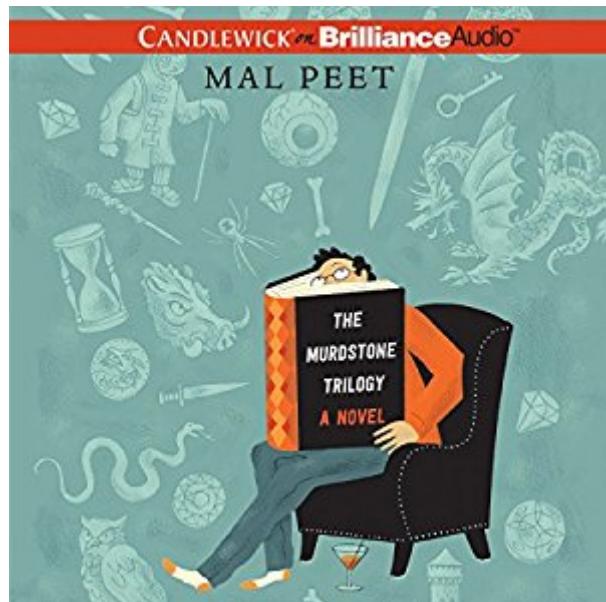


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The Murdstone Trilogy: A Novel



Synopsis

How hard can it be to write a fantasy trilogy? From Carnegie Medalist Mal Peet comes an outrageously funny black comedy about an impoverished literary writer who makes a pact with the devil. Award-winning YA author Philip Murdstone is in trouble. His star has waned. The world is leaving him behind. His agent, the ruthless Minerva Cinch, convinces him that his only hope is to write a sword-and-sorcery blockbuster. Unfortunately, Philip - allergic to the faintest trace of Tolkien - is utterly unsuited to the task. In a dark hour, a dwarfish stranger comes to his rescue. But the deal he makes with Pocket Wellfair turns out to have Faustian consequences. The Murdstone Trilogy is a richly dark comedy described by one UK reviewer as "totally insane in the best way possible."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mal Peet's THE MURDSTONE TRILOGY has been compared to Goldman's THE PRINCESS BRIDE - both are snarky send-ups to the fantasy genre. But while BRIDE is charming in its eccentricities and delightfully funny, MURDSTONE is dark, disturbing, and creepily demented. Peet's novel is more Bentley Little than it is William Goldman. At the start, MURDSTONE is a scathing satire of the twenty-first century publishing industry. Philip Murdstone is a successful YA author of "sensitive" stories, with five awards under his belt. But as his sexy agent Minerva Cinch (totally a Roald Dahl name!) tells him, old-school writers like Murdstone are out of synch with the modern publishing world, which now expects authors to blog and tweet and update their Facebook pages and their "wretched narcissistic websites." As Minerva tells Murdstone, "Gone are the days

when you simply write a jolly good book and wait for the queues to form. Readers need to be friended, darling. They need to be subscribers. They need to be followers. You can't just sit in splendid isolation." And what readers want most, she says, are fantasy trilogies (or "phantasy," as she explains it). So poor Murdstone is instructed to begin an epic trilogy along the lines of "Lord of the Rings," complete with dark sorcerers, elves, dragons, and plenty of "magick." Unfortunately, the only way Murdstone can write such a book is to make an unsavory deal with an elf-like creature called Pocket Wellfair, an unpleasant fellow who agrees to provide Murdstone with a narrative in exchange for something he calls the "Amulet of Eneydos." What happens after that is a twisted tale of dark sorcery gone mad.

Show of hands from the writers out there. Would you make a pact with the devil, or someone creepily like-but-not-exactly-the-devil to write a best seller? Or even just to sell your book? I suspect a number are timidly raising hands. That's what Philip Murdstone does. Kind of. You see, he was once a successful YA author of thoughtful sensitive books about boys who are, to quote Minerva Cinch, his agent, "inadequate." Philip made enough money writing what Minerva calls the "Sensitive Dippy Boy genre" that he was able to buy a rustic cottage in rustic Devon and pretty much hide from civilization. Only now the books aren't selling, and Minerva can't get even a nibble on his latest work. Philip needs a hit. Soon. And Minerva has a plan. Philip needs to write a fantasy. High fantasy. Spelled with a p-h. With magial swords and maps and wizards and deep meaning that no one understands. Philip panicks, as would any writer whose genre is definitely not fantasy (or phantasy). Minerva has a formula which she maps out for him, and sends Philip back to write some high phantasy. After getting drunk, Philip embarks on research. Lots and lots of research. It helps him not a whit. Until one night, after over-indulging on a new artisinal beer called Dark Entropy, he goes stumbling out into the bogs and meets the aforementioned kind-of-like-a-devil character, Pocket Wellfair, with whom Philip makes a Faustian pact. When Philip returns home and sits down to write, it's like the book is writing itself. But keep in mind, he's just made a pact with a somewhat unsavory character from another realm, and things are not going to go well. And so it begins. Want a top ten list of things that are great about THE MURDSTONE TRILOGY?

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