



The Prodigal

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Martin is twenty-one, an age not worth lying about. He's been happily doing nothing, claiming to be a professional online Poker player. But now, he's facing a life away from the corrupting influence of overwhelming privilege.

In lean, distinct prose, punctuated with unpredictable typography, Alexander J. Allison's first novel is a humorous, sharp and fresh look at the things that make living better than dying. Or not, whatever.

The Prodigal Details

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Author : Alexander J. Allison

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From Reader Review The Prodigal for online ebook

Michael Seidlinger says

This book achieves a new level of sincerity. Martin, the main character, is every bit an unlovable asshole as he is the exact image of who we all are when egotistical, overly prideful, and/or being an asshole ourselves.

Allison's tangential pontifications add weight to the pseudo coming-of-age narrative.

Here's a humorous and notable passage, written in the form of a list of questions, considerations:

"At this moment, the most important questions in life seem to be:

- 1) Do you wipe sitting down or standing up?
- 2) Do fires actually happen? Has anyone actually seen a fire?
- 3) How many different toilets will I use in a lifetime?
- 4) How many times do I tie my shoelaces in a year?
- 5) Are you supposed to use an equals sign or a semicolon when you create a Facebook emoticon?
- 6) How many Pringles do you have to eat before you get sick of eating Pringles?
- 7) Does anybody actually use bookmarks?
- 8) Does anybody actually click on pop-ups?
- 9) Does anybody actually pay for porn?
- 10) Why would you create a virus?
- 11) Who creates computer viruses?
- 12) Am I immortal?
- 13) Does anyone still use MSN Messenger?"

The book also makes me want to learn how to follow poker because, at the moment, I don't completely get it. I **want** to get it but I am currently clueless.

Kelly says

I was lucky enough to win a copy of this from goodreads first reads and was not disappointed. The Prodigal tells the story of Martin a 21 year old born with money that doesn't care about anything or anyone struggling to become a adult. Well worth a read.

Hannah says

Hard to say anything else positive that has not yet been said in other reviews. It was hard to believe someone my age (or younger?) wrote this book. The prose, characters, and storyline are incredible & engaging. Though Martin may be kind of a 'douchebag' I still kinda-sorta-maybe have a mild-to-moderate crush on him. This book was very funny but also surprisingly 'deep' at moments. I do not even know how to play poker & still absolutely loved this book. Because it isn't really about poker. Because Alexander J. Allison is the bees' knees.

Tobias says

A review is forthcoming.

Helen says

The Prodigal is a very funny, highly engaging novel following Martin's hapless struggle with trying to become an adult, despite apparently having all the privileges you'd think he'd need to catapult him into success. It's also very contemporary in both its themes and style - I love what the author does with the typesetting and wordplay. A must read.

Jay says

Highly recommended fiction for online poker players, this book is a quick read and hilarious. A wealthy degenerate kid suffering from existential despair loses himself in SNGs and his own dark psyche.

David says

The prose style in this one reminds me of Tao Lin, but it's definitely doing it's own thing. Martin definitely wants something, but that something is elusive and may not exist. That need is definitely differentiating, though. It, and Martin himself, is uncomfortably comfortable. It's much more moving than it seems should be possible from the text. I also found the typography manipulation effective and interesting.

Chris says

:) I like Allison's style - the writing is really interesting.

Giles says

Really enjoyed reading this. Prose seemed really 'efficient' and 'tight'
Reminded me of 'action, figure' in some sense. Not sure what that 'sense' is exactly.
Made me realise there is a whole world of poker that I know absolutely nothing about. Don't think I really missed out because of that but I'd like to hear what someone who plays poker thinks of it.
There're a lot of moments that made me laugh out loud. But also some quite dark moments. Not bad.
A++

JustHeatherH says

I was lucky enough to get this book for free through the goodreads first reads giveaways. Upon first glance of the book's cover art, witty plot and current reviews I was definitely interested in reading this book. I liked the idea of reading a funny book about a dysfunctional 21 year old boy who seems to be in the midst of a quarter-life crisis. When I received the book in the mail I was pretty excited. I also noticed how quick read the book would be. At only 191 pages long with it's unique typography choices, I REALLY wanted to like this book.

I have to admit that since this was my first giveaway book I have received, I felt a little nervous and uncomfortable about what to rate this book. I decided to be totally honest and so, unfortunately, as per the goodreads ratings, I had to give this book 2 stars. I didn't not like it, but I didn't particularly like it either. It was simply "just OK", in my opinion.

The book is about recent college grad, Martin. Martin comes from a privileged family and privileged life. Not necessarily the most loving family but money has never been an issue and he has anything he needs to succeed at his finger tips and yet, Martin is absolutely miserable. He is addicted to playing online poker and doesn't seem to care much whether or not he wins or loses; he doesn't care about money (he's never had to) he only cares about playing. It is only when his parents finally confront him about their bank statements that he is forced to take a good look at himself and realize that he has been spending money that was never really his.

There is nothing likable about the main character, Martin, or his friends. The book is funny, at times, but I often found myself wanting to scream at Martin for being such a pointless, self indulgent, jerk. I waited for some sort of karmic intervention or redemption for Martin but I feel as though it never really came. I felt as though I was reading 191 pages from the journal of an obnoxious, forever dissatisfied, unappreciative, spoiled and manipulative 21 year old boy. His parents were equally frustrating. Martin's cries for help go basically ignored and when he is put in therapy he spends his time "acting" through each appointment. His parents love with money and enable Martin's embarrassing behavior throughout the entire book.

In addition to my inability to relate to Martin, the in-depth poker discussions and terms used through-out the book were lost on me. I don't play poker nor do I understand how the game is played, so whenever the game was discussed in detail, I didn't understand much. The book was not for me. I appreciated the humor and unique qualities that the book offered and it was a very quick read, but, the things I didn't like and/or couldn't relate to outweighed the things I did like. For me, 'The Prodigal', I'm bummed to say, was not for me.

Sam Moss says

Allison is obviously a talented writer but The Prodigal is fairly rough around the edges. The plot is wandering, but not in a disagreeable way. There is this intermittent playing with fonts and layout that seems fairly superfluous. Allison seems to be very influenced by Tao Lin, which is not in itself an issue, but he does show it readily which comes off poorly.
