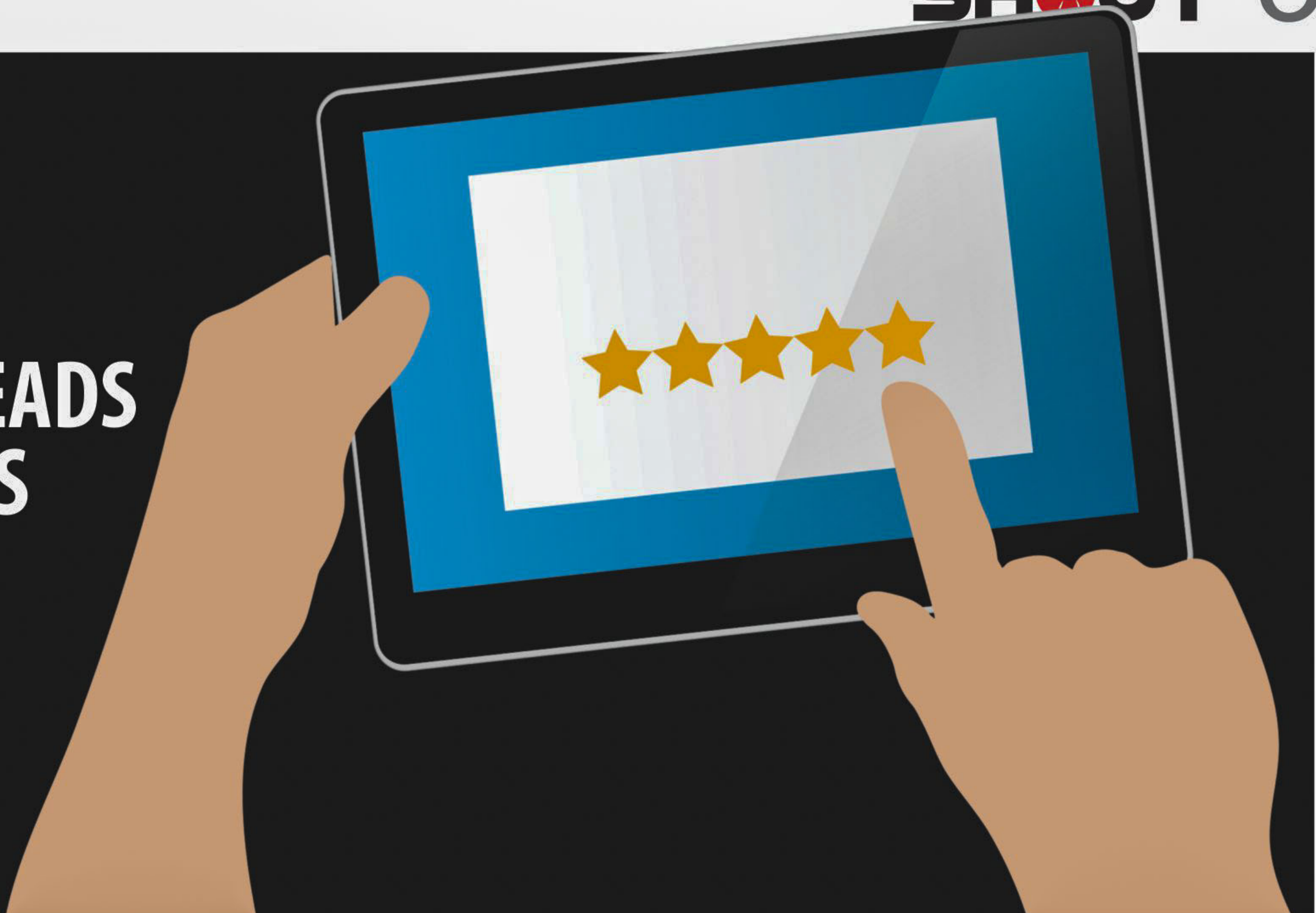


# THE FAULT IN OUR GOODREADS REVIEWS



RASHEED KHAN

Take a moment to pick a book, preferably in English. Then, search “\*name of your book\* review” on Google. One of the very first things you’ll see are the ratings on a website called “Goodreads”, the Facebook of books.

Goodreads has three very distinct similarities to Facebook: it’s popular; it’s got good things, but also mind-numbingly painful problems; and ignoring it isn’t the best idea, since you’ll find most book reviews there. Instead, it would be much better if I were to try and show you what’s wrong with many Goodreads reviews. This should hopefully help you circumvent all the unnecessary stuff, all the while getting a good review of any TBR books.

The most common problem of Goodreads reviews is that they can sometimes be extreme. One moment you’re peacefully scrolling through the reviews, when suddenly, someone shows up raving about how the book is so mind-bendingly awesome, that every single problem in your life will be solved by laying your eyes on it. Curious, you scroll down further to see what other people have said. The very next review is of someone saying that the book is worse than diving into a midden heap with ample manure frosting all over it. Now, perhaps you have never been more confused about a book in your entire life due to this, but here’s some good news. This particular problem is very easy to spot because the review often uses an absurd number of GIFs and appears LIKE THIS IN HUGE CAPITAL LETTERS AND LOTS OF EXCLAMATIONS!!! I should mention, however, that sometimes the reviews actually do make valid observations.

Almost all books have a certain essence. In order to understand that essence, you have to adapt your perception to the book’s perception to really get the feel of it. Otherwise, you just won’t enjoy it. Ultimately, it’s less about what you like, and more about what the book is trying to tell you. Now, why am I explaining this? Because many Goodreads reviewers don’t understand this concept. Here’s an example from “The Well of Ascension”, the second book of the Mistborn Saga by Brandon Sanderson. I once found a review there that stated that the first book had more action and that there’s “too much political stuff” in the second book. Now, here’s the deal. Literally more than half the book is poli-

tics-based, solely because the story was abundant with political elements at the time. Heck, it wasn’t even badly written or something. What irritated me isn’t that the reviewer complained about this; it’s perfectly fine to have preferences. What irritated me is that not only did they not understand, but they actively refused to do so. As if that wasn’t enough, they labelled the book as a bad book. I admit, I have a special hatred reserved for these people. If you even catch a hint of this particular thing within the review, run for the hills. Or make THEM run for the hills.

Yet another problem with some reviews is nit-picking. Even if the book is good, the people writing these reviews only need one single “flaw” to lose their mind. The flaw could be anything in the book, from the character, to something written in the book, to the writing style, etc. It even sometimes goes as far as the book cover. I saw this

particular problem a lot in reviews of “The Wise Man’s Fear”, the second book of “The Kingkiller Chronicles” by Patrick Rothfuss. I would throw in some examples but it’s hard to do so because of the sheer number of reviewers who nit-pick this book apart. It’s more self-explanatory to just go through the reviews yourself after reading the book (which I highly recommend because it’s awesome).

These are the main problems I found after scouring through as many reviews as I could tolerate. Hopefully, it’ll give you some solace and help you ignore stupid reviews. Remember though: just because a review has loads of likes, doesn’t mean it’s a good review.

*Rasheed Khan is a hug monster making good music but terrible puns and jokes where he’s probably the only one laughing. Ask him how to pronounce his name at aarcvard@gmail.com*



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