



The Big Reap, Chris F. Holm, Angry Robot, Limited, 2013, 0857663429, 9780857663429, . The Collector Book Three Who Collects the Collectors? Sam Thornton has had many run-ins with his celestial masters, but he's always been sure of his own actions. However, when he's tasked with dispatching the mythical Brethren &dash; a group of former Collectors who have cast off their ties to Hell &dash; is he still working on the side of right? File Under: Urban Fantasy [ Soul Solution | Secret Origins | Flaming Torches | Double Dealing ].

The Wrong Goodbye , Chris F. Holm, 2012, , 384 pages. Meet Sam Thornton, Collector of Souls. Because of his efforts to avert the Apocalypse, Sam Thornton has been given a second chance - provided he can stick to the straight and ....

Gay Slang , Tim Fosberry, Oct 30, 2004, , . .

The Kiss , James Patterson, 2013, Juvenile Fiction, 357 pages. PASSION HAS NEVER BEEN MORE DANGEROUS. Whit and Wisty Allgood, a witch and wizard with extraordinary abilities, have defeated the ruthless dictator who long overshadowed their ....

Forbidden Cargo , Rebecca K. Rowe, May 30, 2006, , 352 pages. It's 2110 and Creid Xerkler, the creator of the Molecular Advantage Machine - a virtual system that facilitates instantaneous access to all of humanity's knowledge and ....

Sam Thornton has had many run-ins with his celestial masters, but he's always been sure of his own actions. However, when he's tasked with dispatching the mythical Brethren &dash; a group of former Collectors who have cast off their ties to Hell &dash; is he still working on the side of right?

Last summer I read Dead Harvest, then a few months later got my hands on an ARC of The Wrong Goodbye. Both made my end of the year lists for all the right reasons. I've been waiting as patiently as possible for The Big Reap to pop up on NetGalley and on Tuesday morning I woke up to no less than 3 (THREE!) people letting me know it was available (sidenote: Do I have friends that know me, or what?).

Sam Thornton made some poor decisions in life, for the best possible reasons. Because of those poor decisions, he's stuck spending his afterlife as a Collector for Hell. He tracks down the people who's souls are owed, working alongside his handler, Lilith (yes, THAT Lilith). The first book deals with a Collection that shouldn't be happening, the second is more of a buddy film road-trip. Both are excellent, but neither are as good as this one.

Speaking of Sam. We feel that he distances himself from his human side: he finds it more and more easy to "wear" a living human, whereas in the first books he sought only corpses (I recall that Sam is a damned soul who can't live by himself, but must have a body). We follow his questioning because he doesn't want to lose his humanity, but we also follow his discoveries about the ease with which

he possesses the living. There is an internal struggle between the facilities that brings him a living body (credit cards that work, relatives who do not believe you're dead and scream when they saw you ...) and his intransigence of the beginning when he only sought bodies not to traumatize people and not to risk getting them killed (which is easily done in his occupation). So we learn a little more about what he thinks and feels, on who he is actually!

As for the other characters, it was a pleasure to meet back some of the protagonists of the previous books - I won't give their name in order not to screw the pleasure of discovering who returns - even if they're easily guess (because ultimately there is few people we really want to see again, right?) We also learn a lot about Lilith and her story, which I really enjoyed because it allows a better understanding of her actions and reactions.

Let's talk about the humor, because one thing is for sure, this book is stuffed of it - as in the previous two books, which makes these über cool books to read. There is a certain ferocity and cynicism in the dialogues that make them as funny as addictive - dialogues that are often followed by action and hordes of hemoglobin! The fact that Sam possesses human gives way to spread very funny quips for those who like black humor (which I love).

Finally, the story itself and the action, because this book is full of action. I enjoyed the flashbacks of the first collection of Sam and his introduction by Lilith as a collector because it allows us to see the progress made by Sam who is doing better and better. The flashbacks are found in some places in the text and are so well written that the fact that they cut the story do not interfere at all, on the contrary, because they provide a better knowledge of Sam and Lilith. Some might believe that the act of collecting souls might be a bit déjà-vu (in the previous two books) and that it is difficult to make it an interesting concept but Holm yet manages to make a breathless story and not at all boring, because each collecting is different. And action ... Action! By reading this book, I thought several times that it would make a great action movie, a kind of blockbuster that would move!

Finally, the weak point of the book (it has to have one right?) Sam is the only collector in charge of collecting the souls of the Brethrens and then I thought, "but why just him. It's not like Hell has shortage of labor, it does not make sense. Ha ha, I have found a flaw in the story? "And well no, the explanation will be given and all will become clear because, dear reader, Chris F. Holm will not let you down, nor leave anything on the sidelines, you'll have the answers to your questions and more. So, no weak spot? Ha! Yes: the book is too short!

Having read all three books, these characters have become part of the past couple years of my life. They're drawn so well, it's as if I was reading about things that really happened, in one sense. And yet, with the battles between Heaven and Hell and the demons and the angels and the soul collecting and the bugs and all, I'm pretty sure it was just made up.

Somebody, somewhere in the Twittersphere posted something about some war between the covers of Dead Harvest and Chuck Wendig's Blackbirds. Curious to see what could possibly compare to Joey HiFi's beautiful rendering of Miriam Black, I rushed over and (like a dutiful little minion) cast my vote against the pulpy goodness of Dead Harvest. But I was intrigued.

So I fired up KindleGadget and clicked away. Read it and wanted more, so I went back and clicked again. "Hey, he's got a collection of shorts on sale." Lather. Rinse. Repeat. Hey, he's got a story in this collection over here." And again. A quick look at today's KindleGadget shows that I have 3 Collector Series, 2 collections of Chris F. Holm shorts and at least 1 anthology containing his stories.

It seems that Sam Thornton has taken one too many trips to Guam and stopped by the duty-free for a couple of bottles of Smart-Ass and a gallon jug of Bad-Ass. There is no hesitation nor any self-deprecation as he proceeds with his assigned task of destroying the Bretheren (a group of former collectors who long-ago escaped indenture and have been hiding in our world ever since).

Sam finally seems to be comfortable in other people's skins and it rings through in the narrative, conjuring cheers of laughter as I read. Old friends and frightening new, yet familiar, enemies round

out the cast and we finally get a good look at Lilith, the sultry handler from hell. Each new reveal feels like a forgotten gift found hidden against the wall under the backside of a Christmas tree.

A Collector story would not be complete without the deft application of flashbacks to shed a little light on the world of The Collector and his journey through it. As in the previous two books, the backstory and exposition do not interfere, but rather complement the narrative. I particularly liked the contrast as we watch Sam's character change. And change again.

Chris Holm was born in Syracuse, New York, the grandson of a cop with a penchant for crime fiction. It was the year of punk rock and Star Wars, two influences that to this day hold more sway over him than perhaps his wife would like. His stories have appeared in a slew of publications, including Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine, Beat to a Pulp, and Thuglit. He has been an Anthony Award nominee, a Derringer Award finalist, and a Spineingler Award winner. He lives on the coast of Maine with his wife and a noisy, noisy cat. When he's not writing, you can find him on his porch, annoying the neighbours with his guitar. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Since the publication of Chris F. Holm's first Collector novel, Dead Harvest, I've been a fan of the series. I absolutely adored books one and two and book three lived up to my expectations and more and had me once again guffawing out loud at Sam's dry wit. For those familiar with Raymond Chandler's The Big Sleep, the title gives some clue of what to expect from the novel as it's a word play off of Chandler's book, but there are some twists Chandler himself wouldn't have thought of. Like the previous book, The Big Reap retains the gritty, noir flavour in its story-telling, but in some places it's actually a little darker in tone than anything that went before.

The plot seems rather linear with Sam charged to go and take out the Brethren, a group of rebel Collectors. But it turns out to be far twistier than that. I liked the notion of the Brethren being the people even Hell can't handle and the various members of this exclusive group we meet are suitably unpleasant. He gets to play a game of follow-the-bread-crumbs with these Brethren, being put on the trail of the next one by Lilith once he defeats his current target. The Brethren are a corrupted and twisted lot, but at the same time they're also tragic figures, driven mad by immortality. In many ways what remained of them was less than human and it seems as if killing them was more a mercy than a punishment.

As with the previous books we learn more about Sam's past in The Big Reap. In this story we witness his own Collection, subsequent awakening as a Collector and his first reap, which is an epic one. We also learn more about Lilith and their complicated friendship. I love that we learn more about Sam and his relationship with Lilith. She was one of the most intriguing characters in the series to me and it was great to learn more about what makes her tick and why she was set to be Sam's handler. Through Lilith we also learn more about the way Heaven and Hell are ordered and why Collectors have to be doomed souls instead of just the Devil's demonic minions. Holm manages to squeeze in more world-building and still give us the sense that there is yet more to be discovered.

At its heart the story told in The Big Reap is about love and what tragic lengths people will go to save the ones they love. It's a tragic story and a timeless one. Through the events of the book the reader discovers that Sam's isn't the only tragic story among the Collectors and it made me curious to learn more about other Collectors. What drove them to make their deal and did they get what they wanted or did it turn out to be as much a pot of fool's gold as Sam's deal was? But there was also a lot of hope in the book especially in the ending, where Sam reclaims some of his humanity, which he's been steadily feeling slip away throughout the narrative.

Of course there are characters beyond Sam and Lilith in the book, but most of them are rather secondary to the novel, except for the Brethren and some old friends who make cameo appearances from the previous books. I loved seeing where Kate had ended up and I positively cheered when Theresa and Gio made their entrance. It was great to see old friends, but I also liked how Holm worked them into the story without making it a 'getting the band back together'-device. They come in, do their thing, and then don't hang around to be Sam's Scooby Gang. They have their

own things to deal with, which I thought was clever, as it affords us the pleasure of seeing some great characters return, without that return infringing on the core of the narrative.

With *The Big Reap* Holm continues his Collector series in style. While the narrative ends at a full stop, I whole-heartedly hope this wasn't the last we've seen of Sam Thornton and friends as I just enjoy his character and the tone of the series so damn much. While *The Big Reap* can be appreciated on its own, if you haven't read any of the books before, I strongly suggest you start at the beginning with *Dead Harvest* as not only will you get far more from *The Big Reap*, you'll also be in for two fantastic reads. Whatever Chris Holm writes next, I'll be there to read it, but I sincerely hope his robotic overlords decide to get him to write more Collector books. And I'm willing to bet once you meet Sam and company, so will you.

This is the third volume in The Collector series after *Dead Harvest* and *The Wrong Goodbye*. If you haven't read either, you may find this review a bit spoilery, in which case stop now. (In that case I'd also recommend reading the other books first: if you read this book you will probably want to read them anyway, and although this part is perfectly good as a standalone, it does give away a fair amount about their plots).

Sam Thornton is The Collector - bound, after agreeing a Faustian bargain, to the service of Hell, specifically, collecting the souls of the damned, under control of his "handler" the mysterious and glamorous being Lilith. In the earlier books, we learned how that happened, and some of the politics of Heaven and Hell, as well as the coven of rogue collectors called The Brethren. In this third volume, which picks up directly from the end of the second, Sam turns his attention to them.

It's noticeably different in concept to the earlier books: the plot is much less twisty, even more gore-filled and violent (with, I think, one of the most disgusting methods of travel to trouble the gentle reader of a horror novel: just wait) and with fewer plots-within-plots, reverses and revelations. But we have the same wise-cracking, hard-boiled Sam and the same paradox of what (despite his crimes) seems to be a basically good man forced to do Hell's bidding and feeling his soul die a little more with every bodily possession, every reaping he carries out.

The book is immense fun, as were the earlier ones, and I don't object to the gore. I've only marked it four stars instead of five because it seemed just a bit... well, plot light I suppose. Perhaps it's best to think of the three books as essentially one story, with this part really the action filled finale? It does feel that way, and I wonder if Holm plans more or if this is really the end? Read more &rsquo;

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