



## From Man to Man

*D.E.M. Emrys*

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*'I've traded my old enemies for just this one... ' The axe thundered home. 'I miss the old ones.'*

Every man has a past, none more so than Draven Reinhardt. Abandoning his old life to settle down as a villager, he struggles to fit in, let alone hold down a job. When opportunity offers the much needed coin, Draven is torn between a promise and a purpose.

But, what's one last job if you've already got blood on your hands?

'From Man to Man' is the story of how one man can change – or not – for the best. Prequel to the upcoming novel 'It Began With Ashes', the short (6400 words) introduces the reader to a world of suspense, intrigue, and action.

## From Man to Man Details

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Author : D.E.M. Emrys

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## From Reader Review From Man to Man for online ebook

### **Jessica says**

A curious little story. Well done though a little disjointed at times. I liked that in a short time the author had displayed the protagonists attempts at a new life though failing miserably. His love for his wife making him try and try again. But coins a coin no matter how you earn it right? Well that's the question asked. I have to say I enjoyed the story though I would like to see what David can do with a longer length story which shouldn't be a problem as this book is an intro to his other book It Began With Ashes.

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### **Caro says**

I'm an avid fantasy reader. I love to be captured and taken into a world just beyond my imagination, yet familiar.

I like to meet people that don't exist in this world but could live in others, and I adore being surprised.

From Man to Man, being a short-story prequel to the actual series, only hints at a low fantasy setting through the different world, but I wonder how much more there is.

Being a short story, From Man to Man doesn't answer questions. It poses them. A few, here and there. There are a few hints at how the world is built, but nothing much other than that.

What carries the story - I don't really want to go into details, because the summary already tells you everything there is to say without spoiling the story - is the line of thought of the main character, Draven, an ex-Mercenary.

I've seen my fair share of Mercenaries in Low Fantasy because no Low Fantasy seems to be able to survive without at least one ex-Merc who'd like to change his life. Draven wasn't really different, but the 20 pages he had for himself didn't really give him a chance to be.

Even though Draven didn't exactly stand out between all the other ex-Mercs in Fantasy fiction, he still had his very own voice and story. I loved how his background was hinted at all the time and I felt myself patching it together from the bits and pieces of information he threw my way.

I liked that this story didn't have that much exposition - if a story has to be short, it should be neat and tight. This one was. It does exactly what it's supposed to do: it gives the reader a glimpse of the world Mr. Emrys has created, and nothing more.

The glimpse is well-executed though. There is no horrible info-dropping about Draven's background, and I loved that. If there is something that I really liked about Emrys' style it's that he doesn't tell much.

There were some minor points that irritated me in the writing, though. The flow of the story was constantly interrupted by Dravens poetical and thoughtful thoughts that were so thoughtful they didn't fit.

His comments threw me out of the story at least half a dozen times and that irritated me quite a bit. Seeing that it's such a short story, the story would have flowed better if the thoughts had been incorporated into the text more subtly than to just throw them out there without further comment.

I'm a huge fan of indirect speech and Joyce-style stream of consciousnesses, and maybe that could be another option to the endless thinking.

Also, I didn't like how the denominator's such as names and titles were switched during a sentence. It was a bit like this: "*The bride* was listening intently, and when *husband* gave *the beautiful woman* a flower, *Margret* grinned devilishly." See how distracting that is?

The changes sometimes happened really close to each other and the rare use of "he/she" instead was a bit annoying, and also confusing. It threw me off during the action scene and that really shouldn't happen. I understand the need to vary the names so the reader doesn't get bored, but this was overdoing it.

What really worked in this story was the obvious knack for characters Emrys showcased. I could easily connect to every single one of them and could see them in front of me as I was reading. That is talent, pure and simple, and I would love to see where he is going with this story.

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~ the author provided me with a copy in exchange for a review but it's free on amazon anyway so it probably doesn't count ~

### **Nikki says**

Arrghh, I wrote a long review of this and then my internet died and I lost it on submission. I'll try and reproduce it, but I really need to remember to reinstall the Firefox extension Lazarus... Anyway, I was sent a free PDF of this in exchange for an honest review.

I found it an easy enough read; there's the beginnings of world-building and character-building here, though there's at best only half a world thanks to the lack of inclusion of female characters. Draven's wife, for example, only appears asleep, which means a missed opportunity for a valuable window into Draven's motivations. The main plot points of the short story were easy enough to pick up on, but I don't have very strong feelings about the characters, aside from curiosity. It's hard in a short story, but still...

The main thing that was awkward for me was the dialogue, and especially the attempt at rendering some kind of dialect. The dialogue read as if, well, as if it'd been written. I always read out my dialogue when I try to write; it makes it a lot more authentic. That doesn't help much if I'm trying to invoke an accent that isn't my own, of course. I read the dialogue of the villagers in a Yorkshire accent -- the one I grew up with -- which was unfortunate. "Things t'ain't working out for you, I heard" is "things that aren't working out for you, I heard", or even "things the aren't working out for you", neither of which really works. The t' when people from Yorkshire speak tends to stand in for that or the; "I'm going on t'internet", or "can you pass me t'envelope". (And if you're me, with a mix of Welsh and Yorkshire, it'll be "t'envelope over by there" or, "yes, now in a minute". Over by there and now in a minute often annoy Yorkshire people. Oops.) Oh, and there's it, too -- t'ain't could be 'it isn't', so the aforementioned sentence could be "things it aren't working out for you", too. As you can see, it doesn't quite work -- it's not like the 'h' that gets dropped from 'ospital or appended to h'ain't, it does serve a grammatical purpose.

Caveat: I am not an authority on either accent/dialect. I hear it's possible to tell apart people from Barnsley and Leeds by the accent, but I don't know how to. /linguistics dork

Anyway, overall the story piqued my curiosity as to where the author is going with this, especially with the

excerpt of the upcoming novella included -- which I found more smoothly written -- but I'm not so wildly enthused that I will definitely read more. I'm curious, but still lukewarm. Other reviews often mention David Gemmell as a comparison; I can see where that comes from, and with a bit time and work I'm sure this world could be equally as compelling. Two stars in this case definitely mean 'it's okay'; I see potential but it didn't grab me yet.

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## **Milo (BOK) says**

<http://thefoundingfields.com/2013/02/...>

“A great short teaser that keeps the reader entertained and leaves them wanting more.” ~The Founding Fields

“I’ve traded my old enemies for just this one...’ The axe thundered home. ‘I miss the old ones.”

“Every man has a past, none more so than Draven Reinhardt. Abandoning his old life to settle down as a villager, he struggles to fit in, let alone hold down a job. When opportunity offers the much needed coin, Draven is torn between a promise and a purpose.

But, what’s one last job if you’ve already got blood on your hands?

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The short story itself is an interesting beast. D.E.M Emrys really manages to write a great entertaining piece of fiction, and is another read that proves that self published doesn’t mean bad writing. I didn’t notice any errors throughout this short and it had a great level of professional quality apart from a few sentences that felt awkward, but they were the only issues that I had with it. The book itself draws some inspiration from David Gemmell, and fans of the author’s work will find something to enjoy in this short story.

The character that takes center stage here in From Man to Man is Draven Reinhardt, and his story is an interesting choice to tell the short from. He’s having trouble adapting to his normal life and you can tell that his past still hangs over him. The short itself reads very quickly and tells the story of Draven’s fight against bandits who have come to steal the taxpayer’s money, so whilst the outcome may never be in doubt, D.E.M Emrys’ short has provided the reader with an interesting glimpse of what we can expect from his work and especially with the currently released It Began with Ashes being quite cheap on Amazon’s Kindle Store, I can’t wait to explore more of the Wroge Elements Universe and see where Emrys takes the story from here.

The short itself is quick and entertaining, and Draven has a strong internal monologue that was great to read about. I enjoyed the book itself as a whole and whilst it is too short to get a full taste of what Emrys’ writing style is like, It does leave you wanting to see more. Emrys writes a short action scene towards the end of the story and this is where his writing strength truly lies, and I’d love to see him write a full-blown battle.

VERDICT: 4/5

Free fiction! Who doesn’t love that? It’s a great sample into D.E.M Emrys’ writing style and whilst there are

a few minor sentences that didn't fit, you won't ruin your reading experience. It was a bit on the short side though – and I'd love to read a longer installment.

#### WRONG ELEMENTS: From Man To Man, It Began With Ashes

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#### **Nathan Washor says**

This is the first short story I have reviewed. David is a fellow reviewer/blogger and I value his words.

From Man to Man is mostly cold and dark, but ends with a hint that things may be looking up for our "hero".

Draven, our protagonist, has made a promise to his wife and child to forego his old ways. What these old ways are is a bit of a mystery to us – a mystery that seems to be locked away in a chest that never gets opened in this short story. What we do know of Draven's past is that it involves a blade of some sort.

Draven is not the type of person you'd want to be friends with if you met him in real life. This tortured man is bitter, violent and possesses a pessimistic wit. He scares acquaintances and strangers alike – perhaps too much – and the reason for this isn't yet revealed. How he came to buckle down with a wife and child in the first place is hard to believe. As this is only a short story of a much larger tale, I give the author his creative freedom.

In this story, our "hero" is having a hard time at keeping his word. He needs money. A lot of it (for some reason we are not yet privy to), but he just can't hold a job long enough to carry home a decent wage of which he can be content. Every job he takes as he goes about trying to fit in as a "villager" ends in some kind of ruin. Of course this ruin is always of his own making.

Draven is confronted by the local smith who has some knowledge of his past life. The tradesman makes a job offer (one of less than reputable claim) which is immediately and resolutely denied. As we witness Draven's inner turmoil about trying to keep his past behind him yet earn enough money for his future, Draven recounts and accepts the work being offered.

The most interesting thing about this short story to me is how I have actually grown attached to Draven in so few words – and I don't even like the man! I am curious to see what the future holds for him and his family. I was also fascinated by some of Emrys' imagery, especially the scene where the protagonist was struggling to stay awake in the pitch of night. I know this well from my own time spent in the infantry and David managed to capture the essence of the experience quite well.

I am pleased to give From Man to Man by David E. M. Emrys four out of five stars. I felt the pacing was a little too quick for my taste – but then again it is a short story. I also found the main character's chilly persona, even to those who don't know him or his past, a little too distracting. I imagine as the story grows this last issue will be explained away – and by David's writing style most likely in a very entertaining manner. I particularly liked how our protagonist's history reads like a puzzle being pieced back together. Of course this can only last for so long, but there are still plenty of pieces remaining to complete a decent sized book or two. Overall this is a great short story and I recommend it.

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## **Bookwraiths says**

Originally reviewed at Bookwraiths Reviews

When I sampled this short story, I was in the process of reading David Gemmell's Troy series, so that type of epic fantasy writing was what I was accustom to. Imagine my surprise when I found "From Man to Man" as a free download and discovered an indie author writing a fantasy tale with that same sort of realistic action and characters. I was absolutely amazed and excited, especially since this was just a teaser for his upcoming series Wroge Elements.

The story here centers on Draven Reinhardt: an accomplished warrior, former mercenary (At least that was my assumption based on clues) and loving husband/father. Draven is attempting to abandon his bloodletting ways and settle down as an average, salt of the earth villager. Naturally, our former mercenary struggles to fit in, let alone hold down a job. I mean, he is great at cutting down trees with his axe, even though he swings it more like he is cleaving necks than branches, but how many trees does a small village really need cut?

Not enough for Draven to take care of his family unfortunately. So when a chance to make a little extra coin comes his way, our merc turned villager finds himself in a horrible situation. For on one hand, he has made a promise to his wife that he will never go back to his old ways, but on the other, he knows he will never be able to survive as a normal villager, because his best work skill is killing other men. That is the moral dilemma examined here.

Draven's decision and its consequences progress on from there, and Mr. Emrys spins a very entertaining yarn out of it, twisting our warrior villager this way and that as he tries to be true to his promise but also take care of his family. Added to this a reader is presented with a realistic setting (though the world building is very short) as well as one action scene at the end of the tale, where Mr. Emrys excels at presenting a rousing and intense struggle without overdoing the details. So all in all, this is an entertaining short story as well as a great primer for Emrys' Wroge Elements series.

Highly recommended!

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## **Jim says**

This was a good short story (33 pages on my ereader) & probably would have been better if I'd read more in this world, which I'm planning to do. There wasn't any magic or anything fantastic, just a Medieval world and a man toeing a tough line. It was a nice change pace. Well worth the time.

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## **Chelsea says**

This was a very enjoyable short story!

At first, I was worried that the author was playing at Joe Abercrombie's grittiness, with some dark characters and dark work to boot. I got a good sense of Draven's boredom and frustration. He's an ex-mercenary who's trying on a villager's lifestyle, and the suit doesn't fit. The beginning read a little weak to me, since Draven didn't stand out as a character.

However, with the introduction of Shrike, the story revs up. The interplay between Draven and Shrike is fun to read. While at times, Emrys' writing is a little overwrought, he comes out with a few gems. He describes the tax collector as "a vial of poison short from the serpents that snatched coins like eggs from a nest."

But then the chicken symbolism goes a little over the top.

However, Emrys can really write a fight scene! The battle at the end really brought the story home for me, and it was nice to see the main character achieve a purpose, with being able to use his skills on behalf of the village. I get the sense that he is a bit like a pit bull. Strong, full of energy. If that energy doesn't get used, he's at risk expending it dangerously, so it's good to see that he has an outlet as a character. Makes him more real.

This short story is a set up for a novel, which I'll definitely be reading. More Shrike!

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### **Liviaalexandra says**

From Man to Man is the introduction to Wroge Elements a new series by D.E.M. Emrys.

This piece of short fiction is an interesting introduction to the character of Draven Reinhardt a man who is trying to lead a new life in his new home and leave the troubles of his past in his old life. I like the way the character struggles with himself with a part of him wants to take up his old ways again and the new man who wants to have a normal life with his wife and son. I like the way we can see his thoughts like he is two people in one body. It is all very imaginative and the writing fits well with the characters.

Although this story is short and you don't see much of the world you get a sense that this world he lives in is an interesting one and i cant wait to see more of his world and the characters that dwell in it and to see Draven find his place in the world with his new life and to see if he can keep his promise to his wife. I think it will also be interesting to see his relationship with his wife and child. I am interested in the character because he has his darkness and his good side which i would like to see more of.

The language of the story is easy to follow and flows really well so you can read it quite easy, i didn't get bored, it kept my interest the whole way through and it had its seriousness mixed with a little humor. I like that it is not full of long and boring descriptions it really gets to the point quickly with still being entertaining and doesn't have the feel of being rushed. I like that Draven isn't to talkative, i think it makes his character more interesting and his actions will speak for him, it reminds me a little of Druss and some of David Gemmell's other characters, he has that sort of interest for me.

I will be looking forward to the next story and would love to see more from the characters to see their stories, who they are and how they live. Hopefully they will have some interesting stories and names and the world that he has created i would love to know more about it. It reminds me of the stories by David Gemmell and can tell he has influenced the writing.

From Man To Man is a great read an Id would recommend this book to fellow fantasy readers.

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## **Evgeny says**

I received a free copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

This is a short story entertaining enough to finish it. Draven, the hero of the story left his old mercenary life behind and is trying to live a normal life in a village. The problem is, he does not have skills for it, and his bad temper does not help either. Finally it looks like he can make it as a woodcutter until a village blacksmith offers him a job more suited to his skills which looks simple enough. The looks can be deceiving...

There is also a preview of the upcoming novella set in the same world which is intriguing.

The book deserves 4 solid stars for the new author's solid effort.

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## **Mihir says**

Full review originally at Bastard Books blog

From Man To Man is a debut short story by D. E. M. Emrys, it is a prequel to his heroic fantasy book "It Began With Ashes". I've been fascinated by his reviews that I've read as he was able to channel the essence of the book skillfully into his reviews thereby making them a pleasure to read. Also he's a huge fan of David Gemmell and his debut book might be inspired by this legendary writer, which also amps up my anticipation for this title.

From Man To Man focuses on Draven Reinhardt, an ex-warrior who hasn't lost any of his deadly martial skills however has lost the reasons to continue as a warrior. He strives to tread the path of an honest person working small menial jobs but destiny and his attitude mark him out to be otherwise. Soon after his most recent job loss, he gets an offer to use his skills albeit in a role as a guard however things are never as crystal clear as they seem. Draven needs to find out where his future lies.

David writes with a fairly sharp prose style, he sets up the story and introduces Draven and his miserable situation. This short story gives a stark look into what happens to the life of an ex-soldier and this perhaps could be a dicey move as with this being a short story, it leaves the reader wanting to know more.

Its a good short story with some deficiencies in regards to the story style as the end action sequence & climax perhaps raises more questions than the answers it provides. It does however leave the reader with a strong desire to know more about the world and about Draven who as an axeman has big boots to fill. A good short story with an excerpt of the upcoming book, give it a shot. I know I will be waiting to see where D.E.M. Emrys takes the story next.

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## **Paul Nelson says**

From Man to Man is a short story introducing the character Draven, a man trying to leave his violent past behind him and settle into a normal village life with his wife and child. He does not have much success with

the various jobs undertaken until offered a protection detail looking after the local tax collector with the village huntsman Shrike. The coin offered is too much for him to turn down and he grudgingly accepts the commission. With the tax collectors work done, they escort him from the village only to be confronted by bandits, Draven puts his axe to good use and the bandits are driven off. The style of writing is very good and I will certainly look out for *It Began With Ashes*, of which the prologue is also included. As always when reading a good quality short story, you immediately wish for more - lets hope we don't have to wait too long.

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### **lafon ???? ???? says**

***'I've traded my old enemies for just this one...' The axe thundered home. 'I miss the old ones.'***

*Every man has a past, none more so than Draven Reinhardt. Abandoning his old life to settle down as a villager, he struggles to fit in, let alone hold down a job. When opportunity offers the much needed coin, Draven is torn between a promise and a purpose.*

*But, what's one last job if you've already got blood on your hands?*

I don't read indie or self-published short fiction very often. Maybe because I've seen over and over again, the poorest of writing, the most inane of plots, and the basest of characters. Perhaps it's because most authors seem to ignore the advice to write about what they know. Perhaps it's because I've read what they are writing in a slightly different package with a different name, and it's no longer an interesting topic.

None of this happened to me while reading Mr. Emrys' prequel novella, "From Man to Man". The writing is fresh, crisp even. There is a passion behind the words that belies the sadness of protagonist. He wishes he didn't have to be a fighter, but once a person becomes a warrior it is very hard to take it out of a person. Nonetheless he fights against the impulse to take up the blade, not to save himself, but to save the promise he gave to the one he loves and to honour his word.

In the end however, when the job comes looking for him it's more than he can handle. As Draven says: "What's one last job if you've already got blood on your hands?"

Truly we get to see Draven's emotional pain, and his unwillingness to descend back into his mercenary ways even if it would have been the easier way of doing things. The problem though, is he's not making money through the non-violent jobs he's given, as it always ends up in failure through no real fault of his own. So when that job comes up, to protect the tax man from bandits, after fighting with himself for a while, he says: "Any coin's a coin."

This piece of fiction doesn't even really qualify as a novella, as it's so short. Regardless, whether as the introduction to this world, or as something to stand on its own, this short story really delivers. I'll be keeping my eye on this author for some time to come, and I would look to read his upcoming work "*It Began With Ashes*".

4.0 out of 5 stars.

**Note:** This was originally intended to be a review for the blog Squibley's Fiction Addiction before Sarah got sick. I'm still hoping for it to be up.

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## Reader-ramble says

This short story serves as a nice introduction to a greater world. Mostly character driven, Emrys really only gives you glimpses, but the reader gets the idea.

Despite a couple of sentences that the reader can get hung up on, Emry's prose is relatively smooth and his dialogue throws in just a sprinkle of dialect to keep it interesting. In truth, his main character doesn't really speak much at all. We learn about him through his thoughts and actions over everything else.

Towards the end, there is a well-written fight scene. We get a good sense of movement and urgency. Just like real life, it doesn't last too long.

In truth, where Emrys' writing really shines, is in the prologue to a novel he's writing that he has given the reader at the end. This alone is worth the time to read.

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## Melanie says

I received a free copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

This introduction to 'Wroge Elements' and the writing of D.E.M. Emrys was short, but sweet. While we don't learn much about the world, there are bits and pieces of hints. A mercenary guild. Widespread fighting. Racial tension.

Draven is trying to live an ordinary life, but he can't find a job that fits with his temperament, or rather he can't find a *new* job having left his old one behind. His thoughts intersperse the text a lot more frequently than most things I've read, but it worked. He isn't a talker and the short, sharp thoughts fit well with the tone of the book as a whole. And he's funny! The book's not at all long, but I found myself rather amused on a number of occasions by the things he thought, and I especially liked the way he compared people to animals.

The writing itself is rather wonderful. The descriptions are imaginative and the way we are given information is nicely different. There were a couple of times when words or phrases were repeated in close proximity which bothered me a little, and a lot of the characters aren't named, so there are a lot of 'the stranger', 'the blacksmith', 'the herdsman' which I also wasn't really a fan of. It's ok to some extent, but I wasn't a fan of it in general. Of course these are likely to be a matter of personal taste and not exactly the end of the world!

After the short story **From Man to Man** we are given a preview of the first chapter of **It Began With Ashes**, the up-coming novella set in the same world. The writing's still great, and we're given a bit more back-story to the history of the world and quite a tantalising ending to the prologue. I'll definitely be on the look out for the release of this book!

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