



The Anvil of the Craftsman

Dale Amidei

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** "Anvil" was honored at the 2013 Best of the Independent eBook Awards with recognition for Best Editing and was also named the Runner-up in both Best Action/Adventure and Best Villain. The Revised and Expanded Edition includes a Bonus Chapter.

"You have love, hate and indifference. Choose."

A doctoral candidate in Theological Studies accepts recruitment by a friend in the U.S. State Department for an initiative to the most troublesome province in 2006 Iraq. The many challenges of nation building expand the mission from diplomacy to a survival situation as local and international interests position themselves to oppose a State Department initiative: one vital to progress in an uncertain theater.

Terrorism and counter-terror operations threaten to keep the team from leaving the relative safety of Baghdad. Until, that is, a former USAF Special Tactics operative hunting the men who want to kill them draws duty as their protector. The simple questions posed during a tribal council threaten provincial and regional stability; the conclusions reached explode into a clash of faith, loyalty, schism and betrayal that will help shape the future of two nations.

The Anvil of the Craftsman, the debut novel by author Dale Amidei, will be appreciated by fans of a broad range of fiction; from aficionados of the haunting themes of Ernest Hemingway to readers of the tightly woven plots of Tom Clancy and popular titles of authors like Vince Flynn, David Baldacci, W.E.B. Griffin and Richard Marcinko.

The Anvil of the Craftsman is presented in its Kindle Edition with a fully functional Table of Contents and navigation controls (NCX). Approx. 97,900 words / 327 pp. print length.

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The Anvil of the Craftsman Details

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From Reader Review The Anvil of the Craftsman for online ebook

Dale Amidei says

Though some readers frown on authors rating their own books, I choose to use this forum to mirror the review results of the Kindle Edition, which currently holds 4.6 stars across one hundred and fifty reviews on Amazon. Should that change, I will revise my own rating here.

"Anvil" is the story of one young man with a vision, one friend with a mission, the men who want to kill them and the man who wants to keep them alive. As a personal note, I reiterate what I have written about the work elsewhere: graced to write but a single novel, I'd remain pleased to have it be this one.

Here is the blurb:

"A doctoral candidate in Theological Studies accepts recruitment by a friend in the U.S. State Department for an initiative to the most troublesome province in 2006 Iraq. The many challenges of nation building expand the mission from diplomacy to a survival situation as local and international interests position themselves to oppose the State Department initiative: one vital to progress in an uncertain theater.

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"Anvil" is available on Kindle, Nook, iTunes, and Kobo in addition to Smashwords. Paperback editions can be ordered from Amazon and CreateSpace. Approx. 93,000 words / 312pp. print length.

Robin says

I had a little bit of a hard time getting into this book, figuring out who the characters were and what was going on. Once I got beyond that point (and it was well worth it!), the book was excellent. Great story, great characters, and hard to put down. I would highly recommend Anvil of the Craftsman.

Janice Palko says

I don't often read this type of genre, but I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the writing and how engaging the story was. Jon Anthony was an appealing character, and I think it masterful that the author chose him as the vehicle through whom we experience the wild land that is Iraq. I particularly liked the

spiritual and philosophical themes that were laced throughout the story.

Romina says

After failing to make an impression in his doctorate for theological studies Jon Anthony accepts a position in the U.S State Dept. Recruited by an old friend the two of set out a plan to try and change diplomatic relations in war torn Iraq.

Terrorism threatens, and they find themselves a protector, a special tactics operative whose real name can never be given freely.

Their diplomatic mission will reach a conclusion with explosive consequences for both sides shaping the future of two nations.

Theology plays a huge part in this story, it's a subject that has always intrigued me. Eagerly I threw myself into it.

A few chapters in I was thrown into war torn Baghdad and what seemed to be soldiers' story.

As a genre of books I only occasionally read I tried to take my time, with terminology I am unfamiliar with and a foreign language I wanted to understand as best as I could.

I must admit I was surprised that I began to enjoy it.

With strong characters, defined by their own surroundings. Although I wondered how a theologian and military personnel would work together the writing made it easy to see a way they could.

Although seeing Iraq in the news an awful lot the descriptive in this novel gave me a new environment to consider, imagining places we as civilians are not privy to see.

The scenes of war can feel horrifically real when reading and have a way of making the reader consider the true danger our military face daily.

The dialogue has an intensity that almost makes you catch your breath in apprehension of the final outcome. I really did enjoy this book once I got stuck in and has become a genre that I don't intend to shy away from in future.

Fiona says

What a suspenseful & thought provoking book! I couldn't put the book down. And, there were parts of the book where I shed tears.

The year is 2006. Jon Anthony, a theology PhD candidate, is recruited by his friend, Tom Colby, to work for the State Dept. Specifically, he is to help Colby's team go to Iraq to help bring the sheik of the Anbar Province into the parliamentary process. Problem is that the Anbar Province is still controlled by the insurgents and Al Queda. USAF Major Kameldorn (fake name) works for military intelligence gathering information and often using force (sniper rifle, pistol, and whatever else he can get his hands on). Major Kameldorn is after two insurgents: Abu Bakir Raad which is a Sunni cover name for an Iranian Revolutionary Guard who is funding the insurgency in Iraq. Muhammad Qasim al-Khafji is a Saudi who runs one of the al Queda networks in Iraq.

Colby's team is going to meet a bunch of the sheiks and their followers in their province. Of course, the "bad guys" find out about the convoy route and date. Who will come out alive? Will the sheiks work with State Dept?

This novel is full of details. It's as if I was reading a real-life report of what is happening in Iraq. It's thought provoking because Jon Anthony, as a theology candidate and well versed in Islam, speaks to the sheiks of religion. He told them that they have a choice based on Muslim and Christian beliefs: to love (stop the killings), to hate (assist al Queda), or do nothing.

This is the first of the Jon Anthony trilogies. I'll have to read the others now.

Karen says

What can I begin to say about this book?! Anvil of the Craftsman was so well written that it's hard for me to grasp that this is Mr. Amidei's first book. Right from the beginning I liked Jon Anthony. But I fell in love with Matt. The suspense and adventure kept my interest throughout this book. I found myself getting angry at the bad guys, and rooting for the good guys! When an author evoke real emotions from their readers, that's the mark of a great author. I look forward to reading more from Mr. Amidei.

Bob says

Excellent book. I could not wait to turn the page.

C.C. MacKenzie says

A book that grabs me by the throat and doesn't let go is a very rare thing these days but Dale Amidei managed to do just that with The Anvil of the Craftsman. It's thrilling read which actually made me cry. Thanks for that, Dale.

This book more than deserves to be in the best seller lists.

Unlike Ridley Scott in The Kingdom of Heaven, Dale's attention to fact in his fiction is riveting. His use of language is a master class in descriptive prose as is the character development, especially of the hero Jon Anthony. Something that sucked me in and made me feel as if I was right there was the attention to detail of how the State Department works along with espionage, the complex mind of a terrorist and the core values and belief in humanity of the man charged with the task to stop him. I'm not going to write a synopsis of this book because that's been done by fans of the genre a hell of a lot better than I can.

However, what I will say is that I can see a film in this book's future. And remember you heard that here first.

Kevin Birmingham says

This is an excellent read. The beginning chapters were paced such that I was hard-pressed to put the book down. I was so immersed that as I finished I was hoping to find the next book in a series. My rating of 4

stars, a high 4 stars, is my way of persuading Mr. Amidei to give us more. The best I've read in this genre in quite awhile.

Dana Delamar says

4.5 stars. I don't normally read political thrillers, but I'd heard so many great things about this one, that I had to pick it up, and I'm so glad I did. Though the first quarter was a little slow at times, I was soon absorbed in an engrossing story about what it takes to win a war and rebuild a nation--in this case, Iraq.

One of the things I really liked about this book is that you don't just get the point of view of the good guys; you get many perspectives, and by the end, I felt that I had a much better understanding of the Iraq conflict and the various peoples involved in it.

I had been a little concerned that the book would be preachy, but the spiritual aspects were integrated well and presented in such a manner that I believe anyone of any religious faith could appreciate them.

Extremely well-researched, with taut, thrilling action scenes (I was ready to high-five the characters at the end) and well-rounded characters, Anvil of the Craftsman is a winner. I've already purchased the sequel and look forward to more from Dale Amidei. This book would make a great movie!

Tamara Ward says

This book is a thriller with deeply developed characters and much more; it carries a message. The book goes beyond entertaining the reader with the action and characters; it speaks weightily. Do religions share a commonality – or, rather, can people of different faiths find commonality with each other? What makes an effort during a time of war worth the cost? How much cost is too much? For a reader who lately has been drawn to lighter reads, this meaty book kept my mind engaged and my fingers turning the pages until the very end.

Tracy says

I both enjoyed this novel and admired the quality of the writing. At the end of every scene I felt the urge to keep reading. The story was revealed in an effortless flow. Characters were either easy to empathize with or mysteriously fascinating.

In the beginning the novel introduces Jon Anthony, a doctoral candidate in theology. His dissertation is rejected in a heart wrenching series of scenes that let me share in how bereft the character felt after having his life's work rejected. With student loan bills piling up, he ends up taking a contract position in the U.S. State Department headed by Colby, an old college friend of Anthony's. This is how Anthony ends up in Iraq, working as a cultural and religious advisor.

The setting in the early years of the Iraq War make the stakes high and the landscape dangerous. The character of Matt Kameldorn enters the story in Iraq. He's a U.S. Air Force Major who stalks Al Quaida agents and plotters, gathers intelligence, and sometimes assassinates targets. He reminded me a little of the

main character in *Apocalypse Now*, but Kameldorn was not as troubled. He was good at what he did and worked hard to try to save the lives of the people on his side of the war. Kameldorn is presented with fascinating technical accuracy as he employs various surveillance devices and uses weapons. The street scenes in Baghdad came across as very authentic too, and the danger was palpable.

The way the novel also peered into the minds of terrorist cell leaders and the people they recruit was quite gripping. The evil manipulative nature of these leaders who cared nothing about spreading ruthless bloodshed was darkly interesting.

Later in the novel when Kameldorn and Anthony become acquainted and work together on a State Department mission, I was very impressed with the flowering of the Kameldorn character. He had initially been interesting because he was a lone wolf warrior and good at what he did. But in Anthony's company more of his personality came out. The two men hit it off a bit and develop a mutual respect for each other. The warrior and the philosopher created stimulating foils for each other and I enjoyed the chance to see a bit of humor in Kameldorn instead of just the deadly serious stuff.

The Anvil of the Craftsman is a political thriller. It's not the type of novel I usually read, but the title caught my eye. Yes, the title. I just loved that phrase and discovered that the author writes novels as well as he names them.

For a thoughtful, exciting, and well crafted read, I recommend *The Anvil of the Craftsman*.

Gregory Carrico says

I must admit that this title decorated my Kindle for over a year before I read the first sentence. My preconceptions about *The Anvil of the Craftsman* as a Christian novel kept me from starting what I feared would be a thin veneer of a story wrapped around a preachy message. I couldn't have been more wrong.

Dale Amidei has masterfully, almost magically created the total literary package. This book is meticulously edited and formatted, and thoroughly researched. The level of detail goes beyond building an utterly believable world. It pulled me into the story so seamlessly that some of the scenes feel more like personal memories than something I read.

With a fairly large cast of characters, I am impressed by the apparent ease with which Mr. Amidei gives each a distinct voice, not only making them real, but making them so engaging that I feel like I know them, both the good guys and the baddies.

What I did NOT get from this book was any confirmation of my foolish preconceptions about this genre. This is a beautifully crafted, exciting, thought provoking ride, and any true master of his craft, Mister Amidei makes it look easy. I could kick myself for not reading it sooner. This author has jumped right to the top of my Must Read list.

Sherry Ledet says

For those who have an interest in stories of the Iraq War, this is a must read. Jon Anthony, disappointing

denial of his dissertation for his doctorate finds himself offered a temporary job with the State Dept. in Iraq. In the notorious Anbar Province his life takes now direction and allows his faith a new outlet. It also teaches him a new respect for his State and Military companions. This author seems to leave an opening for a sequel. I hope there is one.

Natalie Owens says

I won't be going into the specifics of this book but I can safely say this story will stay with me for a long time. It will be one of those books I will pick back up a year from now after finishing the series, and re-read. If you think this is just a basic thriller and war story, you would be mistaken. There are so many facets to it, so many thought provoking scenes, that I'm still reeling from it. Jon Anthony is, I think, the perfect hero, but there are many other interesting characters in this book. All are well sketched out, not simply "drive-by characters" we are not invested in. Sometimes something happens so shocking, that you have to put the book down and catch your breath. I learned a lot about human beings from this book - about their motivations, what drives them. We are all products of our culture and experiences but beyond that, we live in a connected world. What happens in one darkened corner of the Earth may have wider effects than we expect. This book, basically, is not just about a war, about good and bad guys - it is about PEOPLE, and about the consequences of different actions. What is the price we pay to achieve a certain result? How far are we willing to go? This is a book you will not be able to forget, so if you're looking for an easy read, look elsewhere. It is well written though and flows beautifully. Amidei has a knack with crafting engaging narrative with some knock-out phrases that will leave you breathless. There are many scenes of fast action and suspense that I found riveting, especially the further you go in the story. So yes, this is a book of action/adventure and a thriller, but it's so much more than that. Amidei is truly a master of the craft in my mind, but most of all, this is a story you will want to read. It's one of those books you tell your friends about because it affected you so much, and it's one of the best books I've read in a while. That's how I feel about it anyway. Of course, I'll be reading the entire series.
