



## Grace Period: The Awakening of Abel Adams

**Robert hammond**

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*Slam. Boom. Smacked back and nodding into eternity. Heavenly narcotic bliss. He was in the womb again home sweet home.*

This (probably) false memoir depicts prolonged addiction and one man's sporadic quest to emerge complete. Despite an upper-middle class upbringing Abel Adams constantly pursues extremes and repeatedly seeks out the oblivion of the heroin nod. When arrested and tried for narcotics offenses the sentencing judge turns out to be the father of a girl Abel corrupted in high school. Juvenile hall jail prison rehab the Army; the institutional authorities can't overcome this love of hard drugs in a lasting way. Abel evolves into a spiritual seeker although that mixes inharmoniously with periods of pimping and dealing. Various Left Coast metaphysical groups from California to Vancouver merit enthusiastic study but each fails to provide a lasting source of direction. "Everything seemed to be leading nowhere an endless abyss..." Despite fundamental similarities Abel continues to be surprised to learn that each cult is in fact a cult. In general New Age idea-systems aren't portrayed in a flattering light here.

Hammond's character study focuses on a person who doesn't simply make himself problems: Abel's devotion to the next fix causes burglaries and robberies arrests and accidents but a large part of his will is in active pursuit of a rise above lower forms of consciousness and behavior. Abel is a definite joiner and a believer in systems in an overwhelmingly outward locus of control; he's a fair fit for twelve step programs. Breaking from the revolving door lifestyle is more challenging for the protagonist because of a natural excellence at the fraud and sales cons end of crime. He's really happy doing wrong while he's doing it but perhaps a seed in his professor's-son upbringing lingers to remind him that better is expected.

The prose in *Grace Period* is efficient and on-topic. Arcs of doom and improvement are built on distressingly sharp gradients. When cult after rehab after straight job after cult fails to keep Abel clean of drugs a simple help-me-God prayer ushers in a redemptive Christianity that works like a charm. Remarkably the reason for this substantive difference isn't provided making the success seem random. Implied assumptions regarding the power of the Christian religion aren't up to the explanatory standard established by previous events; the ending is partially unearned.

After experience in dispute resolution the author currently works in public relations for Capital One Financial. Robert Hammond's previous books include popular consumer reference works *Identity Theft: How to Protect Your Most Valuable Asset* and *Life After Debt: Free Yourself from the Burden of Money Worries Once and for All*. Both continue to sell steadily years after their original releases. *Grace Period* is hope-gathering book designed to please fellow Christians with the outcome. Authentic attention to the milieu of the hard-core junkie is of voyeuristic interest to a wider crowd who would rather read about that life than live it.

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