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Ted Dekker

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Stephen Friedman is making a good living in good times. He's just an ordinary guy. Or so he thinks.

But one day an extraordinary piece of information tells him differently. It's a clue from the grave of a Holocaust survivor. A clue that makes him heir to an incredible fortune . . . a clue that only he and one other man can possibly understand.

That man is Roth Braun, a serial killer who has been waiting for Stephen for thirty years. Roth was stopped once before. This time nothing will get in his way.

Known worldwide for page-turning, adrenaline-laced thrillers, Dekker raises the stakes in this story of passion, revenge, and an all-consuming obsession for the ultimate treasure.

Obsessed Details

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From Reader Review Obsessed for online ebook

Kathy says

Whenever I read a Ted Dekker book, at some point I just sit back and shake my head! He is nothing if not creative, but sometimes it's over the top. People do things you never imagined people would do. On the other hand, especially in this book, without that extreme imagination, you would never grasp the complete idea, obsession. After all, God is obsessed with us and we need to be more obsessed with Him. So in light of that, I loved the book. As always there were surprises, suspense, and periods of joy and love. Constantly, you have the element of extreme goodness and extreme wickedness; always the struggle by Lucifer to obtain all. But in the end, the solution seems very plausible. It reminds us of our struggle with Satan and the lies he tells us. I loved the end of the epilogue....it brought tears to my eyes.

Sheila Myers says

Another thrilling novel by Ted Dekker. The plot was exciting from the first to the last page. I enjoyed how Dekker flipped back and forth between the characters in 1973 and their parents during WWII to tell the entire story.

P.A. Pursley says

This is my second...maybe third...book of Dekker's I have read. I read Blink which was really good! I think I read another of his that was recommended by the ladies at church but it didn't have much of an impression because I don't even remember if it was Dekker or not. Obsessed left me feeling empty. The history in the Nazi camp was good. The obsession by the protagonist, Stephen, left me exasperated and frustrated. Not because of his obsession but because his obsession was about money. He says it was for other reasons but, truly, it was about money. The characters in the Nazi camp were well done but the development between Stephen and Esther was very shallow. Didn't care for it.

This is the story of Stephen, a Jew who left his heritage and moved to America. He spends his life wondering what his true calling is while all the time making tons of money. He finds an obsession in some stones that were supposed to be the stones gathered by David when facing Goliath. Stephen will go to any lengths and spend his entire fortune in obtaining these stones. He will find more than he desired in both money and love.

If you enjoy stories of WWII, history, lost love, and Christianity...this book is for you!

Matt Barker says

A good read from start to finish. The only reason I gave it an 8 was that some of the things Stephen Friedman does in this book just seem a little too far fetched. Almost like watching those old scary movies where the high school girls decide to stay in the house even though there's an ax wielding psycho out to get them. You

know, the ones you kept screaming at to just get out of the house? Come on, you know what I'm talking about...

Publisher's Summary

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But one day an extraordinary piece of information tells him differently. It's a clue from the grave of a Holocaust survivor. A clue that makes him heir to an incredible fortune...a clue that only he and one other man can possibly understand.

That man is Roth Braun, a serial killer who has been waiting for Stephen for 30 years. Roth was stopped once before. This time nothing will get in his way.

Known worldwide for page-turning, adrenaline-raced thrillers, Dekker raises the stakes in this story of passion, revenge, and an all-consuming obsession for the ultimate treasure.

Debra says

Half of this book is terrific, the story of Martha and Ruth and their lives in the concentration camp, and worth reading for that. It's gripping, suspenseful, heart wrenching, and worth a definite five stars. I suspect those who rated it high did so because of that portion.

Unfortunately, there's also Stephen's story that takes up the bulk of the novel and reverses the effect of all that beautiful storytelling with Martha/Ruth. Stephen's actions are quite illogical in many places, which made the majority of his story unbelievable for me. I couldn't like him because he made several downright stupid choices. I just kept saying to myself, "Really? I'm supposed to believe someone in his situation would actually do that?" Some of his actions are clichés, as is the character of Roth (the antagonist).

If I'd recommend it to anyone, I'd tell them to read the Martha and Ruth chapters and skip over all the others until they reached the last few chapters. I don't think they'd miss anything important, and they wouldn't be distracted by Stephen's illogical behavior.

Keiki Hendrix says

This is a take your breathe away suspense thriller. Dekker has outdone himself. Slowly you are taken from mere interest, to understandable fanaticism, then ultimately a page turning ending.

This is not a book for the squimism. Not a book for the faint hearted. At times, I was almost sickened. If I had not already known of the atrocities of the Holocaust, I may have put this book down somewhere in the middle. But, these sadistic scenes just mirrored history and added great depth to the redeeming theme of the book.

Wonderful read. Dekker fans WILL NOT be disappointed in this work.

Sensitivemuse says

This has been an addictive page turner. It's kept me on pins and needles. There were times where I couldn't bear to turn the page because I just didn't want to know if the character was going to encounter an ugly end, or a great success. However I just had to keep going and read it because I really wanted to know what happened. The action and the plot were well written and it just keeps you on edge. It's been a very suspenseful plot and a very thrilling ride.

Stephen as a character is what makes the story funny and keeps the action going as he keeps on pressing towards his goal. I say it's funny because there were just things Stephen had to do which just made me laugh out loud. Roth on the other hand, makes the story very chilling and dark, he's your average villain, but add more evil (about 3 cups) and take away the soul and you get Roth. I have never read a villain such as this and he would most likely end up on my top ten villain list. He was just very real, and oozes evil (he even has the black ensemble to match it). Of all the characters mentioned though, I liked Ruth. Her strength, and her ability to see the good and be able to hold onto hope even when she was surrounded by death and hopelessness was very admirable.

Considering the author is known more for his Christian fiction, and he does make references to faith and God in his works, the book did not seem preachy at all. It did not get in the way of the plot. So those who aren't into Christian fiction like I am, the story really has nothing to do with God, or anything of any religious denomination. Just read it for the plot, and the spine chilling events. You'll be a satisfied reader like I was. Obsession does play a major theme in this book; both from Stephen's side, and from Roth's.

What frustrated me about the story is certain parts of the book where the characters decide to just stop and hesitate and think about what they're doing when they should be running out the door and running like hell. I don't get it. I felt like jumping in and kicking them towards the exit and to stop thinking and blubbering like idiots. It was extremely frustrating and annoying.

Overall though, an excellent page turner with all the right plot twists and thrilling moments at the right times. Give this a read if you want a great thrilling ride

Rollie says

From the beginning, I am very much curious about this book. So I really searched first its author and found out that Ted Dekker—the author—is known for his book entitled Three. However, since the copy I only saw from Dekker is just this book, I searched first for readers' feedbacks. Honestly, I've been picking books up safely these days because eventually, I don't want to go bashing and ranting some poor books just because they hadn't made my taste. I'm glad that the feedbacks I've read were all so far positive that it got me pursue to read this book.

Stephen Friedman is normally living as a realtor. He inherited a big amount of money from his foster parents to make it way enough for his living. When the rich old woman Rachel Spitzer died and reveals a note that she's searching for her son while she was alive, Stephen's life changed. No matter how he denies that he's the son of the old rich Rachel, gravity as though pulls him towards the house of his late mother. In just a

single visit, he didn't think that he would discover a safe in the house's basement nor does he know how much it will change his life forever and turn him as obsessed as he never could imagine.

Roth Braun is living as a serial killer. Knowing a Rachel Spitzer died in a newspaper, he is soon requested by his father, Gerhard Braun, who's also a killer to search for the relics which Rachel had stolen from them. Roth did follow his father's request, but the main reason he goes for it isn't for the relics that stolen, but for Stephen whom he has waited for a long time.

Let's have this straight, I don't know if I'm just being generous on giving stars these past few weeks since I hadn't encountered again a book worth bashing. Probably, my safety picking of books has indeed worked. I liked this very much if that's again you want to hear from me as what I said from my other book reviews.

I rarely read a suspense fiction books and if I do, I'm really much into praying that I'll be able to read the book through all the way. At first, I thought this was a horror kind of book or a fantasy one. As I make it halfway through, it was impossible for this book to make up for either fantasy or horror and obviously, I still continued reading. Many suspense books had tried me, but they aren't worthy as putting in a suspense genre. However, when it comes to this book, I assure you one-hundred percent that this will terrify you to the bones; oh-uh not because there are some ghosts in it, but this book has a super strong factor of suspense. There was one time that this book (Obsessed) really made me laugh to the point that my mom asked me if I'd gone nuts and while in the motion of laughing, I immediately closed this book and stopped reading because I'm very much terrified of what might happen next.

Books nowadays have apparently nice titles. But my question is: do the titles of those books make sense to its story? Obsessed is a catching title and fortunately it really gives so much justice to the story. If obsession is what you're looking for in this story, this book will give you what you're looking for. I really liked how this book offers different kinds of obsession, how this book gives a connection between fear and hope and how this has been influenced by bible.

Dekker tells different story from different time. And the both stories are really interesting that I kept waiting when the story of either time will be continued. The main thing that got me interested between these stories is how the both stories will cross and make sense after all the turns and confusions it has given me.

This book offers a different kind of love story; a different meaning of destiny. I can't really imagine how a man finds his destined-to-be out of his obsession. I really enjoyed Dekker's concept of this book, purely matured but definitely suits to any kind of age. This book has a very impressive writing style—won't let you bored (as for me). One thing to complete my list, for my whole life of reading, this is one of the books I've read that indeed stunned me with its unpredictable twist. I never really see the twist coming that it really amazed me to the point that I'd never almost finished my lunch just because I reached the point of the twist and that made me ponder how it's gotten there under my nose.

I'm totally not obsessed of this book but I promise to look for Dekker's other books.

Laura says

First off, I must say I found this novel by Ted much different than House or Skin. In fact, as I was initially reading it, I thought I had a different author. I think it was because it started so slowly for me.

It starts with a ruthless Holocaust Commandant and his son, Roth, discussing the death of a rescued female camp survivor, Ruth (aka Martha at the camp), who died in the US and donated a Stone of David to a museum. All of them together were worth millions and they were obsessed in getting them back, as they assumed they were stolen by Martha.

Martha had befriended Ruth on the train that took them to the camp, where they found out that each was pregnant. Ruth gave birth to a girl (Esther) and Martha a boy (David). The women were beautiful, and the Commandant catered to their beauty by summoning them to his headquarters to serve him. However, one day Martha, who was still pregnant, was summoned to be hanged, like many others had been. Ruth, who had already given birth, took her place. Martha was left to care for Ruth's baby girl and her baby boy, although both were eventually taken from her because of the deception. Unbeknownst to the Commandant, Martha stole the Stones of David when the war was over, although Roth now thinks she's hidden them.

A cat and mouse game proceeds throughout the novel by Roth to draw out the son, David, of Martha, now known as Ruth, to find the remaining Stones. Part of the game revolves around the fact that David finds out that the woman who died was his mother, but only after her death. However, Roth has bought her house!

David feels the house should belong to him, and he is also obsessed in finding these Stones, and the game is on. Twists and turns keep you glued to your seat, right up to the very end, which ends in a way I didn't totally expect. The tricks and surprises each of the men play will keep you reading. I thought it was very well written.

Jason says

This seemed different to me than the other Dekker novels I have read. Interesting, a bit slower, but different. Maybe the topic of obsession just didn't connect with me or I just did not connect with characters as well as I have in the past but I had a hard time staying in sync with the choices made by almost all of the characters. It just didn't seem feasible.

That being said, this still ends up as an entertaining story...though you have to wait it out until the very end...and I do appreciate the point that he comes around to on how much God loves us. It doesn't take a long time to get through it, and if you like Dekker, then it is probably worth it. Otherwise, I might opt for something else.

Lou says

Dear book, maybe it's me and not you but lately I'm looking for something really really fast. Unfortunately, your pace was quite slow and your romance was too much for me. But I always love the message of Ted's books, so I was quite delighted with yours.

Nate Perrin says

I am a Christian with Jewish heritage and I found the story itself intriguing. However, the suspense was not really as present as it could have been and the ideas themselves could have been fleshed out more. I know that the Christian publishing market is tough on fiction and nonfiction writers. To give people a glimpse of

that, Philip Yancey wrote that he felt the pressures of the Christian publishing market are just as strict as the pressures the Soviet government had on the propaganda film makers. I think it could have been a lot better and I can see that Ted Dekker has the talent for that, but he has to work within certain restrictions. For what it was, it was excellent.

Overall, I do recommend it solely for the intriguing story and the subtle Biblical parallels. If you haven't read as much suspense fiction as I've read, you may find it suspenseful too. The concentration camp scenes were very respectful and not exploitive at all.

Dustin says

When *Obsessed* was published in 2005, I don't know if Ted Dekker was a household name. He certainly hadn't gained the loyal fan base that he knows today. It is a cult-like following, in that his fans can be quite divisive at times, and they let their opinions of him and his work be known. It is a fan base I'm proud to be a part of, and I'm not afraid of express myself.

I don't mention these things as filler or because they might or might not interest the reader (though I'd like to think I'm not alone in finding them modestly interesting.) Rather, I say them to stress a distinct point, which I believe should be considered throughout the course of this review.

On the cusp of adrenaline-laced books like *Heaven's Wager* and the second installment in *The Heaven Trilogy*,, *When Heaven Weeps* (also known as *The Martyr's Song trilogy*,) as well as *Thr3e* and *Blink*, Dekker's eleventh novel offers something that others do not. It's a departure from his supernatural or mythology stories, although it is just as theological as his other work. I also suspect that while he had written historical fiction before (namely the coveted *Circle Series*, those are more speculative and biblically-based.

In *Obsessed*, we possess something different. It's a quality which Dekker has honed over the last seventeen years, to the point of near perfection. He is constantly keeping things fresh, reinventing himself. Essentially, *Obsessed* is historical fiction, through and through. Its preternatural elements are minimal. Doing so allowed him to shift the focus away from plot, in an attempt to develop character. Sadly, I found most lacking. Where there should have been a fullness and love, compassion and empathy, there's a wretched flatness that I'd never associated with Dekker before.

To be clear, I'm not being overly critical. I prefer the term "constructive criticism." I think that he wrote one heck of a novel that's fast-paced, deeply profound in a myriad of ways—even touching at times-- and, for the most part, very well-written. In fact, of the ten Dekker books under my belt, *Obsessed* falls short only of the *Circle* series and *Adam*. That's saying a lot, too, seeing as those five books are near and dear to me. They're beyond compare, personally.

More to the point, I believe that most of the flaws in *Obsessed* stem from relative inexperience. He was also experimenting, the end result being historical fiction verging on insanity—well, almost— which oozes fringe. Dekker's all about the fringe.

It's always risky to balance two sides of the same story by two or more perspectives (all of which should invariably be distinctive,) and that's exactly what Dekker does here. But typical of this Indonesian, he takes it steps further. The chapters in question aren't merely contrasting points-of-view; they show the experiences of two women imprisoned in Torun, an infamous concentration camp in Poland, circa 1944-45. Ruth and Martha's chapter's are shown in the utmost detail, often gut-wrenching and moving. There's a lot of heart

and soul there, too. What makes this so risky is that the reader could potentially enjoy one half more than its counterpart. This is a bold move which pays off in spades, despite (or perhaps because of) its precarious nature.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toru%C5%84>

It's a risk that works, even though I did enjoyed them more than the present storyline, set in 1973, Los Angeles. Those set in Torun satisfied and astounded me. They fascinated me infinitely. They gutted me unlike anything I've read in a long time. I wanted more, much more. I still do. Dekker could write a whole book, chronicling the lives and unique experiences of Martha and Ruth, and I would not complain. As a matter of fact, I would be honored to read their stories.

There is immense purpose to the juxtapositions, too. It isn't as though one doesn't serve the other in some way or another. Dekker certainly didn't included them as filler. There are connections throughout, some being thematic while others are concerned with character, four of which make an enormous impact on the present. There's no future without the past, and vice versa. It all makes sense in the end.

"I sell ideas. Actually, if you think about it, everything is really no more than an idea. The past is nothing more than a memory, which is one kind of idea. The future is still a hope, another kind of idea. The present is fleeting and becomes a memory before you can put your hands on it. All ideas, I sell ideas."

There's a significant amount of supernatural talk, of power obtained through it. Overall though, that's all it amounts to: talk. In utter seriousness, I'm not sold on the concept that the novel's main villain, Roth Braun, is some supernatural entity. If he is, Dekker does not define it. There is, however, mention of psychic energy. Roth believes that the phenomenon is vastly misunderstood by humanity. He gloates:

He hated America, but he loved the purity of nature, and despite the smell of exhaust, the wind held some of the power that came with that purity. Even those who thought they understood the psychic energy in nature rarely rarely really understood its true unspoiled power.

It was the energy of a million nuclear detonations.

It was the force of a billion babies crying out at once.

It was the substance of creation—raw, staggering. A plea to reverse the chaos suffered at the hands of ruined humanity.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Energy_...

Despite my reservations, I did not struggle to picture Roth. I know his likes as well as the subjects of his loathing. Whenever a personal trait was mentioned, I was not taken aback. Everything felt genuine. The same goes for Roth's father, Gerhard Braun. Clearly, Dekker knew the duo intimately, as well as the research

necessary to render the historical aspects as accurately as possible.

Not that I sympathize or have empathy for Roth, but I understand him. He's a cruel monster, and yet, there's a part of me that pities him. His childhood was, in a lot of ways, forced upon him, resulting in a terrible upbringing (I'd challenge **anyone** not to be scarred by it.) Even through he chose to embrace a murderous lifestyle later on, that status was basically inevitable. (That isn't a spoiler, by the way, as the synopsis tells you that he's a serial killer, which makes way for my next point.)

The killings didn't feel real, and maybe that's because we see it happen only one time, early on. And I hate to say it, but I can't help feeling that Dekker incorporated said trope as a way of attempting to sensationalize his tale. Perhaps he was obligated, and felt afraid of losing readers if he didn't deliver another killer, like Slater from *Thr3e*. His reasoning could be any number of things. I just wish I knew why.

At any rate, it did not work for me. There was zero tension, suspense or fear.

Still, I should have felt *something*. If nothing else, the reader should feel the sting of death, especially that of the innocent. And there's so much innocence here.

I'm even willing to concede the possibility that this was intentional; that Dekker placed less emphasis on the killings in exchange for a more intense, personal narrative revolving primarily around Stephen, Roth, and their respective obsessions.

These present-day Nazi's aren't alone, either. Roth's henchman are outwardly simpleton. They're mindless, with subviance bordering on naivete. His entourage is flat, which makes Stephen Friedman's impressive and transparent by comparison. I know nothing about them, save their blind loyalty to "the cause," and their ethnicity. I wanted to get to know them (still do, in fact,) in the vain hope that maybe there's more to them. Maybe they're decent and strong and kind. Maybe.

But we'll never know, unless Ted rewrites the book someday.

At least with Stephen, we have a fairly decent sense of who he is, but I yearn for more, always.

In between Ester and Stephen is there's an unorthodox love. Or, at any rate, an intense chemistry. I think it blossomed too quickly, and as a result, it felt contrived. Nevertheless, their adoration for each other grew on me. They're adorable in ways which aren't gross or heavily romanticized.

His conversion to Christianity also felt forced. I wanted badly to believe in his implicit salvation--I really did--but it kind of felt almost fake. He and his Rabbi friend, Chaim Leveler, and the ever spiritual, Gerrik, seemingly served as the author's mouthpiece. It's classic Dekker didacticism. But from a Christian perspective, he couldn't have written it any other way. He did what was expected of him. That is a move I admire, as a person of faith as well as a reader, writer, and creative individual. No one should be afraid of expressing themselves about anything, particularly hot topic issues like religion or politics. Note: politics isn't an issue here. I used that as an example.

I've given this a lot of thought, too, and he does use his characters as mouthpieces, and there's more to them than the surface allows us to glimpse, but that's not my point. I respect what he did. However, I think he went about the process the wrong way. The flaws are in the execution. He could have conveyed the same things without coming off as didactic. With restraint often comes strength. Less is almost always more. I don't say these things to be pompous, but because there are a lot of writers expressing similar themes in

subtle ways. I'm also not saying that every beautiful or powerful quote such as Chaim's and Gerrik's advice should've been omitted. Clearly, they serve a purpose. That's what I'm saying.

"With his creation. With humans. With the love of humans. You thing he created with nonchalance? Let's throw some mud against the sky and see if any of it sticks? Not a chance. We are created for love, for obsession. So we do indeed obsess, through usually not over the right idea."

Again and again, I kept coming back to Roth Braun and his apparent preternatural abilities. If Dekker had taken a little more time developing that part of his character, the results could have been amazing. Instead, we're given suggestions:

...but it would take too long to explain how the powers of the air work;

Torun, Roth's spiritual birthing place. Where his faith had shown him how to harvest souls.

Torun, where his father had lost all of his power through one asinine decision.

Torun, where Roth would finally become a god.

The plot itself is terrific, I couldn't put it down. From start to finish, each sentence flowed smoothly into the next, catapulting itself (and the reader) further and further. Before I knew it, the chapter would end on a cliffhanger, and you know I had to keep going to see what happens next.

Ted Dekker writes about good versus evil, forgiveness and ultimately, hope. Love. Light. There is no love stronger or more important than the love of Jesus. Pursue it, chase it. Obsess.

Bonus: An Excerpt

It's only fitting that Center Street(a division of Hachette Publishing,) paired the former with an excerpt of Dekker's most historically based fiction to date, entitled, A.D. 30, and it's unlike anything I've ever read, period. Years ago, Dekker said that he was born to write the *Circle* books, but in hindsight, I disagree. I believe he was destined to write the former, and its follow-up, A.D. 33. The quality of his writing has matured immeasurably. His prose blew me away anyway, despite having come to expect it. And it's not just the writing, either. For me, it's the way he depicted the Arabian sands and the numerous tribes and political intrigue. In those sixteen pages, I beheld very impressive character development, far surpassing anything I've read in very long time. It was all just...mesmerizing. Breathtaking. Highly addictive. I need it.

A sweeping epic set in the harsh deserts of Arabia and ancient Palestine.

A war that rages between kingdoms on the earth and in the heart.

The harrowing journey of the woman at the center of it all.

Step back in time to the year of our Lord...A.D. 30.

The outcast daughter of one of the most powerful Bedouin sheikhs in Arabia, Maviah is called on to protect the very people who rejected her. When their enemies launch a sudden attack with devastating consequences, Maviah escapes with the help of two of her father's warriors--Saba who speaks more with his sword than his voice and Judah, a Jew who comes from a tribe that can read the stars. Their journey will be fraught with terrible danger. If they can survive the vast forbidding sands of a desert that is deadly to most, they will reach a brutal world subjugated by kings and emperors. There Maviah must secure an unlikely alliance with King Herod of the Jews.

But Maviah's path leads her unexpectedly to another man. An enigmatic teacher who speaks of a way in this life which offers greater power than any kingdom. His name is Yeshua, and his words turn everything known on its head. Though following him may present even greater danger, his may be the only way for Maviah to save her people--and herself.

I really, **really** cannot wait to get a hold of this one, and A.D. 33

Carrie says

This is not the type of book that I normally read, which is why it probably got a three. Also, I didn't really get the main character. However, I did finish the book (amazing for me I know) because the plot was intriguing. There were times where I felt like I was watching a movie where you start to hear the leary music because the bad guy is coming and you know somehow the good guy is going to get himself out of the pickle he got himself into. I also liked that fact that this book was clean of language and verbal porn because it's by a Christian author. For a Christian novel, it was nice that Christianity was woven in to the book in a way that made you think and not feel like you were getting a sermon in novel format.

Descending Angel says

A thriller novel by a christian writer about WWII concentration camps, it sounded interesting and it was.....that part of the novel was. The story mainly follows 3 people ~ In 1973 we have our hero stephen friedman, a jewish war orphan that slowly uncovers his past. Roth braun, son of a nazi commandant of the concentration camp Torùn and then we also follow martha thats actually in the concentration camp in 1944-45. I really wanted to like this book more then i did, it was a bit of a mixed bag, i loved the parts following martha, it's really gripping, and i really felt for the characters and the terrible things they were going through and everytime the story went back to stephen in 1973 i kept wondering what happened to them and how it linked to the story being told in 1973, and it did and was good, which brings me to the other half half of the

book which was pretty cheesy with men dressing up as women, for some reason a couple hippies (that disappeared from the story once they weren't needed anymore) and cliché bad guy things, not to mention that most of this part of story is just Stephen trying stupid plan after stupid plan to get into a basement of a building. It kinda felt like this half of the story was padding and a bit of relief because of the dark themes of Nazism. I would of rather had the story played straight without the stupid and cheesy parts that could of came outta of a bad Dean Koontz book. All in all, its a quick read, with some heartfelt moments that are bogged down with some of the other not so good parts.
