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1. **Mark Richardson** reviewed [Two Pumps for the Body Man](#)

★★★★☆

A Fun Read

May 20, 2016

Near the end of Ben East's excellent new novel, Two Pumps for the Body Man, one character says to another: "...the prevention of terrorism can best be realized following a significant increase in terrorism." That Orwellian doublespeak captured the feeling of the novel for me. Although it wasn't really Orwell I was thinking about while reading the book, it was Kafka. The book mostly takes place in Saudi Arabia, and offers a farcical take on an illogical and downright bizarre bureaucratic structure put in place to fight the war on terror. Sometimes I found myself confused, but I wasn't alone; the characters were confused as well. "Tinker feared Fourth Branch because he had no idea what it was," we're told. I didn't either, but I soon found out (you'll get a kick out of it). But hey, the confusion was part of the fun, and, most importantly, I always found myself entertained.

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2. **Amazon Customer** reviewed [Two Pumps for the Body Man](#)

★★★★★

Five Stars

May 14, 2016

Smart, Fast, bright, Real. Well done Bender!

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3. **Bruno** reviewed [Two Pumps for the Body Man](#)

★★★★★

A well-woven farce within a farce

May 8, 2016

Calls to prayer sound off with derisive omniscience, echoing through a diplomatic station situated on, in front of, or perhaps somewhere closely behind the front lines of the War on Terror. There's no place for logic in an ideologue's world, we'll soon learn.

In B.A. East's Two Pumps for the Body Man, a farce within a farce, we find ourselves strangers in a strange land -- although the most unfamiliar features belong to the people and machinations of our own government.

East writes, tongue appointed firmly in cheek, as someone who experienced the bureaucracy and doublespeak of the service firsthand, introducing us to diplomats and servicepersons who are subject to, or complicit in, the gears of the WOT. Their sensibilities range from vainly ambitious to hopelessly carnal and flippant, but each unique layer of pathos is disseminated with patience and dexterity, not unlike a report from an ambassador's trusted advisor.

As outsiders sitting behind walls, barbed wire and panes of glass, all our characters know is shrouds and faceless silhouettes. The whispers of intel they gather are flawed at best and comically manipulated at worst. As readers engrossed in a great work of satire, we can empathize.

A satirist's world is one of its own unyielding ideology, much like the Kingdom our characters find themselves stationed in. Like them we are logicians desperately trying to make sense of it all, and it's only when we give in to the madness of the WOT that we can find peace.

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4. **Jennifer Prokash** reviewed [Two Pumps for the Body Man](#)

★★★★☆

Stranger Than Fiction

May 3, 2016

A "diplomatic noir", eh? Hmmm . . . I don't believe I've ever read one of those. Let's see . . . Two Pumps is set in the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the action centers around a ragtag crew of Americans waging the War On Terror in the Godforsaken desert. Oh boy, Mr. East, those are some shark-infested waters! At worst, we might have ended up with a typically glib, macho spy-thriller violence party. A lot of ruggedly-handsome American boys curb stomping swarthy Middle-Easterners. Luckily, Mr. East's novel is informed by his time spent in the Peace Corps, teaching in Africa and Paraguay and a State Department stint in the Kingdom itself. Two Pumps ends up being a wry ode to the cluster-f*** of confusion that is the WOT. How do you wage a war on terror, anyway? East understands that this is a question without an answer. And he understands the evil of those who build violent careers on lies, vagaries and non-answers.

East avoids offering a straight-up political polemic, though the administration in question is taken to task. We are treated to cartoonish cameos by G-dub'ya and Dick Cheney, who are, after all, more unbelievable than any fiction. The pace is fast. Some of the side characters are not drawn very deeply. But Two Pumps is a page-turner, baby, and it takes some real balls to satirize the great Christian crusade of our times. Bravo, I say. Truth is stranger than fiction. That's why we need good fiction writers; because if you simply tell people the truth, they'll take you for a liar every time.

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5. **Altson** reviewed [Two Pumps for the Body Man](#)

★★★★★

A journey into diplomatic absurdity

May 3, 2016

As I got into Two Pumps for the Body Man, I found myself initially confused by the wide assortment of government / diplomatic / bureaucratic expressions and acronyms. I gave the book a chance, however, and was glad that I did.

All the characters (or should I say caricatures) are well developed and all of them have their delightful idiosyncrasies. I’ve been told that I have an offbeat sense of humor and this book played right into my wheelbox. I can’t say that I had belly laughs, but I came close to it. Ben takes you from one absurd situation to another. Nothing is sacred and all the sub-stories are titillating. Just wait until you get to the conclusion!

Good job, Ben East.

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6. [Robert Cormack](#) reviewed [Two Pumps for the Body Man](#)

★★★★★ Catch-22 Meets The Acronym: Very Funny April 27, 2016

Ben East has created a wonderfully wacky consular bash in a place called The Kingdom, a nightmarish place straight out of Catch-22 where bureaucrats use very acronym under the sun (including OOPS, which stands for Office of Overseas Predator Strikes). While bureaucracy rules, one man, Jeff Mutton, Head of Security, tries to keep everyone safe despite the machinations of beauty Vanna Lavina, Consul General, attempting to improve diplomatic relations with disco parties. This is haywire bureaucracy at its finest and East does a great job bringing his characters out into the Middle Eastern sunshine. A good read from a writer who's obviously seen some of the nuttiness himself. Truly enjoyed this.

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