



# Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage

*Ennis Drake*

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## **Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage** Ennis Drake

One man ravaged by disease, the other by war, their stories--and fates--bound by an ancient entity that thrives on suffering.

For Detective Ernest Riley, the path to damnation begins with an anonymously mailed recording detailing a series of grisly murders. Can Riley unravel its secrets without sacrificing his humanity? Or will he surrender to the RAGE inside him?

Strom Wheldon has returned from Iraq a literal half-man. But he's lost more than his legs to that desert Hell. He's lost his will to live. Can love save him from the RAGE eating him from within? Or will a gift given in innocence cost him everything?

"28 Teeth of Rage has the bite of a crocodile. Drake tears a hole right through modern horror. This guy isn't on the way; he's kicking in the door." — Laird Barron, award winning author of *THE IMAGO SEQUENCE*, *OCCULTATION*, and *THE CRONING*.

"This is a tale of possession and madness, but the kind that any sane person will understand. Drake gets inside the heart and mind of each character and never stops digging for the truth. You know these people. I know them. They have suffered terribly, and they are haunted by their loss. At the same time they are the inheritors of the spectacular horrors human beings have hurled at one another throughout our blood-spattered history. This is a hell of a ghost story, one you won't forget thanks to Drake's storytelling ingenuity, but also because it springs directly from our collective well of grief and rage. This animal howl— for justice, for retribution— resonates within us, and is unanswerable." — S.P. Miskowski, author of the the Shirley Jackson Award nominated novel *KNOCK KNOCK*

## **Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage Details**

Date : Published May 28th 2012 by Omnium Gatherum Media

ISBN : 9780615645292

Author : Ennis Drake

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# From Reader Review Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage for online ebook

## David says

Dark, hallucinatory visions of hell come to life in Ennis Drake's debut novel, "Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage". This is a slim novel, but the writing here quickly encapsulates the reader in a bottle of horror. It's a story about darkness and what happens when we let darkness consume our hearts and minds. I'm looking forward to more stories from this author. Bravo!

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## Keith Deininger says

Very exciting--cinematic almost. I couldn't stop reading this one (actually, I sneaked away at work and took a half hour #2 to finish it ;)). The shifting narrative voices technique can come across as contrived, but Drake pulls it off beautifully. Very well-told and excellent prose style.

I should probably give this 4 stars, but, fuck it--I really enjoyed Drake's flagrant violence and gore.

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## Benjamin Ethridge says

Ennis Drake's writing absolutely cooks. From start to finish, I was enthralled with his imagery, language, and mastery of creating horrific chaos (deep (deep ( deep in the soul) ) ).

This is a story that could have been another tired horror exercise-- the haunting of a man, his madness that ensues and the various destruction it causes in his life and to his loved one(s); for me, this type of tale, barring stunning creativity, has become older than space dust. Even with a spark of originality, you're most often looking at literary junk food at best.

And yet, the flare, energy, passion, and courageous choice to go for the astounding rather than the easy, mediocre, blended-down version, sets 28 Teeth of Rage apart from most others in its category.

If this is junkfood, then it is indeed a red-velvet twinkie set upon a china plate with a chocolate drizzle design piped there by a master chef. I cannot wait to devour a main course from this brilliant new author.

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## Hal Bodner says

Had it been written as a short story, Ennis Drake's "Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage" might have been a genuinely creepy, off-beat tale of horror. Compression would have done this novella a world of good, intensifying the horror elements, forcing the author to develop character more efficiently and helping to create a viable plot. As it stands however, "Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage" is just a silly bit of stuff that completely fails to work on any level.

It's no spoiler to mention that the twenty-eight teeth of the title belong to a power saw--a demonic power saw inhabited by the spirit of an Indian totem no less. While stories about unusual or non-traditional haunted objects can be delightfully spooky, one needs to do more with the conceit than to simply pick an odd object for the haunting. It's not that Drake doesn't TRY to do something with what could have been an interesting idea, he simply fails miserably.

What's more, the plot contrivance (and it is indeed contrived) concerning a soldier who has lost his legs and is now "half a man" (an expression which is an example of how sorely this book lacks originality) being tempted to do evil in exchange for the return of his legs is both hackneyed and poorly executed. What purport to be several parallel plot lines fall flat and seem more inchoate than incomplete, much as if the author threw them in because he thought they'd be "cool."

There's not much to recommend this book. Other authors have tackled the same themes (albeit without the haunted saw which, in the end, provides no improvement whatsoever) much more concisely, in far more entertaining manner, and with far more originality. Drake's version is bland and lacks any originality. In addition, the novel suffers from a writing style which seems to suggest that the author could not make up his mind what he wanted to do with the various characters and/or plots.

Nothing is really completed in terms of plot; aspects of the story crop up and are left hanging. The reader never has the feeling that the characters are real people. The characters don't even rise to the level of being cardboard or two dimensional--they're just blandly presented in a way that startled me with how much an author would have to work to create such uninteresting people.

In short, unless you have an unrequited passion for haunted electric saw novels, you can skip this one.

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### **S.P. says**

This is a tale of possession and madness, but the kind that any sane person will understand. Drake gets inside the heart and mind of each character and never stops digging for the truth. You know these people. I know them. They have suffered terribly, and they are haunted by their loss. At the same time they are the inheritors of the spectacular horrors human beings have hurled at one another throughout our blood-spattered history. This is a hell of a ghost story, one you won't forget thanks to Drake's storytelling ingenuity, but also because it springs directly from our collective well of grief and rage. This animal howl— for justice, for retribution— resonates within us, and is unanswerable.

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### **Todd Russell says**

Great title, good cover artwork and the blurb pulled me into this novella. It opens with a bloody scene that happened in the past and then flashes forward to present day with a detective who receives a disturbing package. An evil totem that enjoys suffering and transcends time haunts a skill saw, er kill saw, in the hands of a vet who lost his legs and is "literally half a man" (a description in both the blurb and story which seems wrong on *so* many levels).

This one tries ridiculously hard to be scary, but the bloody action flows a bit too fast to learn about anybody enough to care about them. While we should feel sorry for the man in the wheelchair, or fear what he might

do with the haunted saw, instead he comes across as an empty vessel for bad things to happen. The most sympathetic, likable character is his wife, but instead of seeing scenes unfold through her eyes (third person POV), we're told them in less compelling first person pov diary entries. The detective narrative could have been more exciting had he actually interacted with the others beyond being an official who gets an anonymous mail and struggles alone to figure everything out.

On the Kindle formatting side, there was something wrong with apostrophes in the version I read. Like a weird character had invaded where they should have been (leaving a question mark with a square around it) and punched me out of the narrative several times. The publisher might want to investigate and resolve this gremlin.

In summary, a nice package (get them interested in reading, that's a **big** hurdle to overcome with so many reading choices these days), an interesting idea with shaky execution at times particularly with pacing and characterization. Good imagination. There is noticeable talent shown here. I might be interested in reading another work by this author, especially if it's a more character-driven tale.

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### **Brent Kelley says**

It's not a long read (124 pages), but it's a good read. The story is brilliantly conceived and masterfully executed. The Yaholos stand out, led by the gruesome Hadjo. But that was a long time ago. Rage has returned. Terror in the South Florida swamps in the 1800s, IED's along the Fallujah roadside, the KILL SAW screaming hungrily in the basement... all told with gritty detail and originality. This story stuck with me, and I'm certain I'll think about it every time I use my chop saw.

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### **John Palisano says**

Listen: I loved this book, and probably for all the wrong reasons. What do I mean by that? Well, it's not for everyone. If you dig 'normal' storytelling and paint-by-numbers procedurals, you're going to be frustrated. However, if you're looking for something that is not ordinary, you may enjoy this. First off: the beginning of the book felt very different than the last third. There was a lot of Military action and stuff going down, which was fine, and there were sprinkles of the story to come. About halfway through, I was like, what the heck is this? And then things changed and the walls came down and Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage really took off for me. Note: I love William S. Burroughs, and psychedelia, and experimental work. I'd put it right in line with his contemporaries like Michael Louis Calvillo and Benjamin Ethridge. Last, I want to talk about the writing style. I loved it, even though it took a bit of getting used to because it's in a very stream-of-consciousness kind of style. Loved it, recommend it, hope you enjoy it, too.

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### **Jason Rolfe says**

Ennis Drake is a very good writer. With Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage he seamlessly weaves journal entries, recorded monologues, and horrific visions into a compelling story that bleeds raw emotion. The depth of character, the intricacy of thought and (misguided) motive, and the vivid realism Drake brings to each and every page make this short novel both compelling and difficult to put down.

While Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage is pure, unapologetic horror, it symbolizes the (very real) pursuit of life and liberty at any cost, the idea that these pursuits, coupled with a lack of (social) conscience, are often achieved at the expense of others. In short, we step on the backs of those around us in order to achieve our own lofty goals. In this novel, Drake uses brutal violence to demonstrate this societal shortcoming.

Drake "weeps for the loss of 'The American Sensibility'" - a fact he makes quite clear in Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage. He is an extremely talented writer with something very important to say. Armed with a combination of skill and purpose he is certainly a welcome voice in horror.

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### **Andrew says**

Hmmm ...

Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage has a strange premise. If I'd summarized it here (which I won't, 'cause it'd be a spoiler, although the cover does have a clue), you'd probably start snickering. The fact that author Ennis Drake is able to pull it off without the READER snickering is a compliment to his writing skills.

The book is short, more novella in my opinion. It seems to jump around a little; by the end, I figured out what was going on, and the strengths and weaknesses of the characters. BUT it took a little ping-ponging around different scenes at different times from different characters' vantagepoints to make that happen - I didn't like being as confused as I was for as long as I was. (Maybe it's just me, of course.)

I DID like the fact that the characters (well, most) were not straight "good" or "bad". I prefer my proverbial cowboys to have gray hats rather than black or white ones. (I also liked the Florida setting - having lived in the rural central part of the state awhile back, it allowed a little nostalgia. Although I had to wonder about the basement in the house ... I don't know a house down here that has one due to the high groundwater table.)

Summary: My opinion falls right down the middle, as 3 a 3 star rating as I can provide.

DISCLOSURE: The electronic version of this book was provided to the reviewer free of charge without conditions, although an honest review was probably hoped for and a good review really hoped for.

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### **Marilou Johnson says**

Another interesting looking FREE book!

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### **Beverly says**

This book is a fun entry into the slasher genre. While it isn't my favourite genre, I still found Drake's book to be a page-turner. I read it in one sitting and found that it kept me saying "Just one more page" until I got to the end. I particularly liked the historical elements, being a fellow Floridian. If you like slasher, I can definitely recommend this. If you like a twisted look at historical figures, I can recommend it as well.

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## Nick Gucker says

This was a rather visceral little monster of a novella, excellent story telling device used to convey multiple points of view with a slightly noir edge and an economy of style. It takes a bit for things to get rolling, but the set-up in the beginning is quite necessary to fully flesh-out the gravity of all that comes to a head. This character driven vortex explores the trauma of post-war PTSD's, bruised relationships, and dire obsession, as the layers get peeled back and the open wounds start to pull you into the quagmire and mythology of historical sins and ritual blood lettings.

I wanted it to continue on for another couple of chapters but the ending makes complete senses, I just didn't want the 28 Teeth to stop raging!

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## M Griffin says

This short debut novel quickly establishes that newcomer Ennis Drake can really write. The narrative voice is strong, rich with nuance and flavor. Scene after scene exhibits Drake's competence at playing out a narrative thread. The book is clearly in the horror category but also has a noir genre feel to it, including the common noir element of the emotionally or psychologically damaged law enforcement officer for a main character.

The whole story, every character interaction, is a pool of hard, bitter emotions. Everybody in the book seems hurt and wanting, stuck in an agonizing pattern of self-defeat and dysfunction. Characters seem realistically flawed, emotionally alive. It's clear what they want and what's keeping them from getting it. Drake's strength as a writer is in clearly rendering these people (particularly Riley, the protagonist) so they seem believable and familiar to the reader. Throughout this book, I felt what the characters felt. The ability to give the reader this experience is arguably the most important determinant of whether a book succeeds or fails. On this test, I say Drake easily passes. The novel is quite strong in terms of execution, of conveying believable characters with a strong narrative voice.

An aspect I consider less successful is the central conceit of the possessed or demonic power saw. Much of Stephen King's very popular oeuvre has been built on similar concepts -- such possessed/demonic objects as a hotel, laundry press, lawnmower, classic car, eighteen-wheeler, even a St. Bernard. Despite King's success with this approach, I'd argue a stronger, more interesting antagonist or threat could be created by not merely applying demonic or malignant qualities to a mundane object. I'd love to see Drake's skill for storytelling, and the creation of realistic characters, applied to a stronger, more complex basic concept.

The only other shortcoming is in those sections of written or recorded testimonies of characters in their own voices, which sound not like a real person telling their story, but more formal, like a novel's narrator. Through these segments important backstory is revealed, so these passages are necessary, yet the tone is slightly off. This problem does not exist with the novel's spoken dialog, which is both naturalistic and believable, so it's clear Drake knows how to convey the way people really speak. This minor quibble applied only to the sections of Jodi's diary and Strom's recorded testimony, and really didn't detract much from my enjoyment of the book.

These reservations were certainly outweighed by the confident, fluent prose and believable characterization.

Overall, *Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage* is a compelling, passionately-told drama, and a successful piece of writing. From the first page I was impressed with Drake's ability to draw the reader into an intense, vividly emotional scene. Flaws may be present, but not many for a first novel. I'm eager to see how Ennis Drake applies his obvious authorial talents to different story concepts in the future.

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## Steve says

Whoo boy! This one had some pop to it. As I understand it, this is Ennis Drake's first "novel." At 128 pages, that's probably more in the novella range, but in the field of Horror, if you employ potent economy, effective atmosphere, shock, and good character development, that's an honorable place to be. Drake does well on all counts. Normally, I'm not big on possessed power tools, cars, and other objects – beyond houses of course. But Drake builds a good (and totally horrific) historical foundation for his possession that is rooted in the Seminole wars. The book opens up with a terrifying chase, set in the Florida swamps, with howling Indians, running soldiers, hand to hand combat, torture, and, well, otherworldly nastiness. I was totally hooked after this opening.

What follows next is a complicated back & forth involving a dying detective and his obsession with a missing couple's journal and tape, which builds to a terrifying (and not expected) conclusion. *Twenty-Eight Teeth of Rage* does not, refreshingly, follow predictable horror novel formulas. Drake is, early on, already his own writer, so comparisons are kind of hard. Clive Barker (*Damnation Game*), Richard Bachman (Stephen King), and a healthy dose of Laird Barron darkness, all of these writers come to mind, but Drake has a very bloody velocity all his own. Definitely check this guy out. At \$1.99 on Kindle, this has to be one of the best Horror deals out there.

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