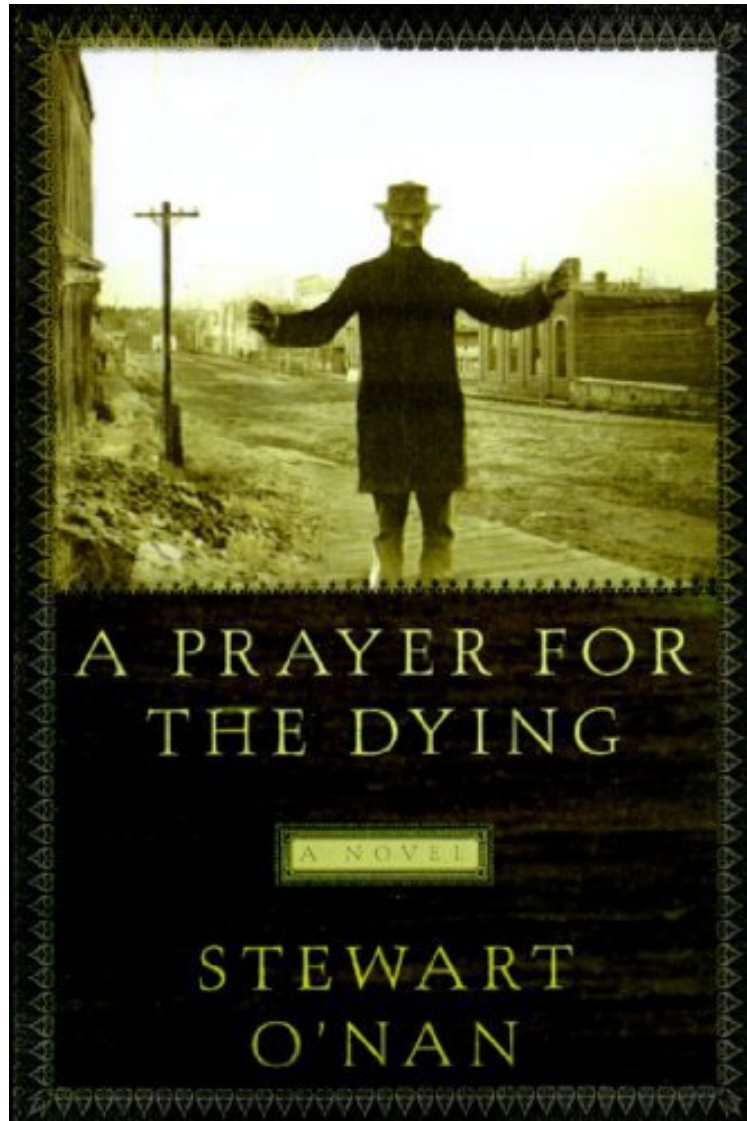


[Pdf free] A Prayer for the Dying: A Novel

A Prayer for the Dying: A Novel

Von Stewart O'Nan

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Von Stewart O'Nan : A Prayer for the Dying: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Prayer for the Dying: A Novel:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen3 von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Macabre Thought ProvokingVon Lee ArmstrongThis was my second novel of O'Nan's after Snow Angels. I think I was attracted to the book because a health situation in my family really made me get philosophical about issues concerned with dying. Perhaps I thought reading this book would somehow be part of a therapy for me to get a perspective on the

issue. I found tremendously engaging the tensions between faith and hope on one side and the reality of illness, death and tragedy on the other. I don't know why people die. I suppose if God had intended that we live forever on this earth, we would. So the fact that everybody dies ought to be a clue that this earthly existence is secondary in the overall plan. But when humanly confronted with death, how we cling to life and to the lives of those we love! This aspect of the novel seemed so real to me. I think I agree with the reviewers who wonder why the main character didn't just get his family out of town at the first sign of trouble. I would. On the other hand, there's one sentence where he wonders if he had, whether that would have just meant death for Cousin Bette -- and that doubt made me feel the character was less stupid. The macabre aspects of the story, the swirling descriptions of death and conflagration are masterfully written, O'Nan the modern Poe. Why the book ended as it did or what we are left with after having been through this journey, I'm not sure. Maybe this is much the same way one deals with any tragedy or family illness, we just go on if we have to. In the end, this novel whisks by as a brisk read, slowed down only by the intensity of its subject. The second person description is different and inventive. Johnny Depp should star in the film. I'm glad I read it. Try it out.

1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Riveting novel from a truly gifted author Von jmh This is a truly gifted author. I became familiar with him when I read *Snow Angels*, and since then I have purchased nearly every book he has written. Each novel is an original piece. This novel, *Prayer for the Dying* is another stunning accomplishment. He takes the reader to post Civil War Wisconsin. His first person accounting is riveting as he takes you into the heart, mind and soul of Jacob Hansen, town sheriff, undertaker and pastor. Add to this odd mixture of occupations a devastating diphtheria plague that threatens the town's human and animal population. A gentle, loving and spiritual family man, he must make horrendous decisions involving the township. While tragedy befalls the town, he must cope with the possibility that he may have infected his beloved wife and baby daughter after undertaking the initial diphtheria cases. Stewart O'Nan sets a thoroughly researched scene for the reader. You will walk through his surroundings and feel yourself in every step he takes, while you explore all his thoughts that challenge his faith and own mortality. An absolute masterpiece.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. ashes to ashes Von karl b. On the dedication page of 'Prayer for the Dying' O'nan placed a quote from Albert Camus's 'The Plague'. "There is no escape in a time of plague, we must choose to either love or hate God." 'Prayer' owes a debt and provides a striking contrast to the existentialist masterpiece. Both books are set in lonely outposts at the seeming edge the world, afflicted with a deadly disease. The towns are isolated microcosms of society and the human condition at large. Diphtheria spreads in O'nan's Wisconsin settlement, as a raging brush fire closes in on it. Jacob Hansen, sheriff, pastor, undertaker is the custodian of the wretched destruction of his community. He performs the sacraments, assists the doctor, buries the dead, seals the quarantine. He is a survivor of the Civil War and its images are an indelible refrain in his memory, as carnage and death seem attached to him like a curse. The unusual second person narrative gives a slightly disassociated perspective, as if the narrator is a witness rather than a participant in the horrors around him. Jacob presides like an angel of death over a futile struggle, dispensing comfort and arbitrary expedience. 'A Prayer for the Dying' however is not an existential tome. At its core there is faith, charity, hope--a bedrock of structure and belief, which sustains the protagonist as all that is important is taken from him. That is the antithesis of Camus's proposal of meaning being solely in the immediate, intrinsic value of heroic action-- the existentialist credo of conduct ennobled by its freedom from spiritual duty or expectation of reward. Both authors explore indifference to suffering, and the measure of character in alleviating it. There is no outward necessity for Jacob to act as he does, he could save his himself and his family, yet he grimly perseveres. Camus and O'nan finally agree that the understanding of random evil rests in the response, not its justification-- be that solitary revolt or spiritual refuge.

Kurzbeschreibung New York Times Book Notable Book of the Year A new masterpiece of American literature. Dennis Lehane, Entertainment Weekly A Prayer for the Dying reads like the amazing, unrelenting love child of Shirley Jackson and Cormac McCarthy. Its twisted proof that God will do worse to test a faithful man than the devil would ever do to punish a sinner. Chuck Palahniuk Set in Friendship, Wisconsin, just after the Civil War, A Prayer for the Dying tells of a horrible epidemic that is suddenly and gruesomely killing the town's residents and setting off a terrifying paranoia. Jacob Hansen, Friendship's sheriff, undertaker, and pastor, is soon overwhelmed by the fear and anguish around him, and his sanity begins to fray. Dark, poetic, and chilling, Stewart O'Nan's A Prayer for the Dying examines the effect of madness and violence on the morality of a once-decent man.

de When his town's sleepy summer tranquility is shattered by an outbreak of diphtheria, Jacob Hansen--constable, deacon, and undertaker--stares at an impossible dilemma: save both himself and his family or observe his many duties? Although he's nearly convinced that it's possible to do both, the inexorable and crushing horror of Stewart O'Nan's fifth novel, A Prayer for the Dying, is that evil doesn't flinch, that its insistence can obliterate goodness, corrupt humility. "When won't faith save you?" Jacob wonders; the silence soon deafens him. An ostensibly inured Civil War veteran, Jacob watches helplessly as his neighbors in tiny Friendship, Wisconsin, are stricken with disease: simply hearing a mother say of her daughter, "She's sick," becomes chilling. Yet even as his wife and baby fall ill, Jacob patiently, dutifully tends to the helpless and buries

the dead. When panic erupts, however, and he grapples with the tragedies accumulating before him, he feels the prick of spiritual doubt, even succumbs to violence. "Is this the devil's work?" Jacob asks as he struggles to discern the good in a world without order, watches those he serves turn against him, and disregards his own moral outrage. O'Nan's style is taut and often oddly lovely, its immediacy braced by an unnerving second-person voice. The novel is, at root, spiritually terrifying. It forces us to consider at what remove we truly are from evil. Overwhelmed with checking his own despair, Jacob begins by pondering how to halt wickedness and ineluctably finds himself sustaining its slow creep. You wonder if he ever had a prayer. --Ben Guterson *Pressestimmen* "A cross between Steven Crane and Stephen King . . . O'Nan is certainly among the strongest American writers of his generation." --Peter McCarthy, *The Washington Post Book World*