



Peril in the Old Country

Sam Hooker

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What terror lurks in the shadows of the Old Country?

Well, there are the goblins, of course. Then there are the bloodthirsty cannibals from nearby Carpathia, secret societies plotting in whispers, and murder victims found drained of their blood, to name a few. That's to say nothing of the multitude of government ministries, any one of which might haul one off for "questioning" in the middle of the night.

The Old Country is saturated with doom, and Sloot is scarcely able to keep from drowning in it. Each passing moment is certain to be his last, though never did fate seem so grim as the day he was asked to correct the worst report ever written.

Will the events put in motion by this ghastly financial statement end in Sloot's grisly death? Almost definitely. Is that the worst thing that could happen? Almost definitely not.

Peril in the Old Country Details

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Author : Sam Hooker

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From Reader Review Peril in the Old Country for online ebook

Tonya Luttrull (Rustic Book Reviews) says

I was given this book by Black Spot Books in exchange for an honest review.

I thought this was a such a cute book. I loved the book from the moment I picked it up. If you are looking for something that will make you make laugh and have some not so heavy moments, this book will be for you.

Sloot Peril has had his whole life planned and throughout the book, you watch as Sloot starts doing things completely out of his planned out life style. Then when he was asked to correct a financial report, things for Sloot start changing. He is now doing things he thought would never do.

Sloot had no idea was about to happen around him. Between all the undead and secret societies going on, he met the lovely Myrtle. She may have just put a smile on his face, but you will have to read the book for this story! NO SPOILERS.

The author did a great job describing the evolving of Sloot from the beginning to the end of this book.

Oh and lets not forget our spy, Roman. Loved Roman. He was one of my favorites in the story.

The question is does Mrs. Knife want Sloot dead?

I would highly suggest this book!

Faith (BookSelf ~ You Are What You Read) says

I received this eARC from Black Spot Books on NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of this book in any way.

"You may be a mild-mannered bundle of nerves, Peril, but you're the most earnest and loyal bundle of nerves I've ever met."

The Writing and Worldbuilding

I found this book to be a riot, and I was giggling and laughing basically the entire time. Sam Hooker really got that strange niche of humor I reside in, and I was really happy with the world and most of the characters.

The concept of the goblins was honestly the best running joke I've ever heard of and I seriously loved it so much. Seriously, if you want a good laugh, this is the book for you. It feels like you got a bunch of Russian people drunk and had them very inaccurately reenact *1984* by George Orwell.

Unfortunately, once the main cast actually got to Carpathia, I found the humor slipped from the absurd to the annoying and irritating, and I really didn't like that part of the book. Most of that was the characters

introduced in that section of the book, and the rest was Sloot's arc (which kind of paused, reverted, and then got back on track basically as soon as he left), and also, not much really happened in Carpathia, and what did happen wasn't as funny or interesting.

The Characters

Sloot Peril: This guy is literally my worrier-spirit animal (and I mean worrier, not warrior). He was so funny and awkward, but his arc of coming into his own and gaining some degree of self-confidence was really awesome.

Roman: I really liked Roman. He was pretty straight-faced and also absurd, which is a difficult combination to do well, but Hooker did just that.

Myrtle (and Arthur): I liked her enough, but found her fairly annoying during the Carpathia parts. Arthur was pretty consistent but if he hadn't been there, I probably wouldn't have missed his presence. It was fairly unnecessary to the story.

Greta and Vlad: I liked Greta when she was introduced, but once she got into Carpathia, she became really annoying and I really didn't like her. Vlad's introduction was promising, but she quickly became a more annoying version of Willie without his stupidly endearing qualities. They were more plot devices than anything.

Willie: I really loved Willie's complete idiocy. He was so silly and consistent.

Mrs. Knife: lol this lady was a classic bad guy. I really liked her.

Conclusion

This was a very enjoyable book. I really liked it and I'm so glad I read it.

Danielle says

This book is so fun! plenty of mystery and adventure, plus it was really funny! very enjoyable read.

Kopratic says

Peril in the Old Country by Sam Hooker is a book with words. Yes, yes, that might sound redundant, but not every book has words you know. Perhaps you've heard of picture books? Got you there! ahem Anyway, this worded book has many passages. Some of them lead through long and winding hallways. Other passages are rather short, but you just can't help but take your time as you walk through them.

In this book, we follow Sloot Peril, who lives in the Old Country. It has a name, but it's illegal to say it. Don't want to offend the Domnitor—long may he reign. Sloot is a worrier and has lived that way his all life. His money-making profession, though, is an accountant. When he corrects a report originally done by a - phrase that means to stand atop a table- (don't want to summon any goblins with our swearing), he finds

himself as the financier to Lord Wilhelm “Willie” Hapsalt, a definitely six-year-old boy who must move to his own estate due to him finally getting engaged.

“Six?! He’s at least forty-two! He’s tall and has a mustache!”

No, no. Little Willikins is definitely six. He just had an early growth spurt. Moving on.

The Old Country is the best country. There’s Nordheim to the north, but they have to deal with all of their gods all the time. As long as you follow every single rule in the Old Country, you’re golden. Well, Peril would rather have less luster. Easier to blend in that way. Except he’ll soon find out that becoming the young Lord’s financier might not have been the greatest thing. Mrs. Knife made him do it, and have you seen the daggers she can glare? We rarely see her, but she sends shivers in July.

Ever the man for rules, Sloot soon finds himself being made to break a few. Including—brace yourselves—spitting on the sidewalk. The horror! The disgrace! A gran should kick him, she should! (Older women are the best kickers, as they’ve had lots of practice.) Oh and also he might have to go to Carpathia where blood-crazy cannibals live and meet Vlad the Invader. But hey, at least he’ll have the philosopher-possessed Myrtle to think about. And his new buddy Roman. The characters are wonderful, really. For example, Myrtle’s banter with Arthur (the philosopher) shows just how cunning and full of wit she is.

As we discussed earlier, this book takes us through many passages. Many humors (the comedic ones, not the bodily ones; we’re not Carpathian savages after all! Let the records show that the use of savages does not imply that the Ancient Greeks were savages or that Carpathia is inspired by Ancient Greek) make an appearance. This is a fast read. It has wit. It has charm. The world is built up very well, although I will say that a few of the passages felt a bit like info-dumps, which halted with the pacing a bit. Don’t let the Domnitor, long may he reign, know I said that, though.

In short, this is a book for anyone who wants a bit of adventure, some laughs, and a character with a little Senlin (from *The Books of Babel*) quality to him.

[I received a digital ARC from the publisher in exchange for an honest review and need to now go recite all 14 verses of the Loyalist Oath before I forget.]

Diane Hernandez says

Peril in the Old Country is a hilarious quest fantasy! Sloot Peril is an accountant who has a nervous condition. He lives in the Old Country where swearing causes goblins to physically appear. There is so much bureaucracy that a union provides professional line waiters. Sloot is a patriot who despises the country just past the Old Country’s giant wall, Carpathia. What happens when he:

Is recruited to be the financial manager of his mega-rich boss’ son
Finds out a shocking truth about himself
Is recruited to be a Carpathian spy
Does the one thing his boss told him not to do—on his first day

The puns come fast and furious in *Peril in the Old Country*. There are running gags about swear words and shoes throughout. It is a zany ride. The world building is terrific and hilarious. Is it fantasy? Is it horror? I don’t know but it is highly recommended for readers looking for something different. This book is perfect

for fans of the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy's style of humor. 42 stars! [sorry, wrong book] 4 stars!

Thanks to the publisher, Black Spot Books, and NetGalley for an advanced copy.

Crittermom says

If you love the humor of Terry Pratchett, you absolutely must pick up a copy of *Peril in the Old Country*. It is a delightfully absurd novel with elements of the movie *Brazil*. Witty, astute observations on the nature of man and the reality he creates are paired with strange situations that become more and more convoluted as Sloot Peril endeavors to do the right thing and keep his head attached to his shoulders.

All Sloot did was correct a memo. Now he is the financier of an idiot nobleman, a spy, and possibly falling in love for the first time in his life. He is way outside his comfort zone and the situation is becoming more ridiculous and more complex as it progresses. *Peril in the Old Country* is an absolutely wonderful novel. Not only was it extremely funny, it also had just the right way of pointing out truths that left the reader groaning and or rolling in laughter. My only quibble is the abrupt ending.

5 / 5

I received a copy of *Peril in the Old Country* from the publisher and Netgalley.com in exchange for an honest review.

— Crittermom

Wol says

Sloot Peril is my favorite sort of protagonist – the kind who comes from a place of honesty. In much the same way that most of us would find ourselves sorted into Hufflepuff if we were totally honest with ourselves, the majority of us have more in common with Sloot than we do the real heroic heroes of fantasy, like Aragorn or Conan. Sloot is a tightly wound accountant with a strong survival instinct and a deep love of bureaucracy and routine. He's anxious, cowardly and somewhat haughty – sort of an interesting mix of all the negative qualities of a pre-tower Thomas Senlin, Bilbo Baggins and Rincewind.

In this dark comedic fantasy there are echoes of a great many influences, a little of everything from Edward Gorey to George Orwell. This is a dystopian tale that covers a number of fairly heavy subjects in a light and satirical fashion. While there is definitely a hint of the Discworld in its tone, Pratchett's rage against injustice was never far from the surface. Hooker opts for a more darkly amused, fatalistic approach. It's gallows humor done very well indeed, and while for me there weren't always big laughs, it was consistently amusing and I chuckled a lot. The plot at its most basic is a standard reluctant-hero-thrown-into-an-adventure story, but there are none more reluctant than Sloot Peril, and therein lies the comedy.

The pacing of the story is a little inconsistent, but the author's voice is strong enough to carry it through the lulls, and the characters are great fun. The secondary characters are pretty well developed for the most part and they are each given the opportunity to shine through the excellent dialogue. Lord Wilhelm and Nan in particular are absolutely hilarious – Willie's naive ignorance and lack of self awareness was the highlight of

the novel for me, and Hooker's deft commentary on people who have more money than sense was hugely enjoyable. It reminded me quite strongly of Hugh Laurie's portrayal of Prince George in *Blackadder*, just the right blend of well-meaning and dimwitted that comes with having been born too rich to really need to learn anything. I also found that despite some obvious foreshadowing, I genuinely believed the narrative was heading in a certain direction, and then, it... didn't. It did exactly the opposite of what I expected, and I was absolutely delighted. I don't want to go into detail because it would ruin one of the fun surprises of the book, but Hooker did a great job of turning my expectations on their head despite having signalled well in advance that he was going to do so.

However, sometimes there has to be a bit of bad with the good. While the prose, setting, dialogue and character development were all very strong, there was a failing that unfortunately means I have to dock it a star, and I'm truly sorry to do so because it was otherwise excellent. The ending that was not an ending. Perhaps it was a deliberate choice, but from my point of view it felt like the author didn't know how to end the novel and so chose a cliffhanger in order to give himself some breathing room to sort the mess out later. Rushed, abrupt and unsatisfying. There was no resolution of any kind to be had – and while I am dying to know what happens next, I feel this could have been handled better. However, the good most definitely outweighs the bad. I know I'll still recommend this to several people I know, but I'll have to give them a heads-up about the ending and I do hope that this won't be a hallmark of the series. Outside of this flaw, it's genuinely wonderful and I look forward to book 2.

Score: 7.7/10 (4 Stars)

Lauren Stoolfire says

I received an ARC from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Terrors lurk in the Old Country from goblins, bloodthirsty cannibals from nearby Carpathia, nefarious secret societies, to bloodless murder victims. Then there are the government agencies that might take you in for "questioning" in the middle of the night. Sloot can barely keep himself from drowning in the sense of doom that saturates the Old Country. Any minute could be his last, but now things are looking worse than ever as he's been ordered to correct a ghastly financial statement. It's almost certain that this will lead to Sloot's grisly death, but that probably isn't the worst thing that could happen.

I have a feeling that if you like Terry Pratchett or Douglas Adams, you'll also like the tone and style of *Peril in the Old Country* by Sam Hooker. I loved the dark, tongue-in-cheek sense of humor. Sloot is something like a mild mannered Arthur Dent sort of character who gets thrown into a whole new world that is nothing like what he's used to. He gets thrown into more and more ridiculous and terrible events and he has to deal with all of these changes to his life now. Unfortunately, the humor doesn't always quite work or flow as well as I would like it to, but the absurdly dark sense of humor is one of my favorite aspects. I also loved some of the ridiculous (in a good way) details that go into the story. I know that this style won't be for everyone, but it's still quite a bit of fun in my opinion. I will definitely want to try the future installments of the *Terribly Serious Darkness* series.

Thanks again, NetGalley!

Roselyn says

I just uploaded my book review here!

Montzalee Wittmann says

Peril in the Old Country (Terribly Serious Darkness, #1) by Sam Hooker is a book I requested from NetGalley and the review is voluntary. The first few pages were difficult to get into but once I got going I enjoyed the clever and witty story up until about half way through. There things got complicated. (At least for me) I never could pick up the same rhythm I had with the book like I had in the first half. I did enjoy the book.

Melindam says

ARC received from the publisher via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

3,5 slow-burning, but ultimately funny and promising stars

When I say slow-burning, I mean slow-burning, but that's what you get when your Main Character is an accountant. :)

More detailed review to come.

Tim Slee says

When Terry Pratchett died we didn't just lose an author, we lost the entire Discworld universe. It was a fantastically humorous universe peopled with warty witches, goblins, faeries, evil despots and hapless heroes.

But rejoice! For Peril in the Old Country is a rollicking story peopled with warty witches, goblins, faeries, evil despots and hapless heroes!

There is more than a little Pratchettiness about the prose, but more in the way of an homage than straight fan fiction and it's a very easy and entertaining read. I read it during and in between international flights and it's the sort of book that bears multiple interruptions (boarding, meal service, movies, deplaning, straining to hear announcements) because the plot moves forward nicely in small bite-sized pieces and isn't so tricksy that you need to go back and re-read to remember what had happened the last time you picked it up.

Check my highlights for examples of the prose, but there are many chuckle-worthy gems:

"Grans of the Old Country seemed certain that young people were in constant danger of freezing to death, and took up knitting so they could stare death in the face and say, "Not today. Not on my watch."

"Sladia continued talking, but Sloot could hear nothing but a high-pitched whine. He'd expected the sound of his life as he knew it bursting into flames to be more dramatic, yet there it was. A sort of highly efficient eternity passed, during which he managed to have a mental break, lose the power of speech, and rehabilitate himself before Sladia finished speaking."

It can be a little chaotic at times (I never really did work out what the spy called Roman's 'grand plan' really was ... but maybe that was the point?) but a bit like a ride at a fairground, the fun is in being flung around and turned upside down, not in the destination itself!

The main protagonist 'Sloot' is very reminiscent of Rincewind from Discworld and I would definitely recommend this one to Pratchett fans who miss Sam Vimes, Lord Vetinari and Nanny Ogg!

Valentina says

The author's voice is what drew me in from the first page. First paragraph, really. With its tongue-firmly-in-cheek prose, the story kept me turning the virtual pages.

Sloot Peril is a great hero because although he is a walking neurosis, he feels real. Most readers probably know someone just like him. His progression throughout the story is cleverly done, so that we see him slowly changing, managing to do some things that he wouldn't even have considered at the start of the novel. This growth on his part is one of the things that make him such a believable character, even in such a series of wacky plots. Roman was another favorite of mine because he is both so bad and so good at the spy business that you never know if his plans will actually work or not.

There are some real laugh-out-loud moments, making this definitely a story I would recommend for people who want something lighter. I especially enjoyed the queuing scenes because they show an exaggerated version of the bureaucratic nonsense we have all put up with. Oh, and the black market. Which is actually a black market, underground and super secret. All of those details add flavor to an already fun read.

If you enjoy witty narratives that have plenty of comedic moments, then I highly recommend this one.

Nia Ireland says

This book is very reminiscent of Terry Pratchett's Discworld in terms of world-building and characterisation.

Hapless characters go around haplessly happlessing from one kingdom to the next, with none quite so hapless as Sloot Peril, mild-mannered and rule-abiding financier of the Domnitor. An accountant is the perfect character to tell this story.

He's singularly unqualified to be going on adventures and uncovering mysteries, but that's the situation he's

thrown into. He's incredibly neurotic and dry in his humour, which is what makes him a very easy character to empathise with and enjoy reading.

However, it was the pacing and structure of this book that threw me a bit – the dry humour and absurd situations were great fun, but it was very drawn out and somewhere near the middle of the book I started to forget what was even going on.

The book does cover some excellent points in a wonderful wry fashion - propaganda, social class and how independent thought should really be discouraged in a population if you want to run it without argument.

The author's humour is the guiding force of this book, if you like your funny dry and dark, this is the perfect book for you.

Thank you NetGalley for a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest and unbiased review

malrubiush says

Please see my review in the April 1, 2018, issue of Grimdark Magazine.
