ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

CHRISTIAN

Blood of Eden
Ken Policard
I AM Publishing
978-0-9846340-1-9
Three Stars (out of Five)

According to Christian scriptures, God triumphed over the Devil when Jesus Christ allowed himself to be crucified on a cross. In his death, mankind's sins were literally washed away. Yet no one, not even the most devout Christians will know the exact day of his return. Ken Policard's novel explores what the world might be like if humanity had some kind of advanced knowledge regarding Christ's return, and what would happen if this information fell into the wrong hands.

In *Blood of Eden*, the Devil, known as Devlin, makes a bet with God that in the twenty-first century Christ could be corrupted or detained and would not be able to achieve divinity. God accepts the bet and the games between good and evil begin. Policard captures the Devil's hubris perfectly by creating a fictitious book of scripture, the Book of Devlin, which is kept secretly in the vaults of the Vatican.

Numerous characters get caught up in the penultimate game of chance: FBI agent Christine Mas, the investigator of the grisly murders by a serial killer called the Branding Killer; Father Eden, a Catholic priest who is willing to serve wherever God wants him to go; and Zamba, Devlin's right-hand man, an ancient Voodoo priest whose loa is a metal necklace that can transform into a deadly asp.

Blood of Eden was first written as a screenplay and, indeed, the novel reads like a movie. The author's near twenty years in the entertainment business provided him with an uncanny sense for creating scenes that immediately capture suspense. Policard's prose is carefully written except for a few small errors. For example, "Kaddouri was sitting on the couch across from Helen's desk, waiting for her, a fax in his hands. He looked up and almost smiled, but she saw the troubled look in her (sic) eyes." On the other hand, the following passage offers wonderful prose, "…it was part of the entropy of the universe. Things fell apart. It was always much easier to destroy than it was to create, always easier to tear something down than to build it…The entire game was rigged to go downhill, and in the grand scheme of things hope amounted to

little more than whistling in the dark. Goodness was a scam and heaven was a house of cards."

At times the novel can be horrifying and dark, especially the lengths the Devil will go to stop Christ from achieving divinity. Policard shows us that the true savior of humanity, as graced by God, is man's divine free will to sacrifice for another human being. The twists and turns and false paths in *Blood of Eden* will keep readers guessing up to the very last page.

Lee Gooden