



The Merchant of Death: Pendragon Graphic Novel (Pendragon (Quality))

By D.J. MacHale

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Bobby Pendragon is a seemingly normal fourteen-year-old boy. He has a family, a home, and even Marley, his beloved dog. But there is something very special about Bobby.

He is going to save the world.

And not just Earth as we know it. Bobby is slowly starting to realize that life in the cosmos isn't quite what he thought it was. And before he can object, he is swept off to an alternate dimension known as Denduron, a territory inhabited by strange beings, ruled by a magical tyrant, and plagued by dangerous revolution.

If Bobby wants to see his family again, he's going to have to accept his role as savior, and accept it wholeheartedly. Because, as he is about to discover, Denduron is only the beginning....

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 5 Up—An award-winning comics creator has adapted the first in D. J. MacHale's popular series (S & S). The Pendragon books take the elements of the classic hero and his journey (the orphaned young man with a great destiny, the mentor, the call to adventure, etc.) and mix in sci-fi, fantasy, and plenty of action to create a compelling story. This adaptation moves along at a brisk pace, establishing the characters and situations and then playing them out to their (literally) explosive conclusion, but not without first setting up the next volume in the series. The black-and-white illustrations do a capable job of presenting the events, although both story and image lack the spark that would elevate them above similar tales. Still, Pendragon fans and lovers of action comics will certainly be drawn to this title.—*Douglas P. Davey, Halton Hills Public Library, Ontario, Canada*

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About the Author

D.J. MacHale is the author of the #1 New York Times bestselling Pendragon series. He has written, directed and produced many television series and movies for young people that have been seen on Nickelodeon, The Disney Channel, HBO, Showtime, PBS, Discovery Kids and the broadcast networks. D.J. lives with his family in Southern California.

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Journal #1: Denduron

I hope you're reading this, Mark.

Heck, I hope *anybody's* reading this because the only thing that's keeping me from going totally off my nut right now is getting this all down on paper so that someday, when it's all over, it'll help prove that I'm not a total whack job. You see, two things happened yesterday that changed my life forever.

The first was that I finally kissed Courtney Chetwynde. Yes, the Courtney Chetwynde of the bites-her-lower-lip-when-she's-thinking, stares-right-into-your-heart-with-her-deep-gray-eyes, looks-unbelievable-in-her-volleyball-uniform, and always-smells-a-little-like-roses fame. Yeah, I kissed her. It was a long time coming and it finally happened. Woo-hoo!

The second thing was that I was launched through a wormhole called a "flume" and got jacked across the universe to a medieval planet called "Denduron" that's in the middle of a violent civil war.

But back to Courtney.

This wasn't your average "nice to see you" peck on the cheek. Oh no. This was a full-on, eyes closed, starting with tight lips but eventually morphing into a mutual open-mouth probe thing that lasted for a good thirty-second lifetime. And we were close, too. Like real close. I was holding her so tight I could feel her heart beating against my chest. Or maybe it was my heart. Or maybe our hearts were bouncing off each other. I have no idea. All I know is that it was pretty cool. I hope I get the chance to do it again, but right now it's not looking so good.

I guess it's kind of dumb to be fixating on the glorious Courtney Chetwynde when the real problem is that I'm afraid I'm going to die. Maybe that's why I can't get her out of my head. The memory of that kiss is the only thing that feels real to me right now. I'm afraid that if I lose that memory I'm going to lose everything, and if that happens then...well, I don't know what will happen then because I don't understand anything that's been happening to me. Maybe by writing it all down, it'll start to make some sense.

Let me try to piece together the events that led to my writing this. Up until yesterday I was living large. At least as large as any normal fourteen-year-old guy can live. School came pretty easy; I kicked ass in sports; my parents were way cool; I didn't hate my little sister, Shannon, usually. I had excellent friends, with you sitting right on top of the list, Mark. I lived in this major house where I had my own private space to play music or whatever and nobody bugged me. My dog, Marley, was the coolest golden retriever there ever was; and I had recently macked with Courtney Chetwynde. (Did I mention that?) How much more goin' on can you get?

The thing is, I also had an Uncle Press.

You remember him? He was the guy who always showed up at my birthday parties with some special surprise. He wouldn't just bring a pony, he'd bring a truckload of ponies for a minirodeo. He's the guy who turned my house into that laser-maze game. Was that great or what? He's the one who was throwing the pizzas at my party last year. Remember that guy? Every once in a while he'd show up, out of the blue, and do something amazing like take me flying in a private plane. Yeah, he was a pilot. Another time he gave me this computer that was so advanced, it wasn't even in stores yet. You know the calculator I have that you input numbers by talking to it? That was from Uncle Press. I gotta tell you, he was the coolest uncle everybody wished they had.

But there was always something a little mysterious about Uncle Press. He was my mom's brother, but she didn't say much about him. It was almost like she felt weird talking about him. Whenever I asked, she'd shrug and say something like, "Oh, you know him, he's his own man. How was school today?" Basically, she'd dodge the question.

I don't know what he did for a living, but he always had boatloads of money. I figured he probably had some top-level government job, like doing research for NASA or something and it was all hush-hush. So I didn't ask too many questions. He wasn't married, but sometimes he'd show up at the house with some odd character. One time he brought this lady over who never said a word. He said she was his "friend," but I got the feeling she was more like his "girlfriend." I think she was African or something because she was real dark-skinned. And beautiful. But it was strange because she'd just stare at me and smile. I wasn't scared or anything because she had soft eyes. And maybe she didn't talk because she didn't know English, but still it was kind of creepy.

I'd have to say that my Uncle Press was the coolest guy I'd ever met. That is, until yesterday.

The county semifinal basketball game was last night. You know how important I am to that team. I'm the highest scoring point guard in Stony Brook Junior High history. I'm not bragging; that's just the way it is. So for me to miss that game would have been like Kobe Bryant missing a Lakers playoff game. Okay, maybe I'm not that important, but it would not have been cool for me to bail on that game. Mom and Dad had already left for the gym with Shannon. I had a ton of homework and I knew I'd be fried afterward, so I had to get it done before leaving. I had just enough time to scarf down a banana and some Pop-Tarts, feed Marley, jump on my bike, and blast over to school. At least that was the plan. I can't help but think that if I had done my homework just a little bit faster, or decided not to throw the tennis ball with Marley, or even waited till I got to school to take a leak, none of this would have happened. But it did.

I grabbed my pack, headed for the front door, threw it open and came face to face with...Courtney Chetwynde.

I froze. She froze. It was like somebody hit the pause button on two lives. Except there was nothing static about what was racing through my brain. The crush I had on her dated back to when we were in grade school. She was always so...perfect. But not in that unattainable she's too good for everybody way. She was beautiful and smart and great at sports and she laughed and told jokes. I think that was the key. The fact that she told jokes. Maybe that sounds stupid, but if you tell jokes it shows you're willing to look stupid. And if you've got the whole package going on and still willing to let people laugh at you then, man, what else do you want?

Of course I wasn't the only one who felt this way about Courtney. I was one in a long line of admirers. But she was standing at *my* front door. Instantly, every synapse in my brain started firing to try and find the perfect, spontaneous thing to say. The first words out of your mouth in a time of crisis can color someone's opinion of you forever. It either shows that you're totally in charge and ready to handle any situation with composure and wit, or that you're a blundering idiot whose mind will freeze at the first sign of pressure. This all flashed through my brain in the few nanoseconds while we were on "pause." Now it was my move. She came to the house, it was my turn to respond. So I hitched my pack up on my shoulder, leaned casually against the doorjamb, gave her a little smile and said: "Yo."

Yo??? That's not even a real word! Nobody says "Yo" unless they're impersonating Sylvester Stallone, which I was definitely not doing. I was all set for the smile to drop off her face in crushing disappointment as she turned and left without saying a word. Instead, she bit her lower lip (which meant she was thinking) and said:

"Hi."

That was good. "Hi" isn't much higher up on the cool scale than "Yo." I was back in the game. It was time to start playing.

"What's up?" I said.

Okay, maybe I wasn't ready to play just yet. It was easier to lob the ball back into her court. It was then that I noticed something weird. Courtney looked nervous. Not out of her mind scared or anything, but a little bit uncomfortable. My confidence soared. She was just as tense as I was. That was good.

"I know you've got to get to the game and all, I don't want to make you late," she said with a little embarrassed smile.

What game? Oh, right, the county semifinal. Somehow it had slipped my mind.

"I've got plenty of time," I lied casually. "C'mon in."

I was recovering nicely. As she walked past me to come inside I got that faint hint of rose fragrance. It took every ounce of willpower not to do a huge-old sucking inhale to try and grab every ounce of that wonderful smell. That would have been dumb and this was definitely not the time to do something dumb because Courtney was now inside my home. She was on my turf. I closed the door behind her and we were alone.

I had no idea what to do next. Courtney turned to me and I made contact with those amazing gray eyes. My knees went soft. I prayed she didn't notice.

"I wasn't sure if I should come here," she said tentatively.

"I'm glad you did," I shot back with perfect timing. I kept the ball in her court, yet still managed to make her feel at ease. I was on fire.

"I'm not really sure why I picked now to come. Maybe it was to wish you good luck in the game. But I think it's more than that."

"Really?" Perfect comeback.

"I'm not exactly sure how to say this, Bobby, but since we were kids, I've had this...feeling about you."

Feeling? Feeling is good, unless she feels like I'm an ax murderer or something.

"Oh?" I shot back. Noncommittal, nonaggressive, perfect.

"Man, I feel like such a geek saying this." She broke eye contact. I was losing her. I didn't want her to chicken out so the best thing I could do was throw her a bone.

"Courtney, there are a lot of words that come to mind when I think of you, but 'geek' is definitely not one of them."

She looked back to me and smiled. We were back on track.

"I'm not really sure how to say this, so I'll just say it. There's something about you, Bobby. I know you're a brain and a jock and popular and all, but it's more than that. You've got this, like, I don't know, this aura thing going on. People trust you. They like you. And it's not like you're trying to show off or anything. Maybe that's part of it. You don't act like you think you'r..."

Users Review

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