

Forgiveness Dies

J.J. Hensley

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J. J. Hensley's political thriller *Forgiveness Dies* boasts a unique private investigator, Trevor Galloway. Galloway, a former narcotics officer who survived an Eastern European drug gang's torture, is back in Pittsburgh and needs to take a whole pharmacy of medications every day. The pills don't stop him from hallucinating, though.

Then a former Secret Service agent who's now with a private security firm hires Galloway to help catch Chaerea, the nemesis of presidential candidate Dennis Hackney. The job takes Galloway from Pittsburgh to Savannah and means involvement with African warlords, mercenaries, a long-running domestic dispute, and a smooth-talking hitman.

Galloway is fascinating, but far from reliable. Because of his precarious mental state, Galloway sees what's not there and does not always remember details. The story toys with time, and entire sequences jump back and forth. At times, Galloway seems to magically transport from one location to another, and from predicament to predicament, without sufficient explanation.

The plot mixes real-world elements with fantastical ones. Dennis Hackney is an obvious parody of the current president Trump, and the novel alludes to ongoing controversies like the Russia probe and James Comey's tenure at the FBI. Outrageous developments include a bartender and aspiring novelist rising to become Galloway's partner in the course of the book, able to beat up experienced mercenaries, gather intelligence, and concoct getaway plans that fool American law enforcement officers.

Still, the story is a breeze: fantastical, fun, and well told. It places a premium on action, and does not waste words on unnecessary details. *Forgiveness Dies* is an unusual political thriller featuring near-impossible events.

BENJAMIN WELTON (November / December 2019)

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