



The Fire Watcher

Chip Hill

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Jacob Adams was living the American dream: a loving family, a new home, and a high-profile job designing the world's first atomic power plant. But when tragedy strikes his family, he turns to alcohol to deaden his pain and grief. He becomes an alcoholic and eventually loses his home, his job, and his faith. Thirty years later Jacob lives in poverty in the shadow of the now defunct power plant, where he works as a janitor. Jacob's life takes one more unexpected turn when he becomes trapped in the pitch-black recesses of the plant. In his forced sobriety, the bitter memories he has been drowning for decades begin to surface all around him, dragging him into a pit of regret and despair. Suffering the ravages of alcohol withdrawal combined with the chilling effects of sensory deprivation, he embarks on an emotional and spiritual journey that will take him to the brink of insanity and back. Before his captivity comes to an end, Jacob -- like his namesake from the Old Testament -- will find himself wrestling with God. The town sheriff, a State Police detective, and even a local priest, follow different clues as they search for Jacob. The widening mystery touches off a cascade of changes in the lives of those connected to him. A friendship broken by betrayal is mended, a long abandoned romance is rekindled, dark secrets about the power plant and its caretakers come to light, and a young man's life is forever altered as he uncovers the tragedy that sent Jacob spiraling downward so many years ago.

The Fire Watcher Details

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From Reader Review The Fire Watcher for online ebook

Katrina Hoppe says

Starts a little slow but well worth pushing through! It does have some religious undertones, if that matters to you.

Teri says

It took Jake many years of being drunk, losing all that he really cared about. When Jake is trapped he then takes a true look at his life. This is a great journey for so many of us. We should all look into our lives. A very fulfilling book.

Chandra says

4.5/5

I have to totally change my opinion of this book from my earlier one when I wasn't sure I could complete it; I never expected to actually love it. I am left with feelings that I had when I read "The Shack". We are never abandoned by our Father no matter how hard we try to run from Him. Well done Mr. Hill!

Carol says

This book was very good. It started off well enough but after a while it started to drag a little bit. Not for long though. It had me reading as fast as I could to see how it would end. I found myself crying a few times even. A book about faith though I don't feel it hits you over the head with it. I would surely recommend this book.

Wendy says

Liked the book. A story about faith using a man who is an alcoholic and through certain circumstances is brought to the end of himself.

At the beginning of the book he is an unattractive character, but as you learn about his life and what brought him to the point that he is now you feel compassion for him.

The style of writing keeps the suspense up as you go between characters, events and memories to get the whole story. It has an evangelical emphasis with Roman Catholicism and Pentecostal theologies represented. I read the book because it was written by my friend Tami's brother. For full closure you need to read the Epilogue.

Cheryll says

The story was so realistic. I think anyone who worked at a nuclear power plant during the construction phases knew these characters. The pressure to make deadlines and long work hours took a toll on a lot of families. At the same time it created bonds between workers that will last for life. I worked at a plant in CA in the early 1980s and formed bonds with people that have lasted over 30 years. Even though I have worked a lot of different industries nothing compares to my experience at DCP. I have recommended this book to all my DCP friends.

Terri Davidson says

Really enjoyed this book. The characters were well thought out and you could easily relate to them. It was definitely a good book about self revelation.

Hope says

First Impression: Nuclear power plant story about alcoholism and redemption through Jesus – sounds interesting. Also the haunting cover image is perfect. Let's face it, we all judge books by their covers, at least initially.

Characters: Most of the cast has biblical first names, which correlate throughout with the message from the Bible. Jacob Adams is down on his luck, half in the bag, and hard to watch. The Fire Watcher follows Jacob through the worst days of his life, the best days, and all the little decisions leading to both. I thoroughly enjoyed watching Jacob develop as a person, and cried for all his moments of disappointment. Each character, from Jacob's boss and coworkers to his family, stands true and feels real. I genuinely cared what happened to each of them. I believe creating people I could meet on the street or live next to is one of the most challenging aspects of writing. Well done and a pat on the back to author Chip Hill for this aspect.

Setting: As a plausible reality fiction book, the setting is just the good-old U.S.A. The time jumps from multiple stories in the present - to past situations and back again. This was handled wonderfully with clearly headed section breaks giving the setting and date changes.

Writing Style: Hill writes with the ease and familiarity of a seasoned pro, so it's surprising this is his first published work. If there were any errors in proofreading, they didn't stand out enough to remember. I was never confused, which is quite an accomplishment with all the storylines and time shifts throughout. Setting up for the story is slow for a while, but well worth the wait. Once The Fire Watcher picks up, you don't want to stop reading.

What I liked: I have read a few reviews chastising the author for not researching the finer points of nuclear power stations. Unless you actually worked for one of these places, you wouldn't have any doubts. The story is plausible and tangible, and it stays with you long past the epilogue ****WHICH YOU NEED TO MAKE SURE YOU READ****. I really enjoyed the ending, as it wasn't predictable or Hollywood – that's all I'm going to say about it!

The Christian/Catholic aspects of The Fire Watcher make for a heart-warming and cautionary tale. The entire story is built around redemption and the love God has waiting for us all. I didn't feel preached at – I felt I was observing real people coming to realizations about their choices.

Deal Breakers: There was a few times where the story dragged out a bit as a way to build suspense. I don't

particularly disagree with doing this, but think the story would benefit from a bit more action. The thing is there were enough events to create action scenes, but they were more so quietly described instead.

Overall Rating: I would give 4.5 stars if it were allowed – Goodreads and other sites have done away with half-star ratings.

For Fans Of: The Shack

Kathy Maher says

A great book. I don't do well writing book reviews. I either like a book or I don't. I loved this book. I honestly thought it was going to be a ghost story or suspense but it was much better. It was well written and let me think about God without being preached too. Jacob becomes stuck in a dark room with no way out. He goes through all the emotions we would all go through and then he begins to reflect on his life - the good and bad. We learn the reasons for why he is the way he is. He learns to love himself again and to forgive himself. In the end the joy he is able to give his family is rewarding and it does give a little twist in the end. I am sooooo glad that I read this book and I do recommend this for anyone.

Heidi Feltrop says

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book.. It is a wonderfully written story of a man's spiritual transformation in spite of himself. I personally found it to be extremely thought provoking and I liked how it was spiritually inspirational without being "preachy". I could not put it down!! The ending was not as I expected, but I understand why it ended as it did. I defy you not to shed a few tears.....

Betty says

Wow wow wow! I'm literally speechless! This may be one of the most insightful books I've ever read! Honestly, words escape me. Gripping to say the least.

Zacksmom Okon says

Well done, Mr. Hill. Never have I read a novel that takes nearly every character and transforms (or transcends) the trilogy that makes up the human being. This was truly a captivating, page-turner; I lost sleep needing to read more. As I closed the book for the last time, I wept for an unnatural length of time.

Linda says

A book worth reading. Very moving. I hesitated to download it at first. Wasn't sure I would like it. Would highly recommend

Leah says

I love, love, love to read. It takes me away from my life and let's me live a little while in someone else's. That being said, the story written of Jacob Adams will be a life that I'll remember sharing forever. I met Chip Hill at the Bridgewater Bookfest on September 10, 2011. His book was the only book I bought that day.

I had one serious reservation: NEVER before have I even attempted to read a book containing scriptures and Bible references such as yours for fear of blatantly misunderstanding or misappropriating their purpose in the story. Surprisingly, despite my general lack of religious familiarity, I understood exactly what the chosen passages meant and why they were used. All of the biblical references in *The Fire Watcher* were stated clearly and expertly inserted in ways that supported the story, helped to maintain the overall theme and drove home most of the major points in the story. If you're not crazy about novels that use biblical references, that is, if you avoid them because you think they'll be pedantic and "preachy" then I propose that you read THIS story. You will be pleasantly surprised that not only do you clearly understand the references, but you appreciate them and they WILL resound in you.

The story itself was a melting pot of oscillating themes. There is mystery, suspense, cynicism, retribution, addiction and revulsion. There is also love, romance, family and friendship. It's risky and it certainly takes a talented writer to weave such a detailed and wide-open story. *The Fire Watcher* spans many genres and can hold it's own in each one of them. The connections between characters are unraveled sequentially and deliberately in a way that allows you to understand and grasp the true sense of everyone's situation, which drew me in even closer to the characters. Their trials and tribulations, and believe me there are many, were realistic and authentic. In fact, one of the facets that made this book so interesting was that "hush-hush" topics (alcoholism, corruption, adulterism, etc.) were blatantly sprayed across the pages of Hill's book. I can remember several eye bulging, jaw dropping and heart wrenching moments...including the ending.

The environment for the story held a particular interest for me as I was born and raised in a small town in the vicinity of several steel mills and a few power plants. In fact, the setting was astonishingly similar to where I live. We even have a "World Famous" bar to call our own. A few of my friends and family members have, in the past, worked for companies somewhat similar to SAPS. This book provided me an opportunity to appreciate what they may have experienced working in those places. Hill's intricate explanations of setting mixed with my own personal familiarity with this type of environment coincided to produce a unique, panoramic and individual experience. I believe that the characters and situations composed by Hill could potentially be lifted from the pages and superimposed on a number of people in my life and fit almost perfectly. No other book I have EVER read has, quite literally, hit so close to HOME.

The craftsmanship is praiseworthy. There were a few typos in the text that didn't go unnoticed but otherwise the literature was seamless. The story flowed perfectly. The flashbacks kept you up to date and slowly - as more and more information was revealed about the past - each character bloomed like a flower. From past to the present - the development of each of the book's characters was flawless and fascinating, especially Jake and Porter. The writing is detailed, imaginative, informative and uplifting. Above all, I truly felt that *The Fire Watcher* was entertaining to read. It's gripping from the very first page and doesn't let you go until the end.

In closing, The Fire Watcher by Chip Hill is an outstanding book. I highly recommend this novel to those that believe religion can't be entertaining to read and for those who know someone who is or has battled with an addiction. It will move you and you won't ever forget it.

Karen Gonzalez says

This book raised many questions for me. Good read that goes quick. I cried happy tears at the end.
