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## Grit Lit: So many Land books, so little time

By Myles Knapp  
Times correspondent

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LOOKS LIKE I won't be going to work for at least the next two months. Just discovered that one of Grit Lit's all-time favorite authors, Jon "The Legend" Land, has written 28 novels. TWENTY-EIGHT! And I've only read nine of 'em. That's 19 books I've gotta read right now! And no, you can't have my copies when I'm done. They are going to their place of honor on my bookshelf, next to the other superlative tough-guy novels by John D. MacDonald, Randy Wayne White, Robert Parker, James W. Hall, Andrew Vachss, Stephen Hunter, Ian Fleming, David Morrell.

Sleep was already pretty much back-burnered anyway. What with the NBA playoffs — 40 Games In 40 Nights — which of our country's enemies came up with that? Forty days of nonstop basketball could bring the American economy to its knees faster than a whole new round of subprime loans.

But wait, there's more good news — more up-all-night books, including an outstanding new Jack Reacher by Lee Child and a great new tough guy novel by Andrew Grant. Plus the 19 new-to-me-books by Jon Land.

- "Strong Enough To Die" by Jon Land. (Forge \$24.95, 352 pages, [www.tor-forge.com](http://www.tor-forge.com)) Land's books are so good, his last book, "The Seven Sins: The Tyrant Ascending," is on its way to being a blockbuster. Movie guys from "Terminator" snapped up the rights. Now don't get all mad when you discover that technically, "Strong Enough" is not a tough guy book. That's only because on special occasions, Land's hero can look mighty good in a dress. His new star, Caitlin Strong, is the first female Texas Ranger. So, she's tough. Plenty tough. "You ever shot anybody before today?" he asked her. "Yup." "Kill anybody?" "Yup. Not that I'm proud of it." "You proud of what you did today?" "Nope." "Figured." Dylan sighed, leaning back with arms crossed. "Why?" "Cause I was too late to save your mom."

"Strong Enough" is a wonderful, complex story that touches on several real life issues: torture recovery centers, border control, high-tech computer weapons. In "Strong Enough To Die," Land has created wildly enjoyable thriller.

- "Gone Tomorrow," by Lee Child. (Delacorte Press \$27, 421 pages, <http://www.leechild.com/>) "Gone Tomorrow" is Reacher at his finest. For those of you who don't know, Reacher is the classic lone wolf. He travels light. Sleeps where he can. And when he needs a weapon, he usually just steals it from a crook. In "Gone," Reacher sees a New York subway suicide. And he knows that something is not right. BAM! He's in the middle of a mess that both the feds and al-Qaida want to keep secret. Reacher winds up being hunted by both sides. Which, typical of Reacher, is exactly what he wants.

- "Even" by Andrew Grant. (Minotaur Books, \$24.95, 352 pages, <http://www.andrewgrantbooks.com/>). The first in what Grit Lit hopes will be an ongoing series. David Trevelyan has survived the Byzantine world of British Royal Navy Intelligence. He's worked undercover, on both sides of the line. Sucked into a huge international conspiracy (details of which you will not learn here because we are not going to spoil the excellent plot), Trevelyan is in trouble and suddenly, his superiors forget he exists. Here are the opening lines: "When I saw the body, my first thought was to just keep on walking. This one had nothing to do with me. There was no logical reason to get involved."

"I managed two more steps. If the alleyway had been a little cleaner, there's a chance I might have kept on going. Or if the guy had been left with a little more dignity, the scene might not have bothered me so much. But the way he'd been discarded — dumped like a piece of garbage — I couldn't let it pass."

"Even" starts out great and keeps getting better and better. So here's how I see the future: It's gonna be two-plus months of maximum strength NoDoz and lots of missed work. I'm gonna need some new excuses for calling in sick.

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