



The Boy and the Peddler of Death

Dylan Saccoccio

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For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

At the core of this tale is a love story that spans a lifetime, wrapped in a gritty, epic, real man's fantasy that anyone can sink his or her teeth into. It is a beacon of truth in an enslaved world suffering from moral relativism and willful ignorance in the presence of Knowledge.

For the mature fans of Harry Potter, A Game of Thrones, Lord of the Rings, Elder Scrolls, Legend of Zelda, Guild Wars, World of Warcraft, Fable, and Dragon Age, The Tale of Onora follows the journey of a young orphan after his village is destroyed and he is forced to grow up in a dangerous world. As he navigates through different walks of life, he begins to uncover a conspiracy as to why his village was destroyed. Before he can put the pieces together, his fate is sealed by a terrible war. In the storm of chaos that follows, his actions turn him into a legendary hero. The more renowned he gets, the closer the source of evil is drawn to him. The more he fights for the truth, the more of an outlaw he becomes. In Book One, a boy at the brink of adulthood travels beyond the ruins of an ancient elven city, to The Crown of The World in the far north. It is there where he meets his father for the first time, in search of the answers and reasons his mother refuses to discuss. At the risk of his life, he learns that finding the truth requires knowing The Tale of Onora.

The Boy and the Peddler of Death Details

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From Reader Review The Boy and the Peddler of Death for online ebook

Rowan says

After reading the spectacular comment thread about this book yesterday, I decided I would try reading the sample (the book DID have a lot of 4 and 5 star reviews, and I'm an avid fantasy reader). I thought if it snagged me, I might even purchase the whole book.

I have to say, my single star seems completely justified now.

- 1) The preface is at least partially plagiarized from a speech available on Youtube.
- 2) The graphic depiction of violence (there's a florid description of eyeballs leaving sockets) begins within a page.
- 3) The author's use of language might *generously* be referred to as purple prose. This book could have benefitted from an editor, if the author wished it to be taken seriously. I am still boggling as to WTF, exactly, an "austral beggar" is and why that's supposed to be an insult.

I was going to try to read the whole thing, but I just couldn't subject myself to it.

If grimdark, poorly edited fic is your thing, though, you'll probably love this book.

G. Brown says

This is the best book I have ever read in my life. It has everything I want in a book. It has pages and most of those pages have words on them. Furthermore, the words form into sentences and you can read from one sentence to the next and it eventually forms a sort of story, if you will. My eyes got a little tired because it turns out there is quite a bit of reading involved. The other aspect is the turning of pages. At one point, my hands started to cramp up because I was gripping the book so tightly. I eased up and continued to read. I read and I read. It took a lot out of me and I'm not sure I'll ever read as hard as I read this. I got the impression that the author grew up playing every sport, fishing, sailing, and breaking rules. Also, I wouldn't be surprised to find that Saccoccio has lived in Boston, Providence, New York City, and LA. There is a strong theme in the book. I won't give it away because it has to be read to be believed. I had to burn the clothes I was wearing when I read this--that's how powerful the book is. I fell down the stairs while I was reading it, too, and take that as a sign that I should not read while walking down stairs.

William says

This book is awful. How bad? Well, I got the book free via Kindle Unlimited, but I still think I deserve some sort of refund for the time wasted on it.

People, learn from my folly. Avoid this book.

Ashley Dougherty says

I saw the author's reaction to a low review go viral, and after reading his comments, thought that maybe the book wouldn't be half bad and the reviewer was being too harsh on him.

I got two pages into the preview.

First of all, a foreword OR a prologue. Both is overkill. But considering the author's tendency towards the sesquipedalian, I presume overkill would be a recurring theme.

If a reader needs to take a breath in the middle of reading one of your sentences aloud; then Mr. Saccoccio -- you need to rethink your use of punctuation.

Also, "Nordic" implies a people similar to Northern Germans, "Che'el De'Trezen" sounds like a French prostitute drunkenly slurring.

"By the time I'm finished with your city," the cloaked figure shouted up at them.

"There will be nothing but beggars left of your race!"

Was that supposed to be one sentence? Because it read like two, which doesn't make any sense. Logically, it should have been:

"By the time I'm finished with your city," the cloaked figure shouted up at them, "There will be nothing but beggars left of your race!"

Overall, it read like an angsty high schooler's attempt to be Tolkien. I wouldn't finish reading it, even if the author was a tolerable person.

Lant says

Incoherent mess of outdated tropes. Imagine a science-fiction novel where the protagonist had to equip power armor to fight insect monsters or fly space fighters against an evil empire.

Dylan Saccoccio mixed together some fantasy novels and video games, added a bit of pretentious language, and now sells it as "for fans of...".

No, but just because I am a fan of A doesn't mean I read everything with the lowest common denominator.

Brand Gamblin says

This book makes me feel better about myself as an author. No matter how bad my writing is, I know I'll never be THIS bad.

I first found out about this book when the author turned a single review into a damning train wreck. Once I saw the wreckage, I decided to take his advice and read the sample. I'm so glad I did. It's almost worth buying the thing, just so I can look it up every time I'm feeling bad about myself.

I'm not going to go deep into what's wrong with it. You've seen the same thing everywhere else. It's long-winded, dull, and pretentious. The very fact that he rips off Shakespeare for his own book description gives you an idea of what you're dealing with. . .

I actually think this guy's a troll, who doesn't care about the book, he just wants to have fun inflaming a review thread. It might be that he did one of those computer-generated story builders to get the first sixty thousand words, then threw it out there just so he could enrage people.

Whatever the reason, I'm glad I got out when I could.

Kate says

Wow, just wow. Obviously I tried reading this after the hype on the review page, and I'm sorry, but I didn't like it. Not the story, but the writing. This is a series, right? Cool down. You don't need to expound your worldview right out of the gate. Either write a coherent book of philosophy or fiction--remember the 50 pages or so in Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged, when Galt gives his speech on the radio? 95% of readers skip that entire section, whether or not you believe they're better off for it, because you betray the reader by forcing a philosophical viewpoint when the story simply can't carry it off.

Prashant Verma says

Too few pages, very loquacious and pretentious, overused cliches and not worth the time or money.

This piece of writing is a crude mixture of overused tropes, cliches, worn out one dimensional characters, and a plot that is as predictable as death and taxes. The author tries too hard to appeal to fans of fantasy movies and games by employing every cliché from the usual repertoire of said movies and books in a very child-like fashion. But in the end too much words and pretentious writing messes up any structure, and the limited pages numbers prevent any interesting plot development. But with the kind of writing the author presents, increasing the number of pages would only cause one to drop the book.

Phyber says

After just having finished the book, I really have to say that this was not what I expected.

I feel like this is nothing more than the author trying to sell his philosophical ideas by using a fantasy world as a wrapper. This is not what I expected from a book labeled as High Fantasy.

The character development to me felt shallow. I never really felt attached to any one character. Everything was presented as a long string of historical events that gets washed down with a heavy swig of the authors personal socioeconomic views. Having said that, I have no issue when authors use characters to project their own ideas and fancies. I do have issues when authors create one dimensional characters that ONLY do that.

The book just feels a little forced. There are also times when I really questioned the authors commitment to making sure everything makes sense. Like the line "Lugh's eyes burned with electromagnetism." Huh? Electromagnetism is the STUDY of electric and magnetic field interaction. Is Lugh a physicist obsessed with his work?

Overall I give it 2.5 stars (leaning more to 2).

EDIT: Everyone please read the comments from the author and myself. You get a real look into the egocentric mind of the author. PS, if you didn't pick up on the "Nazi ban on Jews from the ownership of arms" in the book, you aren't alone. I didn't either.

Edit 2: It seems the author deleted his replies. I will leave my responses up for historical purposes.

Edit 3: Here is a link to a screenshot of what the author's replies were. Thank Google Cached Pages for that.

Deborah Markus says

No one ever starts a fight.

Whether it's a street brawl or a war, both sides always insist they're defending against an aggressor who (figuratively or literally) threw the first punch.

Considering that no one in the world ever plays anything but reluctant defense, you'd think this planet would be a heck of a lot more peaceful than it currently is. But as you've no doubt noticed, when we're not ducking and covering on an actual battlefield, we're engaging in heated wars of words on the home front.

Question: What does that have to do with a book review?

Answer: Everything, if it's this particular book.

Even if I wanted to write a neutral review of this book, it would be impossible. If I say anything the least bit critical, the author and his defenders will see me as one more oppressor who wants to keep down independent writers. If I praise it, those who are critical of both his behavior and his writing skills will see me as a shill or an idiot, or both.

If I don't say a thing and give it three stars, his supporters will sneer at me for not understanding the amazing five-starness of it all. His detractors will reread the code attached to the star-rating system here, look at me incredulously, and say, "You *liked* that? What the hell is wrong with you?"

For the record: this book is very badly written, and I did not like it at all. I read the whole damned thing, and I can back it up with supporting quotes when I tell you that this author got everything wrong. On the technical front, his spelling, grammar, and punctuation are atrocious. So far as the story goes, the characters are stick figures. The dialogue is hard to understand. The plot is impossible to find. And if you got rid of half of the adjectives and adverbs, you'd still have a book in which every object and action is smothering under a life-threatening layer of modifiers.

What this writing reminded me of more than anything was a wonderful scene in Muriel Spark's novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, in which two ten-year-old girls are writing a novel together. Here: try to figure out which of the following passages was written by a man who believes his writing is absolutely perfect, and

which was written by an award-winning novelist pretending to be a ten-year-old.

"Stand back from the door, I say!"

"Never!" said Sandy, placing her young lithe body squarely in front of the latch and her arm through the bolt. Her large eyes flashed with an azure light of appeal.

The man's expression flashed a brief glimpse into the unadulterated darkness of his soul. "Do not seek the sanctuary of evil, for I have tread in the heart of it."

Tough call.

But the fact remains: bad as it is, this book is just one more poorly written self-published novel on a site that's host to hundreds of them.

So why is it under attack?

Because it is. There's no other way of putting it. There's a battle going on, and this book's in the center of it.

Dylan Saccoccio would say that he was the wronged party. Someone wrote a negative review of his book, and he was just defending his work.

Others would insist that his inflammatory language in response to that review was what started this skirmish, and they couldn't just sit back and watch him verbally attack a young woman who was bewildered by his response to her review and startlingly civil in the face of extreme provocation. (Not that I'm biased or anything.)

Obviously I side with the latter group, but I would go a step farther and say that the reason this is an all-out war is because this author is just one more soldier in – oh, why not borrow some purple prose from the author in question and call this a battle for the soul of Goodreads.

To be a little less flowery, there's an ongoing war of words about what Goodreads is and what it ought to be. And while this particular skirmish seems surprisingly heated to outsiders (I only learned about it when a friend showed me a post on PZ Myers' Pharyngula blog), it's depressingly business-as-usual for those of us who spend a lot of time here.

There are people who consider Goodreads a place to talk about books and say what we like and don't like about them. These people consider reviews a matter of personal expression and a reflection of personal taste.

Then there are people who believe that free speech doesn't mean freedom to be unkind to total strangers who after all are just trying to tell a story and maybe make a buck or two.

What's messy about this war is that it isn't as simple as writers vs. readers. There are plenty of writers, both conventionally and independently published, who are fiercely protective of a reader's right to gripe about books she doesn't like. And there are plenty of non-writer readers who truly believe that if you can't say something nice, you shouldn't say anything at all.

In a world that isn't exactly staggering under a surfeit of niceness, that last bit is the kind of idea that can be hard to argue with. To apply it to this situation: okay, this book is bad. So what? Why talk about it? Hate a book all you want in the privacy of your own home, but why hurt a writer's feelings?

Who cares if someone who isn't basically competent insists he's master of a craft and wants to be paid for his work?

Well, when you put it *that* way...

And that's the point a lot of us are trying to make. We put it that way because **there isn't any other way to put it.**

The fact is, no one's forcing a writer to write. It's easier on any given day *not* to write than to write. (Trust me. I'm speaking from experience here.)

And no one *at all* is forcing a writer to **publish** what he's written. Again, that's a task it's much easier not to do. No writer has ever rolled over one morning, rubbed the sleep out of her eyes, stared in bewilderment at the neatly-bound volume on her pillow (complete with cover illustration), and screamed, "Holy crap, I wrote a BOOK! It just, like, HAPPENED!" She has also never run to her computer and seen to her shock and dismay that this effortless dream-volume is now available for sale on multiple sites on the Internet.

"But I didn't even DO anything!" this writer has never, ever shouted.

Writers have been known to say that our books are our babies. (Heck, Jane Austen said it, so it *must* be true.)

If that's the case, some writers are nightmare parents who want all the fun stuff that goes along with having a baby – first smile, first step, first birthday cake – but steadfastly refuse to change diapers.

Wanting all the good things that can come along with being a writer (money, fame, fan mail) while refusing to accept the negatives (deadlines, bad reviews, hate mail) is delusional.

It also isn't fair to the rest of us.

Let's take a closer look at the argument for niceness. A writer is a person. Why hurt his feelings by publicly saying bad things about his writing?

Read the sample pages of his work. Those should tell you if you'll like the book or not. If you don't like what you see, don't read the rest of the book. And if you don't read the book, of course you have no reason to post a review.

Simple. Everybody's happy.

Everyone except the people who would like the rating system here to actually mean something.

In a post I read recently, a writer compared posting free-to-read fan fiction to baking cookies and sharing them with your coworkers. What if someone did that every day, and all she asked in return was a little feedback so she could feel appreciated and learn to be a better baker? Is that so much to ask when someone's offering you free yummys?

It was an interesting analogy, and it led to a lively debate.

I bring this up because a lot of people – specifically, the people who think it's unkind to give a low rating and a negative review to *any* book – seem to regard all books as baked goods.

If you visited your elderly great-aunt and she offered you her home-baked cookies, maybe you'd accept out of politeness, even if you didn't really want one. Even if they weren't very good, you wouldn't say anything mean about them. She worked hard to make you something she hoped you'd like. You'd have to be some kind of jerk to say, "Ye gods, woman – these are hard as rocks and not nearly as sweet. Can I bring some

home in case I need something to throw at burglars?"

Saccoccio urged readers not to read his book if they didn't think they'd enjoy it. That way, only the people who enjoyed it would review it. And his GR rating would be heartwarmingly high.

But the reason he wanted a high rating was so (as he said himself) he could sell lots of copies of his book. A negative review could destroy his dreams of becoming a successful writer.

And that's where the cookie crumbles.

If an author wants to be treated with all the kindness and consideration you'd give a cookie-wielding great-aunt, and that author *also* wants to succeed as a professional in a field that's supposedly a meritocracy – well, that author is guilty of what used to be called wanting to eat his cake and have it too.

That's what's wrong with the argument I've seen made by readers and writers alike that it's one thing to trash-talk writers who have already made it big. Stephen King isn't going to cry his eyes out if I say I couldn't stand *It*. But it's unkind and unfair to air the flaws of a writer who's just starting out.

There are two things that are very, very wrong with that argument.

First of all, it's factually incorrect. A study was done on the connection between reviews and book sales. Good reviews boosted sales, of course. But so did bad ones.

EXCEPT bad reviews of established writers.

That's right. Poor reviews – even scathing ones – of unknown writers gave a bump to sales. But they did damage to authors who already had a reputation to hurt.

Here's a link, if you want to see for yourself:

<https://hbr.org/2012/03/bad-reviews-c...>

The other thing wrong with the "pick on someone your own size" argument is what it says to readers. Specifically, it says that a high rating on GR is meaningless when it comes to independently published or small-press fiction, so readers should stick with the conventionally published books from the big houses – the ones people are free to trash-talk if they deserve it.

I think I can safely say that no indie-writer wants to go there.

Who'da thunk that letting people tell the truth about your book – even if the truth hurts – isn't just good manners. It's also good for business.

I really hope that through some miracle, Dylan Saccoccio has a change of heart and decides he has something to learn from the reviewers who took the time to say what they thought of his book. Not just the ones who said things he wanted to hear and already believed, but the ones who pointed out that his story is impossible to follow, his prose needs cleaning up, and his dialogue doesn't resemble how people actually talk (even in high fantasy).

He probably won't, but I can dream.

April says

I can't bring myself to even say this book is okay(2 stars). I really didn't like it at all. I got it through kindle unlimited so thankfully all I wasted was time. Incoming giant review. There was just so much I hated I have to get it all out there.

Let's start with the part labeled "Foreword". It's a bunch of wishy washy garbage like "To you, that you may awaken to understand that the whole universe is a dance of energy, and that energy is God, and that energy is you." And ends with "So this is for you, my fellow creators, my fellow gods, and my fellow selves, that coincidence may never disguise itself with the mask of fate and torment you, that every moment be meaningful, and that no experience be lost."

That's fine. I'll ignore it and continue.

So first we are introduced to some bad guy. He murders a whole town, but the most notable part is when he is faced with a mother and her children and says "I long for your souls to haunt me," he called out to them. "That I may best you over and over again for all of time!". Very impressive...besting some children. You the man. I couldn't tell if the reader was supposed to find this comical or horrific. I just shook my head, sighed, and forced myself onwards.

Without further plot spoilers here are some annoyances I had with this "book"(it's really short. It took less than 2 hours to finish so I don't know if I can even call it a book. It's supposed to be for adults but this is shorter than a YP novel). There are quotes but I assure you, nothing is spoiled. It's hard to spoil this anyway since there wasn't much of an interesting plot.

1. I don't like a third person narrative that jumps between the thoughts of the characters in the scene. I find it comes off as sloppy. It's much cleaner to choose one character, and make it their POV, but still maintain third person.

2.Lines like "Just because he was a champion of freedom, of truth, and integrity, it did not mean that he wasn't capable of being flawlessly evil." made me cringe. Cheesy while clearly trying to sound like something more. "Every night the sun watched itself die in the mirror of Lake Aryalus." It's called a sun set. As a planet moves around a sun, the sun goes across the sky and disappears when that side of the planet isn't facing it any longer. This is called a day and night cycle. Cut the dramatics. "Silence stole all sound yet again.". Silence is the literal absence of sound. Stop trying to sound fancy.

3.Boring. So very boring. Page after page of flowery language with a plot I couldn't find interesting. Pages of history, SHOW DON'T TELL! I don't want to read a friken fake history book. And descriptions of geographical locations that no character was heading to. When a book this short has this much useless filler it becomes a lot more noticeable.

4.Magic system is like a bad version of Name of the Wind magic. You need to know the true name of the thing you are controlling...like a BOTTLE OF BRANDY.

5.It seems I'm supposed to be like "DOWN WITH THIS GOVERNMENT!" I can't get behind finding the government evil for suppressing magic when it is so damn dangerous. You can kill someone by just saying some words; no shit the government doesn't want everyone having that power. And everyone on the planet can do it, some are just better than others? That's super unsettling.

6.(view spoiler)

7.(view spoiler)

8.If you don't have a father you become "wicked". Keep that in mind all your fatherless people! You can't be trusted if you don't have a daddy!

9.I love video games. Video game terms are jarring in books. Like a spell that granted a 2/3rd chance to dodge or "Adults could not equip them"(this one may be used elsewhere but I've never heard it outside video games. Usually you wear armor, not equip it in real life). There is no place for that language in a book unless the book is about being in a video game a la Ready Player One.

10.Another complaint about the political crap in this. So many strange parts that are clearly about ANARCHY RULES. Like his rant about the evil of banks. I didn't know this book was a comedy, because it sure had me laughing!! "The entire western world is dependent upon them. They play a dangerous game of musical chairs. The only difference is that those left without a chair become slaves." Damn my enslavement to banks! I'm an accountant too! I must be EVIIILL. I even believe in taxes :O! "A real man recognizes when the power structure of his country is merely one group of people suppressing the progress of others. They sprinkle this faelen dust of lies upon you, or patriotism, or whatever other illusion is necessary to get you to sacrifice what's good and best for yourself to their agenda. But ultimately the illusion empowers only the ones who create it. A real man becomes aware when a parasitical hex has been cast upon him, and that all power is derived off that hex." I read this as "Here is my political agenda and let me hit you over the head with it. DOWN WITH THE GOVERNMENT.". YAWN.

11.Hate for gun control laws as seen here: "Banning weapons under the guise of security was a tyrannical ploy, nothing else. There was no such thing as weapons control. There was only people control. Logic dictates that inanimate objects do not do anything on their own, much less kill people. It is an irrefutable law of nature." I'm not from America so gun control Is A OKAY by me. This part just made me shake my head and laugh. "that having an unarmed population would lead to a mountain of atrocities." I better let Canada and Europe know we are living in a tyranny! Also our crime rates are a lie and probably much higher.

This is absolutely not like the actual GOOD books that are listed in the description. It's just another unmemorable fantasy novel that had way too much that bothered me for me to actually enjoy it. I'm going to give a big "NO THANK YOU" to the next in the series. I don't need more of this crap political agenda being pushed on me. It's just propaganda.

I think this review is actually longer than the book.

Mike Hunt says

Since my first review sadly got deleted, I have to add another. I got this for free via Kindle Unlimited and managed to read it all the way through. It took me longer than a book this size should have taken because it is so wordy and written so poorly that you start to mentally drift away from the book and realize you sort of just skimmed the last three paragraphs - so you go back and read them, only to find it didn't really matter anyway. I know my time hasn't been well-spent when I feel like I've overpaid for a free book.

The summary says it's like Game of Thrones; perhaps the author meant that Game of Thrones is also a collection of ink and pages bound together in sequence, but the similarities end there. Speaking of ink, I can only assume the author was attempting to save on print costs with how long some of the sentences run. To say that the sentences were tortured is akin to dismissing a fictional Robot Hitler's Fourth Reich as "problematic."

The book is heavy-handed with the author's philosophy on economic issues, which would be fine if the author had opinions worth noting on the topic. I would rather read John Galt's speech than this book, because at least it's genre-defining and a seminal work. The author's take on socioeconomic issues is just as subtle, just as wordy, twice as skippable, and freely accessible without Kindle Unlimited at your local chapter of the Young Communists' League.

Nickel Penny says

This is a terribly written book whose prose is the purplest I've ever seen. The style of writing is terrible and takes forever to wade through. It is not remotely in the same vein as Game of Thrones or Harry Potter beyond being labeled as fantasy. If you're expecting any sort of high fantasy epic adventuring, you'll be sorely disappointed. I do not understand why it is compared to those works. It has none of the depth, characterization or story development that mark a good story. It's merely the author's personal pseudo-spiritual philosophy presented in a transparent fantasy wrapper. Saccoccio's rambling incoherence strongly reminds me of the paranoid conspiracy writings of David Icke. If you enjoy anything written by Icke, you'll probably enjoy Saccoccio. That said...

This book is made even worse by the author's attitude toward his customers. Any author who bullies, attacks and harasses people, then creates multiple accounts to defend those actions, and otherwise displays contemptible behavior, is not one I want to support and can not in good conscience recommend.

Jacksback says

Really, really awful. How anyone could think this drivel was worth wasting their time on is beyond me. Like most positive reviews for this book, I am an acquaintance of the author's, got it as a gift, and really tried to like it. Alas, unlike the others, I did not find it within me to lie for a friend. Dylan, if you're reading this, for everyone's good, find a form of employment that requires little literacy, and no creativity at all. And for God's sake stop boring everyone to death with your half-baked theories.

Cait S says

This was just...so unnecessarily wordy and pretentious. I just did not enjoy it at all. Which makes me sad because the summary says it's for fans of Harry Potter, Game of Thrones, and World of Warcraft. Aka three of my favorite things. So how did I loathe this so entirely from page one? I don't know.
