



The Book of Paul

Richard Long

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"Richard Long intertwined a bag of genres while creating this intriguing and enchanting story...it's mind-blowing." - Stephen King

In the rubble-strewn wasteland of Alphabet City, a squalid tenement conceals a treasure "beyond all imagining"-- an immaculately preserved, fifth century codex. The sole repository of ancient Hermetic lore, it contains the alchemical rituals for transforming thought into substance, transmuting matter at will...and attaining eternal life.

When Rose, a sex and pain addicted East Village tattoo artist has a torrid encounter with Martin, a battle-hardened loner, they discover they are unwitting pawns on opposing sides of a battle that has shaped the course of human history. At the center of the conflict is Paul, the villainous overlord of an underground feudal society, who guards the book's occult secrets in preparation for the fulfillment of an apocalyptic prophecy.

The action is relentless as Rose and Martin fight to escape Paul's clutches and Martin's destiny as the chosen recipient of Paul's sinister legacy. Science and magic, mythology and technology converge in a monumental battle where the stakes couldn't be higher: control of the ultimate power in the universe--the Maelstrom.N

A best-selling novel, The Book of Paul is the first of seven volumes in a sweeping mythological narrative tracing the mystical connections between Hermes Trismegistus in ancient Egypt, Sophia, the female counterpart of Christ, and the Celtic druids of Clan Kelly.

"Long's prose is deft and clear, transporting the reader from one character's psyche to the next...this tale is a compelling one. A psychological thriller for readers who are bored with run-of-the-mill horror...Those who embrace the genre will eagerly anticipate a second installment in the series." - Kirkus Reviews

"Intelligent, self-aware, and often amusing...hitting all the markers for sadistic, salacious, and scary. Long is doubtless going to build a large and loyal fan base composed of people just like him: literate folks with a bizarre sense of humor who prefer a bucket of blood to a bath filled with rose petals." - ForeWord Clarion Reviews

"Totally absorbing! The Book of Paul is moving, profound, funny, terrifying and never lets you go. The prose is swift and sharp...at times, even poetic. Masterful storytelling. Hats off!!" - Henry Bean, writer/director of The Believer

The Book of Paul Details

Date : Published June 7th 2012 by Open Eyes (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9780615648644

Author : Richard Long

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Genre : Horror, Thriller, Fiction, Fantasy, Mystery, Paranormal

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From Reader Review The Book of Paul for online ebook

Andy says

The Book of Paul is hard to describe.

It is like Highlander, Kill Bill, The Bourne Identity, Hellraiser, and The Da Vinci Code all rolled into one package. Don't be fooled, though. This is definitely its own entity.

Needless to say, there is a lot going on in the book, and a bit of patience is required as each new twist will unfold when the timing is right. Rest assured that by the end of book, all will make sense, its just that you've been tricked into a much bigger story than you thought, which is a good thing, especially considering that this is the first of a seven novel series.

With its incredible action scenes, well-researched and unique mythology, and a badass factor of 101, The Book of Paul is one of the best books I've read this year. Can't wait for the next installment.

Christa Wick says

This is a great read. While standing completely on its own, it puts me in mind of Clive Barker, Umberto Eco, Neil Stephenson (thinking Quicksilver's first third - which I love) and the best of Dan Brown's Da Vinci Code without all the stuff that keeps me from having read more than one Dan Brown.

There is a great deal of violence and a smidge of sex, but it is well handled and shouldn't make more gentle readers uncomfortable (while satisfying readers like me who are comfortable with Barker, Palahniuk & Bret Easton Ellis). Hermetic lore and philosophy also are an essential feature but, again, the author meets both types of readers (don't really want it v. can't get enough) in the middle.

Book of Paul is on the long side, but broken into digestible chunks for the more leisurely reader (like me), and I quite enjoyed the chapter headings as an artful orientation to each chapter's contents. There are POV shifts from the narrator telling the story primarily in third person to relating events the narrator attended in first person and there are distant past scenes interspersed with the book's present action, but I found these to be seamless -- readers shouldn't be confused by these shifts.

Finally, while Book of Paul is the first book in a planned series, it wraps itself up at the end. Readers feeling lukewarm (what's wrong with you?!) won't be stuck with a cliffhanger. But I imagine most readers will be like me -- looking forward to the next installment!

Heaven says

Reading the The Book of Paul is like being on a rollercoaster blindfolded. It is Insane and I loved every second of reading it.

Patrice Hoffman says

I could not stop reading this book once I read page one. Richard Long does a great job at spinning a heavily detailed, intricate, fast-paced novel that instantly grips attention of the reader from page one. Martin is practicing to smile and Rose is handing out HIV and Hepatitis...

Martin and Rose are only two of the central figures in this novel. And they spend much of the novel trying to flee Paul all the while coming to grips with their pasts and how they may, or may not, be connected. Paul is the type of antagonist that haunts a reader. It makes you wonder if there are people out there that exist and are that evil. Another central character is William who is a narrator of some of the chapters. (FYI-Chapters are short and to the point-love it)

There are flashbacks into each of their pasts that explain so much that I don't want to give away so I encourage the readers to pay attention to this book. There's a lot going on regarding alchemy, ancient relics, body modification/mutilation, tarot, and reincarnation. I also encourage the reader to pay attention because the novel does read rather quickly. At times, it's easy to miss crucial information that may be given.

The thing I liked most about this novel is that there are no unnecessary characters. Many authors introduce faceless, one dimensional people who do nothing to move the story forward. Long did not do this and I appreciate this. It also helped in streamlining the book and knowing where everyone was and who's side of the fence they were on.

I haven't read any book like this before so I don't have anything to compare it to. I enjoyed every page of this book. It's well written and is engrossing. I recommend people who love reading thrillers, horrors, occult classics, science-fiction, and even gritty romance novels. Richard Long has definitely got me anxious for the next book in this series.

Katy says

Book Info: Genre: Paranormal Thriller

Reading Level: Adult

Recommended for: People fascinated with occultism of all stripes, alternate ideas behind spirituality, dark suspenseful stories

Trigger Warnings: Torture, serial killing, explicit sex, (implied) rape, mutilation, betrayal

My Thoughts: This book. Wow, I don't even know where to begin! I ended the book, shook myself all over, and said, "**Oh my GOD!**" This book was amazing, mesmerizing, engaging, wonderful... twisted... And I learned more about the more extreme forms of body modifications than I ever really wanted to know (and I thought I was already fairly well-informed... just goes to show you, there is always something weirder out there. Nullification, anyone? That means, "cutting off bits," if you didn't know this...). Maybe a good place to begin is here:

"...everything you've ever known, everything you've ever believed about yourself... about the description of reality you've clung to so stubbornly all your life... all of it... every bit of it... is

an illusion." I know I'm repeating the quote from the beginning of the synopsis here (shown below), but it encapsulates the ideas behind this story beautifully.

Something you need to understand about me, to maybe help you understand why I loved this book so very, very much. I love villains. I've always loved villains—it all stems from early exposure to the Joker, I think. I root for the villain in superhero comics and cartoons and movies; I love stories where the villain has a good showing. A good villain will just make my entire month. And Paul? He's an awesome villain. He's charismatic. He's joyfully cruel, gleefully evil. He loves to torture people. He's like Hannibal Lecter if Hannibal Lecter had been kinda stinky, Irish, and not as dashing. Best of all, he's absolutely convinced of the righteousness of his own actions. Paul... is my ideal sort of villain. I just wanted to follow him around (hiding of course—you don't want that sort to *notice* you, after all) and watch everything he did with a sick and morbid fascination.

The ending is a complete spin, and just amazing. I don't even know what else to say about this book other than you must read it! If you are fascinated with occultism, Hermeticism, the Celts, druids, like dark suspenseful stories... There are some things in this book that will probably distress more sensitive readers, so be sure to check my trigger warnings, but overall? I loved this book, and I am now on tenter-hooks hoping the next will come out soon.

Disclosure: I purchased this book for myself upon the recommendation of Kriss Morton (a death mask may have been involved). All opinions are my own.

Series information: A best-selling novel, *The Book of Paul* is the first of seven volumes in a sweeping mythological narrative tracing the mystical connections between Hermes Trismegistus in ancient Egypt, Sophia, the female counterpart of Christ, and the Celtic druids of Clan Kelly. The next two books in the series are to be called *The Book of Druids* and *The Bone King*.

Synopsis: "*Everything you've ever believed about yourself... about the description of reality you've clung to so stubbornly all your life... all of it... every bit of it... is an illusion.*"

In the rubble-strewn wasteland of Alphabet City, a squalid tenement conceals a treasure "beyond all imagining"—an immaculately preserved, fifth-century codex. The sole repository of ancient Hermetic lore, it contains the alchemical rituals for transforming thought into substance, transmuting matter at will... and attaining eternal life.

When Rose, a sex- and pain-addicted East Village tattoo artist has a torrid encounter with Martin, a battle-hardened loner, they discover they are unwitting pawns on opposing sides of a battle that has shaped the course of human history. At the center of the conflict is Paul, the villainous overlord of an underground feudal society, who guards the book's occult secrets in preparation for the fulfillment of an apocalyptic prophecy.

The action is relentless as Rose and Martin fight to escape Paul's clutches and Martin's destiny as the chosen recipient of Paul's sinister legacy. Science and magic, mythology and technology converge in a monumental battle where the stakes couldn't be higher: control of the ultimate power in the universe—the Maelstrom.

Tom says

First things first: "The Book of Paul" is a challenging read. Author Richard Long sets the bar really high for this novel, and he reaches it. As I said, it's a challenge. Various elements from disparate mythologies are blended together, along with science, and a gleefully psychopathic, near-immortal protagonist.

From the synopsis: *The Book of Paul is the first of seven volumes in a sweeping mythological narrative tracing the mystical connections between Hermes Trismegistus in ancient Egypt, Sophia, the female counterpart of Christ, and the Celtic druids of Clan Kelly.*

Honestly? That rather simplifies everything that goes on here.

When we enter the story, a man named Martin is watching TV, trying to learn how to smile by watching a news anchor. Then he watches an old film, while doing a ridiculous amount of calisthenics.

We meet Rose, a punky tattoo and piercing artist (with lots of examples on her own body), as she wakes up and starts her day. Her sink is broken, and she doesn't know where the Superintendent lives.

So she rings the doorbell of the apartment below hers. It's Martin's. It's kind of a meet-cute. He hates visitors, and debates killing her. She can't understand why he's being so antisocial. He points her toward the Super's apartment. He closes the door. A minute later, she's back at his door. Alas, the Super wasn't home, so she asks him if he knows how to fix a sink. He does, and goes to her apartment to fix it. Things happen, they have sex, and fall in love with each other.

We meet William, who "remembers everything." He weaves in and out, providing background information when we need it, and gradually revealing parts of his life that touch the fringe of the other characters, ultimately becoming an active participant later in the book.

Oh, and Paul slaughters a guy just for knocking on his door.

After their sex-fueled first day together, Martin goes and sits in a nearby park. He senses, then sees Paul coming toward him. They obviously know each other from way back, but we don't know what that means, yet. Only that Martin is a gigantic badass, and yet Paul scares the crap out of him.

As we delve back into the history Paul and Martin share, we keep moving deeper into The Book of Paul's real story. What starts with an uneasy meeting of two old colleagues keeps expanding and expanding. We find out how they met. We see that Paul became a father figure for Martin, and that some bad things happened along the way.

That's one of the beautiful tools Richard Long uses: we see the characters as they are today, then flash back to how they met. As the present day story moves forward, so too do we move forward through their time together, until we finally reach a climax and denouement involving these four characters in present time.

Okay. That's the straightforward part.

What takes The Book of Paul to a different level is that each of these characters plays a role in The Big

Picture, meaning the spiritual order of things: God, prophets, magic, creation, destruction, souls, age-old feuds, etc.

Pretty much all of the novel's mythology is given to us by Paul, typically in long monologues to people he's training as his apprentices. We find that there is much truth to many different belief systems, but none of them are absolutely correct. We hear about ancient texts from multiple religions and philosophers--the wisdom of the ages, and how things are all aligning for a huge Turning, with each of our characters playing a role.

I'm going to leave the mythology at that. There is a shit-ton of it in *The Book of Paul*, so be prepared. By having Paul explain it to his "apprentices," we get the beginner's version of each concept, some of which are built upon as the book progresses.

For as complex as things get, this is a lovely way to frame the hardcore legends so that we can understand them as well. As the "apprentices" move along through their training, Paul delves deeper, and we can follow along.

Paul is one of the most gleefully wicked characters I've encountered in a long time. He can be hysterically funny and loving one minute, then harsh the next. He has a pretty high body count in this book, too--his favorite method is beheading, by the way.

The down-side to Paul's gleeful wickedness is that we encounter torture--physical and emotional--as well as the murders. If you are squeamish about brutality, this might not be your book.

There are two basic stories woven together here. There's the actual, palpable relationships between characters. They squabble, hug and make-up, laugh and yell and cry. These people are not normal, functional people, as we find out from their pasts.

The second story is the mythology Richard Long creates. I don't know how many books he's read, or how long he spent studying to write this book, but his depth and explanations feel real: even when "The Big Truth" combines ancient Greek and Egyptian elements, through and including Christianity, and the Druidic orders in Ireland. There is no way I can explain it.

As I said, Richard Long raised the bar really high for this novel, and to me, he pulls it off brilliantly. However, parts of this were difficult to read. Not because of poor writing--Long's writing is irreproachable--but because of the sheer enormity of the world he creates. To me, it's all explained well, and I could follow what happened. This is a rewarding book, but it can be demanding, probably like having Bela Karolyi as your gymnastics coach. It's one of those I would not recommend to just anyone. If you were only used to reading popular thrillers and mysteries, you might have a hard time with the added elements.

However, if you like a challenge--a book that will make you think, and maybe challenge what you believe--then I highly recommend "*The Book of Paul*."

I finished it, and I immediately felt like I needed to take a shower. It was such a journey through some truly squalid parts of the world, both places and people's hearts and souls, that I almost felt like I'd driven a thousand miles in summer.

Though admittedly not for everyone, Richard Long's "*The Book of Paul*" is an excellent debut novel.

Paul says

Not an easy read. Even harder to review, told with numerous flashbacks and points of view for those looking for a straight forward narrative structure I'd say this novel is not for you. Having said that it's an interesting tale well told. I don't love nor hate the book of Paul yet I wouldn't call it a meh novel either. Almost as if Pynchon had written the rule of four(funny I'm reading the co-author's the fifth gospel even now) but it lacks the stream of consciousness writing. Well in sure I did a bang up job describing it and y'all are rushing out for a copy lol. Final thoughts I teeter-totter between rating this 2 stars and 4 so I guess 3 is a fair rating

Jodi says

At first glance you think, oh boy here's another book about a psychotic serial killer in the vein of Silence of the Lambs. But then as you read you realize The Book of Paul is so much more. The first installment in a seven volume series sets the undertone of what is to expect in the other six volumes.

The intricate vignettes Long weaves are the stuff nightmares are made of. Not specifically a horror in the holy crap it's scary style, but is more the feeling of a prickling up your spine. The Book of Paul is definitely not a book for the faint hearted. It's often graphic details of body modification, piercing and torture, which incidentally, I think is necessary to the telling of the story, are enough to make even the seasoned reader of horror wince a wee bit.

Written in short chapters some narrative and filled with mystical details between *Hermes Trismegistus in ancient Egypt, Sophia, the female counterpart of Christ, and the Celtic druids of Clan Kelly, the reader needs to pay close attention to keep the details straight as Long switches so quickly from one character to the next which is in my opinion a little befuddling at times.

I think The Book of Paul is an example of what a gift Richard Long has in his writing. His ability to draw the reader into the story and keep them there as he sets the stage for what will happen next is brilliant. The Book of Paul is definitely a great read and I can't help but thinking it would make a pretty intense television series.

Jessica says

As the tale told in The Book of Paul unfolds, we're introduced to several complex characters, all of whom are connected by an intricate web skillfully woven by author Richard Long. At the center of this twisted web is Paul, the book's sadistic namesake, who is bent on fulfilling an ancient prophecy by any means necessary. Paul's protege, Martin, struggles with his blossoming feelings for his sexy neighbor, Rose, and his mounting distrust of the man who raised him and taught him everything he knows. Every action, every character, is another piece in a giant jigsaw puzzle. Will Paul fulfill the prophecy? And if he does, at what cost?

I have to admit that when I first began to read this book I couldn't help but wonder if I had bitten off more than I could chew. It is obvious from the start that this is not a book for the faint of heart. It wasn't long, however, before I got so caught up in the unrelenting action that I couldn't put the book down. I read the

majority of it in one marathon reading spree that lasted late into the night (or, more accurately, the early morning). It was one heck of a wild ride, with twists and turns that had me on the edge of my seat the entire time I was reading. It has everything a person could possibly ask for: a gripping storyline, mythology and lore, neverending action, good vs. evil, and even a love story thrown into the mix for good measure! And best of all, it meshes together beautiful and every last bit of it plays a part in the larger scheme of things.

If I had to compare it to other works, I'd have to say it has the manic pacing of a Hunter S. Thompson novel, the unapologetic brutality of Fight Club, and the lore and mystery of The Da Vinci Code. I'm going to make a lame pun here, so you'll have to forgive me in advance, but I'm just stating a fact: The Book of Paul is a truly thrilling psychological thriller. Mr. Long is immensely talented author and it's a shame we had to wait so long for his work to come on the scene.

I honestly can't remember the last time I read something so intricate and so engrossing! Despite my initial hesitance, it was a pleasure to read and I hated to see it come to an end. I can't wait for the next book in the series! I will definitely be recommending this to my friends.

Shelly says

This review was posted originally on my blog {Dive} Under the Cover

I don't even know where to start with this review. I suppose I should start by saying that this isn't the type of book I normally read, but the synopsis intrigued me and I was not at all disappointed. I will also say that in taking these chances with books that are out of the norm for me, I am actually finding some really great new, to me, authors.

I should warn you right up front that this book is going to take you on a wild and crazy, dark and dirty ride. I am having trouble even putting my thoughts about this story into words. It's just that crazy, I was struggling to describe it to a friend yesterday! It's not romance, but it does have a thread of a love story throughout it that really has the potential to change the course of history as Paul sees it. It's doesn't feel paranormal or supernatural, but really, in essence it is when you take into account the whole of the story. There is an underlying horror like feel to it, but it's not a scary horror, more like a creepy serial killer like horror. Suffice it to say, I can't really classify it other than to say that it has a little bit of everything in it. I also have to say that while it has a little of everything, if you aren't really prepared for the worst you probably won't enjoy it. If you have a weak stomach or you can't handle a torture, body modification, etc...then this probably isn't the book for you.

There really is no way to explain the story without giving anything away and I really dislike to post spoilers especially in a case like this, where every twist and turn of the story is so significant. The characters are really quite complex and while it seems like they are doing bizarre things most of the time, everything that happens really does have a place. There is someone pulling the strings here and it's not hard to figure out who it is.

I must say that Richard Long is a tremendous and unique story teller. I was immediately pulled into the story from the very first short chapter. I love that most of the chapters are really short, they are like short little story bursts. This book is also really different in that it's told in 1st person part of the time and the rest is in 3rd person. One of the characters is the narrator and his part is obviously told in 1st person. We don't find out who the narrator is for quite some time, but he plays a very significant part in the story. The other parts of the

story are told in 3rd person from one of the other characters perspectives. What I think is super cool is that the narrator really is omniscient even though he is a character in the story, that is one of his "gifts" and it's not always a fun one to have in his case.

Let's talk about some of the characters. Paul really is a gross and deeply disturbed character, probably one of the worst I have read! He really has no redeeming quality except for maybe Martin. As unlikable as Paul is, I found Martin to be a quite the opposite. It will seem weird (that I like him so much) especially as you first start reading the book, but really from the minute Rose enters the picture you can see a light in him. It may be hidden under layers of icky residue left there from how he was raised, but it's there nonetheless. I really like Rose, I think that she sees something in Martin that no one else does. She feels something for him that she doesn't really understand especially since she has really only known him for such a short time. They are both pretty damaged people, but together they have tremendous potential to change everything.

From the time the story starts until it ends only a couple days pass in reality, but a lot of back story is given in Martin's suppressed memories and the narrators journal entries. This part of the story, that I like to think of as "Martin's Story" really starts when he is a boy. The overall story goes back thousands of years, though, all the way to the beginning of time really. We get a sense of this part of the story from the narrators journal entries, he is giving us a pretty clear view of all the things that he is learning as he learns them from a number of sources. He is really the main character in the whole of the story, but since he isn't revealed for so long it's hard to think of him as such. This is just the beginning of the story and I can't wait to see what comes next.

This is such a unique story, at least it was for me. The whole time I was reading it I couldn't help but wonder where on earth this came from. It's a puzzle from the beginning, but once you hit the halfway point the pieces start fitting together in a beautiful if not psychotic way. There are still things that I wonder about, but I have every confidence that my questions will be answered as the story continues. At its heart it's a supernatural thriller, but it's deeply psychological as well. It will make you re-think what you think you know about the "beginning", science and even religion. It will take you on a wild ride for sure, so buckle up!

Abigail says

Syzygy

Oh what a word, one of my favorites and one that fits all aspects of this gorgeous amalgamation of craziness and story arcs throughout the book! But wait, which definition applies to this book?

Syzygy (astronomy), a straight line configuration of three celestial bodies

--This book involves Hermetical teachings, some that may fly right over your heads like those celestial bodies, do not fret though, you do not have to get that stuff to enjoy this read! Just blow through it like I do in battle scenes of epic fantasy novels.

Syzygy (astronomy), a straight line configuration of three celestial bodies

--Oh yes, definitely! This is truly a love story and not just between Rose and Martin. The aspect of eternity can be seen as a theme with everything in this book. What you read it and do not agree? Come on think about it! I will win this argument just like I won the ones about how it is not a cupcake without frosting and how Avatar is a Western (do not even try to win that one!)

Syzygy (mathematics), a relation between the generators of a module

--Numbers numbers numbers.... the wheel is all about numbers. $1+1=2$ right? The cards are all about numbers, Martin must have equal and balanced aspects in what he wears, what he carries or his OCD goes ballistic. Where as Rose is OK with just having odd aspects mixed in with the even. She is OK with "prime" qualities instead of constant equalities. And William... Paul? They are to freaking selfish and must have them all!

Syzygy (poetry - specifically Greek poetry), the combination of two metrical feet into a single unit - where one consonant is used repeatedly throughout a passage, but not necessarily at the beginning of each word.

--Honestly, I caught several examples but if I start talking about that I may lose half of you. Just think of it as something quirky and clever that aha! moment when you take a sip of your coffee and go, "Wow how cool was that, he just brought it back to...." ya one of those... so no worries I have some great material to get to the meat of this puppy!

Syzygy - (X-Files) an episode of The X-Files

--OK seriously, this was on the bloody list and I am going to say, yes it fits! I about fell out of my chair laughing my rear off, in fact I could probably write a pretty decent thesis argument just around this. The show was made for the fans. It addressed several complaints and questions (will Scully and Mulder finally make-out [yes they did finally make out and more but at the time the writers were not having any of that PERIOD], would Mulder let Scully drive the car [seriously fans bitched about this?? Sheesh people are such philistines at times!] and all of this was because of some "rare planetary alignment" effecting the behavior of everyone in town, including two murderous teens (again with the bloody DUO of DEATH)

Where do you start with all that info? See how each can be applicable, if what I say is true (*giving you the death mask again* what I say is always true!) I am going to do my best to expand on the above ideas while reviewing and convincing you to go buy the book and read it (*giving you my death mask*...you will buy the book and you WILL enjoy it...).

Let's start off with a few basics for you interested readers. First, this book is NOT for the faint of heart. It is a book which should not be expected as a quick weekend read. Which is one reason my review was not up and out there yesterday like I was targeting it for. That and I kept falling asleep and going into this screwed up fairyland full of bloody altars, crucified squirrels and a moose with a key around his neck *shuddering*. This is a dense read; literary fiction folks, there are no sparkly vampires frolicking through cedar trees or a love spell written in frosting on that cupcake. This is a thick porter house steak, dripping in blood and still moo'ing as you saw into it with a lovely Wüsthof steak knife.

I read Tarot, in fact I read with the Thoth Deck which is a creation of Aleister Crowley (the crazy and very infamous Occultist who believed the Necronomicon was a real book and had long drawn out correspondences with H.P. Lovecraft over the years of those wonderfully loony mens lives, both which have brought me much pleasure in mine). Something Crowley wrote popped into my head when I read the word syzygy within the pages of The Book of Paul:

"A curious conflict this of love and fear..."

Aleister Crowley from his Coll. Works ii. 77

This wraps up a lot of what the book talks about. There is pairing and duality, the main aspect of anything

involving syzygy. You cannot have a true aspect of a singularity within the definition of this word, well ideal and philosophy and.. and.... I do not think there is a way to give you spoilers with this complex story, you just have to read it so I will be doing a bit more sharing than I usually do. (*slipping death mask on again* you want to read this book, this book is amazing, it will change your life...)

Any successful pairing, be it numbers, or spices or people, must start with a single idea or thought or spark of energy. It grows as more things are added, and as Paul enlightens us, it never dies; "Energy cannot be destroyed" (loc; 6893). But it still needs to be created and fed additional energy, that spark of chemistry between a man and a woman when you "see" them for the first time, I mean really see them. When Martin looks down at Rose and she up at him amidst the fluffy down comforter and their sweaty bodies right after they meet and umm do a special dance, it clicks and the energy is and will continue to flow, to grow to become indestructible. (BTW Richard gets a 6 out of 5 stars on his sex scenes and for those that do not get that joke, refer to this post when regarding how much importance I find when adding a sex scene to a novel)

Aha! Martin and Rose, the love story right? Well yes, it is... well one of the love stories in the book. There is the love for Rose that William has, our fourth-wall breaker, the orator of this tale, the Kelly family story teller. Another spoke on this grand wheel of characters. His love of Rose is intertwined with and branches out to that of knowledge and of death. His photographic memory allows his love of knowledge to grow exponentially and his love of it turns into his obsession with objects of death; ie: from my teaser last week "...up to thirty or even fifty, written by another sicko, each and every one of them covered with the skin of their victims." These are books that William loved, coveted and had an intense relationship with. Is it a duality? Yes the duality of conflict within himself. How can one be as obsessed with such morbid and macabre items steeped in the blood of countless victims and still think of himself as a good person? Oh man, that is a dicey question, and for the answer you best crack this book open because that would be a spoiler! (*my death mask slips on....*)

There is the love between Martin and Paul. A damaged boy's love for the man he thinks of as his father, if not in blood (or could it be? oh I am being bad... *death mask slipped back on* go buy the book... read it.. you will LOVE it..) This man, Paul, mysteriously appears in his life and as a child all Martin has known is fear and a darkness by the hands of his mother. The syzygy of lightness and darkness... The darkness of the cellar, the darkness of her moods balanced with the rare light from his visits with his Aunt Norine, where cuddles and happiness reigned.

Paul brought with him another form of love, as only a man can bring. His love of control, of death, a detached death. Martin learned how to kill as a child and he started with shooting rats at the dump. Sounds pretty bleak right? It is very and this damaged boy turns out to be someone who recognizes the right kind of love in the end. Another turn of the wheel.

Am I stretching this a bit? Perhaps but love can mean many things, just like those four trump cards above, as Richard explains in his guest post. Paul happens to more than a little resemble one of those trump cards, The Devil. In the tarot The Devil can represent a irresistibly strong and unscrupulous person. Wait, that is Paul.. oh and it gets better, the card also can be representative to ambition, temptation, obsession... someone who has a secret plan about to be executed...(yanking hard on that wheel to break through the rust) Oh yes indeed. This is Paul people. Plus Paul, it seems is made up of pure energy for he may or may not have been around for quite some time. This is where I will leave it for if I went on about the transmigration of souls it would get murky and I would lose you. Let's also say this plays into the syzygy of the mathematical aspects, for numbers make up everything, math can be found in all things as so many stories having used the Fibonacci sequence have shown us. I am pretty sure you can grasp that one... but I really am digressing and I want to

get a move on here!

Over all by the end of The Book of Paul we have been fed with Hermetics, sadism, masochism, blood, death, damage, lightness, love, violence, god building, crucifixion, resurrection, obsession, body modification (I am so needing ink and a new hole punched into my body now) and in it all the wheel keeps turning. Life moves forward, where it will end with this book depends on who does that final crank of the wheel.

Who will end up standing, even it is barely, with his head still on? Will the Malestrom rip someone part? Will any come away still whole, or at least almost as they were with only some parts missing? Will some of these parts be assimilated and absorbed into another? Isn't this love? A chemical reaction of energy?

Syzygy is about a pairing, be it two numbers, two people, two sparks... a hammer pounded into the head of a nail... and to make these things work there are opposites, the magnetic poles on a parallel path; such Martin and Rose or William and Paul. Each damaged, each with different obsessions, each with different goals and in the end fitting together and balancing each other out, creating an extra spoke in that wheel, or perhaps a pole to thrust in and cause a crash of monumental proportions that no one, even one who has lived hundreds and thousands of lifetime sees coming...

Love is the syzygetic ideal of this story. But it left some sparks behind, which found some other sparks and I have a feeling the next six books are going to blow my mind as much if not more than this one. I wish I could keep going because I did not even come close to touching the core aspects of this book, I have already gone on to much but if I were to sum it up I would have to say this:

"The Book of Paul a twisted, festive, life & death tale dragging us from sunlit rooms into the dark corners of our minds one hammer swing at a time."

The book is one of my top reads of 2012, no question about it. In fact Geoff even wants to read it and that is no small feat as many of you know! I am going to rate this a full five of five whacks! *death mask slips back on* Go ...buy it now, it is only 99¢, what do you have to lose, I have never steered you wrong this book is a bloody festive romp of delight into those dark recesses of your soul that you would never admit you like... kind of like William's little collection of skin covered journals...

Jeannie Walker says

Talk about talent - this author has it.

I believe Richard Long has nailed his gift with his beautifully crafted psychological thriller complete with a love story.

The novel has short chapters and relentless action that pulls you into the story.

People with weak stomachs are advised that there are parts that will horrify you - think about Hannibal Lecter and you might get the picture.

It definitely is a very unusual novel and the first of seven volumes that I believe readers will also enjoy.

Jeannie Walker - Award Winning Author of "Fighting the Devil" - A True Story of Consuming Passion, Deadly Poison, and Murder

Melissa Storm says

Let me start by saying that The Book of Paul totally and unequivocally took me by surprise. I've never been a fan of the thriller genre--to me, their stories are too often formulaic and predictable. So in picking up The Book of Paul, I was expecting a hackneyed version of the same story we've all heard and seen far too many times. Boy, was I ever wrong!

In fact, I've never read anything quite like it. The debut novel by Richard Long grabs you by the eyeballs and refuses to let go. This is an especially astonishing feat when considering some of the subject matter. I'm over-the-top squeamish, like faints at the sight of blood squeamish, and while The Book of Paul has definite gore, it wasn't enough to turn me away. In Paul's and Martin's pursuit of fearlessness through experiencing extreme (potentially ungodly) pain, I was more intrigued than appalled. The author clearly knows his subject matter, but he also doesn't beat you over the head with it. It just all works together in a book that is equally riveting, thought-provoking, and full of surprises.

If you're a deep thinker, you will love this book. While it's a thriller at the heart, it also contains many profound discussions (and even witty asides) that reflect on the nature of life, philosophy, relationships with others and self, the occult, religion, and general history. For those who'd rather be purely entertained and avoid all that pondering stuff, The Book of Paul is still a great choice. Its layers are woven in such a way that you can simply enjoy a neat and original story or you can choose to dissect every aspect and examine it on the philosophical level. Something for everyone, and definitely a book I won't soon (probably ever) forget!

Disclaimer: Richard Long is a publicity client, which means I can review his book, but I can't ethically assign a star rating. I hope my review speaks for itself!

Chasity says

'The Book of Paul' was the best dark horror novel I have ever read, and I say that in all honesty. No book has ever blown my mind quite like this one and I must warn you before you read this novel; you will never look at literature the same way again. 'The Book of Paul' was such a brilliant masterpiece that I literally could not put it down I was consumed in the story, the characters and the pure utter darkness of this book. Talent like this only comes around every once in a great while and I feel like I have stumbled upon gold. I can very well say anything that Richard writes I will rush to buy, it is such a rare talent he has as a writer.

I feel so lucky to have been asked to review this amazing novel, I found it to be stunning, creative, with such detailed precision in the way the story was told. It was a mind bending story that you absolutely have to read! I have not read a book with such talented, detailed writing in so long, if ever. Richard Long really sets the standards high in the horror/ thriller genre. I mean Paul makes the baddest of the bad look like sheep. Paul is so sick and twisted but you can't stop reading it, you have to have more of Paul. 'The Book of Paul' is such a dark, seductive tale of things you couldn't even begin to imagine. Take your sickest thought and multiply it by a thousand and you may have just stumbled upon the very tiniest hint of what goes on in Paul's brain. You really have to read this brilliant masterpiece, I cannot even put it into words how stunning I believe this book is. I believe it will be a classic one day.

I am so much more thrilled to find out it is the first book in a series. I will definitely be reading all of them. The characters and the story are addicting. You can go ahead and try to say they are not, you are flat out

lying! 'The Book of Paul' is by far the best novel I have read all year! I am addicted to this series now and I will read everything Richard Long writes from here on out. I believe this man is a genius with words and storytelling. I will be a fan for life. If you have not read 'The Book of Paul' you are missing out, I tell you! What are you waiting for? Go, now! Get it! Read it and see for yourself what I am talking about! I assure you, your eyes will be opened to a very new world.

Hira says

"The Book of Paul" by Richard Long is, and I have to admit this to begin with, is not the kind of book that I usually pick up. I'm a HUGE fan of thrillers, so the premise was incredibly intriguing to me - and boy am I glad that I decided to give this book a try! You may have seen me describe many a thriller as being "atmospheric" - well, I love using that adjective because the truth is, I really believe the setting and the atmosphere are KEY, especially in a thriller or mystery. "The Book of Paul" is completely brilliant because although the narrative is absolutely engrossing, the book is thoroughly absorbing in its ability to creep you out with the build-up of its creepy atmosphere and chilling setting. This book defies any genres, because it is the amalgamation of many genres in one - horror, supernatural, paranormal, romance, thriller, and mystery. And the beauty of it is, it does justice to all of the above, it is all of the above, without focusing too much on one or the other.

In addition to the creepy, dark and foreboding nature of this book - it is also a novel of multi-faceted and multi-dimensional characters. Characters like Martin, who is a truly troubled character, but beneath the surface lies a decent human being marred by the inadequacy of his upbringing. And then there's Rose, whose presence seems to have a positive effect on Martin, is herself a damaged woman with a past - but in the short time that they come to know each other, they tend to understand and connect with each other, and soon become important to one another. Then, there is Paul - and I left him for last because I believe him to be the most complex character of all - he is truly a despicable being, a gross and negligent man who has almost no redeeming qualities. But as flawed as he is, it's absolutely riveting to read about his character and his atrocious deeds!

The timeline of the narrative is quite short, and comprises of only a few days - but we are able to appreciate the past of the characters via Martin's memories, which he has suppressed, and via journal entries made by the narrator. The narrator is the main character of the book, and the story revolves around him, but all the characters are so absolutely essential to the story that it is absolutely impossible to pin-point any important characters. This book is a roller-coaster ride, with a fireworks to boot - it is crazy, it is zany, it is thoroughly enjoyable, and it will puzzle you...until you get to a little past halfway, and then things fall into place. But here's the unique thing about Richard Long's book - even though the pieces of the puzzle begin to fit, the premise is still so unique, and so crazy, that one cannot help but be completely hypnotized by it. A part of your brain begins to accept it, and the other part is astonished that such events have come to transpire in the course of the narrative. I really want to go ON and ON about it, but I would not want to give too much away.

Believe me, anyone with an inquisitive mind, and a penchant for the weird or scary would love to read this book. But be prepared, some parts of the book are quite disturbing, and include torture and mutilation - if you are not someone who can handle the gore, this may not be the book for you. However, if you are able to stomach such indelicacies, then this is the kind of book that is sure to baffle you in the best way possible! Let me forewarn you - this book is a conundrum wrapped in a riddle, it is both puzzling and thoroughly riveting to read. This book will send tingles up your spine as you read, and a feeling of dread will permeate your

being as you advance through the story, you will probably check the deadbolts and windows of your home twice, if not thrice, and you might even end up having to sleep with a night-light on....but trust me, whatever the case may be, this book is sure to bamboozle you with its awesomeness - I can't wait for the rest of the books in the series!!!
