



Paul the Peddler

Horatio Alger Jr.

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"Now, mother, I hope supper is 'most ready, for selling neckties has made me hungry." "Almost ready, Paul." It was a humble meal, but a good one. There were fresh rolls and butter, tea and some cold meat. That was all; but the cloth was clean, and everything looked neat. All did justice to the plain meal, and never thought of envying the thousands who, in their rich uptown mansions, were sitting down at the same hour to elaborate dinners costing more than their entire week's board. -from "Chapter VIII: A Stroke of Luck" It's entirely possible that the 20th-century concept of "the American dream" would not exist without the cheerfully idealistic novels of Horatio Alger, Jr. Enormous bestsellers in their day, Alger's rags-to-riches tales nurtured the nation's faltering idealism during the economic inequities of the Gilded Age. Paul the Peddler, from 1871, follows the typical Alger format: Paul Hoffman is a poor but industrious 14-year-old who ekes out a living for himself and his mother hawking whatever he can on the desperate streets of New York City... until his hard work and integrity pay off in wealth and comfort. This is a charming work, its hard-bitten romance tempered by its celebration of virtue and strength of character. American writer HORATIO ALGER, JR. (1832-1899) wrote well over 100 novels, among them Ragged Dick; or, Street Life in New York (1867), Sink or Swim (1870), and Tattered Tom; or, The Story of a Street Arab (1871).

Paul the Peddler Details

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From Reader Review Paul the Peddler for online ebook

Rogue-van (the Bookman) says

After his father died, Paul had to learn to work the streets to help support his seamstress mother and lame but artistic little brother. He follows Alger's principles: keep at it, adapt, learn the tricks of the trade, stay honest, and be ready to fight when necessary. Not totally predictable--one of Alger's better stories.

Alger says

A classic Alger novel where all the pieces of the formula fall into place.

A young boy supports his family through earnest labor and honesty. Unlike most Alger novels, the plot keeps the unlikely circumstances to a minimum. The one strange event being the affair of the valuable ring, which occupies the last half of the book. This device eliminates the usual rescue by an influential rich man, but it does still require a reputable rich man to vouch for Paul honesty in circumstances that would never occur in the real world.

A fun and fine read.
