



In the Shadow of St. Anthony: Being a Somewhat Detailed Account of the Coming of Age of Tommy Santalesa, the Neighborhood Wiseass.

Andrew Hernon

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Tommy Santalesa isn't a good friend. He holds the more talented members of his band back, maintaining his position in the group by constantly reminding everyone else they've been friends since grade school. He's manipulative and shallow-the kind of guy who steals your girlfriend and tells you he's done you a favor.

When fellow band member and guitar virtuoso Frank Balistrieri disappears on the eve of a lucrative record contract, Tommy assumes he's run off with a wealthy girlfriend. When the one girl immune to Tommy's charms calls him out as a lousy friend, he begins a search for Frank in the deserted, muggy August streets of Manhattan's SoHo. What he finds is horror.

Discovering a wan, drained Frank in the clutches of a shadowy, malignant force, Tommy finds himself in an unexpected role-that of selfless rescuer.

Two factors complicate saving Frank. Every cop in New York City is looking for the guitarist for some reason. More importantly, while Frank's up and moving, he doesn't seem to have a pulse, a condition that makes Tommy wonder if he can best serve his friend with a doctor or a wooden stake.

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Mary Johnson says

I received this book through a Goodreads Giveaway

Going in, I had no idea what to expect from this book, but I was pleasantly surprised. The characters were well-rounded and sympathetic, and I loved the complex relationships they all had with one another, especially Frank and Tommy. The setting was vivid, and I found it easy to picture myself in the dark alleys and warehouses of the neighborhood. The story itself moved quickly and held my attention the entire time, adding a few good twists towards the end.

Most of my complaints with this book are mechanical. The writing felt very passive at times, there were several instances of head-hopping, and the character descriptions often felt stilted. Especially towards the beginning, the chapters were way too short and cut up the story, making what should have been gripping scenes feel clunky.

Still, I would completely recommend it to readers who like the thrill of grittier fiction without anything overly graphic or obscene. The author did a fantastic job in that respect, and I would absolutely read anything else he comes up with in the future.

Wendy Jensen says

A quick easy read. The first sentence "Around here the old Italians used to tell you not to go west of Sixth Avenue after the sun went down." sums up the story. Bad things happen. I loved the ending which was years after the main story.

I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads.
