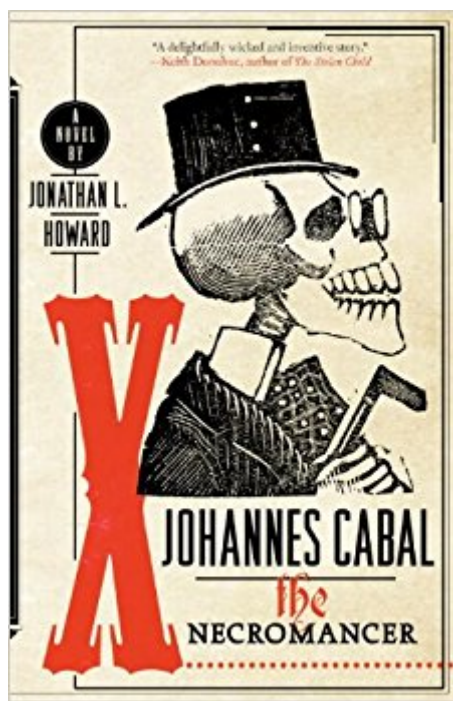


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Johannes Cabal The Necromancer



Synopsis

A charmingly gothic, fiendishly funny Faustian tale about a brilliant scientist who makes a deal with the Devil, twice. Â Â Johannes Cabal sold his soul years ago in order to learn the laws of necromancy. Now he wants it back. Amused and slightly bored, Satan proposes a little wager: Johannes has to persuade one hundred people to sign over their souls or he will be damned forever. This time for real. Accepting the bargain, Jonathan is given one calendar year and a traveling carnival to complete his task. With little time to waste, Johannes raises a motley crew from the dead and enlists his brother, Horst, a charismatic vampire to help him run his nefarious road show, resulting in mayhem at every turn.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Johannes Cabal is not only a necromancer but a total jerk who suddenly finds giving up his soul to Satan has caused him a bit of a problem when it puts a stop to his research. In order to solve this he goes to Hell to meet with the Lord of Darkness in order to get his soul back. A wager of sorts is agreed upon with details set by Satan. The wager consists of bringing forth a dark carnival to help Cabal capture 100 souls in a year's time. If Cabal can accomplish this next to impossible task in the time allotted his soul will be returned to him. The Dark Carnival is of the of the soul-snatching kind, which apparently is not the only one Satan has in operation around the world. However, the one Cabal is given has to be totally reconstructed and revived. To accomplish the revival of the Dark Carnival Johannes enlists his estranged brother Horst, who is not very happy with him for reasons I won't mention here, but agrees to help him with a little arm twisting. Once Johannes resurrects his

carnival workers and puts together some 'freak show' entertainment he starts his journey to collect 100 souls. Jonathan L. Howard's writing is outwardly humorous, dark, and brings to mind works by Terry Pratchett ('DiscWorld'), Douglas Adams ('Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy'), and Christopher Moore ('Fool'). Sometimes the laughs are real 'groaners' and the quirkiness leaves you feeling a little off center due to the rapid pace of the book. The unpredictability of one strange situation after another quickly building on each other is part of the charm of this book, so fasten your seat belt and give in to it to achieve maximum enjoyment. Though I enjoyed the book I still felt there were portions of it that were hastily written.

Johannes Cabal has sold his soul to the devil - with immediate possession - in exchange for magic and arcane wisdom that will help him further his research. But he discovers he needs his soul, not for any particular spiritual reason, but because he believes that being without it is hindering his work. And so he sets out to strong-arm Satan into giving it back. He's willing to make a deal, but both he and Satan drive hard bargains, and in the end, Johannes agrees that within the space of a single year he will deliver one hundred other souls in exchange for his own. And just because he's an okay guy, Satan gives Cabal a carnival. Not your fun-and-games, cotton candy and wild rides sort of carnival either, but one which has the potential to corrupt and destroy human beings. There's something about this book which reminds me a great deal of Gaiman's and Pratchett's "Good Omens" which is one of my favorites. Probably it's the sense that what's going on in the narrative is serious stuff, and should be taken seriously... except it's not. The danger, the corruption, the infernal interference would all make a terrific horror novel, if it wasn't so damn funny. I guess that in the final analysis, evil isn't majestic or magnificent, but rather it's small and petty and even bureaucratic in nature. Evil is less being rent limb from limb by hell hounds and more getting pecked to death by ducks. But there is an underlying seriousness within this book, and it's about the nature of the individual soul, about the relationships that have made the characters what they are, and which drive them to do what they do. That is, at least, deadly serious, and rightly so.

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