



The Devil's Labyrinth

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For more than three decades, bestselling novelist John Saul has been summoning macabre masterpieces from the darkest realms of his imagination. With each new book, his instinct for playing upon our deepest dread has grown only stronger and more sinister. He's never been afraid to push the boundaries of suspense and confront us with what frightens us most.

After his father's untimely death sends fifteen-year-old Ryan McIntyre into an emotional tailspin, his mother enrolls him in St. Isaac's Catholic boarding school, hoping the venerable institution with a reputation for transforming wayward teens can work its magic on her son. But troubles are not unknown even at St. Isaac, where Ryan arrives to find the school awash in news of one student's violent death, another's mysterious disappearance, and growing incidents of disturbing behavior within the hallowed halls.

Things begin to change when Father Sebastian joins the faculty. Armed with unprecedented knowledge and uncanny skills acquired through years of secret study, the young priest has been dispatched on an extraordinary and controversial mission: to prove the power of one of the Church's most arcane sacred rituals, exorcism. Willing or not, St. Isaac's most troubled students will be pawns in Father Sebastian's one-man war against evil—a war so surprisingly effective that the pope himself takes notice of the seemingly miraculous events unfolding an ocean away.

But Ryan, drawn ever more deeply into Father Sebastian's ministrations, sees—and knows—otherwise. As he witnesses with mounting dread the transformations of his fellow pupils, his certainty grows that forces of darkness, not divinity, are at work. Evil is not being cast out . . . something else is being called forth. Something that hasn't stirred since the Inquisition's reign of terror. Something nurtured through the ages to do its vengeful masters' unholy bidding. Something whose hour has finally come to bring hell unto earth.

The Devil's Labyrinth Details

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Author : John Saul

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From Reader Review The Devil's Labyrinth for online ebook

Patrice Hoffman says

This book was gripping from the beginning. John Saul really knows how to write page turners. I don't remember there being any dull moments in this book. Just a lot of unanswered questions. The book is about a boy, Ryan, who agrees to go to a Catholic school for problem-kids. At this school, the Father Sebastian is an expert in a sacred old... something something something... of being able to conjure the bad and evil spirits from the children. Instead of using exorcisms the good ol' fashioned way, Father Sebastian is doing it some other way. Of what other way I do not know because this book has a lot of holes.

Although I appreciated how nail-biting this story was and it was told full throttle, I'm left feeling there are things missing. If this school is for trouble kids, why don't they appear to be anything but normal, goal-oriented teens? What is the purpose or origin of this ancient "magic" Father Sebastian is using? Why aren't any of the other faculty wondering what's going on? And what really happened in the end?

I had a lot of questions and few answers but I still enjoyed the story. One has to admit anything involving exorcisms is inherently creepy. I would love to read more of his books. So far I have read two and they were both really good. Can't wait to read the ones on my shelf at home.

Zach says

Big buildup--then does not explain!

Also the book has the added bonus of being offensive to Catholics and Muslims at the same time.

The book did not have strong characters--and many parts of it were predictable (thankfully--the author moved quickly once the reader knows what is going to happen and does not belabor it). The characters were also unengaging and one dimensional. All of this could have been forgiven, and I kept reading (or rather listening) as I the author kept the story moving with multiple view points and some parts were generally creeping--and made one wonder what is going on?--and then SPOILER ALERT--he does not explain a major part of the story--the predictable part, the ending the reader can see coming like the Acela that he explains--but the really weird, creepy stuff he does not explain, he barely hints at it. I am sure the author would say "oh it's up to the reader"..which would be okay, if he gave us something to go on, especially as what one might think is largely ruled out by the final reveal of the story.

Brian Bova says

Good book. My first John Saul book. A straight to the point reading with few things that seem to be far fetched as there sometimes is in fiction novels. A++++

Bonnie says

It was a pretty good read. Interesting though lost something at the end. Maybe been better if some was cut out. Overall though it was a pretty good read.

I gave it a B or 3 stars.

Linda says

After Ryan McIntyre gets beaten up by thugs at the public HS, his mother transfers him to parochial school, St. Isaac's, hoping for a better social situation. What Ryan encounters there is far worse than bullying. In the bowels of his new school, his classmates are being terrorized literally out of their wits. For kindly young Father Sebastian has an agenda of his own....

With *The Devil's Labyrinth*, John Saul has written an overwrought travesty of a horror novel that stretches credulity to the breaking point. Some passages read like such atrocious melodrama that they're almost comical. Even in the more sensible sections, the dialogue is simplistic and hackneyed, with school personnel depicted as vindictive harpies and gullible dupes. There was one bright spot - Saul managed to stimulate my curiosity about the motives of the diabolical Father Sebastian. Alas, his motives were ludicrous.

Some of Saul's other work is marginally better than this one, but this is the last of his novels that I'll be reading.

Athena says

I was very disappointed with this book. The two brothers burying a pet lizard and finding a box was a great beginning, and then the story continues in present day. Ryan McIntyre is attacked by delinquent school mates at Dickinson's, and transferred to St. Isaac's at the suggestion of his mother's boyfriend Tom Kelly. It is known from the beginning that Tom Kelly and Father Sebastian Sloane are friends. Ryan fits in at St. Isaac's but things keep getting more bizarre after Ryan finds out that the previous student who occupied his room, Kip Adamson, was murdered while killing a woman. Ryan feels immediate concern and alarm due to other things he hears about the school's history. Once Farrooq and Abdul are introduced, though, the plot becomes boring and very predictable. I've read a few novels by John Saul previously, but this book seemed like he had rushed to get through it or couldn't choose which storyline to focus on. Major potential with the storyline but somewhere it fizzled.

Kathy says

If you like *Ghost Stories* or things about darker side of religion such as Satan's realm, you will like this book. It is a quick read and I found it entertaining enough to cut through the boredom of long layovers and airline flights. Of course you may have nightmares after reading it.

joyce g says

It started out really scary.

Scott Benjamin says

John Saul is a bit of a tush.

This book was god-awful. It provided a whole lot of background and build up, leading to a completely incomprehensible and a simply poor ending.

It reminds me of the time my high school girlfriend wanted to "save herself" for Prom night - and then, that night, she left early because her best friend needed consoling for some reason.

A whole lot of waiting and patience and anticipation - and I was just left unsatisfied.

Jennifer says

Like a plethora of the other readers, I found the ending of this book completely unsatisfying, and was additionally dissatisfied by Saul's attempt to ride the tide of generalizations about Muslims. I currently live in a predominately Muslim nation where it's the Christians who hate us; playing up the fundamentalist actions of a few individuals doesn't help anyone.

Saul's works have always been sort of a guilty pleasure for me, along with the works of the (now deceased and incorporated) VC Andrews, and I don't expect great literature when I buy one of his paperbacks. That said, this was just a completely unsatisfying book, especially the ending.

Charli says

I just finished "The Devil's Labyrinth" by John Saul. As with most of his books, it involved evil possessing a child or teenager. This time it involves a teenage boy named Ryan who got beat up at his high school and ended up being sent to the private St. Isaac's Preparatory Academy. There he meets up with Father Sebastian Sloane, a Catholic priest who has had some "success" in helping troubled teens. This priest has been noticed by the Vatican for his successes.

The only problem is, he uses "exorcism" that isn't really an exorcism and the Pope has noticed. He arranges for a visit to the Boston school but he's about to get more than he bargained for. Father Sebastian isn't all he seems. Luckily, Ryan, with a little help from his deceased father and a gift his father left for him, can help foil the plot.

The only disappointing thing was that the book's "climax" came at the very end and frankly, wasn't all that great. The book was great and I could hardly put it down, but it just didn't have the same thrilling climax that John Saul's books usually have. Now I'm not sure if it's because he's written 34 novels (more actually because there's at least one more after this book) and he's running out of steam, or if it was just a fluke. Of course, every writer has at least one book that doesn't live up to expectations, so I guess this one was it.

Cynthia says

This is one of those books that starts out great. It was creepy but quite intriguing. Then the plot took a twist that I found offensive and I continued reading, saying 'seriously?' the whole time. I am not going to say that I liked it. I would have loved it had the whole thing not devolved into a religious war. Nope. Sorry.

Jason Jerus says

I got hooked with the development of each characters, intricacies of their individual circumstances, and how they became intertwined to build the bigger story. However, I'm just as frustrated finding that I only have 20 pages left to include the climax and the explanation (or the lack of it) behind the plot. John Saul built the momentum, only to lose it's edge in the end due to lack of depth in bringing his story to conclusion. Unforgiveable. He's outta my list.

Delanie says

So there I was in Ely, at the only grocery store in town, and I'd forgotten to bring any books with me (unpardonable sin, I know, but that's what happens when you're functioning on 5 hours' sleep because you were up late the night before baking for your mom's Summer Sweet And Savory Fest). It was down to this or "The Millionaire's Inexperienced Love Slave."

I made the wrong choice.

Kasia says

Growing up without a father is tough enough but when sixteen year old Ryan McIntyre decides to do the right thing by acting like a man and standing up for himself he gets punished for it. Refusing to let a bully cheat of his test gets him beaten up so badly that his bleeding body feels terror at the thought of going back. His loving mother Teri reluctantly listens to her boyfriend Tom's advice about transferring Ryan to St. Isaac's Preparatory Academy, a Catholic school located in a grand structure with its own catacombs and dark labyrinths and with Tom's help secures a spot for her son. Ryan is a little distraught at the thought that the main reason why there was an opening is the mysterious and questionable death of the student whose bed he will sleep in, but he cannot go back to his old life and the bullies. Structure and rules should be his guiding light, uniforms and nuns, confessions and prayer his daily grind, but what Ryan doesn't know is that nothing is as it seems. Something rotten is trapped in the labyrinths and it's salivating at the thought of getting out. When the most popular young priest, Father Sebastian takes him under his wing, his life turns to worse, his

friends start changing or disappearing and screams and noises can be heard late at night. Ryan knows that something isn't right, the late night confessions and getting locked up in a secret chapel with a scary and angry looking Christ on the cross seem to affect those who come near it and pretty soon Ryan gets engulfed in it all.

Priests at the school are keen on practicing the long-lost rite to invoke the primitive evil from a possessed person, picking students who are haunted by evil and trying to get it out of them. It's important to the priests there to cleanse those who are bad since the school is known for taking in troubled youths. As their exorcism continue it seems that things are turning for the worse and not better, the students aren't really cleansed but instead they seem to become possessed even if they were fine before. Something or someone is taking advantage of the priests and their gullible enthusiasm for riding the world of evil, as they start to meddle with things that are bad and worst of all, real. Add to the mix their worried parents, Ryan's suspiciousness of his mother's suddenly overfriendly boyfriend who simply couldn't wait to get him out of the house and an Islamic group trying to target the visiting pope who decides to come and see these exorcisms take place.

The book is a very fast read; it sucks you in and is very hard to put down. Half way through things start to turn ugly and the evil comes to the light a little more in a very well and descriptively written manner - my stomach was doing the flips at few parts as it dawned on me that one of the priests had the best intentions in his mind but failed greatly to see what he was dealing with. His perception of evil was way off the base here, if he really knew what was going on he would have changed careers.

Overall the book was exciting but some things were not explained; why certain people acted in specific manner and what drove them to it and why, what the silver cross from Ryan's father really was, and I wish there was more written about the catacombs and the labyrinth under the school, I felt like it contributed to the title more than to the story. As I was nearing the end, about 380 pages in I knew I had about 24 pages left and the whole book was still wide open, awaiting conclusion which took up about two pages. All this high pressure stuff happens, the trickery of the evil, changes in innocent children, false pretenses under which people acted, the deaths and the blood and gore and it took about 20 seconds of reading to get to the conclusion. I think it's a great way to kill a good book, people these days don't want to spend time reading a rich story to get a watered down ending. I liked how it ended but it was so lifeless that I was stunned, almost as if the author simply had enough of the book and wrapped a tiny bow at the end, finishing it all up. It felt as if all the action and cunning planning went out the window and everyone wanted to go home and forget about the pope and the exorcisms and the finale. I would have preferred a drawn out ending or a shorter story overall, so that's why the book rating had to suffer, otherwise it would have been a really good read from start to finish. Saul is a good author, I really love his books and will always read his stuff and I will recommend this book to people I know and like, but they will be warned about the ultra quick ending to avoid overall disappointment.

- Kasia S.
