

Jim Butcher's *Storm Front* is a hybrid novel that blends elements of the noir detective genre and the fantasy genre. The setting is present day Chicago.

Harry Dresden is a wizard for hire. He lives modestly and his income is insignificant. Harry has an ironic outlook on life. Certain ironies, though, escape his notice. For instance, because of his wizardly knowledge, he knows that Santa Claus exists. Santa Claus is a very powerful faerie. Harry has no problem believing in magic, yet he cannot believe in God for some unexplained reason. It doesn't seem ironic to Harry that a very powerful faerie (in which he does believe) spends his life either preparing for or celebrating the birthday of the Son of God (in which he doesn't believe). Harry, also, at one point, wears a t-shirt adorned with the logo, "The Body's Been Found: Cancel Easter." It seems odd that someone whose occupation the vast majority of people would consider a vestige from a superstitious and unenlightened age would have so little empathy for another belief system that has also been subjected to substantial criticism in our modern age of rational skepticism.

Harry Dresden has the power to open his third eye and perceive an alternate reality. In the book, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, by Yogananda, Yogananda, also, claims to have the ability to open his third eye and perceive an alternate reality. This ability eventually gives him the power to meet Jesus and have an instructive conversation with him. Yogananda doesn't see any irony in his meeting Jesus and having a detailed conversation with him even though this is a claim that leaders of the various Christian churches rarely if ever make.

There are several similarities between Harry Dresden and Yogananda. The most significant is the role that fate in a disguised form plays in their lives and world

views. One of Yogananda's most cherished claims was that India's holy men were that country's gift to the world. He acknowledged that it was odd that even though India's holy men had superior wisdom, India was still an impoverished and backward nation. He never addressed this question directly, but seemed to imply the situation was caused by fate.

In Harry Dresden's world, *The White Council* is the disguise that fate wears. It makes him a hero. It does this in two ways: it puts him under a severe time constraint to prove his innocence and it cuts him off from potential allies. *The White Council* is an institution without self-awareness just as fate must be. Harry Dresden is innocent, yet *TWC* with all its power does not know this and apparently can't learn this by the use of a soul gaze or some such method. Harry could present evidence that would cause a rational person to question his guilt, but *TWC* is immune to such an approach. *TWC* is going to execute Harry as soon as they pass sentence. With no appeals process for capital cases, there is no chance for *TWC* to realize when it has made a mistake and thus develop self-awareness as an institution.

Fate, in the form of *TWC*, helps to keep certain questions from being asked by the reader about the nature of Harry Dresden's magical powers. In this manner fate lends credibility to the wizardry of Harry Dresden.

During the period of time known as the '60s, Eastern religions and spirituality of all sorts were quite popular. Then for some reason interest in them declined. It may be that all Eastern religions and spirituality have an underlying component of fate or fatalism in them that is not explicitly stated. Over time this component may have subtly caused individuals with a Western mind set to lose interest in Eastern religions.

