



Dire Means

Geoffrey Neil

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Can love be extorted? An ingenious vigilante launches a bizarre mission to end homelessness in the coveted beach-side city of Santa Monica. Randomly-chosen citizens mysteriously disappear after they are secretly videotaped ignoring or exhibiting cruelty to the homeless. Days later, their corpses show up in the streets, bearing a message. The vigilante's demand is clear: Be kind to the homeless or risk the same horrifying fate. With law enforcement stymied, Santa Monica becomes a virtual armed encampment.

Citizens engage in flagrant displays of public kindness as the only way to feel safe outside their homes. Businesses join in, using storefront window signs to flaunt perks for the homeless and avoid being targeted. Mark Denny, a computer technician, is lured and then trapped in the vigilante's scheme to maintain the public's fear-fueled generosity. Matching technological wits is the only way he can end the city's terror, but it could cost his life.

This taut thriller brings you page after page of nail-biting tension laced with moral quandaries.

Dire Means Details

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Author : Geoffrey Neil

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From Reader Review Dire Means for online ebook

Millie Burns says

I entered the elevator willingly, and couldn't get off until the ride was over. Geoff Neil's writing style flows easily from one chapter to the next and I found it easy to keep sliding my finger across the ipad screen, craving more.

I got a bit emotional as I wended my way through this story. I groaned at Mark's stupidity with the gas station guys, and thought, "Well, duh! How did you think that was going to turn out?" I also worried far too often for Mark's safety (I may have to charge the author for my next hair color job...I'm sure I have a few more gray's). So many characters came to life for me, they were painted so vividly. Some you adore, some you think are quirky, and some are so easy to loathe. I think I know just who should play Pop in the movie - can't you just see Morgan Freeman? I liked that we had a really strong female character to root for as well.

On a more serious tone, I appreciate that Mr. Neil is using his writing gift for the benefit of othes. I like that a portion of the sales of his book, a bit of my money, is going to support organizations that do outreach with the homeless.

Definately looking forward to Mr. Neil's next piece of writing.

Amanda Smith says

My review from amazon.com dated 11/13/2013

Title: An Unique Twist to the Mystery/Thriller

The main character of this book is just a nice guy trying to do nice things for others. However, when he attempts to stop someone from jumping off a building, he life changes drastically. All of a sudden is a superstar of Santa Monica, a hero during a time of disappearances. He gets an invitation to see something that "he will like" and takes the bait. Unfortunately it turns his life around even more and he is now in deep trouble.

I really enjoyed the premise of this book and was actually was quite surprised where the book went. The author definitely knows how to set a book up, by having the main character personally deal with the attitude most people have with the homeless. I also really liked how the very beginning told how some of the victims were captured--had a Criminal Minds or Without A Trace feel to it.

I definitely recommend this book and there is a high chance that I will read the other book by this author that has a character from this book. It certainly takes a twist on the normal mystery/thriller.

Sue Levin says

Another super winner from Geoffrey Neil. The book captures you at the beginning and never let's go. The

characters are well defined with a plot with lots of twists and turns. I found myself staying up through the night reading. I never wanted it to end. Having just visited the book's main site, Santa Monica, I could easily identify with witnessing the many homeless people in the area. Mr. Neil possesses an excellent writing style and I cannot wait for his next book.

Roxanne Reyes says

Very good reading that deals with an issue affecting countless cities and states not only across America but globally as well. The issue is homelessness and this story takes place in Los Angeles CA- one big reason I wanted to read the book since I live in Los Angeles. Great descriptions of Santa Monica and the author describes most of the characters nicely, enabling the reader to make a connection with them. The last couple of chapters were intense!! Unable to put the Kindle down until I read the ending. Recommended!

ChrissieD says

I read Dire Means quite some time ago and am finally getting to the review. (I am reader and not a writer, is my only excuse.) The story is clever and different, which is not a statement that comes lightly to an avid reader. I enjoyed the suspense and especially, the kick-*** female character, Morana. She's one of those types you have a love-hate relationship with as you read.

The crux of the novel is that a criminally minded homeless advocate takes revenge on the well-to-do, cruel-to-the-homeless citizens of Santa Monica, CA. The city is in a fear-induced state of lockdown, but law enforcement can't seem to get even a small break in the case. Until slightly bumbling, but technologically gifted Mark Denny gets caught up in the fray and becomes suspect number one. He ends up in the dangerous snare of the real mastermind and his cult-like company, a departure from his relatively routine, quiet life. To save his own life and stop the murderous rampage of the villains, he must use every bit of technological genius he has at his disposal, as well as summon courage he never knew he had.

I truly enjoyed this book, and despite a bit of a lag in the middle, I am won-over by new author, Geoffrey Neil's ability to spin a wild tale of suspense and terror. I definitely took the stairs a few times after reading this book...and you probably will, too.

Deleyna Marr says

Geoffrey Neil has a new fan. This book is a twisted mystery adventure similar to what I'd expect from a young Dean Koontz. The protagonist is twisted and manipulated masterfully, leaving me wondering who would respond differently. The novel looks at the coldness of the world from the standpoint of the homeless. I've always tried to help the poor, but this novel made me think in new directions...a sign of a wonderful writer.

Black Butterfly says

I READ TO 9% AND I CANNOT GO ON, I THINK THIS IS A FIRST FOR ME. AFTE EACH PAGE I READ IT GOT TOO MUCH FOR ME TO CONTINUE. I GAVE THIS A ONE STAR, IN ALL FAIRNESS I MUST SAY IT MAY BE A FIVE STAR BUT IT'S NOT FOR ME. THE FEELING THIS BOOK GAVE ME AFTER READING A FEW PAGES, IF I TRIED TO COMELETE, IT WOULD DEPRESS-THE HELL-OUTA-ME. PEACE OUT! :(

Lela says

I'm not totally sure what I think about this book -- I just know I couldn't stop reading it. Sort of like trying to look away from a car accident, maybe. Not that the book wasn't well written. It was. There were an awful lot of characters and they weren't all well developed. However, the concept and the plot were fascinating. Even though I love mysteries, I'm more into the gentle or, at least, less bloody (most of the time) British type. I even caught myself looking away from the page a few times here just to get a break. But, as I hinted, this book is addictive. It isn't really gorg most of the time. But, it has just enough of the horrible and the insane. Sticks in the mind and makes me wonder how far away we are from something like this!

Nancy says

No Solitaire for me last night! I had to finish reading Dire Means. The concept was compelling, and Neil's treatment of it was engrossing. Thanks a lot for keeping me up until 2:45 AM, Mr. Neil. Dire Means is a novel that treats a dilemma I find myself thinking about from time to time--how to respond to the homeless I encounter. I'd like to be more like the hero, Mark Denny. I'm not like the worst people in the book, but just where on the spectrum do I fall? Lots of food for thought after reading Dire Means.

Erick Worrell says

I found Dire Means thanks entirely to the Storybundle.com Mystery & Suspense bundle earlier this year - something I bought intending to give as a gift to my mother-in-law, an avid mystery reader. While I find myself more easily satisfied in a good history book or sci-fi piece, something made Dire Means stick out among the other books in the bundle and I found myself hanging onto it even while letting the others go on as gifts.

Dire Means grabbed my interest immediately. The first six or so chapters detail something happening without an explanation. Suddenly, the book changes settings and writing styles completely to begin a character story about someone previously unmentioned. I spent the remainder of the book juggling two fascinations: 1) who is this new character and why do I find myself relating to him so much; and 2) how in the world does this character get tangled up in what transpired at the beginning of the book? The result of the two fascinations combining was an inability to read a magazine, preview another book, watch a TV show at night or listen to music on the treadmill in the morning until I had completed this book.

Geoffrey Neil's writing style was easy to read, his story was easy to care about, his characters were easy to

love and hate (depending on the character, of course) and his narrative moved at just the right pace and chapters broke at just the right places that I was never bored and always telling myself, "Well, I can't stop here! One more chapter..."

I've said nothing to the plot or morals of the book, both of which I loved. Get Mr. Neil's book - as well as his latest, "HR", as I have just done - and enjoy the ride. He'll surely be a great author to follow as he continues to work and grow.

Mike says

Moves along briskly enough but requires a large dollop of suspended disbelief. The overall scenario and establishment response is a shade too much to swallow although the writing style is readable but needs sharpening.

The characters are a trifle thin and a few could be dismissed entirely, or their actions limited, which might tighten up the whole tale. For instance, Uncle Leon takes a hunk of text and yet adds very little to the story overall. (Favors {UK favours} explanation takes up several Kindle pages and goes nowhere relevant). Neva has a drawn out prayer session that could be reduced from several pages to a paragraph and not lose anything.

There is also a lot of minor detail that reduces the chance of letting the reader's imagination give its own colour. The sort of thing like, 'Despite the crisp coastal evening air, the sidewalks bustled with shoppers.' This is fine and sets the scene. The reader can fill in the detail unconsciously. The next sentence does the opposite of its intention and curtails rather than allows the picture to develop in the reader's head. 'Some carried shopping bags while others sipped steaming drinks cupped with both hands...etc.'

Occasionally adverbs detract from the crispness: 'absolutely delicious', 'absolutely amazing', 'absolutely fine', 'absolutely adorable', 'absolutely exquisite' to name but a few.

Despite the cavils, the observation is good and the flow is maintained, the plot is merely a little ambitious and the editing too light.

Dusty says

Interesting premise but I felt the ending was much too abrupt. One character in particular was left flapping in the breeze, clearly with the intent of bringing her back in a later book. I say this with a great degree of certainty as the Kindle version I read had an excerpt from "Human Resources", the author's follow-up to "Dire Means", and the character is prominently featured. Wish the ending was fleshed-out more. The brief epilogue was wholly unfulfilling and somewhat ambiguous.

Philip says

Once I started reading, I just wanted to keep reading, which is generally a quality I consider good in a novel. This story has a lot going for it, from an interesting and bizarre plot to a great main character, tied together with writing that was easy to read and be involved by.

Unfortunately, it took a little while to get there.

I thought this when I just a short way into the novel and still think it now that the first four or six chapters (or however many there are until Mark was introduced) are the worst part of this novel. They're written in a super cheesy thriller type way with clumsy attempts at invoking suspense and absolutely nothing that makes me care about what's happening. Even after reading the entire novel I still feel like they weren't at all necessary to tell the story and the novel would have been better off without them.

Fortunately, it wasn't too much of that until Mark was introduced. And once he was, it didn't take long for the story to develop into one that I wanted to read, with a character I liked and cared about. The suspense and tension that I think the author was trying to build in the first paragraphs did start to happen much better through the news reports and stuff mentioned in the background of Bonfiglio's. For that matter, that diner was a perfect setting: absolutely believable and enjoyable while still doing a great job establishing the setting and moving the plot.

As far as the plot, well, it was super contrived. But I don't think that was a bad thing. Just the fact that it's tied so closely to homelessness makes it odd; while I appreciate the wacko and amusing plot to go with the anvils, it is kind of weird to have the over the top ridiculousness tied to something so serious and mundane. At the same time, if the author wrote this book for the intention of drawing attention to the homeless, then the plot is almost a problem because it starts to overshadow that topic with its later questions about ethics.

Like that makes any sense. What I'm trying to say is that I liked the plot and the questions it evoked. It's just odd that while the homelessness thing was almost excessive and almost a turn off, the things I was thinking about at the end were not about homeless folks. But they were interesting nonetheless. (view spoiler)

So, while I would probably recommend this book to most people and I really enjoyed it (except for a few unnecessary paragraphs), it's not perfect. While the side characters and varied, interesting and amusing, they're all still various degrees of flat. Morana's probably the most interesting one just because it takes a while to figure out her thinking/ethics/motivation/whatever word it is I want.

Uncle Leon is interesting. I enjoyed his conversation with Mark. However, it was odd how he wasn't actually part of the story. He was introduced and in the one paragraph established as if he was going to be a part, but then it turned out he was at most a catalyst. Which is kind of too bad. On the one hand, written like that he wasn't obviously the cliché wise old man who gives the perfect advice to tie up a story, which is good because that's super cheesy and usually not something I like in my stories. On the other hand, once the story is finished, in retrospect that's exactly what he was, giving the perfect advice to start the story. I guess I just wish there were a bit more natural way for Mark to change. Also, his one loose thread was never used: (view spoiler)

Unfortunately, that wasn't the only bad plot device. The TellTale, just in general. Ugh. Besides the fact that it is totally impossible and the fact that the explanation given of how it works doesn't make sense and the fact that Flash isn't hardware so Jim using a newer revision wouldn't make it smaller, it was just entirely too convenient. When it was mentioned originally, even then it was the most obvious Chekov's Gun ever, to the point that now that I'm finished it really feels more like an Ass Pull that was retconned in to make it less terrible, even though that didn't actually help to make it less terrible.

Sorry, I just felt like TVTroping. By the way, don't click those links.

Where was I? Dunno, I've been looking at TVTropes and forgot if there was anything else...

Oh, right, one last complaint is that I felt that there was a conspicuous lack of background about Pop. He's

this (view spoiler) And we're just supposed to go with that with no explanation of how he got where he is or why he suddenly now is doing something. Ultimately it just made him a caricature of a villain, which is less than ideal.

But, despite those things, I definitely enjoyed the story.

Andrew Harvey says

Great book good story enjoyed it a lot.

Caddy Rowland says

This was a very good story. I enjoyed it and found the book hard to put down. It was interesting to think about someone coming up with this as a way to end hunger and homelessness. Yikes.

It moved along well and the characters were well developed. I would recommend this book to others. Well worth your time.
