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The Black Tattoo



Synopsis

Jack's best friend, Charlie, is in serious trouble, possessed by an ancient demon called the Scourge who plans to use Charlie to bring about its evil ends; which, unfortunately, involve the destruction of the entire universe. Now Jack and the butt-kicking, sword-wielding Esme must contend with floating sharks, intelligent jelly, oversized centipedes, gladiator pits, and vomiting bats, all for the sake of saving Charlie from the Scourge. And, hopefully, saving the universe from total and utter annihilation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I really am scratching my head. The premise of the book sounded fascinating - The Scourge, an evil entity is released to awaken a dragon in Hell to destroy the universe. I started reading and must say that the book captured you and kept you reading. But do the characters make you like them? Do you want to read its sequel? This is one dark book - most of the action takes place in Hell. Charlie has been duped by the Scourge into thinking he will rule Hell, and goes with him into the realm, Jack, his best mate, follows to rescue him, and then Esme, the last member of an ancient organization to imprison the Scourge, follows them to contain the Scourge and place him back in his prison. I didn't like the varied demons. I didn't like that God joined Hell because he was bored with things. I didn't like the French secret group how were supposed to 'save' Esme. The trio of Esme, Jack and Charlie have the potential to create an interesting series, but I do not think I will be reading them. This is not Hogwarts. This is not Harry, Ron and Hermione. I do not see any comparisons

other than there are 3 young people. As a fan of sci-fi, thrillers, I can tell you this is one heck of a book. (sorry I had to do that) But it did not click for me. Well written, good cover and poster. You may really like the book - it has potential and you may like this struggle between light and dark. But I did not, and cannot see a young person reading this without being disturbed by the beings and the action in Hell. Why am I giving the book 5 stars? It is an excellent read, and many will like it, but I am honest in telling you this was not my kind of book.

It took me weeks to read this book
Much longer than it should
It's long and sometimes rambles,
thought
It's basically quite good
For several thousand years or more
Entrapped beneath a tree
There lies the evil demon Scourge
Who's yearning to get free
He snares an unsuspecting host
To help with his escape
The Black Tattoo's his trademark
And it's always changing shape
A battle with the Brotherhood
Soon puts them to the test
Can Esme and the loyal Jack
Derail the Scourge's quest?
A tale of evil and of good
With other stuff as well
A floating shark, a bat and
Gladiators down in hell
The dialogue is sometimes weak
The plot may be confusing
But though this novel is quite dark
You'll find some parts amusing
For readers who are 9 and up
And know what they're about
It isn't Harry Potter
But it's well worth checking out
Amanda Richards, March 8, 2007

I have not personally read *The Black Tattoo*, however I purchased this for my son as a Christmas present. He literally wore out his paperback copy of the book from reading it so many times and from loaning it to his friends. He was absolutely thrilled to receive the Hardcover book and even happier when he realized that the cover was also a poster. The condition was as described. I am very happy with my purchase.

First off, I'd like to break down my rating: I give the book 4 stars for its creative concept, but only 2 stars for execution, which averages out to that 3 stars. Okay, I feel better now. From what I can gather, despite the book's unusual plot, this is basically a coming-of-age book, concerning teenage growing pains (mental and physical) and the point at which one learns to take responsibility for one's choices. The story essentially centers around two friends, Jack and Charlie, who seem to be your pretty average 14-year-old boys. Charlie's the cool one, the slightly taller, slightly more sophisticated boy whom slightly awkward, slightly clueless Jack would secretly like to be. But Charlie's life isn't all it's cracked up to be. His father's skipped out on the family, to shack up with his younger girlfriend, which leaves Charlie and his mom wondering what happened. Which makes Charlie angry. And angry is good for the Scourge, a demon whose only goal is the utter destruction

of everything. And this is where things start to get...whimsical. See, for the past thousand or so years, the Scourge, defeated and imprisoned by a powerful curse, has been watched over by the Brotherhood, one of those super-cool, super-secret societies. (They're not totally cool, though, because the Brotherhood lacks the dramatic costumes and complicated secret handshakes. Shame on them, the slackers.) Now we come to the tricky part. One of the Brotherhood defects the order, frees the Scourge and lets himself be possessed by the demon...to win the affections of a girl, naturally. The treachery is discovered, a war is fought, and the Scourge is once again defeated, or so the Brotherhood believes. Truth is, the Scourge is still free and waiting for the perfect vessel to take over, a nicely gullible, angry, malleable vessel, so that the Scourge can put his plan in action. Little sullen Charlie is the perfect fit. Eventually, through some twists and turns, the story ends up in Hell- no, I don't mean metaphorically. The characters and storyline move down into Hell, where we encounter some strange and scary demons, the Emperor of Hell, and some rather cute, talking bat-like creatures on the road to the Scourge's plan of utter destruction. Of everything. I'm talking the world, the universe, every single plane of existence from here to eternity. Now, if I may, I'd like to go off on a side rail for a moment and discuss this "utter destruction" plan. Why do all these super-villains always want to destroy everything? What's the point of gathering enough power to frighten and terrify entire populations, to take over and gloat from the highest mountain top if there's no one around to gloat over? Hell, you, the powerful villain who's accomplished this destruction, wouldn't be around to gloat if you manage to send the entire universe up in smoke. Again, I ask, what's the point? If we're talking about some clinically depressed villain, who could only manage to make himself feel better by destroying everything around him (and admit it, we've run into a few of those), he wouldn't get that far--he'd lack the strength of will to make it to uber-villain status. After the first disappointing reaction to his cool, emo-badness, he would've swallowed some Drano, slit his wrists and jumped off the nearest cliff...not without first writing some really bad poetry about his misunderstood emo-villain nature. So we now, thankfully, come to the point of my rant: Where's the fun in destroying everything? Wouldn't it be better to destroy a little bit--a couple of countries, a planet or two, heck, I'd even support destroying a galaxy if it'd get your point across. Just enough to prove your badness so that you can then sit back on your massive throne of bloody skulls and enjoy the terror of the masses as they come, scraping and bowing and jibbering in fear, before you. Just a thought. (What, me? Pictured myself on said bony throne, laughing maniacally at the petrified expressions on the faces of the peons below me? No, never. Honest.) To get back to the book, eventually the story rises to the climactic 'good vs. evil' showdown, sacrifices are made, puppy love blooms, lives are lost, and--spoiler alert--good triumphs all. While there's nothing glaringly wrong

about the book, there are some points about it which make for a occasionally tedious read. For instance, a third or so into the book, a second secret society, the Sons of the Scorpion Flail, is introduced, for no apparent reason other than to give the protagonists a few more obstacles to overcome on their way to hell. Never mind the convolutions and contortions the story occasionally goes through as well, again with no other purpose, it seems, other than to drag the story out. I think had the story been written a bit tighter, it would've truly been a rip-roaring tale. My opinion only, in case you were confused about that.

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