



Brimstone

Douglas Preston , Lincoln Child

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Behind the gates of a fabulous Hamptons estate, FBI Special Agent Pendergast comes upon the carnage of a gruesome crime: one that recalls the legendary horrors that befall those who make a Faustian pact with the devil. Surrounded by the choking stench of brimstone, the smoldering remains of art critic Jeremy Grove are found in a locked, barricaded attic next to a hoofprint singed into the floorboards.

Unable to resist a case that defies all but supernatural logic, Pendergast reunites with police officers Vincent D'Agosta (Relic) and Laura Hayward (Reliquary) to search for a more earthly explanation. But their investigation soon takes them from the luxury estates of Long Island and penthouses of New York City to the crumbling, legend-shrouded castles of the Italian countryside, where thirty years ago four men conjured up something unspeakable. . .

Brimstone Details

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From Reader Review Brimstone for online ebook

Filipa says

O agente Pendergast e o sargento Vincent d'Agosta apaixonaram-me.

Este livro é o primeiro de uma trilogia que devo dizer me impressionou pela positiva, tanto pela história como pela mestria da escrita e ainda pelos carismáticos polícias.

Adorei o brilhantismo de Aloysius Pendergast, que por mais alhadas em que se metessem (ele e colega) estava sempre um passo à frente e avaliava todas as situações de um modo muito analítico, com extrema calma e sangue frio. Não recorre à violência a não ser em último recurso, prefere sempre o diálogo e. . . que habilidade com as palavras ele possui.

O sargento d'Agosta, ferve mais em pouca água, mas tem uma coragem, uma honestidade e uma lealdade ferrenhas, sendo o melhor parceiro de aventuras.

Tinha mesmo de mencionar estas duas personagens, porque, são sem dúvida alguma, duas, que não se esquecem facilmente.

Facilmente daria 5 estrelinhas a este livro, assim dou 4,5., isto porque, há partes que para mim se tornam maçadas e esse "defeito" em livros faz-me sempre não conseguir dar as 5, no entanto, não deixo de dizer que este livro é mesmo fantástico e que os autores do mesmo são soberbos.

Nesta história temos quatro assassínios e alguns suspeitos, sendo que são reduzidos a dois praticamente no início, e sendo que dentro das possibilidades desses dois, um deles, é assassinado, o que resta, o último suspeito. . . Um suspeito muito poderoso, muito inteligente, muito astuto e muito determinado.

A trama leva-nos desde Nova Iorque até Florença, passamos por várias obras de arte, descobrimos castelos e igrejas (sendo que a derradeira aventura se passa num castelo muito antigo, com várias passagens secretas e túneis. . .), desenterramos túmulos e ainda, encontramos um reverendo que tem o complexo messiânico capaz de influenciar uma multidão em massa. . .

Dentro da história, perto do fim, Pendergast recebe uma carta. . . e assim descobrimos que este, tem um irmão e que esse irmão. . . é o completo oposto dele. . .

Falando do fim. . . ah! O fim. . . O fim meteu-me uma angústia e uma tristeza. . . mas, no epílogo passa-se algo. . . algo em forma de um homem que tem um olho azul e outro castanho. . . um homem que d'Agosta vê na floresta que rodeia o castelo, quando ele e Pendergast estão no derradeiro confronto com o seu poderoso inimigo. . .

UM LIVRO A NÃO PERDER!

Michael says

I had some thrills with this one, the 5th in a series of 12. A mysterious death of a hated Manhattan art critic is judged as caused by internal heating, and a cloven hoof print and bit of brimstone at the scene raise the

specter of the Devil's work. FBI agent Prendergast and police liaison Sergeant D'Agosta make a team similar to Holmes and Watson. The victim's guests and telephone calls made the night of his death have overtones of a man who has made a pact with the Devil fearful of payback time. A second grisly death gets the public worried, fanned by a doomsday preachers. A scholar they contact has identified a temporal pattern in history including the volcanic explosion behind the myth of Atlantis and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah that predicts the end times in this year of 2004.

You know the good guys will deflate all this spooky, mystical fluff and dispel the nightmare in favor of some fiendish, but human, criminal enterprise. And it's kind of fun to follow the steps they take to get there from small clues. Eventually, after a number of dead ends and narrow escapes, they are led to Florence. I was quite disappointed how our fearless duo never succeed in preventing the deaths that are part of a pattern and how most of the mysteries of the murders are revealed to them by the bad guy when finally cornered. Yet Prendergast claims he knew much about the motivation from a horse hair found at one crime scene.

I liked this one better than its successor, "Dance of Death", but not quite as well "Cabinet of Curiosities". For escapist fare, they satisfy my periodic craving for slightly absurd, somewhat Gothic thrillers where heroic brain and brawn are challenged to the max.

Erin ? *Proud Book Hoarder* says

"While dead men tell no tales, their corpses often speak volumes."

Opening with one of the most intriguing mystery starters ever, Brimstone makes it seem like the devil himself has come to settle scores. Like many other Pendergast novels, sometimes it seems like the story is Paranormally focused, but by the end that's not always the case. I won't say whether it is or isn't this time around, just like Relic and Still Life with Crows, things are usually more than they initially seem, even if what they initially seem is already downright fascinating without adding more plot point brownie points on top.

The creepy atmosphere is well-maintained, although it dwindles down into more of a whodunnit. Finally at the end it almost feels like a spy action-adventure novel. The authors are excellent at weaving up interesting, complex storylines that borrow a little of this and that from various genres. Even Pendergast himself feels little like James Bond. Really there isn't anyone else out there like him, which makes the stories seem even more unique, but you can pick up other far-out there traits shared with other detectives. While the book starts strong, it stays fascinating, but the ending is a little weak in comparison to the rest of the book. Usually the endings of these are showstoppers, so this was a little surprising.

Pendergast doesn't go as far out into Super-Pendergast territory as some of his previous novels, and we get returning characters such as Vincent D'Agosta. This was a treat since I always loved the guy, although he's now had major changes in his life and has to deal with demotion, depression, and self-doubt. It was interesting seeing him deal with his issues and getting a new lease on life, thanks to the supportive friendliness of our pale crusader.

While the fifth in a series, it's also the first of a trilogy focusing on the mystery of Pendergast's long-lost and apparently twisted, evil brother Diogenes.

Overall another psychologically gripping story, but in this case I kind of wish more of a supernatural bend would have come into play. Outstanding characters, well-placed tension, and groovy atmosphere support it up against any weight of plot pitfalls though, so this is another one highly recommended in the long-running series.

John says

OK, more popular genre fiction doing a very mediocre job of representing their genre.

Child and Preston must have a fan at the local independent bookstore because several of these McNuggets of entertainment are on their recommended shelf. After reading a few of them, I'm not sure why.

Two dimensional comic book characters (and not in a good way), over-wrought plots, unbelievable exploits, yadda yadda.

Probably the most fundamental criticism I can make regards their craft. They consistently tell us about the amazing abilities of Diogenes and Pendergast rather than showing them to us. They seem to want to set up Pendergast as a modern Holmes - Mycroft even - and yet their descriptions of his abilities boil down to magic. "And then through his amazing intellectual abilities, Pendergast saw the solution: 'Aha!' he exclaimed. 'Follow me!'" This isn't a direct quote but you see this pattern throughout the Pendergast novels. Similarly they might describe a fight intended to illustrate Pendergast's amazing martial arts skills as follows: "Pendergast's movement blurred and his opponent fell to his feet unconscious. 'Anyone else?'"

We might as well be reading Batman issue #1, here. "Through his amazing super-science, Batman analyzes the crime scene and identifies his culprit."

Also, they make no attempt to make the elements of their stories remotely believable. In *Brimstone*, for instance, they invent some kind of microwave weapon that you cart about like a bazooka and melt people in their homes. In another story they invent a young lady who has lived an extraordinarily long life and yet remains essentially a pre-adolescent. These elements could have been handled in a credible way - that is, we could have been persuaded to suspend disbelief - but as it is, they are literal comic-book devices, no more intriguing than the Super-Villain of the week back in the Silver Age of comics.

I read this book shortly after reading Jasper Fforde's lampoons of detective fiction - the *Nursery Crimes* series. I burst out laughing as soon as Pendergast appeared on the scene. A master of disguise, with a sidekick, a bizarrely expensive and impractical classic car, and an unpronounceable name.

Child and Prestons work on these characters was momentarily diverting but ultimately a waste of time and money.

Now don't get me wrong - I *love* comic books, from the classic (and ultimately poorly written) characters to the most innovative thing created today. But a novel isn't a comic book and the worst comic book I've read this year beats this.

Jeeze - enough with the negative reviews - gotta post something I like.

Dirk Grobbelaar says

Review Revisited

This is a fabulous series.

Brimstone is somewhat different from its predecessors. It's more Agatha Christie than Michael Crichton this time round. A little bit less horror; a little more mystery. The authors appear to be paying tribute to a number of literary classics and conventions in this novel. For one thing, one of the characters is lifted exactly out of *The Woman in White*. Aloysius Pendergast has always been decidedly Sherlock Holmes-like, but it's taken to the next level here, with Vincent D'Agosta acting out the Dr. Watson parts. Heck, I even detected a bit of Ian Fleming.

So, it's a bit of a mish-mash of sorts, but it's all good. In fact, it's really, *really* good. It's clear that the authors have been consciously trying to prevent the series from becoming too formulaic and predictable. Every novel brings a new dimension to the table and *Brimstone* is no exception. Think you can predict what's going on? Think again.

Some things have remained constant though, such as the thrills and suspense we have come to expect. Recalling Mbun from *Relic*, the 'surgeon' from *The Cabinet of Curiosities*, and let's not even talk about the *oh so atmospheric* *Still Life with Crows*, I can't help but wonder when these guys are going to start running out of ideas, or variety. Fortunately, with *Brimstone* it hasn't happened yet.

Brimstone is the first in the Diogenes trilogy and we are fleetingly introduced to a creepy fellow (now you see him, now you don't) who **may** or **may not** be Pendergast's evil brother, Diogenes. As such, the novel ends on a bit of a cliffhanger. You'll want *Dance of Death* close at hand.

It's exciting stuff. I can't recommend this series enough.

Ginger says

Another great book in the Pendergast series! I've been really impressed with this series and the writers. Preston/Child have tackled lots of different plots and they have all worked so far.

This book in the series, *Brimstone* starts off with a charred body found in a Long Island estate. The questions about the death seem to involve evil forces with the smell of brimstone in the air and a hoofprint scorched into the floor.

Did Satan really kill this man?!! Well, read this book to find out.

This book travels from Long Island to New York City and then to the historic and ancient city of Florence, Italy. I loved all the details of the city of Florence along with the art and history references.

I enjoyed where the authors took the character of Vincent D'Agosta in this book along with giving more family history on Aloysius Pendergast. Laura Hayward from Reliquary was also in the book. I really love this character and hope to see more of her in the future!

If you enjoy thrillers, horror or suspense, then this book and series is right up your wheelhouse! I highly recommend it!

Marie says

I read this book a long time ago and really loved it then just as I loved again this time around. It grabs you by the throat and doesn't let go till you get to the end. I had forgotten some of what happened in the book, but it slowly started coming back as I re-read it. To me it was as thrilling the second time around. Love Pendergast!

If you are not familiar with Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child or you are new to the horror genre, then you need to read these authors and especially their series on Pendergast as you will not be disappointed. These authors know how to weave a story and pull you into their world! This book gets a five star rating!

Lena says

Powerful men are dying of spontaneous human combustion and everyone's blaming the devil. Never fear Pendergast is here!

And so is D'Agosta! He's had some knocks since last we saw him but *my goodness* does he shine here.

D'Agosta is fierce.

D'Agosta is smoking hot.

D'Agosta *sizzled*.

I enjoyed so much of this book: the plot, historical anecdotes, the action, the sex, that ending. My only complaint is that they could have cut fifty or so pages, this was *long*.

4.5 Stars happily rounded up. I'm addicted!!!

J.K. Grice says

4.5 stars. What can I say? Another stellar Pendergast adventure from Preston & Child.

Sean Gibson says

I've boxed myself into reviewing Pendergast books using food comparisons, which, fortunately, is not an overly restrictive framework (I mean, I'm only on book five, so haven't had to start reaching for okra or polenta just yet), but has, thus far, been influenced by whatever I've eaten most recently that seems even remotely applicable. (Another reason I haven't busted out okra or polenta, incidentally, because eating those things just seems ridiculous. I refuse.)

Fortunately, the stars aligned well in this instance—I've been housing a ton of pizza lately, which seems apropos for a book set, at least in part, in Italy. Here's the thing about pizza, though: pizza quality can vary wildly, not unlike the multiple storylines within this book (see what I did there?).

See, sometimes you get John's of Bleecker Street, some of the most sublime pie you've ever had. The method of the murderer (did the devil REALLY do it??), the historical backdrop in Italy, the burgeoning friendship between Pendergast and D'Agosta...these are the tastiest parts of the story, and worthy of what you'd get in that fabled West Village pizzeria. (For those of you wrinkling your faces because you're Chicago-style fans, just sub in the word "Gino's" for John's, okay? I won't judge or argue.)

Other parts of the story, though, are more like your favorite local pizza joint—good, sure, but , unless you live in New York (or Chicago), you're probably getting something that is perfectly satisfying, but not the best you've ever had. That's other elements of the story: the weird preacher in the park subplot, the wacky supporting characters, and Pendergast's entertaining but often absurd knack for getting out of impossible situations.

Then, of course, there's freezer pizza. Which, let's face it, is barely pizza, but it's what you eat if you NEED something pizza-like and have no other option at 3 AM. In this case, that's the semi-icky romance between D'Agosta and Hayward, the occasionally clunky dialogue, and most aspects of the villain (who I won't say anything about to avoid spoilers).

(Incidentally, I'm ignoring things like the pizza they serve in elementary school cafeterias, which the FDA has determined is not, in fact, pizza, but is actually a corpse hand covered in mozzarella-flavored cheez food snack product. There are no circumstances under which it should be given to a growing child for whom nutrition is paramount, unless one is grooming said child to be a flesh-eating zombie, in which case it is acceptable, but less preferable than almost any other form of decaying human body parts.)

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: Preston and Child are as technically proficient a pair of thriller writers as there is on the market, so even when they stretch in different directions (occasionally a little awkwardly) in an effort to broaden the canvas on which they can paint this series, they don't lose sight of what they came to do, which is write an entertaining page turner that never lets up. Worth a read if you're a fan of the series, but definitely start with the predecessors before you jump into this one.

(One note on Pendergast: he continues to evolve into more of an action hero, moving beyond his Sherlockian roots to become something more akin to a highly intelligent and eccentric James Bond in this book, albeit Bond mixed with a shirtless, drawling Matthew McConaughey. It's odd. Yet, compelling.)

Matthew says

There are not enough stars in the world for Preston and Child! Dark mystery and intrigue! Forces of good and evil collide! Satan come forth from hell to take the souls of sinners!

Every chapter is interesting with a question answered or a new one raised. Every few pages, another cliffhanger. Each challenge presented seemingly impossible to overcome.

If you like mysteries, thrillers, horror, dark humor, crime drama, etc. Basically if you like unstoppable excitement from page one that goes on for book after book, then you need the Pendergast series in your life.

Kasia says

Brimstone is the fifth fantastic read from the ingenious Preston and Child duo and it doesn't disappoint. I thought that the book was simply fantastic and extremely delectable, and the moment I finished it I felt a deep hunger to pounce on the next, if I had the sixth book in my possession I have no doubt that I would be unable to leave it alone. Meticulously researched, the novel travels from the streets of New York into the lush and romantic Italy, where Pendergast meets with a nemesis so grand, evil and intense that everyone has little doubt about it being the devil himself. I adore that these books have an aura of enigmatic and mystical proportions, anything is possible and everything somehow has an explanation.

The book is quite long but a lot of things happen and the chases, the intrigue and the clues take up a lot of time, making the entire story feel alive and throbbing with anticipation of what happens next. My favorite literary crush, FBI Special Agent Aloysius Pendergast is fabulous as usual, with plenty of tricks up his sleeves (literally) and with his senses heightened to take on this hard challenge he takes charge at solving another unusual crime while risking his life. When a famous art critic dies under strange circumstances Pendergast doesn't take long to start connecting small clues, they form into a cluster of horrifying secrets and involved more people who seem to die in similar fashion before anyone can get to them. There's a connection between the strange, rich people and the hellish ways in which they perished, but the closer they get to the truth the more obstacles appear on his way, seems that not only is the devil out to get him but the mortals involved in protecting the secrets are as ruthless and vicious as they come. His research takes him and former NYPD officer Vincent D'Agosta to monasteries, castles and catacombs of ancient Italians, where the secrets are gravely guarded and finding the truth is tougher than anyone could have expected. I adored the last hundred pages, the tale really took a life of its own and the ending was stunning, I am worried but hopeful, gah..books such as this one really take me somewhere else, and I can't wait to dive back in.

Cherie says

It was nice to have the whole story and not an abridged version.

Mark says

The best reason for rereading a good book is when you switch from a dog-eared paperback copy to a first edition hardcover copy, so I did just that.

The book begins with a crime scene that clearly shows that the devil has taken care of the victim. This of course tickles a certain FBI agent's interest and when he finds a certain former NYPD lieutenant Vincent in the humble job of police sergeant at the same scene life is good for Vincent who suddenly becomes a liaison for the local police department and the FBI.

When a second dead occurs that looks like the Devil visited a second sinner the religious read a message in that and they have their own agenda to fulfill.

In the meantime Pendergast and Vincent are pursuing their own investigation that is a heck more down to earth. It does take them from New York to the Bella Italia where everything either ends or just starts heating up.

A first installment in a trilogy of books that does end on some sort of cliffhanger, which makes you read on. The fact that this book is written by messieurs Preston & Child makes it an easy choice, of course you will continue.

For the fans of Dan Brown there is plenty of brilliant Italy and the art and history to be enjoyed, only a lot better written by two writers that were just getting started with the Pendergast tales.

Well advised to be read.

Jovana Vesper says

Bože, daj svima zdravlja i sreće a meni šesti nastavak Preston/ajld romana!

Obožavam ovu franšizu, to je i slepim miševima u mom dvorištu jasno. Koja šteta što mi je trebalo toliko vremena da pročitam "Sumpor" do kraja ali šta tu kad su mi obaveze stale na put. Zbog toga sam u tuđnom raspoloženju sad kad sam gotova.. Prvih 400 strana sam praktično u dahu pročitala a ostatak suviše razvlačila da sam se u tom istezanju distancirala od kraja, dok ne stigoh do Epiloga. E to je druga stvar!

Prvo rečeno sam se bojala je da će D'Agosta biti neutešan na kraju (ako preživi). Sad znam da sam se realno plašila ali ne iz razloga koje sam pretpostavljala. Bez obzira na to, "joj!" za Loru.

Drugo, očekivala sam da će Pendergast biti istestiran do krajnjih granica jer je i sam slučaj bio drugačiji od ostalih - što se i očekivalo, peti nastavak mora da bude zaokret ako ćeš da držiš pažnju italaca - ali ovo što se dešava u "Sumporu" je (ne)prijatno iznenađenje, Pendergastova koncentracija nije na najvišem nivou, spremnost mu je (mislim što se tiče ovek koji je praktično kategorija ličnosti sama za sebe) skoro falšna! opterećen je višestrukim brigama i emocijama te je njegova žrtva i razvoj događaja apsurdan, skoro tuđovistan.

Treće, ali ne manje važno - znam, sva treperim ali znaaaam ko je ovek raznobojnih ožju! Ta mračna dejvid

bouvijevska prilika je niko drugi do Pe..-##%&"!#\$Q! kah kah krrrkljj kahhh...
Uhhhh zamalo se ne udavih svojim teorijama i spojlerima.

Ovo je svakako više detektivski roman u onom izvornom smislu nego istraživanje neprirodnog ili natprirodnog, dolazimo do novih otkrića vezanih za događaje iz "Kabineta ʻudesā", tu je i omaž Vilkijevoj "Ženi u belom", radnja se najverovatnije delom odvija u Firenci što je lepa promena, D'Agosta se tripuje da je italijan hahah i ima dosta lepih priča o muzici i neizbežnoj, nepromenljivoj mračnoj strani ʻoveka.

?Susan? says

I have liked other books in this series very much but I had a hard time getting into this one. I only related to two characters which is rare for me in a Preston Child book. It was a struggle to stick with it.

Alex says

Great book! Solid 4.5 stars. The duo really has a way of fusing together both great dialogue and descriptive setting with a solid plot. There were several action scenes that had me on the edge of my seat, reminding me of the greatest action novels I've read - Dan Brown, Max McCoy, Patterson, and even other Preston/Child books. Great plot, per usual, and plenty of twists and turns to keep you guessing what will happen next. And the fellas have a knack for knowing just when to switch to another subplot to keep the suspense maxed. Bravo, gentlemen, bravo. And the epilogue? Epic...

Emma says

Pendergast for President! I love this character and this series. Pendergast is the real deal.

kartik narayanan says

Brimstone starts off promisingly but putters out towards the end.

So..., the book is actually quite good till the last act. Once, the villain is revealed in all his Blofeld like glory, the book falters. Other than this (which is a big deal), Brimstone has excellent writing & characterization blah blah blah.

Preston & Child have used this book to set up a 'Moriarty' for Pendergast or is that a Mycroft? ;-). In addition, a new character is abruptly introduced which made me wonder if I had missed a book in between but then I realized it was not so. We also get to meet a couple of returning characters - D'Agosta & Laura Hayward.

Lobstergirl says

This, the rollicking fifth in the Pendergast series, featuring spontaneous combustion, assassins, and 18th-century violins, is Preston & Child's best Pendergast thus far, despite some flaws. One overlookable flaw was an unnecessary side plot involving an ex-felon doomsday preacher who improbably sets up a grimy tent city in Central Park and gets hundreds (or maybe it was thousands) of New Yorkers to follow him as if he's a modern Messiah. Um, right. This felt like it was imported from a bad Tom Wolfe novel. A second flaw is the introduction of several high-society characters at the outset, who then are immediately abandoned. A third flaw is the authors' outright theft of Count Fosco, plucked, white mice and all, from Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*. The authors pretend to apologize for this in an afterword, claiming that "today [the novel] is well-nigh forgotten" - ridiculously, of course, because *The Woman in White* was and is much more widely read than even Preston & Child's biggest selling bestsellers. (*The Woman in White* has 105,780 Goodreads ratings, versus 75,080 for P & C's *The Relic*, and 28,128 for *Brimstone*.) Fourthly, there is some cringiness in the way Pendergast meets and is instantly smitten by Lady Viola Maskelene, who will appear in subsequent novels. With a character as odd as Pendergast I think you need to write his emotions as awkward and stumbling, not suave. No one wants to read a scene where he takes a woman's hand and time stops and the world suddenly rotates on a different axis. Fifthly, I don't understand how Pendergast's face can "drain of color" when he is albino to begin with. "As D'Agosta watched, Pendergast grew pale." "D'Agosta was startled to see Pendergast go pale as he took the envelope." It's time to find a new way for Pendergast to look startled or frightened, authors! Maybe his nearly-white hair can stand on end.

Overall, though, Preston and Child's bulbous wet glistening mounds served them fairly well in this Faust-themed novel. By that, I mean their brains. Even though, regrettably, their bulbous wet glistening mounds could not seem to refrain from constantly referencing police captain Laura Hayward's breasts (as happened in earlier novels as well). These breasts were large, even enormous. Several characters in this book and others referred to them multiple times as a "set of knockers." This is a phrase that emanated from Preston and Child's bulbous wet glistening mounds. As Preston and Child sat at their computers, their penises in their trousers - possibly engorged and erect, ramrod straight - or perhaps lying flaccid, limp and inactive, nestled like new babes in mangers - who knows which? - their bulbous wet glistening mounds constantly reflected on the size of Laura Hayward's mammaries even though this had no bearing on the story. Laura Hayward was not a stripper, an exotic dancer, a model, not a wet nurse. She was a police captain. Her uniform was not revealing of her chest or other body parts. Yet the bulbous wet glistening mounds of the authors, as they sat penis-equipped writing their novels, insisted that Laura Hayward's breasts must be emphasized in every description of Laura Hayward. This flaw I could not overlook.
