



or all the stuff people say about the wonderful new dynamic publishing model, with all these books out that never would have seen the light of day, I have to say that some of them should have been buried in deep graves in the woods and forgotten.

I won't say which book this was (but those with sharp eyes might spot it sometime) but some coworker raved on it I bought a \$3 book on his recommendation. You know, I'm dropping book titles by Stephenson and Wells and even Pratchett, and this guy pushes a off-brand. But sure, why not try it?

This is the second time I've been burned by back-door books like this, stuff that people write, unvetted by any writer group or anyone beyond a friend nosing through it. It was written in (as I would term it) third-person-weak, meaning that we're being told the story from an external POV. And yes, I know that this is the most widely used method of storytelling, but it can be about as exciting as someone reading their laundry list. In this story, a planet blows up. And that's about as much as we are told. Not what happened to the billions on the planet faced with certain extinction. Not the panic, the weeping, the desperate rush for berths on the last ship. Just that the planet went pop and that was that. How can you take something that *should* provide endless emotional attachment (and description porn) and make it a couple of dull words? Forchristsake, not even a single adjective!

And the hero, who is as good as a saint. We're told that. Over and over we are told that. But never are we *shown* why he is good. Never an anecdote, an episode, not even dialog which would prove his worth to us. It's more like, "Hey, he's the hero. He's good. No proof needed."

Show, don't tell. That's the damn rule writers live by!

Anyway, I read about 50 pages and found myself dreading going back in - it was so dry and

## DNF (DOG EAR)

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pointless. I didn't care about the characters (frankly, I couldn't tell them apart). I had no idea where the tension had gotten to. There was no curiosity on my part to see where it was going. And thus, after a horrible day at work, I came home, took a look at my Ipad and turned my back on it. No, grabbing a book off the used shelf ( *Eternity Road*, by Jack McDevitt) I was instantly hooked. All I knew from the first few pages was that we were living in a post-apocalypse world along the Mississippi. An explorer had come back from a mission to find a supposed trove of old-world items, and was (strangely) the sole survivor of his party.

Really?

Curious.

Nobody said he was reclusive. Or mysterious. The story just showed me those things in the first few pages. And I wanted to know more. Like what happened to the people on his expedition? Where did they get to? What did they see?

The next day at work, I mentioned to my good friend Kanchan my guilt at tossing the other book away like the tripe it was. And she told me it was a DNF (a "did not finish") which was perfectly fine. Me, I usually fight to make it through a book. *Crime and Punishment* took off from the moment I almost put it down into something I still carry internally with me today. Who knows when a book might take off?

But really, if you can't stand it, really can't, maybe it's better for you just to jettison it. I did. And now I'm seeing the clues of *Eternity Road* come together. And I'm loving it!

**[&gt;&gt;&gt;DON'T YOU DARE PUT DOWN MY BOOK. NOT THAT I THINK YOU WILL. IT'S BRILLIANT! THEY ALL ARE. TRUST ME! FOLLOW THE LINK HERE TO THE GIFT SHOP AND CHECK THEM OUT!&lt;&lt;&lt;](#)**