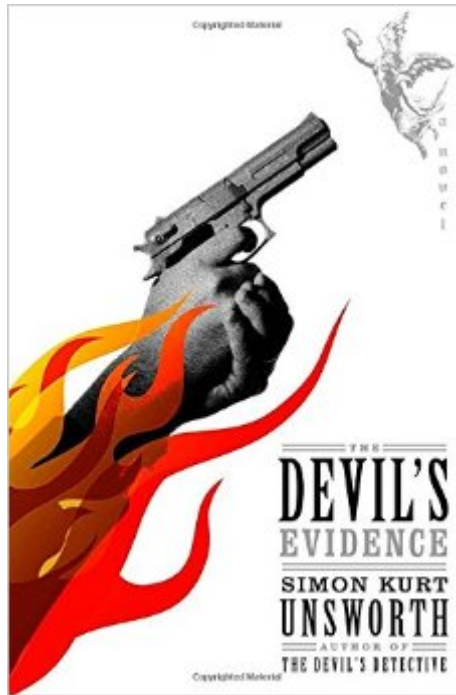


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The Devil's Evidence: A Novel



Synopsis

Murder in the land of God sends the Devil's detective to Heaven. With the character of Fool, Simon Kurt Unsworth has crafted a hero among the damned. "HUGH HOWEY, NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF WOOL Thomas Fool "the resilient investigator doomed to catalog Hell's atrocities in Simon Kurt Unsworth's stunning debut, The Devil's Detective "is back. The man with no memory of who he was or what led to his damnation is now in command of the Information Office of Hell. This power has only inspired new, deadly enemies like Mr. Tap, the cunning leader of a shadowy organization known as the Evidence. Fool alone has survived the wrath of both demon and angel, and now he faces his most thrilling and complex challenge. Troubling and deadly fires are spreading throughout Hell, and it is Fool's job to sift the ashes and find their source. The clues he finds are mysterious and unsettling, implying something different from the usual litany of cruelty he sees. But one fact is the most disconcerting: the fires have left his masters at the Bureaucracy terrified. In the midst of the chaos, Fool is sent to accompany a political delegation to Heaven. It is unprecedented for a condemned human to enter the land of the elevated, but Fool is protected as one of Hell's own. When his arrival coincides with the discovery of an impossible murder, he faces a catastrophic paradox. Violence, corruption, and fear are Hell's currency; how does one investigate evil where those concepts cannot exist? Impossible or not, the killings are real, and the evidence leads Fool deep into the contradictions of a visionary landscape, where danger can present itself in any form, and to the heart of a conspiracy with the power to upset the balance of Heaven and Hell. The Devil's Evidence is an exotic crime thriller as exhilarating as anything in recent fiction. It is a provocative novel of horror, filled with sharp twists and propulsive action that will keep you riveted through the final page.

Book Information

Hardcover: 400 pages

Publisher: Doubleday (July 5, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385539363

ISBN-13: 978-0385539364

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1.3 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars See all reviews (16 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #597,706 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #224 in Books > Literature & Fiction > British & Irish > Horror #2349 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > Private Investigators #2873 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > Supernatural

Customer Reviews

Only after starting this book, did I realize that this is the second book in the Thomas Fool series & its predecessor *The Devil's Detective* was released last year. I soldiered on hoping that this book wouldn't punish me for reading the books out of order & to my pleasant surprise, it didn't. The story begins with our protagonist Thomas Fool who is a resident of hell and is damned to purgatory for sins he cannot recall. This is a key factor concerning all residents of hell. Fool also is a detective of sorts who goes through his existence trying to resolve "crimes". In hell though, the idea of a crime is quite tricky and a hard thing to define. In this book, Thomas is trying to decipher a series of murders in hell and then gets pulled in to heaven wherein a similar set of murders are also occurring. This is where things gets absolutely interesting and to talk more about the plot will veer into spoiler territory. What I thoroughly enjoyed about the book was the author's characterization. Thomas Fool is a wonderful character, tortured in his existence, but yet like Prometheus trying to do what he feels is the right thing to do. In a place like hell, that's also a very extraordinary thing to do. We are also introduced to a wide cast of characters who while grey & black, are intriguing to read about. The author also neatly switches his plot focus from mystery to horror very easily and this subtle merging of genres is what makes this book special. I loved the bleak atmosphere and there are some truly horrific things that occur but make sense within the plot confines of the story. The only thing I can say which wasn't entirely to my enjoyment was the book's pace which lagged in quite a few sections due to plot reasons as well the author's focus in world-building. Once I finished this book, I immediately went and bought a copy of the first book as I can't wait to read more about Thomas Fool. My kudos to Simon K. Unsworth, I think he's an author to watch out for & I'll be devouring his future books as quickly as I get my hands on them.

Whether it be in the eternal fires of hell or in the eternal joys of Heaven, Thomas Fool, Information Man, conducts his investigation and nothing, be it angel or demon better get in his way. I loved the creativity of this book! Building upon the hell he established so well in *The Devil's Detective*, this time Simon Kurt Unsworth turns his imagination to building a heaven. Turns out, his heaven is just as warped as his hell; maybe even more so. There are angels, the Malakim, (the messengers of heaven) and the Estedea, ("Pray their sadness never reaches you.") Lastly, there's Mayall, (not of

the Bluesbreakers variety), heaven's own version of a clown. Or is he more than that? While conducting his investigation of several mysterious fires in hell, (I know, mysterious fires in hell? It sounds crazy, but I'm telling you, it works), Thomas is called for and sent to heaven to investigate....something. The angels don't want him there, the demons and the Evidence back in hell don't want him there, but someone does. Why? You'll have to read this to find out. I believe that it would be difficult to pick up this book and understand everything that's going on without having read *The Devil's Detective* first. There are terms and people, (the Man of Plants and Flowers, for instance), that are introduced in the first book and without any knowledge of them, I think much of the impact of this story would be diluted. I enjoy the way Unsworth writes. For instance, as Thomas leaves Heaven to return to hell: "His last view of Heaven was of a motionless rank of beautiful, somber angels surrounded by falling snow and, behind them, the chapel of all faiths standing alone and mute in the storm light." I love that quote because I can picture it perfectly in my mind. I did have an issue with the self-deprecating Thomas Fool beating up on himself every 5 minutes. (Stupid little Fool! Know nothing Fool!) It became irritating but after about halfway, it occurred less often. With fascinating world building, highly imaginative and creative ideas, it's difficult for me to find any other faults with this book. I've never read anything like these Fool books before. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that I will meet Thomas Fool once again. If you liked the first book I HIGHLY recommend you pick up *The Devil's Evidence*. *Thanks to Edelweiss and the publisher for providing an e-ARC of this book in exchange for my honest review. This is it.*

The frame from which I approached this read was allegorical. Since our banks are too big to fail or jail, it's not too much of a stretch to believe in a hell on earth. Or, for that matter, the heaven that billions can buy. The author is superb at building this other world that juxtaposes our own through a Fool's eye, the detective, Thomas Fool, back from novel one and recently appointed to Commander of the Information Office. He's got fresh orders from the Bureaucracy of Hell to investigate? Yes, you guessed it/Why are fires being purposely set in Hell?[not kosher so-to-speak - sanctioned. It things were not already impossible enough for Fool, his crew of humans & demons not really helping[except Marianne; a new, young, and freshly harvested from Limbo]; there's a new Office of Evidence with a demon called Tap, who wants Fool gone - pronto. Soon Fool's with a delegation that's going to Heaven, the Not-Nearly-As-Bad-Place-Up-Yonder. There's been a murder they may be connected to what's happening in Hell. And soon other murders are piling up in Heaven with the Fires Raging in Hell as well. Fools in deep and the reader gets some heavy duty struggles going on within the Fool himself; as he struggles from Rebellion to Collusion, from one perspective plain of

consciousness to another. The reader then moves with Fool through his struggles in the complexities, similarities, and contrasts between Heaven Earth & Hell. And then there's Darkness that lives within himself. There's Hell to pay if Fool can't come up with the goods. A delicious & horrific cocktail for those who like their genres mixed with slight emphasis on the dark & violent side.

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