



AllBooks Review

by Gregg Haugland

www.allbooksreviews.com

www.allbooksreviews.ca

Genre: Dramatic

Title: AN INVERTED SORT OF PRAYER

AUTHOR: Chris F. Needham

What do you do with your life when washed up as a professional hockey player? How do you react to the game that has all but banished your role as the designated fighter on the ice?

Billy Purdy, alias 'The Bull', had only one occupation during his life - that of Enforcer - or the player whose sole purpose is to wreak havoc on opposing team members. Now nearing forty years of age, he is at the end of a career with only a penchant for fighting, drinking and a bad attitude staring him in the face. The novel follows Billy over a period of months as he tries to come to grips with who he is and what to do with the rest of his existence. He is accompanied (sometimes reluctantly) on his journey by a hard partying bar crowd who embrace him more for his celebrity status and drinking skills than personal qualities. In a strange twist, Purdy's best and sometimes worst friend turns out to be the less than successful son of a Canadian politician, who has stolen Purdy's father's novel to publish it as his own.

This is not a story about hockey, though. It's about self-discovery and transformation. It's about coming to grips with reality and then tossing it away through alcohol and poorly managed personal relationships. It's about using fame and fortune to pursue happiness, only to find emptiness. Throughout the novel, Purdy is a true anti-hero, and the reader is torn between hating the guy and wanting to see what happens next. You find yourself slowly pulled into a swirling pool of emotions, knowing that the ultimate direction is down the drain.

Needham writes the story in a straightforward literary style, offset by long, eloquent descriptions intermixed with sharp, direct dialogue. Told in first person, you are only privileged to see the protagonist's view of the other characters, which is obviously skewed by Billy's own jaded view of the world. As the story progresses, you come to know Purdy well, and quite possibly dislike him even more.

Chris F. Needham lives in Vancouver, British Columbia where he has plied a piecemeal trade as bouncer, bartender, forklift driver, computer technician and magazine editor. *An Inverted Sort of Prayer* is his first novel.

This novel both grabs you and pushes you away. Like the main character, at times you just want to say 'screw it' and put it back on the shelf, but in the end it proves to be a satisfying and thought provoking read. If you want to see the literary envelope pushed, I definitely recommend it.

Publisher: Now Or Never Publishing

ISBN: 0-9739558-0-5

Pages: 360

Price: \$21.95

Available at: www.nonpublishing.com

Reviewer: Gregg Haugland, Allbooks Reviews.

