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The Prestige



Synopsis

This volume examines the integration of economics and moral philosophy, arguing that valuation and analysis in health economics and health programs should be based on recent innovative research. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Written on the cover of this book is the phrase "Winner of a World Fantasy Award" -- those are the words that first caught my attention. And in retrospect, I find *The Prestige* entirely deserving of that honor. Few and far between are the books that I pick up and can still remember several years later, but it's been three or more years since I read this one, and certain vibes and moments that I took from it are still with me. This is due, in part, to an average-to-good plotline, but in the end, to Priest's own sleight-of-hand as an author -- he shows an impressive range, a nice attention to detail, and a subdued sense of style which sets the perfect tone for this tale of rival vaudeville magicians in the late 19th century...Set in 1878, and focused on two magicians who are rivals in both business and love, this story is delivered in a style that made it literally impossible to put down (I think I surreptitiously read it during school classes for about two days, non-stop, and might as well have been absent. I don't even know what I missed). Moving from one character's perspective to another, the story unfolds almost entirely through journal entries written by the two protagonists. The intriguing conceit of the novel is that these journals are not discovered until almost a hundred years later, when the descendants of the two rivals meet and feel a mysterious connection to each other. As they slowly uncover the series of mysterious and unnatural events which befell their warring

ancestors, the action moves fluidly from past to present to future and back, almost without warning. The drastically different narrative styles used in the two journals reveal that Mr.

This was a lot of fun but probably doesn't warrant repeated reading since it's pretty dependent on plot twists and shocks to hold your interest. With most Christopher Priest novels currently out of print (*Dream of Wessex*, etc) it's nice to see this one still out there and it's one of his better novels too, which is a nice bonus. Basically it concerns two magicians at the turn of the century whose paths cross and through a series of unpleasant events become bitter rivals, screwing up each other's tricks and driving each other to more and more complicated illusions in a magical game of oneupmanship. This tale is told through two journals as read by their descendants, first one magician, then the other. This style works pretty well, there are some quirks and it probably won't fool anyone who is a Victorian scholar but it looks good enough to me and it's not enough to make me hate the books. What he does an excellent job of is getting us into the world of magicians, without turning the book into a tedious expose of how they do their tricks ('cause it's all about the illusion), you get a glimpse into a sort of exclusive club that's all about convincing you that you're seeing what you shouldn't be seeing. The method of using both journals is a trick that required quite a bit of skill to pull off properly, since the order of the journals make a bit of difference in order to remain surprising and it's interesting to see two different versions of events, especially when one explains the other in greater detail (the only problem with that is that by the time you get to the concurrent event in the second journal, you might have forgotten what happened the first time around).

As someone with an interest in the adaptation of books and stories into films, I often read a book and then watch the movie or movies to see how various screenwriters have reshaped the material. In this instance, seeing the movie pushed me to finally read the book that had been sitting on my shelf for two years. One always hates to be a heretic, but this is one of the very rare cases where the movie improves on the original. The premise of this World Fantasy Award-winning novel is certainly an intriguing one: two English magicians of the Victorian era, Alfred Borden and Rupert Angier, engage in a lifelong rivalry to outperform each other, a rivalry which at times leads to life-threatening sabotage. Their story is told partially from the modern perspective of their great-grandchildren, but mainly through their own diary entries. The narrative framework is the first area in which the film is a vast improvement. The modern storyline serves almost no purpose and the filmmakers wisely jettisoned it. Similarly, the diary entries are entirely unconvincing as Victorian

documents, and play a much-subdued role in the film. However, the main problem of the book is that the feud is never given much of a basis -- in other words, there are no stakes. The one fairly egregious act early on is done by Borden to Angier, but when Angier eventually turns the other cheek, Borden keeps at it. Indeed, the feud seems to periodically die off, only to inexplicably flare up again over the course of twenty years! The filmmakers recognized this problem and came up with a much more convincing back story to explain the start of the feud, and then very carefully calibrated its escalation over time.

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