



The Fifth Profession

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From the bestselling author of First Blood comes a spectacular thriller, in which a former Navy SEAL and a Japanese samurai master are bound together in a terrifying past that never happened.

The Fifth Profession Details

Date : Published April 1st 1991 by Grand Central Publishing (first published 1990)

ISBN : 9780446360876

Author : David Morrell

Format : Paperback 498 pages

Genre : Thriller, Fiction, Mystery, Action

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From Reader Review The Fifth Profession for online ebook

Jack says

... a fairly light read, but a page-turner. The first half is a somewhat conventional action thriller, with a touch of James Bond gadgetry and world-hopping. The second-half, however, the novel becomes more sinister, turning into a discussion on the nature of memory while also expanding the scope into some commentary on Japan-US relations.

The book is written in the late 80's, early 90's when America was captivated by the Japanese resurgence. This is around the same time as the original "Blade Runner" film, which contains a number of Japanese references, and Michael Crichton's "Rising Sun". Japan is central to the "The Fifth Profession", focusing on the samurai and cultural history. I personally won't be able to vouch for the novel's accuracy in Japanese culture, though the novel approaches Japan with some respect and research. Probably the first time that I have heard of the deity "Amaterasu" or the pinball variant "pachinko" that is apparently popular in Japan.

The writing, I have to say, won't win any awards. While adequate for revealing Savage's inner thoughts and the plot, the writing could have used more polish. The themes, however, are consistent with the summary of the 47 ronin and Birhtnoth's comitatus that serves as the introduction to the novel: loyalty, brotherhood, honor, and a bit of chivalry.

The book won't rank as a classic, but as a lighter read, it does very well.

Jessica McReaderpants says

This book started out great, mystery intrigue spying and bodyguard-ing. Then it took a left turn out of interesting into crazy town. Spoiler Alert* Their brains were messed with. So it goes on and on and on Matrix style with is this a dream is this a real memory or is this fabricated. Chapter after chapter as they are chased and chase people. Oh and then all of a sudden the woman who was saved is suddenly and inexplicably in love with our protagonist. Seriously there is hardly any meaningful conversation or emotional exchange and then it is all "I love you" and "I would follow you into hell" it would be way more believable and I would have not sprained my verisimilitude had she just wanted a quickie in the sack. But back to the is it real is it not problem. The author lost me about 3/4th of the way though the book. Perhaps I was not paying attention and speed reading because "oh no is this a dream or not let's chase and be chased" was happening. (never I) but I have no idea WHY the main character and his (Again suddenly and inexplicably BEST-EST friend in the world) had to have the same memory, that happens to happen later in real life? Really? So if any of you careful readers could drop me a line to explain it to me that would be great, because I am sure as heck not going to re-read this.

Tracy St Claire says

This might be the worst book I have ever read. It does have some entertainment value in being the WORST book I have ever read, but not even enough to gain it a half star.

Morrell wrote this nearly 30 years ago, inventing computer and medical capabilities that do not exist now, yet alone then. Enter characters and an author obsessed with self disembowelment -- it is mentioned no fewer than seven times -- in the service of some billionaire. But that isn't even the stupid story.

It is a story of two people who remember something that did not happen and try to find out what did. And the story stops without saying what did (I was listening on audio) and I was good with that. But the lengthy epilogue took the silly stupid to absolute kindergarten one-upmanship ridiculous putting the final nail in the coffin of this loser.

Arun Divakar says

The book starts off like an action flick from the 80's which stars two heroes and a heroine oozes sexuality. Since one of them is a Caucasian and the other a Japanese, I am going to assume for Hollywood's sake that we will put in Mel Gibson and Chow Yun Fat as the protagonists. The movie trailers tell us that one of them is a Navy SEAL and the other is trained in the Samurai arts. They are executive protectors of the first order and both get sent on a mission to Greece. You settle in with popcorn to watch the movie and then naturally the screen goes wild with hair raising chases, fist fights, shootouts and general mayhem for the first fifteen minutes. The popcorn bucket starts emptying quickly when you suddenly notice a change in the tone and dialog. Somewhere along, the director (let's assume it was good old John Woo) seems to undergo a metamorphosis into an entirely different entity (assume the Farrelly Brothers) and wonder of wonders, Mel Gibson and Chow Yun-Fat also transform into Jim Carrey and Jeff Daniels. Before you know it, you are in Dumb & Dumber territory !

My dear fellow readers, I cannot sum up this book in any other way. For a very exciting first 75 pages, this book gets into one of the most unintentionally hilarious premises I have come across in recent times. Without divulging anything of the plot, I can say that the climax of this book would have been absurd even if it were placed in a Looney Tunes cartoon. Doing a detailed review on this story will be flogging a dead horse and which I have no intention of doing. I do not know if Morrell cashed in on the popularity of First Blood to come up with something like this but honestly what a waste of paper !

'nuff said !

Chris says

It's been a long time since I've read any David Morrell and I had forgotten what a web of a story he can create. High octane page turning read!! By the time I got to the last few chapters I was just as eager as the protagonists to find out why and how the inexplicable happened. I always enjoy learning about other cultures and this book surprisingly took me there also through one of the MCs -Akira and part of the journey to unraveling a mystery is set in Japan. Savage & Akira are two executive protectors who find themselves protecting the same client, but fail miserably. Deaths occur...or so they think. Fast forward 6 mos and Savage is on a new assignment, after a long rehabilitation from injuries, and in extracting a woman from a horrible situation seems to think he sees Akira as part of the pursuit team. But it couldn't be, could it? He saw Akira die, beheaded no less. Can say much more as it would spoil the reader's involvement in this confusing at times but thoroughly immersing thrill ride.

Dipanjan says

This is the 2nd time I read this book. The first time was way back when I was in college. All I remembered was that I had found the book to be awesome then. Well after hundreds of thrillers later, thousands of life experiences later, a few paradigm shifts in my personal outlook towards life, I enjoyed the book but not THAT much. What I had once labelled as awesome has now fallen back into being a good "One Time Read" page turner.

The plot is a bit far-fetched. It starts off in a furious and lucid pace but fails to elevate the momentum somewhere down the line. The pace starts halting, the narrative becomes repetitive. However, what works all the way is the relationship between 2 people from the same dangerous profession but with completely contrasting cultural outlook. Add a little romance in the mix in the form of a beautiful woman with a courageous heart and you have good concoction going.

I must mention that this is the work of a master story teller. What has been attempted in "The Fifth Profession" is a unique mix between espionage and executive protection. Now, considering the fact that Honour plays a pivotal role in this story, you can only imagine how tricky perspectives become since Honour in Espionage and Honour in Executive Protection are two whole different worlds.

If you haven't read this book, I think you should.

Andy Connell says

Started off good, got kinda annoying, got annoying, got dumb, got retarded, got jesus fucking christ./

Ari says

I remember I liked Morrell's novels "The Fraternity of the Stone" and "The League of Night and Fog" quite a lot when I was quite a lot younger. Therefore I bought this book from a second hand book store at the Helsinki Book Fair.

I had expectations. And unfortunately they were not met. The novel was a disappointment. The further I read the more unsatisfied I was and in the end my evaluation was nearly "rubbish". Well written rubbish but anyway rubbish.

Totally unbelievable plot, and I don't mean the cliché superhero type of main character but the story itself. Science fiction movie stuff disguised as a crime novel (sort of). Felt like Morrell had run out of ideas and taken "a trip" with extra visions. A teenager might like this, for an adult this was far too thick. And the romantic part was definitely for teenagers. Who may not recognize the obvious Grace Kelly reference including To Catch a Thief. Too far back for modern adolescents.

The novel was longish just to be accepted as light entertainment without much sense. Morrell has performed better before.

Viides tehtävä
Gummerus 1991

James Adams says

or a moral, but it needs to be bloody, and it needs to be fun. This book is both of those things, and in spades. It is also deeply, and unintentionally, silly.

It doesn't seem that way, at first. There's an intro about the importance and glorious history of professional protectors, in both Eastern and Western cultures. Then we get our hero, Savage, starting a new rescue assignment. Then we get a flashback, which starts very well...

And ends with a moment so OTT it becomes splat-stick.

Back to the present, where the impossible sends Savage, his principal, Rachel, and their new(ish) friend, a modern-day samurai, on a wild goose chase across the globe. There are sober discussions about honor, info-dumps about contemporary geopolitics, an unconvincing romance...

And a final act so bonkers it makes the initial flashback seem quite tame.

There's decapitation, off-the-walls Kennedy conspiracy theories, false memories, and psycho-surgery, all of which are less ridiculous than the romantic plot.

And I dug it.

Look, this is an early-90's action thriller, to the point that T2-era Michael Biehn would have been perfectly cast as Savage in a movie version. It takes itself a bit too seriously at times, but that's small beer. Not one of Morrell's finest hours, it's fun, but you won't respect it in the morning.

Scott Breslove says

A good action story throughout, combined with a trippy mindfuck, and completed with a lackluster ending. I really enjoy Morrell's work, and did for 95% of this one, but the ending kinda fell flat and ruined this one a bit for me. Still a good book all in all, but the difference between 3 and 4 Stars.

Cindy Tomamichel says

An interesting tangle of plot and character as Morrell flashes between past, present and false memories. A great fast paced read, possibly slightly less violent than some of his other books.

it'chy says

p450: savage shook his head fiercely, as if strong enough denial would erase the carnage around him, would made the corpses disappear.

my second morrell;
it reads like ludlum's bourne crossed with the wachowskis' the matrix;
well, maybe minus the transgender part

Guido Henkel says

What a missed opportunity. Morrell is probably one of the sloppiest bestselling writers around. While the story could have been cool, the book is bogged down by his repetitive writing style - what's up with those karate-callused hands in every second paragraph and Morrell's obsession with people tasting bile on a constant basis - to name only a few.

On top of that he forgets and drops an entire major plot line halfway through the novel and offers up a finale that makes neither sense nor does it offer any satisfaction. The story drags in too many places and the moralistic finger comes up a few times too many throughout this ill-conceived lesson in Japanese history.

Overall this is a pretty mediocre book that I would not recommend to people.

Davio Smitti says

Savage and Akira, "protectors," aka bodyguards, aka "The Fifth Profession," are severely injured at a meeting...but when they compare notes, each saw the other killed—in fact, beheaded, right after their client was killed. Problem: all are still alive. False memories via surg procedure. Sidebar of love story with Rachel. Just too many wild improbabilities for me, leaps of illogic...glad when I was done that it was over.

Mason says

While many of the elements of fiction I loved were in place, interesting protagonists, intriguing settings, brain-bending true-to-life science (neuroscience), spies, assassins, questionable memories, martial arts, and moving action, I felt the end lacked... something. It didn't feel like the most powerful ending that Morrell could have written. On the whole, I liked the book and will lend it out to my friends. I learned a lot, though, about Executive Protectors, tradecraft, Japan, and Japanese Culture. Morrell presented the Japanese culture in a way that a westerner can understand it more thoroughly than one would think. But, as is stated in the book, people of the western mind are not *tribal* enough to truly, completely, understand the Japanese mindset. And, to a degree, Morrell seems to be admitting that he too only has peripheral understanding of the mindset himself. But, as all good authors, he shows you what he does understand and uses that as any adroit magician will do to hide what he does not understand.

On the whole I did like it and would recommend it.
