



## Sacred and Profane

*Faye Kellerman*

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Los Angeles Police Detective Peter Decker had grown very close to Rina's young sons, Sammy and Jake, as he had to their mother, and he looked forward to spending a day of his vacation camping with the boys. A nice reprieve from the grueling work of a homicide cop-until Sammy stumbles upon a gruesome sight...

Two human skeletons, charred beyond recognition, are identified by a forensic dentist as teenage girls--and for Decker, the father of a sixteen-year-old daughter, vacation time is over. Throwing himself professionally and emotionally into the murder case, he launches a very personal investigation: a quest that pulls him deep into the crack dens of Hollywood Boulevard and painfully close to the children of the streets and a nightmare world he must make his own.

## **Sacred and Profane Details**

Date : Published October 13th 2009 by William Morrow; Reprint edition (first published 1987)

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Author : Faye Kellerman

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## From Reader Review Sacred and Profane for online ebook

### **Hoyt says**

I really had trouble getting into this one, perhaps because I didn't read the first one in the series. (This book was orphaned at my house after a visit by a family member ; ) All of the dialogue felt very forced and fake, and the religious elements of the plot felt very forced. I know the author is very Orthodox and is perhaps trying to expose readers to her religion, but you really need reference book or a dictionary to know what some of the characters are talking about in some scenes.

I don't think I'll be checking out the rest of this series any time soon...

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### **Betsy says**

Definitely one of my favorite novels in a set of very ,very, good procedural mysteries with Peter Decker and Rinna Lazarus as main characters. Peter Decker is a hard boiled cop/detective with a heart of gold who is seriously involved with a much younger devoutly religious woman named Rinna. While taking what he hopes to be his step sons camping, the oldest boy and he discover the charred remains of two female victims of pornographic sex ring. The psychological consequences of this discovery and the proceeding case has Peter strongly questioning his religious faith and his relationship with Rinna, who thinks of Peter as basheert. The story that follows is a gritty but thought provoking tale of the existence of good in a world of evil. I received this novel as part of the Goodreads giveaway program in exchange for an honest review, which I have had no trouble writing. I recommend this book highly to those who wish to know more about the Jewish religious culture, and those who like procedural detective/cop type novels. The subject matter while brutal is handled without being overly graphic or sensation seeking. This might be the only drawback to some readers with hyper-awareness to these type of situations. Still all in all, this is a novel well worth your time and despite any possible issue you might have with a subject matter.

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### **Leslie Jem says**

Although dated, still a great series. I have book 3 and will begin it shortly.

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### **Sheila says**

Peter is on a getting to know you camping trip with Rinna's boys when 1 boy finds 2 skeletons in the woods. Peter is given the case to solve. Meanwhile he and Rinna are working through some bumps in the road regarding his conversion to be Jewish.

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### **Genia Lukin says**

It's a cute enough schlock series, I suppose. As brain candy reading goes, it's not horrible, nor brilliant. For me, the extraneous digressions into Judaism here, there and everywhere were very offputting; I felt that, as a literary coup, they were poorly done. And that is a pity, because I would have loved to see more orthodox authors and themes written for outside audiences, and the complex life of Jewish Orthodoxy, which very few people on the outside are actually familiar with, reflected in a mainstream novel.

Still, if you want to go mainstream, you must also cater to some mainstream technique, and that includes the capability to insert themes and observations about life in an understated way, not as sermons. I also find it hard to forgive, since Rina Lazarus is depicted more as Charedi than mild Modern Orthodox, the many times the lead characters hold hands, hug, kiss, sit in each other's laps, etc'. It's not that it doesn't happen, of course, but Rina doesn't even make noises about it being forbidden - which it is, as it violates negiah.

Perhaps I am more bemused and bored - as well as occasionally downright annoyed - by these asides because I am an Orthodox Jew myself. Most of her explications, put in the mouth of Rav Schulmann, as well as simplifications, leave me very cold indeed. I don't know. I just know it detracted from the story in my eyes.

On the opposite hand, so to speak, I must compliment her at least on some of the criminology research she's obviously done. I can't speak for many details, but the dental forensics, at least, had decent amounts of accuracy in it.

So, a tepid 2.5 stars leaning towards 3. Not bad for an afternoon with a slightly fuzzy head, but nothing to write home about.

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### **Mike (the Paladin) says**

So, after liking the first 2 of these I read (the first I read was one farther along in the series) I've continued to follow our hero(es) through "life".

And they have an eventful life.

The detective is in love with our heroine. Our heroine however is a devout and actually believing and practicing Jew. There seems to be no way things can work out...even if they do love each other.

Now Peter has to look at his life.

Meanwhile psychopaths seem to proliferate.

These books are well written. The romance growing between the protagonists does not take away from the story (of course if you like romance that wouldn't really be a concern). Their private life integrates and it's simply part of the story as a whole. The plot flows, the characters are complete and while I'm not usually into books where the detective's private life is a factor, these I like.

I can recommend this one also. Enjoy.

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### **Felix says**

As a police procedural, this one was better than the first book in the series and more exciting (though rather violent and harrowing).

One thing that bugs me is that sometimes Ms. Kellerman takes an odd shortcut with the plot (e.g. a mysterious criminal holds important clues; nobody knows much about him except his first name (say, Marmorisco); you'd think that tracking him would be hard - but then Chapter x just begins with something like "Decker was meeting Marmorisco. Marmorisco was going to tell him ..."). It feels as if a couple of chapters were edited out.

The first time I came across this kind of shortcut in *Ritual Bath* I thought I had actually missed a chapter. The good news, though, is that it only happened once in this book, as opposed to about 3 times in the previous one.

As for the relationship between Peter and Rina, it was interesting. A bit of fairy tale stuff but I'm okay with that - this is art, not life, so get used to it.

Will be getting the next one :)

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### **Ken Schloman says**

The second novel of the excellent Peter Decker/ Rina Lazarus series -- which I am re-reading after a long number of years-- is a very worthy follow up to *The Ritual Bath*. While an excellent police procedural, the author makes the key characters human with their developing love relationship and the religious and family conflicts to be resolved, all set against the murder mystery background that takes Decker into a very seamy part of the Hollywood scene. Simply put, the police procedural part of the novel could stand alone, but the author, by combining the human aspects of the characters, has continued to lay a strong foundation for the series. I highly recommend the series for mystery fans.

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### **Sorcha says**

Read a Faye Kellerman a few years ago, and didn't like it, much preferring her husband's style, so have avoided reading this one for a while.[return][return]However, did enjoy it more than I thought I would![return][return]Synopsis: "While on a camping trip, Detective Peter Decker and his two young charges come across the charred remains of two teenage girls. Embroiled in a disturbing case, Decker's only unifying thread in a network of violence and corruption is the deaths of the two apparently very different young girls."[return][return]It's early in the series, so Decker is single, and is also struggling with his imminent conversion/acceptance into Judaism

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### **Sharyn says**

I am on a rereading marathon. It is interesting to go back and see the differences time makes to books. I am

enjoying the series all over again. I find the religious sections very interesting, the mysteries and daily life of the cops fascinating and the relationship between Peter and Rina wonderful. As a Jew who also married a convert (wanted my children to have no doubts) the books have a secondary interest for me.

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### **Brina says**

Sacred and Profane is the second book of the Peter Decker and Rina Lazarus series and ends a few months after book 1 left off. Decker is coming to grips with his place as a Jew in an attempt to cement a relationship with Rina. The book opens while Peter is camping in the mountains with Rina's sons, and on the last day of their vacation, one of the boys discovers two dead bodies. As luck would have it, Peter is assigned to the case.

The mystery components of this book read quickly, leaving me wanting to know who was behind the ghastly murder. What kept me reading quickly, however, is to see how Peter and Rina's relationship progresses. In Hebrew we say two people are bashert when it is obvious that in the universe they are destined for each other. Kellerman fleshes out that Peter and Rina are bashert, but Peter's Judaism remains an obstacle between them. He questions whether or not he is willing to leave behind all vestiges of his secular life for Rina. Between intense conversations with Rabbi Shulman of the yeshiva and his beat partner, Peter comes to grips with his place in the relationship.

As the book comes to an end, Peter and Rina are at a critical stage in their relationship (I will not say more). This juncture has left me excited for the next book in the series. As I mentioned in the review of The Ritual Bath, this is the "perfect mystery series" for me to read in between heavier reads, and I look forward to reading it in its entirety.

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### **aPriL does feral sometimes says**

Good beach read. Better than the first in the series. In any case, for most genre novels my ratings have more to do with entertainment value first, plot consistency second, literary value third.

For religious people, the drama around sex and conversion and evil is probably resonating, even if completely mental (I find the religious arguments on why child abuse and torture is common and snuff films are permitted by any gods particularly compelling and ridiculous, especially the Rabbi's answers,; 1. we don't know, 2. we probably aren't smart enough to understand, 3. if we learned the reason why god allows evil to exist we would be driven insane. WHAT the fuck!?!?!?!? Seriously? And finding the body of a baby covered with old and new cigarette burns, broken arms and ribs, and knifed to death by the mother is better for us and less crazy than learning why god let it happen? HA HA HA HA!

For me, while I enjoyed the police drama, and it strongly reminded me of a Sylvester Stallone action movie, which means to me a overheated concoction of soap opera, realism and manipulated emotion, the religious soap opera subplot makes me either open-mouthed in disbelief (Come on! Either leave the relationship or lie to the stupid woman and fake it) or tired. With all of the real problems in the world, it is mystifying why the author is planning to spend time writing a multi-volume series around all of the hot air on such a circular, endless subject as religious disagreements. I AM curious how the author plans to drag this out and keep it amusing for ten years. Of course, I'm only on book two. I imagine the dubious duo of Rina and Peter must find some way to dumb down and bury the intellectual questions around religion and concentrate on pacifying rituals and faith in order to get on with it, probably, for 30 books of babies being tortured to death,

fathers raping and pimping out their own daughters, boys being raped by Scout leaders and coaches, innocents getting ripped off and murdered while the two get on their knees and recite memorized ritual prayers for a chapter or two in each book and have righteous sanctioned sex making themselves feel better, even if the following pages reveal more police cases which make clear that yet another tortured victim is discovered in the following chapters despite all of the religious hope.

Ya gotta admire the persistence of 10,000 years of continuing and varied religious fervor without a single second of actual conversation or conflict resolution with any god.

However, I'm definitely drawn in by the realistic detective cases, and amused by the over-the-top soap opera elements. I always loved Dark Shadows, the paranormal soap opera that was on TV in the late 1960's, which I watched everyday as a young teen. Even though the only paranormal elements are the religious rituals performed by people and the religious arguments between Rina and Peter ( the author doesn't go so far as to have God rap on tables or invisibly float secret journals with cryptic solutions to Decker's cases next to his breakfast oatmeal), I guess the hysterical tone is what I find resonating, reminding me oddly of Dark Shadows, which I've always found extremely entertaining.

This really isn't a satirical series. I'm taking it that way, for some reason I can't explain, and that is why I'm going to keep reading it, for now.

Inadvertent silly has often charmed me. This series seems to teeter on that edge.

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### **Bill Hall says**

The continuing romance of LAPD Sergeant Peter Decker and the ultra orthodox Jewess Rina Lazarus. In this episode Peter struggles with the integrity of his newly discovered Jewish faith. Born to Jewish parent who gave him up for adoption, Decker was raised by Baptist adoptive parents. I began reading from the beginning of the series to find out how Decker converts from Christianity to Judaism. It seems that although his adoptive parents were devout Decker has no Sunday School training nor Christian understanding.

Amazingly, however, his Jewish birth father was an orthodox Jew that owned some valuable Jewish prayer books that escaped the holocaust.

Of course, there are lots of secular christians just like there are lots of secular Jews. However, it's pretty hard to imagine a person raised by devout Baptists that shows little or no understanding/appreciation of the Christian faith. I secretly suspect that it is our author that has little understanding of the Christian faith.

That disappointment aside, this volume has a better balance between the growing Decker/Lazarus relationship and the murder case. Future books will focus more on the case than the relationship.

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### **Gary says**

You can't fake your beliefs. Pascal's challenge is nonsense because our beliefs must be real to us in order to be our beliefs. One either believes something because they have evidence derived from facts which give

identities with coherence and consistency or one does not. I can't fake my belief. Faith is ultimately pretending to know something you don't know. The burden of proof is always on the one who makes an assertion. Peter Drecker (the protagonist) is open to believing in the absurd for reasons beyond true predicates about the real world (they seem to be tied up with his 'love' for Rina). Using the premises in this story somebody could make the really stupid statement 'I don't have enough faith to be an atheist'. Never realizing that burden of proof lies with the one making the assertion. By definition, the atheist position is 'I believe not in a God' not 'I believe in no God'. The second is an assertion. The first is a statement based on the data that is at hand is not sufficient to make the assertion.

The detective story is only so so. The belief in mystical wisdom is irritating.

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### **Karschtl says**

Das Buch spielt bereits Ende der 80er. Merkt man so wirklich eigentlich nur daran, dass Decker kein Mobiltelefon hat. Die Problematik des Falls (Kinderpornografie, minderjährige Prostituierte usw.) ist heute sicher genauso aktuell wie damals. Und auch genauso schrecklich.

Ebenso intensiv wie auf die polizeiliche Arbeit wird auch auf die Beziehung zwischen Peter und der jüdischen Witwe Rina eingegangen, und Peter Deckers Bemühungen, sich dem Judentum anzunähern und diese Religion als seine eigene anzunehmen. Das war mir wirklich zu viel des Guten, ist glaube ich nur für Leser interessieren die sich für den jüdischen Glauben sehr interessieren.

Ich habe auch schon den 1. Teil dieser Reihe gelesen, und auch schon den 3. Teil. Und da ich weiß dass es noch viele weitere Peter Decker / Rina Lazarus - Bücher gibt, überrascht es mich nicht wenn es mit den beiden doch noch weitergeht. Auch wenn das Ende diesbezüglich hier ja noch offen gelassen wird. Werde die Reihe auch erstmal weiterlesen, in der Hoffnung dass das religiöse Geschwafel deutlich zurück geht. Kann mich nicht erinnern, dass das im 3. Teil so stark vorkam. Aber da hat Decker wohl auch keine Unterrichtsstunden beim Rabbi mehr genommen.

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