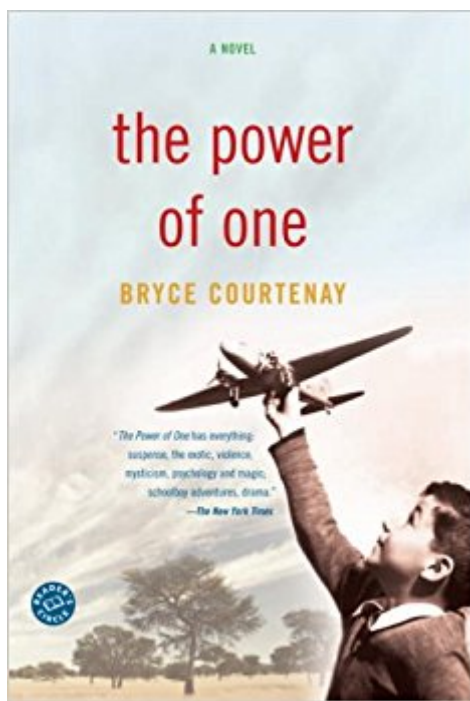


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The Power Of One: A Novel



Synopsis

“The Power of One has everything: suspense, the exotic, violence; mysticism, psychology and magic; schoolboy adventures, drama.” “The New York Times” “Unabashedly uplifting . . . asserts forcefully what all of us would like to believe: that the individual, armed with the spirit of independence” “the power of one” “can prevail.” “Cleveland Plain Dealer” In 1939, as Hitler casts his enormous, cruel shadow across the world, the seeds of apartheid take root in South Africa. There, a boy called Peekay is born. His childhood is marked by humiliation and abandonment, yet he vows to survive and conceives heroic dreams “which are nothing compared to what life actually has in store for him. He embarks on an epic journey through a land of tribal superstition and modern prejudice where he will learn the power of words, the power to transform lives, and the power of one.” “Totally engrossing . . . [presents] the metamorphosis of a most remarkable young man and the almost spiritual influence he has on others . . . Peekay has both humor and a refreshingly earthy touch, and his adventures, at times, are hair-raising in their suspense.” “Los Angeles Times Book Review” “Marvelous . . . It is the people of the sun-baked plains of Africa who tug at the heartstrings in this book. . . . [Bryce] Courtenay draws them all with a fierce and violent love.” “The Washington Post Book World” “Impressive.” “Newsday” “A compelling tale.” “The Christian Science Monitor”

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Customer Reviews

The Power of One is without a doubt, one of most compelling novels I've ever read, and what prompted me into researching a bit into the history of the African (and European) people under

Apartheid living in South Africa. The book, although from a British perspective, seems very unbiased, unlike what you might be thinking. The Power of One begins with the main character (who names himself Peekay) heading off to boarding school, away from his beloved nanny, and into the arms of Boers (Dutch, also called Afrikaners), who not only despise him for being British but despise him as a human being. Throughout boarding school, Peekay is ridiculed but promises himself that he'll never cry again. Although Peekay loses a friend (Grandpa Chook- a chicken of all things), he comes to realize the horrible rift that lies between the Dutch and the British. After leaving boarding school, Peekay encounters a man who teaches him about some of the essentials of what he believed was the power of one, and from this man (a Boer) he discovers his love of boxing, which became his obsession, becoming Welterweight Champion of the World became his goal and his life. This is just the idea behind the power of one, and the introduction of the story. From there, the book tells about the many people Peekay encounters throughout his life and the influence they had upon him and what he believed was the power of one. But what struck me was really how beautifully written the novel is and the way it combines wit, humor, drama, and the everyday troubles of life, and still manages to get its message across and entertain the reader. Just an absolutely incredible novel that sets across a striking vision of South Africa before and during the terror that was Apartheid.

Annotation: An inspiration story of a young man named Peekay who struggles in South Africa during World War II to find that it only takes one to change the world. Peekay overcomes obstacles by using his courage to show the power of one. Author Bio: Bryce Courtenay was born in 1933 in South Africa. He arrived in Australia in 1958 and a year later became an Australian Citizen. He is married to Benita. He also has three sons with her. Courtenay began an advertising career at age twenty six and within five years, he had become Australia's youngest creative director. He retired full time in 1993 to become a writer. Power of One was his first novel and became an international bestseller. The book is translated into eleven different languages. The book has sold over two million copies. Courtenay also wrote a book, April Fool's Day, in which it was wrote about his youngest son who died in 1991 from AIDS. Evaluation: I was first introduced to Courtenay's book when I saw his movie in the seventh grade. Four years later, I decided to read the story behind the movie in this novel. There is no comparison. The movie is a amended summarization of the book and although it is very inspirational, it is not as life changing as the book. I was enthralled in the hardships of Peekay's life as a growing boy in South Africa. He faces many obstacles in racial discriminations with the Afrikaaners since he was English. It is astonishing to see how this boy not only survived his

childhood; he also made a tremendous impact on South African society by using the power of one. Peekay meets many people along his journey that only flavors the soup pot. This book was a life changing event for me. Not only did I feel like crying and helping Peekay with his mission, I felt like I have to make an impact on society today. This book receives my highest rating and I can not wait to begin reading it again.

Bryce Courtenay makes THE POWER OF ONE seems so authentic that the reader is carried right into the story. The book begins when a five-year-old boy is being sent off to boarding school. He's small for his age, white and of English descent. His name is Peekay and he lives in South Africa. Up to this point in his life he's known only his family and his beloved black Nanny. Now, he's forced to take care of himself and survive under the most brutal of circumstances. The time is World War II and Peekay spends years in a boarding school where he's the only English student among Afrikaners who are sympathetic to the Nazi cause. He's beaten, tortured and treated as a "prisoner of war" by the older boys. The Afrikaners are the descendents of the Dutch and there has been a great deal of conflict between them and the English settlers who came to South Africa at a later period of time. When I first started reading this novel, I wasn't sure if I could handle the passages about the brutal treatment of the little boy. However, I quickly learned that Peekay is a spirited survivor and would make it through that horrible period of his life. On his vacations from school, he meets several people, both black and white who really influence him and teach him to work hard in order to fulfill his dreams. I found an uplifting joy in every success that Peekay experienced. This is a big book, but I looked forward to my reading sessions every day and I'm sure that part of this story will remain in my mind forever. The character of Peekay is very inspiring. Next, I plan to read the sequel, TANDIA.

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