



Seat of Truth

Ezechias Domexa

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In the intriguing novel Seat of Truth, a recently deceased man learns about the machinations of the devil on Earth.

Ezechias Domexa's Christian fantasy *Seat of Truth* reimagines what heaven is like through the experiences of a man and his mother.

Beginning with a humorous speech from the devil, who flaunts his credentials and specialty in human souls, the text lists a range of professions that the devil's faithful are involved in. These include politics, sports, the clergy, and begging. The devil, known in the book as Counselor Tshembow, generates interest in what's to come.

When Mitch and his mother die in a horrific accident, they arrive in heaven, where Mitch is shocked to encounter Flannighans, someone he would never expect to go to heaven. Mitch questions Jesus about how Flannighans's drug-dealing escapades, bullying, and lack of church attendance weren't disqualifying. Things get worse when Mitch and his mother cannot find Mitch's brother Edmund in heaven, too.

The book's dialogue is emotional and realistic, as when frustrated Mitch challenges God at his residence after failing to find his brother, ranting about God's unfairness and lack of care for people. Suspenseful scenes also find Mitch traveling back to Earth to spy on his wife, whom he finds dressing up to go out just a few weeks after his funeral. Frustrations about her moving on, and about not being able to communicate with living people, play in.

In this dual picture of life on Earth and in the afterlife, the suggestion is that, on Earth, people are oblivious to the existence and schemes of the devil; it is only after death that they become aware of such matters. Much of the story is directed by a goal of making people aware of the afterlife. It challenges common beliefs and judgments regarding heaven and those found in it, as when Mitch forgets his wrongdoings, including smoking weed, when he's condemning Flannighans.

While Mitch is rounded out as he becomes conscious of his own mistakes and develops a better understanding of forgiveness, other characterizations are inconsistent. God, for example, is variously benevolent and temperamental; at one point, he nails Mitch and Jesus to a cross in anger.

Some scenes are contrived to make points, as with Edmund's convenient career jump. However, the book's descriptions of heavenly settings are strong, full of lush landscapes, warm hues, and shimmering valleys that are like the moon broken into pieces. The book culminates in an entertaining scene in which Edmund is brought to trial to determine whether he is destined for heaven or hell, with the verdict unrevealed.

Told through entertaining conversations between intriguing characters, *Seat of Truth* is a novel that reimagines heaven.

EDITH WAIRIMU (December 17, 2019)

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