



The Devil and Daniel Webster (Tale Blazers)

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Having promised his soul to the Devil in exchange for good fortune, Jabez Stone asks the talented lawyer Daniel Webster to get him out of the bargain.

The Devil and Daniel Webster (Tale Blazers) Details

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Mary Overton says

After a season of bad luck:

"It was about the last straw for Jabez Stone. 'I vow,' he said, and he looked around him kind of desperate - 'I vow it's enough to make a man want to sell his soul to the devil. And I would, too, for two cents!'

"Then he felt a kind of queerness come over him at having said what he'd said; though, naturally, being a New Hampshireman, he wouldn't take it back. ... But notice is always taken, sooner or later, just like the Good Book says. And, sure enough, next day, about supper time, a soft-spoken, dark-dressed stranger drove up in a handsome buggy and asked for Jabez Stone.

"Well, Jabez told his family it was a lawyer, come to see him about a legacy. But he knew who it was. He didn't like the looks of the stranger, nor the way he smiled with his teeth.

"They were white teeth, and plentiful - some say they were filed to a point, but I wouldn't vouch for that. And he didn't like it when the dog took one look at the stranger and ran away howling with his tail between his legs. But having passed his word, more or less, he stuck to it, and they went out behind the barn and made their bargain. Jabez Stone had to prick his finger to sign, and the stranger lent him a silver pin. The wound healed clean, but it left a little white scar."

Carrie says

Do you think you could win your soul back from the devil? Successful Daniel Webster thinks he can. Read and see if Daniel succeeds or ends up being part of the devil's prized collection.

Nicole says

A folk-tale about righteousness and patriotism - The Devil and Daniel Webster tells a fictional story about the real life famous lawyer, Daniel Webster, and his dispute with the Devil over Jabez Stone's immortal soul. As appropriate as it was for the time period, and as laden with imagery - it was still a rather dry read. Interesting to pick apart in a class room setting, yet still - a bit of a snooze.

Don Dixon says

A Classic!

I read this book as a child and loved it. With the events of the last election I chose to read again 50 years later and the moral and ethical undertones resonate today as they did then. Should bring required reading.

Lemar says

New England yarn about Jabez Stone who is understandably reluctant to cough up his soul to the Stranger as he had promised. Instead he does the American thing and sues, hires the best lawyer he can, Daniel Webster. Webster mounts an ingenious defense.

As a modern reader I still enjoyed it but on looking up the histories of Stan's own jury they were almost all like Simon Girty, a friend of the Native Americans and somebody I liked or Thomas Morton who founded a fascinating and liberal community that were the hated rivals of those uptight Puritans.

Stephan says

Humorous, fascinating, easy going. The devil's ultimate challenge, Daniel Webster, is the best lawyer in the world. A lawyer that is bound by morality and justice, bold and daring and without fear of the devil and its nonsense; Funny, amusing, and highly recommended.

Rebekah Sell says

Okay, so this isn't really a book per say. It's really a short story. However, I absolutely love it and read it at least once every year. I would suggest that everyone read this at least once in their lives simply because it is overly interesting!

Diane S ? says

Loved it! IT was such a short read but I love the ironies, the satire and just the thought that man can take on and fight the devil. If only more men took on the devil the world would be a much better place.

Alan says

This is one of my favorite American folktales. It combines the classic Faustian plot with a fair telling of American history and New England personality. Fun to read it aloud again, this time to the kids.

Dominic says

Very interesting as most folklore involving the Devil.

Ritu says

For his voice could search the heart, and that was his gift and his strength.

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading this. And love the voice of the narrator.

Rosa says

I'm embarrassed to admit it, but I love this piece of corny old Americana. Besides, it's not all one-sided and sentimental--there's some serious truth in here. And it's also fun. A great story to read on the Fourth of July.

J'aime says

Some of the best historical fiction I've read concerns duping the devil (i.e. Faust) out of a bargain, and this is no exception. Here Daniel Webster acts as the "attorney" to get someone else out of the devil's clutches. Reminds me why Shakespeare said "kill all the lawyers"!!

A great story, and an even better play.

Dayla says

The best part of this book was the judge who returned to judge Daniel Webster's argument in "court." He was the judge from the Salem Witch Trials. Great book to read if you have 40 minutes to spare.

Courtney says

"Neighbor, how stands the Union?"

As well-written a tall tale as ever graced America's fictional landscape. Daniel Webster beats back Old Scratch with a fiery and stubborn faith...though not so much faith in the Almighty as in the Constitution and his own oratorical powers. Not to be missed.

Lauren says

After a farmer makes a deal with the devil, he brings in a lawyer to get him out of the contract. Not as cynical as it sounds, I enjoyed this short story (and the black-and-white illustrations colored in by a young library patron with crayons).

Erin says

I read this short story in my college English Literature class, and boy am I glad that this was included in the list of reading! While I enjoyed The Devil and Tom Walker, I prefer this retelling over the original. This story is just so well-written and intriguing, and while Washington Irving's version has its merits, I believe Benet was able to transform Irving's story and give it a new life and zest that Irving's story lacks. My

professor assigned this story to be read near Halloween, and I would highly recommend reading it around that time because it puts you in a spooked and somber mood!

Anna says

I read this book the first time when I was in high school.

The second time reading this was in play version which I have to say is probably different from the prose version. To my understanding, it is very difficult to find the prose version and so I have to make do with the play version. The style in which it is written is still very good. Easy to read, intelligent, and fun. But I remember the court scene going differently and following a more "revealing" nature. The play seems to rely on Mr. Webster merely playing off of the jury's human side, which isn't very spectacular. I remember the story being far more inventive than that - how else could it have lasted so long in the world of literature? Perhaps my age and distance from the book have changed my view of it, in the long run.

David says

Fun and folkloric. It was sin and weakness that led poor Jabez Stone to finally buy prosperity with his soul, much as the US bargained with the devil when it warred and enslaved to achieve its great success. Whether or not we as a country can be forgiven is this story's central question.

Sadie Beard says

read this play as it was recommended on "my life in books" but so very dissappointed. A rubbish american cut down version of Fautus.
