



Sabre-Tooth

Peter O'Donnell

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In this adventure Modesty and her loyal lieutenant, Willie Garvin, find themselves pitted against Karz - a modern Genghis Khan with an army of ruthless mercenaries. A hunch by Sir Gerald Tarrant of the Foreign Office sets in motion the action until Modesty and Willie become Karz's unwilling recruits in his fortress in the Hindu Kush. Modesty must break Karz's hold over them, and after her betrayal by Willie Garvin must fight his terrifying executioners, the Twins, before the final battle against the seemingly invincible army Karz commands.

Sabre-Tooth Details

Date : Published August 14th 2003 by Souvenir Press (first published 1966)

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Author : Peter O'Donnell

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From Reader Review Sabre-Tooth for online ebook

Nick Pengelley says

Totally hip!

Tony Hisgett says

This is the second Modesty Blaise book I have read and I'm now hooked. In the first book it was clear that she is a real 'kickass' heroine, but in this book we get to see just how much she is prepared to endure to get the job done. At times this is a really 'gritty' thriller.

When I started reading the books I had some worries that they would seem very dated, but it is easy to forget that they were written in the 60s, over 50 years ago.

The only minor criticism was as soon we meet Lucille it was clear what was going to happen. The problem then is it makes the next half the book almost redundant, because I was just waiting for the point when Lucille becomes the leverage.

Michele says

3.5 stars

Karl says

First US Edition.

Sabre-Tooth" is the second book in the Modesty Blaise series of books and was written by Peter O'Donnell in 1966. It is a direct sequel to the first book "Modesty Blaise" , with Sir Gerald Tarrant of the British Foreign Service sending Modesty and Willie out on another dangerous mission.

Denise says

I got pointed at the Modesty Blaise series by a friend who knows my love of the genre that used to be called "men's adventure novels" and is now called "techno-thrillers". Well, these aren't "techno" per se -- this one was first published in 1966 -- but they're good solid adventure novels, and Modesty (the main character) has catapulted past Dirk Pitt as my favorite action-adventure hero ever. (Jack Ryan wasn't even in the running.) Basic premise: Modesty Blaise, a former criminal mastermind, has retired from running The Network and now lives in England as one of the idle rich. Except she's bored. Very bored. She and her right-hand-man Willie Garvin occasionally take jobs at the request of Sir Gerald Tarrant, member of the British secret

service, who passes things on to Modesty if he can't do them officially and above-board.

This one is the second book in the series (the care package I got of the series didn't include the first), but I accidentally read out-of-order by following the inner bookplates, which in these editions aren't entirely accurate about sequence. Doesn't matter; they can be read in pretty much any order and enjoyed. If you like action-adventure, I'd totally give these a try. (They're products of their times, though; for all that they're fairly progressive in that they feature a female protagonist, one must look past some things that would be tremendously un-PC today.)

This one's about an attempted coup in Kuwait, in which Modesty and her faithful sidekick Willie get caught up, at the request of Tarrant. It's fast-paced and very readable, and I enjoyed it very much.

Jack Clark says

The second book of the Modesty Blaise series is a very well written novel and takes us on from the first book in the series 'Modesty Blaise' which - I believe - was a novelization of the script of the original film. The film - directed by Joseph Losey was a self indulgent ego trip and should be avoided at all costs. The book of the script was far superior and with 'Sabre Tooth' Peter O'Donnell has laid the foundation for the rest of the series.

Sabre Tooth is an excellent adventure story. It is intelligent, it is well written and leaves you wanting more. Well done Mr O'Donnell.

MKenfield21 says

I am not a huge fan of the way in which Modesty and Willie often rely on semi-passive solutions to their problems. That is, when they undertake an action that does not accomplish their goal but attempts to provoke their enemy into a reaction that will accomplish their goal. I don't think this is a sustainable operational pattern. Sooner or later someone will react against the odds and you will die.

Other than that however, these are serious people in a serious business. That's always fun to read.

So far, the series is impressively date-agnostic, with only the absence of computers and the presence of revolvers as a significant giveaway. A revolver is clearly not an ideal primary-carry piece in 2018, but a lot of people thought it was in the 60s, and Modesty's decision to utilize such a weapon is reasonably informed for the time period.

The best part of the book continues to be her relationship with Willie, which is one of the great platonic male/female partnerships I have read, along with the Leary/Mundy pairing.

This book doesn't get an unqualified 4/5 recommendation because the first half of it is fairly slow (though still engaging and pretty funny at times) and because, in the second half, the caper relies too often on fortunate outcomes to succeed.

Doug says

SPOILERS AHEAD:

The pacing in this book was so bad I think I'm done with the series. First we get a lot of the author desperately trying to convince us that Modesty and Willie are cool. (If we didn't already think that, we wouldn't be reading the second book in the series). Introduce us to the obviously future hostage. Then set up set up set up. Action sequence that was obviously there because we had gone too far in the book without one. Set up set up set up. Then the action starts and the book picks up again, and things get dark with the getting shot and the rapey part and all.

And then the end? All better! Status Quo! Modesty's severe bullet wound? Plastic Surgery! She's pretty and perfect again! The traumatic multiple rape stuff? She's Modesty! She knew the job was dangerous when she took it! All happy and perfect again! The hostage faux-daughter they cared about, who had trauma BEFORE her kidnapping, and stole? Adopted by Americans! Don't worry about her!

Bah.

Roybot says

I love the Modesty Blaise books, but why, oh why, are the covers so godawful terrible? I'm sitting reading my book, and my wife gives me the side eye... "What are you reading?" she asks with narrowed eyes and raised brow. I try to explain that it's an action thriller featuring daring plots, danger, excitement... "The cover is smutty." Well... yes. There's that.

Anyway.

Aesthetic critique aside, Sabre-Tooth is a solid entry in the continuing adventures of Modesty Blaise. Hidden bases, daring night rescues, and, of course, the eclectic and bizarre menagerie of villains. Like the Bond books, there's definitely some... problematic content that is **very** dated by modern standards (I would really enjoy some critical analysis of the series, honestly), but the plot and action are well paced and thoroughly enjoyable, all the same.

James Hein says

This is an old but good series. IF you haven't read them then do it.

Marie Bouteille says

It could be one of those action movies that are inspired by the news, except it was written 50 years ago. It's very modern. The settings remind me a little of a Mad Max movie. It's thrilling and fun to read.

Kerry Kilburn says

I am an unabashed Modesty Blaise fan, and have been for decades. I consider her to be one of the first modern kick-ass heroines, and admire the skill with which O'Donnell created her and her world - Blaise is obviously not your average young woman, but somehow remains both real and very likable throughout the series. I am rereading them now, and loving every minute.

For those who don't know, O'Donnell also wrote a set of gothics under the pen name Madeleine Brent; they are also well worth checking out!

Steve says

This second novel in the series is a great step up from the rather routine MODESTY BLAISE (1965), which is not a bad book in and of itself but it can't help but pale in comparison to the subsequent stories that reveal O'Donnell to be a master of both characterization and page-turning suspense. SABRE-TOOTH has to do with a Mongolian military megalomaniac (Ooh! Alliteration!) who is assembling and training an army of mercenaries with the goal of seizing oil-rich Kuwait (can you say "eerily prescient?"), but he needs two utterly badass commanders to lead his men. Aware of Modesty Blaise and Willie Garvin as ideal choices for the role, and equally cogniscent of their retirement from professional ass-whuppin' and criminal activity, the blackguard kidnaps a child dear to our heroes and uses her as leverage to ensure their cooperation. Thus pressed into service, Modesty and Willie must figure out how to survive leading an army of cutthroats, rescue their young charge, defeat the hand-to-hand skills of "the Twins," stop the invasion of Kuwait, and somehow escape from an absolutely escape-proof training ground.

This one's as serious as a heart attack, and there's even a sequence in which Modesty endures... Well, let's just say that I had to put the book down for a while before I could continue reading what she was going through, an experience that made me respect her mental and physical skills all the more. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**

Jane Jago says

I love Modesty and Willie Garvin. It's kind of like a warm cuddle of a book with a bit of sex and violence. I'll probably go through the card now...

Shawn Conner says

The second Modesty novel I've read recently (along with Dragon's Claw and a book of short stories, Pieces of Modesty). Each time I'm amazed and impressed with author O'Donnell's characterizations, his imagination when it comes to bad guys and set-pieces, the skillful and clear descriptions and the storytelling suspense. Sabre-Tooth is, I believe, the second in the Modesty Blaise series but the first (I think to use) the infamous "Nailer," an attention-grabber that our heroine deploys when it's necessary to distract the bad guys. James

Bond, eat your heart out.
