



The Wheel of Darkness

Douglas Preston , Lincoln Child

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At a remote monastery in Tibet, a rare and dangerous artifact mysteriously disappears. Aloysius Pendergast agrees to take up the search that leads him and Constance to the maiden voyage of the Britannia--and to an Atlantic crossing fraught with terror.

The Wheel of Darkness Details

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From Reader Review The Wheel of Darkness for online ebook

J.K. Grice says

Another great Pendergast adventure!

Matthew says

Well, if you thought Pendergast went odd adventures before . . . you haven't seen anything yet!

This is a book that as I try to review I fear that anything I say will be a spoiler. When that is the case, I find a bullet point review lets me share my thoughts without giving too much away.

- The book has a slightly different feel than any of the previous ones
- You can read this one as a stand alone. However there are a few points that tie it back into the rest of the books that will be spoilers if you want to read them to.

Pros:

- Lots of suspense
- Mystery and surprises at every turn
- Characters you root for and characters you root against
- Interesting setting

Cons:

- Key plot points kind of confusing. After finishing, I am still not sure I understand some of it.
- Some plot development was a little too convenient. I am not always a fan of the Deus Ex Machina - and it happened quite often here.

Even with those couple of cons, still another strong Pendergast entry and I will continue to read this series!

J.S. Bailey says

I have a hard time getting into Preston & Child novels. Their plots are interesting but we never really get to know the characters. Just who is Pendergast, and who is Constance? What are their motivations? Their hopes? Their dreams? Their fears? I gather from reading that Constance is immeasurably old but still looks very young, but I don't know what led to her longevity. These characters, as well as the "supporting" cast, seem paper-thin to me because they're really just a name and a face and not much else. These novels would be more entertaining if the characters were more fully fleshed, because it is very difficult to care about the fates of characters I know nothing about.

Juli says

Following the horrors of their last adventure, Special Agent Pendergast knows his ward, Constance Greene, needs a breather, a trip to renew her physically and psychologically. What better place to renew and become mentally stronger than a Tibetan monastery? Although the monks don't normally admit women, Constance is special. She learns much from them during her time there. Then the monks discover that a dangerous artifact that has been in their keeping for centuries has been stolen. They ask Pendergast and Charlotte to get it back for them because in the wrong hands the artifact could destroy humanity. The duo find themselves on board a cruise liner, The Britannia, searching for the artifact. Unfortunately, the passenger who possesses the cursed item is already attempting to use its power. Will Pendergast be able to retrieve the artifact before its evil is released on all of humanity?

Wheel of Darkness is the 8th novel in the Agent Pendergast series. I found this book to be a bit weaker than the others I've read so far. Still enjoyable.....but the story felt like a "mop up" of the prior Diogenes-centered storylines. But, I do have to mention that I listened to an abridged audiobook version of this story. I am not sure how much was gleaned out to shorten this book to just over six hours, but my guess is about half of the story was removed. So it could very probably be that I felt this was a weaker story because I didn't get to hear the entire story the way Preston & Child wrote it. I don't like abridged audiobooks, but in this case, it was the only option I had at my local library. I enjoyed Rene Auberjonois as narrator. He reads at a nice even pace, and I like the accent he uses for Pendergast. But I don't like the fact that so much of the story was removed. In a few places it was quite obvious that portions of the storyline were absent.

Plotwise, I found the story interesting, and it was a bit of a departure from Pendergast's usual behavior. Although some of the differences were due to the effects of the artifact. The action being on a ship at sea made for some exciting suspense. I for one would not want to be in the middle of the ocean on a ship with a powerful and evil artifact causing mayhem onboard. That's a basic fear for a lot of people, I think. Being faced with danger and a possible excruciating, torturous death while stuck somewhere that prevents escape. You can't exactly jump off a cruise ship and swim for it. The setting really made this story a lot more creepy. For the most part, I enjoyed the book.....I just wish I had been able to get an unabridged version.

I would rate this book 4 stars based solely on the story itself, but lowering to 3 stars for this particular audiobook version. Just too much was removed from the book....leaving some obvious holes in the action. Bleck.

There are 15 books in the Pendergast series, with a new one scheduled for 2018. I already have the next audiobook on hold at the library (unabridged!!!! yay!!!). I'm hoping to be caught up by the time the new book comes out!

For more information on the authors and their books, check out their website: <https://www.prestonchild.com/>

Lobstergirl says

I'm not sure what was more ridiculous, a clammy, smoky, malevolent, many-armed world-destroying demon released from a Tibetan painting, or this: "Quickly, he arrayed in his mind the thousand greatest paintings of the Western tradition."

On the other hand, you have to tip your hat to the authors' mastery of the terminology of ocean liners, nauticalness, and general shippery. There was a pleasing casino scene, and there was a certain Agatha Christieness to this hybrid of locked-room-mystery-aboard-an ocean-liner-on-the-high-seas and pop-Buddhism.

Ginger says

The Wheel of Darkness was my least favorite of the Pendergast series.

"But Ginger, you still gave it **4 stars**?!"

"Well, have you read any Pendergast books yet my fellow Goodreads friend?"

"No."

"Well, let me explain. So far, every book has been fun, suspenseful and entertaining. At times the books can creep you the fuck out! I mean, they can't all be 5 star books. Right?!"

Why did I give this a lower rating?

I think the unbelievability with this plot was a bit much for me along with how Pendergast and Constance always got their way while on the *Britannia*. And to be honest, I think my mind is too damn dumb to understand the complexities of the Agozyen.

It was still an interesting, powerful and fascinating Tibetan artifact. I liked the idea of it and wish I was smarter so I can figure out how to take over the world!

I enjoyed the secondary characters, the premise of the plot and all the action. This was definitely a fun and enjoyable read!

Recommended to fellow Pendergast fans, fans of thrillers and action genres and anyone looking for a high seas and dramamine induced nautical read!

Abby says

When you look at this book individually, it's not entirely bad. Mystery novels are supposed to be a fun romp with a whodunit. But when you look at this book as compared to the rest of the series it belongs to, it becomes a bit worse. Nothing about *The Wheel of Darkness* added to the series. The plots drew from *Titanic* and *Sherlock Holmes*. And dare I say, the characters seemed to have different personalities. I just hope this book was a fluke and the rest of the series will shine.

Steven Turek says

After a leaving their last book soaked with uncertainty, Preston and Child return with a very disappointing conclusion. Many a thread are left untied with the conclusion of this book. In their past books they have treated the unknown with science and explanation, but here they delve way too deeply into the supernatural. The ending is reminiscent of the *deus ex machina* endings of ancient Greek theatre. The authors build up the suspense, but then take the easy way out by having very improbable things happen. The hanging elements of the previous book are left out of the entire story until the last page of the epilogue, wherein they are treated very lightly. Hopefully the authors are not planning to try and squeeze another title out of this storyline because they really aren't going anywhere.

John Inman says

Excellent. On to #9, Cemetery Dance. I guess I have to say this is my most favorite series of all time. Nine books in and I'm not the least bit bored. Not sure how many more Pendergast books there are, but I know I'll read them all. And probably more than once.

Irrlicht says

Okay, this was a tough one.

From what I've read so far and in my own personal opinion, within Preston/Child's series about FBI agent extraordinaire Aloysius Pendergast the books are either very good (like, for example, Still Life With Crows) or not good at all (Relic).

Interestingly enough, "The Wheel of Darkness" was a bit in between.

Maybe I should mention that I haven't read "Brimstone", "Dance of Death" or "The Book of the Dead" up until now, so Constance was a new character for me, but I liked her well enough, even though I didn't know much of her background.

Pendergast was his usual smart and witty self – and sometimes he wasn't, which I liked a lot. It added a nice twist to things and showed that even Aloysius Pendergast isn't all that perfect and can be thrown off track or maybe even turned. (Then again, of course he saved the day once more – with a bit of help from Constance – so, yeah, maybe still a bit too perfect.)

The story largely took place on the "Britannia", a huge cruise ship which is like a swimming city, and because of that the reader is introduced to a lot of supporting characters. Some of which were actually likeable.

Also: even if the story progressed slowly, it managed to get quite thrilling on the last 100 or so pages.

So far, so good.

Unfortunately there were a lot of downsides, too.

I think the setting was both a blessing and a curse. By being on a cruise ship, they had nowhere to "go". They couldn't involve any police at all (only the ship's security staff), they couldn't involve the usual and well-known characters like D'Agosta and Hayward and – because of that – they had to introduce A LOT of new supporting characters.

Which took time. A LOT of time.

And due to the fact that – to me – most of those characters were completely unlikable or just killed off after just having been introduced, the book got incredibly boring in parts. There were two or three characters I really liked and would've loved to read more about, but since there were so many others, those were neglected up until about the last quarter – and it really was a drag sometimes to actually get there.

The case itself progressed so slowly that I almost lost interest. Plus, there were too many side stories that had nothing to do with the actual case. (Especially Pendergast catching the card counters. I'm sorry, but that was

just showing off and an unnecessary digression.)

And then there was the “spiritual” part.

For some reason I seem to attract storylines like that lately. “River Marked” and now “The Wheel of Darkness”.

I know that Pendergast spent a lot of time in a Tibetan monastery, learned some super-secret meditation-exercises, and ways to strengthen the body through the mind, ways to actually touch something with his mind, and whatnot. Fine. Either you deal with Aloysius Pendergast being a modern-day Sherlock Holmes with slight supernatural abilities and money to burn, or you don't.

I did. I always do when reading Pendergast novels. But this case and its end were so... obscure, confusing and generally absurd that I just couldn't buy the comparatively simple solution.

So... yeah. Not completely unreadable, but still boring in parts and very convoluted.

2,5 stars – by the skin of its teeth.

ScottK says

I love most of what these guys Douglass Preston and Lincoln Child write together. But I especially love the story line of FBI agent Aloysius Pendergast and his "ward" Constance Greene. Yeah the books are a bit over the top and Agent Pendergast gets away with ALOT of stuff no Real FBI agent would, but the books are great. Always some end of the world /Crazy person with a venetta to destroy everything plot , and yet always different and fresh. This one takes place on a brand new Ocean Liner called Britania and her first crossing from England to NYC. Oh and an ancient Tibetan relic with which a person could wipe out the whole human population. Good Stuff.

Lee Miller says

The language is arch to the point of smugness, the situations are ridiculous, and the characters are absurd, but I couldn't put it down. It's as if two writers got together and said "let's take a junior high boys' James Bond fantasy and see how far we can stretch it before it breaks."

And, for some odd, reptilian-brain reason, it worked, at least for me. A major theme involved Tibetan mysticism, which added a fun, exotic feel. I also enjoyed the fact that much of the action took place on an ocean liner, which gave the authors an opportunity to give you an interesting behind-the-scenes look at how luxury liners work today.

The book was silly, and it didn't make me want to read another Preston/Childs book (it got my desire to read at least one Preston/Childs book out of my system), but it was a fun guilty pleasure.

Annah says

Kind of like an old boyfriend who I'm tired of but keep hanging out with out of guilt. This book had it's moments of fun, and Pendergast is always great to read about. Problem is, he didn't really DO much in this book. It had a really good premise, but just got lazy and ended with a fizzle. Did I love it? No. Will I read the next Lincoln-Child bit of fluff that comes out? You betcha.

Carol says

Constance and Pendergast take on spiritual studies at a remote monastery in Tibet. While there a monk informs them of an object that has been stolen. Something powerful that is enclosed in a box but no one knows what is inside. Pendergast must find it. Constance and Pendergast trace the stolen box to the ocean liner, Britannia and end up on a cruise from hell, literally. This book also gives a bit of insight into the Pendergast in future books as he is altered in a way that will change him forever. Not bad but not enough Pendergast. But loads of disposable cruise passengers.

kartik narayanan says

After the disappointing Diogenes trilogy, Agent Pendergast is back in a much better book. The story is set in Tibet & on an ocean liner which brings back the feeling of claustrophobia that existed in The Relic. In addition, Constance is now a much more involved character which brings that extra oomph that was missing.

Not everything is great though. The ending is a deus ex machina. Plus, the plot point used here is quite similar to the plot point in The Book of the Dead.

So, The Wheel of Darkness is a decent Agent Pendergast book but it palls in comparison to the first three in the series.

Tom Kouhsari says

There are two types of people who rate this book highly. Those that have never read the rest of the Pendergast series and those whose understanding of the rest of the Pendergast series is skin deep.

This book is an insult to the rest of the series. I wonder if Preston and Child just got to the point where they said "I bet we can write any piece of garbage and put our names on it and put the name Pendergast in it and people will still love it"

Anyway, you could easily have written this book and replaced all of the character names with other new characters and the book would be better off. It would still be pretty bad, but at least it wouldn't soil the rest of the series. Pendergast and Constance bear little resemblance to the characters in previous books anyway.

Julie says

Disappointing after the thrilling Diogenes trilogy. However, still an enjoyable, quirky read.

8/11/18 Update: reading for a 2nd time with my daughter while on vacation in Seattle, WA. We'll see how I like it this time around & it will be interesting to have my daughter's experience to add to mine. We finished listening to the audiobook on our way back home. My daughter agrees with my 3*** rating & adds that she found it had too many supernatural elements that had no basis in reality, unlike previous entries in the series. It was a bit too far 'out there' for her. Additionally, she usually feels more invested in the 'side' characters, but in this book she didn't.

Terry says

This book is a little different from the other Pendergast books in this series, but not to its detriment for me. It was an interesting mystery, and the resolution was certainly exciting to the end! The Preston/Child writing style certainly holds to form here as well as this was a very easy feeling book to read. I recommend as a continuation of the overall Pendergast series. 4.0/5.0 stars for me.

Joel says

This is the latest book in the "Pendergast series" from Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child. It's their superhero FBI agent at it once again, saving lost pieces of art, relics and outwitting everyone all while making you, the reader, feel like you need to go out and start buying Hugo Boss suits and driving around in vintage luxury cars.

Actually, this book is a departure from the usual behavior of Agent Pendergast. He actually becomes a victim of sorts in this book and it's interesting to see Preston and Child trying to develop his character beyond the "super-cop" hero archetype. Or, maybe that *is part of the archetype...guess I didn't pay enough attention in anthropology class.*

All in all it is an entertaining read. I finished it in a few days (give me a break I was on my way to Afghanistan when I read it...otherwise it would be a one or two day read) and of course it left me wanting Preston and Child to hurry up and finish their next Pendergast novel. Not the most sophisticated or demanding read, but definitely entertaining and Pendergast is such a great character that you can't help but want to spend more time at your local museum of natural history...or something.

Maraia says

Definitely the weakest one yet.

2.5 stars
