

## A Prescription for the Soul

**Peter Weddle**

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*A Prescription for the Soul is an intriguing and soul-searching novel that asks—and tries to answer—some very disquieting questions.*

Peter Weddle's *A Prescription for the Soul* is a work of penetrating historical fiction that depicts turbulent political times and the evolution of the American Dream.

In the fall of 1963, four American teenagers are living on an army base in Italy, witnessing the cultural upheaval back home from afar. Decades later, the lives of two of the characters intersect in a profoundly deleterious way.

These two time frames unfold in parallel stories, with chapters alternating between the two periods. The narrator, too, works from both his teenage perspective and his adult persona. Though he is the main player in both eras, his given name is never actually revealed in the text, making for an interesting twist in the reading experience.

In 1963, the four main teens are seniors in high school, have formed their own clique, and are allowed by their parents to explore, unchaperoned, the ancient cities of Italy. They intellectually and combatively discuss the issues of the day.

The burgeoning civil rights movement and the assassination of President Kennedy provide the backdrop for their intense conversations; an incident on an Italian train has repercussions that reverberate through the years. And although living supposedly ideal lives in the present, the narrator realizes that perception is far from the reality of the situation. The movement back and forth between the two distinct times is not difficult to follow and allows the reader to reflect on how the characters got to where they are.

The dialogue between the male characters—both in the past and present—is often laced with expletives that emphasize their points. Because most of the characters have deeply held convictions they feel compelled to expound, the text is sometimes heavily laden with dialogue, but it's a conversation worth following.

Descriptions of the Italian architecture and scenery lend ambiance and credence: the landscape and conspicuous consumption reflected in Connecticut, circa 2007, is fleshed out as well.

*A Prescription for the Soul* is an intriguing and soul-searching novel that asks—and tries to answer—some very disquieting questions on American morality and values.

ROBIN FARRELL EDMUNDS (Summer 2016)

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