbiased review.

Charlie Parker is a former cop-turned private investigator. He lost his wife and young daughter to a sadistic killer in the series opener. Apparently, in a later book, he died and came back to life, and this has left him a

changed man. I have culled enough from synopses and reviews to know that Connolly infuses all of his Parker stories with elements from the paranormal or spiritual realm. Knowing this ahead of time prepared me somewhat for what lay ahead in this new offering. Were there aspects of it that I wished I knew more about? Certainly. But those events, characters, and pre-existing relationships didn't interfere with my enjoyment. Suffice it to say that I understand Parker to be a complex, multi-faceted individual.

After Jerome Burnel is released from prison, he approaches Parker and tells him his side of the story – how he was a reluctant hero, how he was set up to take a fall and was tormented in prison, and how he now fears for his life. But Burnel's failure to show up for his meeting with his parole officer is only the beginning of Parker's involvement with the isolated West Virginia group known as the Cut. These guys are nasty, controlling, scary dudes. Folks inside and out of Plassey County know to stay clear of these guys, and Louis and Angel can't wait to mess with them.

All I had to compare this book to was book one, so I missed twelve books in between, but I liked the fact that much of the story is about the Cut and the people whose lives are affected by them, for better or for worse. Yes, Parker and his guys are involved, but not so much as in the first book, and while there is cruelty and violence, it somehow seemed different to me – more controlled, at least on the part of Parker and his men.

The characters are marvelous, and I'm not just talking about the major players. There are some minor characters who come across as very real because they are so well written. Much of the drama is set within the Cut. We see their struggles for control and survival both inside and outside of their community. Men have the power, but women are also important members of the Cut family. Who is loyal? Is anyone really trustworthy?

Is there action? Of course. Intermingling of the human world and the spirit world? Yes. Violence? Yep. The biggest question: Who – or what – is the Dead King? Does Charlie Parker find him/it? How does it all end?

One last comment I need to make is that I love the observations and descriptions that Connolly makes along the way. While it may make his book somewhat wordier than it needs to be, I don't think it detracts from the story in any way; in fact, it enhances it. An example is in chapter 81, his description of the hotel room that Louis is staying in. Rather than simply describing it, Connolly describes the colors (I pictured 70s brown tones, harvest golds and avocado greens) where everything matching something but some things don't match anything. The next sentence had me cracking up, as Louis imagines himself ... well, you have to read it, because it's so unexpected and creative and downright funny.

It gets out-and-out serious from there, however. Connolly is not one to shy away from bloodshed, although his Sheriff Henkel makes the boys try.

Now, I'm not a die-hard paranormal fan, but I can handle it in small doses. So maybe at some point I will backtrack and start on some of the dozen books in the middle of the series that I haven't read yet. This one was well worth it.

4 stars.

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## Lyn says

OK reading friends ... Why has no one told me about John Connolly's freaking AMAZING Charlie Parker series of paranormally extraordinary crime fiction????

Reading the 15th in the series, 2016's Time of Torment, my only thought was – where can I find the earlier books? Where are my car keys? What's my Amazon password? I want to read them all!!!

Cool as the other side of the pillow and fun as a barrel full of monkeys, Connolly's prose is thick with hidden meaning and ripe as a red apple presented to a pale companion of vertically challenged subterranean gem engineers. I could hear his Irish, impish wit casting voodoo and mischievous fun on the darkly euphonious pages.

Parker is a private investigator but what sets this apart is the penchant for and reliance on the occult. And I'm not talking about urban fantasy like Jim Butcher or Kevin Hearne, this is darker and more realistic. This is more magical realism than fantasy, but it's not absurdist; Connolly is laying down a devil's brew of bad juju that is just a shadow's breadth beyond believability. There are open references to ghosts and ancient evil and Parker is smack dab in the middle of it.

A convicted felon is released from prison and then disappears. Parker investigates and runs across an ageless community in West Virginia that has kept to itself for generations. The odd community of a few families has literally created a fiefdom through which local law enforcement has not interfered and who do the policing themselves. The locals stay out and leave the residents alone because they've grown up having seen and heard enough to know when to leave well enough alone.

Parker is described by others reviewers as an anti-hero and here he is named "a weapon in the hands of an unseen god ... he walked tangled paths".

Connolly's gifts for characterization and dialogue are spot on and this reads like a thriller but with the occult blended in to make a woven tapestry of COOL COOL COOL.

Thank you, Mr. Connolly; I will most definitely be reading more from you.

\*\*\* A free copy of this book was provided in exchange for an honest review

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