

Betwixt: Wayne's Angel Trilogy Book 2

Ron W. Mumford

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In the Christian thriller Betwixt, the stage is set for a generational war between Satan and human beings.

In Ron W. Mumford's fantasy novel *Betwixt*, Satan's forces amass, and the threat of a doomsday weapon looms.

Wayne returned to Earth after a successful battle with seven demons in the realm known as the Betwixt. With hope that his life will settle back down, he spends his days with his fiancée, doing activities like going to therapy and running a bar. He aims for a mundane existence. But then Wayne, his fiancée, and their loved ones discover that a dream they all shared was, in fact, a representation of Wayne's final fight in the other realm; and an unexpected enemy appears in the guise of a helpful doctor.

Meanwhile, Helle, a Satanic priestess who is Satan's emissary on Earth, works to enact Satan's plans. Wayne and his guardian angel, Gordon, have managed to outmaneuver her so far. But Satan's recent plan involves Helle birthing his son, releasing Pandora's Box, and flooding the government with documented proof of other realms and demons. In the process, Helle is rendered an over-the-top villainess: every action she takes is blatantly evil, even when she's trying to avoid suspicion.

All the while, Satan attempts to sway Bella, a reckless and flirtatious waitress, to be his newest concubine. Bella's naïveté combines with her headstrong nature to compelling effect, blinding her to the sinister forces working against her.

While Bella's tale holds attention, the book's transitions between its three storylines are too jarring. Further, in conversation, all of the characters, including the book's demons, speak in indistinguishable manners, adopting the same vocal mannerisms and obscuring who is speaking at any given time. The book's lengthy conversations become stale as a result. God's speech patterns are the best distinguished, but that's because his contributions come in the form of capital letters.

The book over pronounces its sense of a dichotomy between science and faith: scientists face demons and Satan, but still demand proof of their existence; and government officials accept evidence that is provided to them by Helle and her allies, even knowing that she's a high-ranking Satanic priestess. In the end, neither side is wholly sympathetic; both work toward vague goals. Despite the threats presented by Satan, including of a doomsday weapon and the loss of Bella's soul, the result is an anticlimactic novel whose final battle is rushed through. It sets up the premise of a volume to come, rather than focusing on developing its own resolution.

In the Christian thriller *Betwixt*, the stage is set for a generational war between Satan and human beings.

JOHN M. MURRAY (July 26, 2022)

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