



On the Fifth Day

A.J. Hartley

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The death of a priest is met with suspicion by his brother Thomas, who knows that his sibling died while researching Christian symbols. But Thomas and curator Deborah Miller aren't alone in retracing the priest's final steps. They're followed by fanatics desperate to hide the secret stumbled upon by Thomas's brother-and willing to kill to keep it buried forever.

On the Fifth Day Details

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Florence Primrose says

A priest dies in suspicious circumstances. His brother follows the clues to his death and is threatened all along the path from Chicago to Naples to Pompeii and Herculaneum and eventually Japan as evil forces try to prevent him from discovering the truth. Quite interesting.

Jenn says

I met Hartley back in September at Dragon*Con while waiting in line for a panel he was appearing on with Laurell K. Hamilton, Jim Butcher, Sherrilyn Kenyon, Kevin Anderson, and Jonathan Maberry. I'd never heard of him before, but he came out to check out the line and see how long it was. He was very funny and self-effacing and talked to us in line for a while. Before long, the people in line were asking to buy his books, so he ran off to get some and autographed them all for us. I got *Act of Will* then, which was his new fantasy novel. Later on, I picked up this one and *The Mask of Arteus*. I enjoyed this one. It was a like *The DaVinci Code*, without so much of the literary puzzle, but heavy on the religious conspiracy. I liked it. I didn't love it, but I did like it.

Dawn Davies says

An interesting and exciting book never heard of this author a most entertaining read, i empathised with all the characters.

Sara says

This started out as 3-4 stars, but sagged midway to 2 stars, and then recovered steam with a decent comprehensible ending. So I'll split the difference.

I picked this up cheap at a book sale for an escapist read...it's fairly dense archaeological stuff for that, but enlivened with a really creepy Dan Brown-ish character, and full of totally improbable escapes. But it's fun to tour Pompeii, Herculaneum, Paestum, not to mention Japan and a remote Philippine island, and it seems to be quite well researched.

I kept expecting it to turn into an anti-Catholic rant but the author avoids this and other extremes quite nicely, putting the stereotypical atheist stuff and the canned anti-evolution rants in the mouths of his characters. The main character arrives at a belief at the end that parallels my own.

On the whole, a really well-educated example of this genre - a bit laughable at times but it kept me turning the pages. What more can one ask? Perhaps a little less ichthyology...

Dwight Weatherford says

Blind religion vs Faith

Very plausible plot of religious blindness vs religious purity of faith. The evolutionary plot aspect is just the juxtapose that leads the reader through this fight between pure God given faith and the corrupted faith of men. True page turner

Tory Wagner says

An interesting adventure about the search for an ancient fish that was the missing link between fish and creatures that could live on land. The main character is a recently fired teacher who is searching for the cause of his brother's death. He begins recreating his brother's last days which send him to Italy and the Philippines. His brother, a priest, had been researching Christian symbols and may have found more than he bargained. Other characters, Death, War, Pestilence and a American Senator all play a role in the story.

Kerry says

Great book. A quick exciting read!

Mina says

I think I enjoyed Hartley's other novel, Mask of Atreus, a lot more. Hartley's writing style is palatable, but the story was a little weak and I had to work a bit to hard to suspend my disbelief. I'm totally a fan of religious studies and biology, but this just didn't jive for me.

Linda says

Conservative religious readers will find much to offend them in On the Fifth Day, but readers who don't mind opposing viewpoints will find much to like here. This isn't a perfect novel, nor even a very serious one, but it does spin out an interesting international adventure with a protagonist who is less than leading man material.

Thomas Knight learns that he's lost his teaching job, and his brother, Father Ed, on the same dismal day. While collecting his brother's belongings, Thomas tries to determine the cause of death, but no one's talking. He pokes around a bit, only to draw the attention of Homeland Security. Now Thomas is mad, and sets off to solve this mystery.

Thomas discovers that Father Ed was researching ancient Christian iconography, putting symbols together in ways that threatened the powers that be. As Thomas delves deeper, various bureaucracies throw stumbling blocks and professional assassins (with preposterous names) in his path. At this point in the story, it becomes necessary to "go with the flow", because as with most books in the genre, the incredible escapes and coincidences pile higher and deeper. But it's a fun adventure written with intelligence, and when the action shifts to Pompey and the Philippines, it becomes truly engrossing.

Connor says

Mediocre. The story is pretty good, but the book isn't very well written, so that bogs it down.

Quillracer says

I would never have picked this book up in a bookstore or library, but since a friend passed it onto me and marked it as a book she wanted back, it merited a try because she's turned me on to many good authors.

This is another book guilty of violating the 'Truth In Cover Blurbs' law. The way the one here reads, Deborah Miller will play a significant role in Thomas Knight's investigation into his brother's death. Yet she doesn't come on-stage until well into the book and makes only sporadic appearances after that point – usually as a voice on the other end of a phone. Thomas's ex-wife and other characters play bigger roles in resolving Ed Knight's death.

Early in the book, I thought it might have a supernatural element – something I'm not a fan of – so it was hard to get into it. But as the tale progressed, Hartley turned the supernatural into something grounded in the real world and I got more caught up in the story. It wasn't a 'can't put it down' book, but engaging enough that I kept reading. It starts slow and, except for a few intense scenes, builds momentum slowly until it all explodes in a rush in the final chapters.

Those final chapters include so many characters doing so many things to other characters at the same time that it was a bit hard to keep them and what they were doing to each other straight.

One odd little quirk I noticed was Hartley's early chapters often had several scenes yet the end of the book had many short (some as short as a page or less) chapters.

I won't add Hartley to my must-read list but I won't reject any of his books that come my way.

Maurean says

Last night, I finished AJ Hartley's second novel, "On the Fifth Day", which I enjoyed, but I must admit, not as much as his first one ("The Mask of Atreus" was one of my favorite reads of last year). The storyline, while interesting, took some dead-end turns that I wasn't sure why they were included at all, and his "take" on the "intelligent design crazies" left a bad taste in my mouth. (Granted, this may be only his character's POV, but it still made me uneasy.) Having said all that, tho, I still enjoyed the story and found it highly entertaining. I'll definitely look forward to reading his next novel.

Jennifer Connolly says

The book is readable enough, but the story is ultimately pretty damn pointless. I just could not bring myself to care about what the characters cared about and found myself scratching my head as to why the pivotal plot point was of any interest to the characters in the first place. Seriously, who cares!

Milissa Bailey says

Good read. At times a little hard to follow, but for those who like conspiracy you will enjoy!

Lcube says

2,5/5
