

Satan: His Psychotherapy and Cure by the Unfortunate Dr. Kassler, J.S.P.S.

Jeremy Leven

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Alas, poor Satan. He's not happy. No one seems to like or understand him; people have got him all wrong. And his relationship with God is a hostile one. Unloved and misunderstood, he's come back to Earth in search of a psychotherapist; he's prepared- if cured- to deliver the all-important Great Answer.

In Jeremy Leven's wildly original comic novel, we follow the Prince of Darkness through his seven amazing therapy sessions. And we watch him grow increasingly well adjusted while his therapist, the unfortunate Dr. Kassler, descends deeper and deeper into hell.

Satan: His Psychotherapy and Cure by the Unfortunate Dr. Kassler, J.S.P.S. Details


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Author : Jeremy Leven

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From Reader Review Satan: His Psychotherapy and Cure by the Unfortunate Dr. Kassler, J.S.P.S. for online ebook

David Rice says

Gosh, I have loved this book for over three decades. The best part of the book is where Satan argues its case as being created by stupid non-Hebrew humans (i.e., Greeks) who did not understand what the word "satan" means. Satan in the book explains its origins and how it came to exist as one of the Christian gods. A delight of a book to read!

Jim Leckband says

Like kids and animals, Satan is a scene-stealer. He did it in Paradise Lost and he does it here. But, then again, he ostensibly wrote this book so I guess it's okay.

This is a weird motley of a book. Mostly it is about the Job-like spiraling down of Satan's psychotherapist, Dr. Kassler J.S.P.S (Just Some Poor Schmuck). In the course of the novel Kassler loses everything through no fault of his own - but gains a patient in the computer built by another patient of his. In the course of the therapy of this patient (Satan), both therapist and patient come to Lifetime Channel breakthroughs about themselves.

But Leven has some serious things he is doing here. In his farcical situations that he puts Kassler through, he is showing him how much he can control and when to let go - and how crazy it is to define ourselves by other people's craziness.

BTW Leven must have had a seriously f*&'ed up divorce battle - because that part of the book seems a little too real! Writing this book may even be a way the author dealt with it.

Felicia McDonnell says

I read this over 20 years ago, while in college. Loved it. Need to re-read!

Meghan says

Very humorous but at times depressing. I enjoyed it quite a bit...not for younger readers.

Toby McMillen says

This was a great read, one of these where I kept thinking, "What kinda crazy bastard would think up a plot like this?"

This book ran the gamut of emotions from absolute grief (I almost couldn't even read the bits about the way Kassler's ex-wife treated him, and the shit with the kids, it was so fucking sad), to hilarity. As always with me, I enjoy another non-church look at God & the Devil, as fascinating a topic as there ever has been.

Lake County Public Library says

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by Jereby Leven

“A wonderful, amusing story of Sy Kassler who, after a series of unfortunate events, ends up counseling a computer which may or may not be the embodiment of Satan. Although at times Dr. Kassler’s story is tragic (indeed, the “J.S.P.S.” in the title stands for “just some poor schmuck”), the book has an overall darkly comedic tone and explores concepts such as good & evil, psychotherapy itself, and history in the context of humanity’s foibles and misdeeds. Highly recommended.”

–EG/TS&Reference

Ted Burke says

No one has ever done a subtler or a more devastating send up of the psychiatric/psychology industry, nor have many been able to insinuate sly philosophical digressions into a frothing satiric text with such grace and pacing. This satan, faceless, locking himself inside a computer in a public gallery, has the charm to coax a snake out of new skin. The complications are wonderfully wild and orchestrated, and Kassler's travails as a single dad trying to rekindle a relationship with his children are heart breaking as they are potently hilarious. I am in the league that lent his copy out, and I've been trying to replace it for years. This book needs to come back into print. Author Leven has given us one of the best structured, best written American comic novels, and its a disservice to the reading public to keep it out of print

Roxann Keating says

I found the first 87 pages of this novel to be very clever and funny. In fact, I recommended it to a number of people, so inspired was I. However after that the story seems to take a nosedive into a soap operish series of events, making Dr. Kassler's life a complete wreck. Now even in a book about Satan I need to see a little hope somewhere. I should have known the creativity in the first fifth of the book could not be sustained, because one generally needs a plot, and it was in search of a plot (which this book does in fact have) that we are forced to deal with the bizarre (and probably supposed to be humorous, though I did not find them so) actions of Dr. Kassler. Well, I stuck with it to the end. And, while there were moments of inspiration throughout the book, they were too few and far between for me to give it more than three stars. Five stars for the first 87 pages and two stars for the rest of the book.

NaiNai says

By page 10, I was thinking the main character was a poor bastard. By page 50, I figured his life had hit rock bottom. From page 50 to page 476, I kept thinking, "okay, *now* he's hit rock bottom". Then It Got Worse.

That book has consumed something like 7 hours of my life I will *never* get back.

I was promised a funny story about a dude trying to cure Satan. Instead, I got...this.

Stephani Miller says

Intrigue, repulsion, and empathy were a few emotions felt throughout my journey reading Satan, his psychotherapy and cure by the unfortunate Dr. Kassler, by Jeremy Leven. Kassler is the main character and with a great deal of thought I've decided he can be either a protagonist or an antagonist depending on your interpretation of his life. But more importantly his character. Whether you're religious or not.. (which I have to say picking this book up from being on hold at the library was a little intimidating because the word Satan can be a taboo topic in public situations). I find a lot of Kassler's actions and personal experiences to be relatable. Some maybe not so much but they still hold high value and definitely provoked a lot of thought about my interactions with others. The way other people view a person in society can really open a lot of opportunities which unfortunately means it can also close a lot of doors. Kassler was relatable for many reasons. Anyone who has gone through losing someone they love in a familiar situation or also just relationships that have gone horribly sour.. he was a person who sought after a mundane, picturesque lifestyle in my opinion. The dream of a family and a great career. Although he lacked the follow through. To be so self involved and insert yourself in others lives forcing them to go along with the idea of your reality is going to only end up in heart break. I empathize with Kassler. I think he tried and to be human involves mistakes. This book was gruesome and uncomfortable and detailed some pretty traumatic scenarios.. one of which involving a computer. Others just extremely uncomfortable sex related situations. It came across as almost animalistic which if you are interested in science or psychology you'll find interesting. I could open any page and find a topic to discuss. Which when it comes down to it is all I and most other people are looking for in a book.

Dan says

Before you dismiss this book as either dismissing or supporting religion based purely on its title, know that it hardly touches the subject. It is very much about the human condition and how everyone has their own foibles and what people need to know is how to deal with both their own and other people's issues. There is quite a bit of information about modern psychiatric practice and discusses not only whether or not it can be effective, but what methods are the most feasible.

The best thing about the novel is its sense of humor. Like Kurt Vonnegut or Philip Roth, Jeremy Leven has a great ability to discuss important aspects of life in a funny way. Of course, like those authors, there are also moments that are depressing and horrific, but it is the way that all of these elements are balanced that make it great.

Patrick says

I highly recommend this book. In the tradition of Marlow and Goethe, Leven has given us a tale akin to Dr. Faustus. There are certainly noticeable plot lines that are similar to Faust's engagement with the world, these played out by various characters. Jobian themes also pervade our poor protagonist who is caught in a web of divine drama.

Hats off to decent use of psychological theory and research, particularly for the 1980s. Stylistically, the storytelling was also phenomenal. In many ways, one can see the influence on authors like Daniel handler, a.k.a., Lemony Snicket.

Patrick J. McElfresh, Ph.D
Unitycarepsychologists.com

Dave says

I read this book back in the 1980's when I was at university and only remember it now because an old photo of me emerged recently with my holding this book in my hand. I recall being both horrified, and yet extremely amused by the trials and tribulations of poor Dr Sy Kassler (Just Some Poor Schmuck) as he puts Satan through a series of increasingly odd psychotherapy sessions.

It's very Joseph Heller in its construction and in its hilariously downbeat view of the world. It's like a train-wreck in slow motion as Satan's therapy sessions continue and more and more bad stuff keeps happening to Dr Kassler, and yet he keeps coming back for more. There are a few moments in the book that are simply blacker than black, but with genius comic timing.

If you ever find a copy of this in a second-hand bookshop I truly recommend it.

Katie Lynn says

This book holds a lot of profound truths delivered in an entertaining and novel way. Ultimately I had to rate it low because of the amount of distasteful and unnecessary debauchery. So sad. I'm not sorry I read it, though I would be embarrassed for some people to know what I've read. Ultimately, it was a good book for me right now, but had too many visuals I don't need floating around in my brain for eternity. Skip it.

Loved that Satan was his relatively true evasive self full of trickery and deflection, riding the razor-thin line of truth. Loved that hope prevails for our flawed, but ultimately human and good Dr Kassler. Loved that the lesson is one of a balance between having control over one's own life and self, but recognizing others' choices are theirs and within only their control. Loved the lesson that if someone can't keep their individual problems from hurting others that they should keep to themselves and learn or get help, as needed, until they can. Like I said, some really good truths, just some extras that could have been skipped and still saved the book.

Mark says

Innovative, inspired, beautifully constructed, informative and, on occasions, hitting like a sledgehammer, Satan is a terrific book and I strongly recommend it. There is a an old tee shirt from the seventies which shows a dog. An eye patch, a broken leg, scratches and cuts everywhere, a floppy ear, staring straight into space.

The caption underneath? "Answers to the name of Lucky".

This is Sy Kassler, the protagonist in Jeremy Leven's book. If it can go wrong, it will do. Everything he does inexorably leads to disaster. Like the wings of a butterfly causing a hurricane in Tokyo, a single note written by Kassler and thrown in a bin can cause complete and utter havoc.

His career, his marriage, his family, his kids - the Tokyo under the impact of the Hurricane. The more heartbreaking and heartrending his struggles, the lower he falls, the more painful his descent into Hell, the more he becomes able to psychoanalyse Satan himself.

I could not put this book down.

It has everything I want to read about in a book. It is bleak and black, with a cruel streak. Yet it is infused with humour: clever jokes, unexpected twists, the childish, guilty laughter when you witness someone walking into a lamppost.

There are real people in extraordinary situations. You can see the cruel vagaries of fate in action. There is philosophy, a ruthless, unhinged view of psychology; (Psychologists will love this book!) There are mad scientists, soulless and dark eyed. There are beautiful, but amoral women (Leven is almost biblically moral about women), and most of all, there is Sy. Dr Sy Kassler. A man you root for like you've never rooted for anyone in your life, and yet, the more you root for him, the more he suffers, the more cunning the schemes of his torturers and the more his painful journey to the most distant circles of Hell continues.

There were times I threw the book away. There are four passages in there which will, if you are human, make you angry, impossibly angry and yet, if you are like me, you will not be able to stop reading.

Buy this book. If you can find it!
