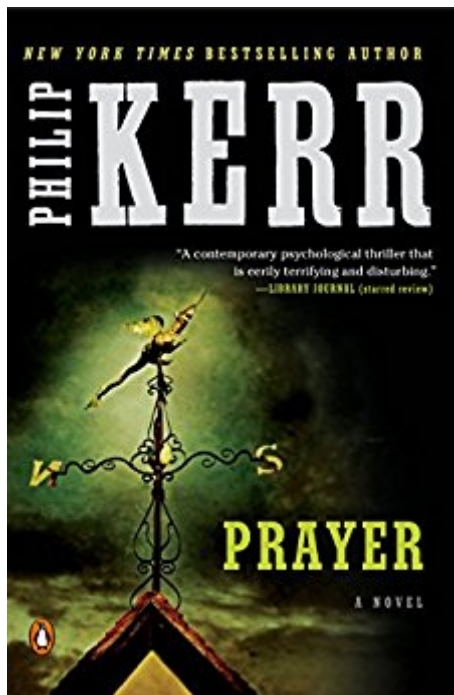


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Prayer



Synopsis

From a New York Times bestselling author Philip Kerr comes an amazing departure: an intense psychological thriller, sure to garner even more acclaim for this powerhouse author on the rise. Gil Martins, an agent with the FBI's Domestic Terrorism Unit in Houston, confronts the violence generated by extremism within our nation's borders every day. He sees hatred and destruction wrought by every kind of "ism" there is, and the zealots who kill in their names. Until now, he has always been a part of the solution—however imperfect—a part of justice. But when Gil discovers he played a key role in wrongly condemning an innocent man to death row, it shakes his faith in the system, in himself, and in God deeply. It even estranges him from his wife and son. Desperate, Gil offers up a prayer. To know God is there, not through a sign or physical demonstration but through the strength to cope with his ever-growing, ever-creeping doubts. His problems become more than personal as things heat up in Houston. A serial killer terrorizing the morally righteous turns out to have religious motivations, upping the case from homicide to domestic terrorism. A number of prominent secular icons die or are grievously injured abruptly and under suspicious circumstances, the latest of which is a New Atheist writer who falls into an inexplicable coma. Left and right, it seems Gil can't escape the power of God and murder. As Gil investigates both cases, he realizes that there may be a connection—answering his prayers in a most terrifying way.

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Customer Reviews

Prayer is a well thought out thriller. Most books that have a supernatural element, although sometimes entertaining almost never have a satisfying explanation for the supernatural events. With this book, if you are religious then the explanation is perfect. The catch-22 of that though is that if you are religious, you might be offended by the contents of this book. I am a religious person, but I am also able to recognize that this is a work of fiction. Also, the questions about God that are brought up in this book are questions that anyone who has read the Bible would ask themselves if they are being truly honest. I know I did. Especially when reading the old testament. Philip Kerr does what he does best. He gives us a story that is very entertaining and also makes us think. Well done!

An amazing book. First glance, cursory reading and most reviews here suggest that this is the story of an atheist who was forced to believe by the undeniable actions of a supernatural being, who sadly enough, turned out to be not loving at all, but malevolent. This does not fit what one would expect from an atheist author who is thoroughly versed in the New Atheist likes of Dawkins-Hitchens-Harris-Dennett and others. Surely Mr Kerr agrees that there is no such thing as God or Devil, angels or demons? What's up with that? This odd apparent contradiction causes confusion and leads some believers to hope/suppose it somehow supports their theism, though in uncomfortable fashion. On the other hand, many skeptics are disappointed at this apparent sell-out, or some crazy shift into a Stephen King genre. That's where I expected the book was going, and almost trashed it before the pieces fell into place. But on the contrary, by the time he gets done, Mr. Kerr's point of view ought to be quite obvious, hiding in plain sight. The "Author's Note" (postscript) spells it out. "Isn't God a s***?" he asks? If that does not make the author's position clear enough as so it seems from so many of the reviews here then I shall be happy to unmask the old guy behind the screen. Going back around sixty years to the fifties, I learned of two strong anti-theistic arguments from Bertrand Russell, whom I would have read thirty years earlier (1927), except that I was just a teen. They are: 1) There most likely is no God because the arguments for his existence are speculative guesswork and without good evidence in the real

world.2) If God does exist in some distant place where he has kept this fact so obscure that thoughtful people have missed it so badly, then THERE IS JUST AS GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT GOD IS NOT A BENEVOLENT BEING, BUT A DESPICABLE MONSTER. In addition to that being a perfectly possible philosophical conclusion, it agrees with the horrible deeds of the biblical God, in both testaments. To my eyes, that is the only perspective from which all the pieces fit into place. Many reviews here flesh out the details. I find his writing excellent, once I understand his intention. I have put his historical mysteries on my reading list. I hope that some future reviewers will reflect this insight, whether to agree or contradict.

Philip Kerr, well known for his nine volume series featuring pre-war, World War 2 and Cold War detective Bernie Gunther, a German, often tackles ethical and spiritual issues in his detective novels and other works. *Prayer* offers a Scotland born and U.S. raised Gil Martins working on the domestic terrorism cases for the FBI. Beginning with his Scottish first communion, Martins becomes an angry and skeptical Roman Catholic. Marrying an American evangelical and working in Texas, he encounters an assortment of churches and responds to them with a declaration of atheism. Yet, his closest friend is a Roman Catholic bishop who points him to the possibility of a conspiracy relating to the suspicious deaths of outspoken atheists. The possibility of a conspiracy is somewhat confirmed by Martins during his independent investigation and then the FBI, to a very small degree, becomes involved because the deaths occur in several time zones. The stakes are raised because the deaths are not murders but suicides and there is no trace of a killer at the scene of the deaths. Martins' marriage dissolves, his atheism is tested, and Martins comes to grips with the possibility that the evidence is leading him to Old Testament declarations and the possibility that there may be one angel, reserved by God, who carries out judgement. Kerr holds Martins' investigations, Christian faiths, and atheism in balance in *Prayer* and the conclusion is sound and satisfying. The close of novel allows this reader to hope that Gil Martins is heard from again.

My first impression upon starting to read this book was, "Oh no. Another one of those unedited, self-published jobs". It turns out that it IS edited and published. It can only be because the author has published other books. Some points:- the characterisation is shallow. Even the main character doesn't seem real or elicit sympathy. His wife is simply a caricature. And none of the Christians portrayed resemble any real people of faith that I've ever met.- there are many passages of unnecessary description (a page for the decor of a room, for example) that slow the pace with no discernible purpose.- the use of profanity is....weird. It's like it was tacked on afterwards because

someone decided it should be in there. It portrays FBI agents sounding like 15 year olds. Mind you, that's about the level of the theology too. Overall, very disappointing. I hadn't heard of the author before, I read "award winner" and thought I was in for a treat. Not so.

A gripping story that will put the fear of god in you. Great characters that are full of doubt, indecision and whose lives are a mess - very realistic. It takes a big swipe at 'New' religions - even all religions. Excellent writing even if I didn't believe the ending..

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