



The Complete Dr. Fell Volume I: Lost

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Homeless after his mother's funeral, John Fell can't stop mourning his murdered lover, Rob, and he clings to his goal of fulfilling his and Rob's dream of completing his PhD to become Dr. John Fell. Looking after his best friend's sub, Charlie gives him the resources to write his thesis and fight his homophobic father for his inheritance. John retreats to his cabin in the woods, but pet-sitting Charlie has shown him a new path. Putting aside his doubts, he finds solace in helping boys learn to serve their owners, and for owners to be worthy of service. Dr. Fell's poverty, pride, and loyalty to Rob hinder his quest for a new boy, but his sense of duty can't let him walk away from someone in need. Forced to confront his responses to abuse and neglect, dispirited by the imperfect relationships of his fellow doms and their subs, and struggling to make ends meet, John gives up the academic dream that sustained him through the lean years with Rob. Time and again, Dr. Fell is drawn back into the outside world by boys in need and by the irrepressible Charlie, who just won't let him be. The center of a growing circle of family and friends, John slowly returns to life. But is all that enough to help him find his 'forever boy'? Will John Fell, PhD, be smart enough to let his past go and make a new future for himself?"

The Complete Dr. Fell Volume I: Lost Details

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From Reader Review The Complete Dr. Fell Volume I: Lost for online ebook

Marejda says

Sorry I didn't feel any connection, any passion between characters and plot was plain. I couldn't believe any of these man was real

Maxicoop says

I am completely in love with Dr. Fell.

Jane says

I wish I were one of Dr. Fell's boys ;-)

I treated myself to the three collected paperbacks and dived headlong into the stories. Love the world that's been built here. It's a fantasy world in a way, but a gentle, sometimes melancholy one, flashed through with humor and beautifully written.

Am I the only one though who wonders if Rob would really have been the perfect boy for Fell if he'd have lived? I'm not sure.

Shanna says

I have to say that I found Dr. Fell a little whiny but he grew on me. I was frustrated at how he was stuck in one place and not moving past the death of his partner. Yet he kept putting himself into situations that could only end badly for him. Again and again he'd get attached to someone else's boy only to have to watch them go back to where they belonged. Over all this was a well written book, and Dr. Fell is a very realistic and well developed character. Even though Dr. Fell was frustrating at times you couldn't help but root for him and wince each time he let himself get hurt. The cast of supporting characters are also well developed and enjoyable, who can't love Twink for all his irritations? The natural development of Dr. Fell and the community he lived in is great. There were no info dumps, and the author took time to show not tell Dr. Fell's history. Over all I think this is a very good collection and while not great it is needed to understand the rest of Dr. Fell's story.

Brainorgan says

What a big softie big, bad Dr. Fell is! It figures he's a cancer. I almost couldn't stand his remorse and grief about his dead lover Rob (give it a rest already, John! He's been dead 5 years!) - I almost thought Rob was

like a Mary Sue character, too perfect, and he really is a character, not just a memory, or referred to in passing. But I got past that, and started to see Dr. Fell work through his issues, and that he actually had some self awareness that he wasn't really a big, bad Dom - even though that's what he is - paradoxically he is just a softie - how does McGinley make it all work? What a genius!

Elisa Rolle says

2009 Rainbow Awards Honorable Mention (5* from at least 1 judge)

Carolyn88 Welch says

Outstanding book. I put it up there with the deviation series. You have Dr. Fell who is a Dom. He is like a teacher to other subs and Doms. It is his life and all the ups and down. I truly got into the characters. I have even emailed Dr. Fell to find out when his next book will come out.

Charly says

Very good writing and intriguing characters

Warning: This review might contain what some people consider SPOILERS.

Rating: 9/10

PROS:

- Very well written. Very. I probably reacted more delightedly toward the abundance of English professor-related pithy remarks than most readers would (I teach college English), but the writing is just spot on. I tend to earmark pages that contain particularly clever comments and/or well written sentences, and I had to stop doing that with this book because there are so many. The book is brimming with one-sentence observations that are caustic and concise and simply perfect for the situation.
- Funny on a number of different levels. The boys/pets are ridiculous and cute almost constantly, and the Doms' reactions toward their boys are amusing. Dr. Fell also provides a running commentary on his own relationships with the other characters and on their interactions with each other, and his comments are dry, witty, and at times, razor sharp. The story in which he helps out a troupe of young actors struggling through a Shakespeare scene is priceless.
- Surprisingly individual characterizations of a large number of characters. The different stories in the book run very smoothly from one to the next (although I can imagine being extremely frustrated if I had had to read them separately in their original electronic formats), and McGinley is clever in the way he introduces the characters a few at a time. For the most part, the reader has the opportunity to get to know the current characters fairly well before they move to the background and new characters are brought to the forefront.

CONS:

- The book is written in present tense. This isn't necessarily a bad thing: it provides a sense of immediacy to the story that past tense doesn't, and present simply makes the stories sound different than most other books out there, the vast majority of which use past. The problem (and it's a slight one) is that McGinley slips up

just a few times in his/her use of past tense vs. past participle to describe events in the past. Present tense muddles the already difficult grammatical puzzle of how to relate flashbacks, but I have to give McGinley credit for attempting it at all; I don't have the nerve ever to write fiction in present.

- The book is sad. Impressively so. I marvel at McGinley's ability to create a truly heart-wrenching story in which the tragedy occurred many years before the story starts. I almost cried--CRIED--several times, and I'm still (2 days later) a little depressed at Dr. Fell's isolation at the end of the book. (I'm hoping, however, that since this is called "Volume 1: Lost" there is a forthcoming "Volume 2: Found" in which this problem will be solved and at the end of which Dr. Fell will live happily ever after with his own boy.)

- In one of the novellas contained in this volume, the number of characters is overwhelming. There are 10 boys at Dr. Fell's cabin for one week, each of whom has his own Dom, and although not ALL of them are referred to by name, many of them are, and I had to read that part of the book rather slowly to allow my brain time to process the identities of the different characters.

Overall comments: This is an excellent read, despite Dr. Fell's depressing situation and my nitpicky comments about the writing. It does contain some heavy BDSM, so if you're not into that, stay away. But Syd McGinley, with this one book, has established a place on my list of favorite authors within this genre.

Tamela says

Don't know why but I love Dr. Fell :)

Katisha says

I love this book! I read one heck of a lot of M/M stuff and this stands out in the crowd. It provides an accurate, realistic portrayal of 'power exchange' relationships (D/s) and the meaning they have for those involved. I like Dr. Fell because he's human, flawed, trying his best to deal with grief and has friends around him who are both true and loving.

This isn't an instant gratification novel(though there is plenty of sex to keep it floating if that's your interest). It's a biography for a fictional character, and at times it feels more like a collection of short stories assembled in chronological order. (If you have bought any of the short stories as e-books previously you will find that they repeat here, but the book is a great read and can be had in paperback format - I adore owning REAL books!).

If you liked this then you will definitely love the next, 'Dr.Fell Volume Two: Found'. Trying myself to acquire 'Pink: Dolorosa' presently but struggling to locate a copy. Thank you Syd for a terrific set of believable characters and a down to earth setting that works so well.

Fangtasia says

Argh!

Why did I wait so long to read this? This was excellent, in every way.

Why did I not buy all the paperbacks at one time? Now I have to wait for the next one to arrive. *sulks*

Why not 5 stars? Because there are a few editing errors and a couple tense discrepancies that pulled me out of the story. Yes, I can be nitpicky like that. Deal with it. Or not.

Tara Spears says

This is one of my favorite series. Although not truly in depth the characters are well fleshed out and likable. The author does an excellent job keeping the reader interested throughout the book and leaves you wanting more. The writing style (first person present) is sometimes rough but it fits the stories within. I did feel left out in some spots wondering what happened to a few of the boys after they left the cabin. I understand these questions are answered in; *The Boys Of Fell* which I have yet to read but plan to very soon. If you are looking for a light but correct BDSM read then I highly recommend this series.

Dusk Peterson says

A group of rich masters swap their leatherboys back and forth with cheerful abandon. Then one master meets an arrogant boy who needs to be taken down a few notches.

I have to admit that this trope – which was first popularized in the late 1970s through *Mr. Benson*, by John Preston, who in turn stole much of his material from earlier writers – is not my favorite BDSM storyline. Maybe it's because I'm such a realist that I expect the masters to be arguing over which master's protocol the boys should follow.

Syd McGinley, though, has done what I would have thought impossible: *The Complete Dr. Fell, Volume 1: Lost* (which was donated to me by the author) is a realistic version of this trope. It's not only realistic, but it retains Preston's admirable mixture of humor and pathos.

McGinley's novel actually reminds me more closely of Preston's *I Once Had a Master*, which Preston based on episodes in his own life. Unlike *Mr. Benson*, which nobody could describe as realistic (with the possible exception of the chapter set in the Mineshaft bar), *I Once Had a Master* sought to mold porn fantasy into something that could pass as literary fiction. McGinley has done the same. Amidst all the unlikely erotic passages – a cock ring made of hollies? – the novel addresses such topics as domestic abuse, immigration laws, illiteracy, and Robert's Rules of Order. "Jesus, he's spent too long in corporate land," the narrator says of another character. "I mean, it is important to discuss who is having what mark put on which boy, but do we really need a fucking agenda?"

In addition, to my very great relief, the dominant who narrates the story is not rich.

Dr. John Fell is an engaging protagonist: a scholarly curmudgeon who has a soft spot for abused and ill-trained leatherboys. I can't say that I agree with every decision he makes, not to mention his propensity for thrashing bare flesh with wild plants. (I winced during those passages, since I'm allergic to just about everything I touch in my garden.) But that's entirely the point: this is no *Mr. Benson*, no idealization of an infallible master. Instead, Dr. Fell is struggling with a personal demon: an inability to move beyond a past tragedy, which inhibits his relations with others.

Fortunately, he is surrounded by a loving and supportive community. (Dr. Fell describe this as a D/s group, though it reads to me as M/s, since all of the group's boys are owned and appear to have little say on how their lives are led.) Many BDSM stories zero in on a sexual pairing, leaving the reader with the impression that there's a solid wall between BDSM partners and the rest of the world. McGinley's approach is refreshingly different, presenting a network of BDSM relationships, and even hinting at what is taking place in the vanilla world. (The passage where Dr. Fell doms his students during a writing exercise is particularly amusing.)

Although Dr. Fell frequents a leather bar (how he got past the doorman before he bought himself a leather jacket is left an unanswered question), there's not much gay leather culture in the novel. On the other hand, there's a strong enough gay atmosphere that one doesn't feel that McGinley has stolen the plotline from yaoi manga. (In a tongue-in-cheek sequence, McGinley portrays a boy as harboring such manga.) Although the characters – in another realistic touch – range from bear to effeminate, Dr. Fell himself is very much a product of masculine culture: "We're saved from having to do awkward macho congratulations," he reports at one point. Thanks to the first-person narration, we get to witness his inner turmoil, but only occasionally are the other characters granted a glimpse of what lies behind his forbidding countenance.

The novel begins a bit awkwardly, with Dr. Fell subduing a recalcitrant submissive by sheer force and, it might be added, no condom. (The characters' attitudes toward condomless anal sex are frustratingly inconsistent; at one point, a boy prepares contributions for an AIDS foundation mere hours before barebacking another dom's boy.) In a wonderful divergence from the *Mr. Benson* tradition, however, the submissive turns out to be not quite subdued after all: "irrepressible" is how the long-suffering narrator describes him.

The next story in the novel takes a darker turn, and the author shows considerable skill at mixing tragedy with comedy.

Alas, McGinley, like most other BDSM writers, is better at describing naked bodies than at describing the characters' surroundings. Usually, I try not to quibble over such matters, but it's hard for me to believe that a Renaissance scholar who carries around a volume with phrases like this—

The canker blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses . . .

—would proceed to describe his surroundings in this manner: "I throw myself into winterizing the cabin: chop lots of wood, finish up roof repairs, install storm windows, and seal gaps in the wooden walls." There is precious little visual detail in the novel, and virtually no smells, tastes, senses of touch, or sounds (other than dialogue). This is a shame, because the novel, being primarily set in one location, could easily have provided the reader with some sensory hint of why the narrator so much enjoys living in the woods. One passage in particular suggests that Dr. Fell has a certain affinity with Thoreau: "I have few possessions: a laptop, sweats and jeans, a box of books. I believe luxury comes from attention to detail, not possessions."

What few descriptions of the cabin exist are slipped into the narrative in a natural manner, usually because one boy or another is doing domestic work. While the novel doesn't scrimp on scenes of sex and SM, McGinley is one of the few BDSM writers who seems to have grasped that doms occasionally emerge from their bedrooms and dungeons. The primary focus of the novel is on nonsexual training as Dr. Fell provides the boys with opportunities to expand their skills.

And not just the boys.

Twink slams in. "Dr. Fell, Laurie says he needs a doctor."

"A real one, not some PhD," hollers Laurie from the porch.

Twink and Dexter suck their breath in unison. I give them my cold smile.

"You two find something to do in the kitchen. I'll be busy for awhile."

Laurie is on the porch, unrepentant. His ass is a mess, but twink has done a good job of cleaning it. He looks me straight in the eye. I know a challenge when I see one.

I shut the door behind me. Laurie keeps his head held high.

"What the fuck are you up to, boy? Is your ass not sore enough?"

I can see tears glistening in his eyes, and I realize it's all bravado and he wants me out here in private.

He shakes his head. "I'm so scared, Dr. Fell. What I'm going to need is too much."

I stand next to him by the railing and put an arm around him. I've only touched to punish so far, and he whimpers in surprise.

"I don't think so, boy. Only if you fight it."

His back is rigid under my arm, and then after a second he starts to tremble.

"Stop being so proud. You know I need to bring you low before you learn better ways. But if you understand and work with me, it's easier."

I get a small sob from him, and then he puts his head on my shoulder and weeps.

"Why doesn't sir do that for me? He just ignores me; he doesn't care if I'm struggling."

"He sent you here."

He's still sobbing, and I'm rubbing his back gently.

"I know, but he never controls me, and he's having you do it, not him. I know it was wrong to use the credit card. I didn't even buy stuff I wanted."

I hide a sigh. Training Doms is much harder than training boys, but it's Laurie's doctor who is the real problem. Laurie is still babbling and his sad little remarks about how being a doctor's boy is lonely and boring confirm my thoughts. Poor Laurie. He, as I suspect are several of the group's boys, is a trophy sub. Cute, outwardly obedient, and bored out of his skull while his rich owner works on staying rich and not on being an owner.
