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The Temporary Agent (The Agent Series)



Synopsis

Scarred by war, former Navy Seabee Tom Sexton vows to leave his violent past behind, only to be drawn back into that life when a deadly conspiracy forces him to face an agonizing choice no man should ever have to make. Five years after his life was saved in Afghanistan by Marine Force Recon Leader Charlie Cahill, Tom lives a bleak, nomadic existence, haunted by the debt he can never repay. Salvation appears in Stella—a woman as damaged, and resourceful, as he. But when a coded distress call from his former CO leads him to a shadowy NSA operative, Tom is recruited for a “black op” to bring back the now-rogue man who saved his life. As he searches for Cahill, Tom quickly uncovers a much larger web of treason and betrayal that calls his entire world into question—and forces him into the ultimate no-win scenario.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was afraid to write this critical review because of the negative comments that I will probably receive as a result. However, I must follow my conscience. If readers only posted glowing reviews then every book would be a Nobel Prize winner. To be fair, the plot is fine—if you like pulp fiction. There is

nothing wrong with pulp fiction. Pulps are those low-priced magazines and paperbacks with bigger-than-life heroes, pretty girls, and mysterious villains that were popular with young working adults and teenagers. In fact, the writer is very talented in coming up with dramatic scenes and action that is very typical of pulp fiction. I believe that if he found a good editor or better yet, several good editors who would be willing to work with improving his writing style, I think he could be an outstanding author. But he is not there yet. The writing style seems unpolished, like it was a first draft needing serious comments and markups. Another reviewer commented about several elements that bothered her with style. She complained about the constant use of incomplete sentences. That is true but I elaborate and state that the entire book is composed of paragraphs that are one or two sentences long and many of those sentences are only phrases, not sentences. Example 1: Inside his heart, a rage was building. Aimed not at the men who had come after them but at himself. Example 2: The badly tuned engine gunned, and the van hurtled across the lot. Aimed straight at the door of the motel room Cahill just exited. Example 3: Before he could do anything more than that, Cahill was at the door. And put two hollow-points into the man's forehead. This is how the ENTIRE book reads. With the above sentence structure, most of the book is very narrative. Example: First sentence begins, "A second later..." Next sentence/paragraph continues "A second after that....." The book lacks a balance of setting up a descriptive landscape scene, putting action in the scene and utilizing conversation to give the characters personality. I would give the book a one-star rating. The writing style is that bad. However, the author does have potential with his storyline itself. So I bumped the rating up to two stars.

This book is worth a read, but all things considered, I couldn't give it more than 3 stars. PLOT -- If all I was considering was the story, I would have awarded four stars. The plot had a few hiccups, but otherwise was good. STYLE -- The writing contained a few elements that bothered me. The first was the constant use of incomplete sentences. As a device, and used sparingly, this can create emphasis and pull the reader along. When used over and over and over, it is nothing short of distracting. I hesitated when I saw this Kindle First book was 402 pages long, but the Shamus Award (for 2003 book "The Poisoned Rose") convinced me to choose M. Judson's book. Once I started reading, I saw why it has so many pages. I would guess over 95% of the book's descriptive paragraphs are only one sentence long. I can see how this would inflate the size of a book, and as a purchaser of many hardcovers and paperbacks, I would have been horrified to order a book and find out it was in no way deserving of the advertised length. I would hope the author didn't do this to make the book bigger, but if it was used as a writing technique, it hurts the flow of the book. As far as

the technical aspects, I would believe the author either owns guns or has researched them thoroughly. I would tend to believe it is the latter, as some of the descriptions read like an ad. Additionally, even James Bond does not shoot as well as the main characters in this book. I don't want to give out spoilers by describing exactly what I mean, but it takes thousands of rounds shot REGULARLY for top shooters to achieve the legendary accuracy at 50 feet described in this book, not to mention what happens to almost everyone's nervous system when placed in a stressful gunfight...and to accomplish this while lying on one's back strains the imagination (many chapters later, the author explains this scene in a couple of short sentences by stating the character was trained by a parent to be able to do this). If the author had been creating super-spy characters, I would have gone along, but my impression is that this is supposed to be a tale based on realism. I don't give or take away stars for language or violence -- just letting folks know that if you don't like violence or language, this book contains both. So, bottom line -- plot alone makes it a worthwhile read, if you feel the above items will not distract you. As for me, I may try the author's Shamus Award winner (for Best P.I. Paperback Original).

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