



Power in the Blood

Michael Lister

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In a mystery book market saturated with stories of gruesome serial killers devoid of morality and shady investigators whose questionable tactics make them difficult heroes, *Power in the Blood* by Michael Lister offers a more spiritual view of social ills and acknowledges that, behind every despicable act, there is always room for forgiveness and redemption.

In this debut novel Lister, a prison chaplain, introduces John Jordan, chaplain of a prison in the Florida Panhandle, who witnesses the bloody death of Potter Correctional Institution inmate Ike Johnson. Jordan discovers that in the closed society of captives and captors no action goes unseen, and no one takes kindly to a cop in a collar. He soon finds his reputation, his career, and even his life are at stake.

"While writing *Power in the Blood*, I attempted to present Chaplain Jordan as a person who is in many ways quite ordinary despite being a man of the cloth. Like everyone else, Jordan attempts to find romance, deals with the demands of work on a daily basis, and struggles with his faith," said Michael Lister. "Despite the extraordinary violence that he must face and the misdeeds of fallen souls he endures, Jordan manages to pursue the investigation with honesty and grace. I think that makes him an unusual hero in today's mystery market." By offering up the sacred as well as the profane, *Power in the Blood* is sure to please both mystery readers and general fiction enthusiasts.

Michael Lister was a chaplain with the Florida Department of Corrections from 1993 to 2000. During his tenure at Gulf Correctional, Lister earned these words of praise from his warden, "Chaplain Lister's unprejudiced concern for the welfare of staff as well as inmates has brought a spiritual soothing to both populations at this institution. He is an exceptionally gifted teacher, truly an angel, a shepherd to all."

Power in the Blood Details

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Author : Michael Lister

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From Reader Review Power in the Blood for online ebook

Tulay says

Good story.

Prison Chaplain investigating the murder of one prisoner. This takes many twists and turns and more killings. From VCR tapes and typewriters, I guess it was written sometime in 1990. Just opened three years ago this correctional institution full of AIDs, drugs, gays and transsexuals with corrupt guards running the prison. Parts was confusing and hard to read.

Becky says

I feel bad rating this 1 star, I usually save that for books I truly hate, but this book was not good enough for a 2 star. It started off OK and I thought it would be a decent mystery/thriller. I read it because Michael Connelly, whose books I love, gave kudos to this book. Mid way through I found myself going "what?" and "what just happened?", "seriously?" I found things extremely unrealistic, characters coming out of nowhere, convenient characters just showing up, and every time a female character being introduced she was "beautiful" with such and such color burning eyes. (with the exception of one). Characters seemed to be thrown into the story haphazardly. Jacob is a minister, which is a fun twist to crime solver, but a couple times the book did get a little preachy, though I didn't find religion to be too much in the book. I found it odd that the love of Jacob's life is forbidden because she is married, but her husband never made an appearance in the book- including when she was in the hospital. People seemed to be normal one second and suddenly over the top insane the next. I figured out the who-done-it about 1/2 way through, but it took a long time and some elementary discussions to get there and explain it to the reader. I had downloaded several of these books on Kindle, and unfortunately, this will be the last one I read. Oh, and for those who can't stand poor editing, this is not the book for you. By the time I was tired of the story, there began to be typos and missing words- just another reason I can't give it 2 stars.

Jen says

John Jordan is a former cop and the present Potter Correctional Institute chaplain who witnesses first hand the gruesome death of inmate Ike Johnson. When the superintendent asks Jordan to help investigate the death, Jordan discovers not only a network of crime and corruption taking place within the walls of PCI, but also the crime and corruption that is spilling out in the county. With the assistance of his friends Merrill and Anna, Jordan sets out to uncover the truth behind it all.

POWER IN THE BLOOD is Michael Lister's first John Jordan mystery, and I can say without reserve that I am looking forward to checking out the next two books in the series. John Jordan is a unique protagonist; definitely the first crime-fighting chaplain I've read about! And I love Jordan because he's real: he isn't perfect, he makes mistakes, he has "issues", and there are many complex layers to this character. The inmates like Jordan and it's believable. I would like J.J. if I knew him, too. As is common place with me, I took a special shine to Jordan's good friend Merrill - Merrill Monroe. His intelligent, sarcastic humor provides a great deal of comic relief throughout the novel. Lister also does a very nice job with the character of Anna.

Just anyone wouldn't be working in a high security correctional facility, especially not just any woman. Anna's personality is believable for the job she holds. She's spunky and self-assured. Anna's personality is essential for the believability of the plot as well. Overall, a very well developed female character.

I especially enjoyed Lister's creative use of both biblical and literary allusions. They are spread throughout the books and are some of the most effective use of this device I've experienced in some time.

The plot of *POWER IN THE BLOOD* is tight. There isn't a lot of unnecessary, outside detail to muck up the storyline. Jordan has some past issues that Lister brings out seamlessly. They don't detract from the present, but instead allow the reader a better understanding of Jordan. And Lister is great at slowly feeding the reader facts as the investigation progresses. The novel is told in first person, and the reader receives clues exactly the same way that the narrator receives them.

The only negative I would present about *Power in the Blood* were a couple of occasions where I rolled my eyes thinking Lister got a little hokey. Maybe others might view these scenes differently, but I thought they were conspicuously sappy. The book is not sappy and the couple of spots seemed to stand out to me as not fitting in with the tone of the novel. But that is far from enough for me to not recommend this novel.

Pen says

Pretty good read but desperately needs an editor. "Roles of fat" and "we had switched rolls" were amongst my favourites. Several times the exact same paragraph was repeated a page or two later. Factual errors such as having an AIDS test hours after having been exposed to AIDS infected blood.

I have another in this series and I'm hoping the author found an editor. The story was interesting enough to keep me reading through the errors but if the next book is the same, it will be the last. *fingers crossed* Appreciated the faith elements in the book, particular the amazingness of grace and the compassion for "damaged" people. I did find the chaplain a little overly hormonal for a middle aged man of the cloth.

Pam says

This novel has a different setting than most books in this genre: a correctional facility in the Panhandle of Florida and the main character is a chaplain there. The main character is likeable and has flaws that he recognizes.

There is a lot of violence in the novel. There are some twists to the story, but most of it was straight forward. The novel does reflect that segregation and prejudice still exists in our world today. It was worth the read as it made me think about the world we live in today.

David Huelsmann says

I have mixed feelings about this book. There was good character development but some poor editing. John the prison Chaplain was asked to investigate a murder that occurred in the prison. This is an unlikely scenario at best. There were a lot of twists and turns and John didn't share his findings with the superintendent nor with the chief investigator for the prison system - John's former father-in-law. Several instances of relatives

to various players popping unexpectedly during John's investigation.

Petra says

Good plot and a little different with the setting being a prison in Florida and the main character an ex-detective turned prison chaplain. I wasn't sure whether I would enjoy this because of the religious aspect, but it wasn't preachy at all. There were a lot of characters making this a little confusing at times, but I liked the protagonist and enjoyed the plot, so I would certainly try the next book in this series.

The audio production didn't seem very professional. Background noise and several sentences that were repeated. The narrator was ok, just a straightforward, no-frills reading.

Rebekah Tooley says

I'm sorry to say I didn't get past the 7th chapter before I encountered several swear words. So I will not be continuing this book sadly.

Craig Pittman says

A flawed but fascinating first novel. Former Florida prison chaplain Michael Lister has created a believable detective hero, Florida prison chaplain Jon "JJ" Jordan, a divorced man and recovering alcoholic who before his call to the ministry was a cop from a family of cops. Jordan has disappointed nearly everyone in his life but now at last feels like he has found his true calling, ministering to the men behind bars at Potter Correctional Institution in Pottersville in the Florida Panhandle. But then he witnesses what at first appears to be an escape attempt gone wrong, later exposed as a murder, and the superintendent of his institution asks him to poke around and find out what happened.

Lister has set up an intriguing mystery, and put it in a revolutionary setting. I've read a lot of thrillers and can't ever recall one where the murder occurred inside a prison and the suspects were all inmates or prison staff. He clearly knows his way around the institution, too, painting believable scenes in the chapel, the infirmary, the isolation ward and out on the exercise yard.

His writing can sometimes come across as stilted, though, and he lets Jordan give a few speeches that go on far too long (we even get his entire sermon from a funeral!), trying the reader's patience. He commits some other common sins among first-time novelists, too. Every single woman Jordan encounters has to be drop-dead gorgeous, which seems highly unlikely to occur both among prison staffers and small Florida towns. He tends to write the dialogue of the black inmates in a dialect that sounds like phony Ebonics. There are some scenes where he's supposed to be reporting to his superintendent in which he never tells him what he's found out, which seems unlikely to occur in real life. And he messes around with that old staple, the threatening letters sent to the hero, tracking down the sender without really explaining why that person would do such a thing.

But those are problems he can work out with practice, and I look forward to reading the next several books in his series in hopes they improve in quality, because this one's a really good start.

Lyle Nicholson says

This book started off well, then all of sudden I was going "what happened to the plot?" He started throwing in characters that he didn't develop. There's an ex-brother-in-law, that he has tension with, then somehow, they're getting along. There's a woman he's infatuated with that disappears and then the main antagonist is hardly developed. I see that Lister has more books, and this was a revision.

I'm wondering if he shouldn't have rewritten this book completely? His writing is good, his descriptions and scenes are excellent, however, the character details...kind of a non-starter.

Rowena Hoseason says

An enjoyable read with a solid murder-mystery at its core, but no hook strong enough to tempt me into reading more in the series. The idea of having a prison chaplain as an investigator is a neat theme, and one I enjoyed, but it seems to rely on too many contrivances to be truly credible.

The number of conflicts in the protagonist's personal life (his ex-wife, his alcoholism, his angry ex-father-in-law, his drunkard dying mother, his sibling rivalry) plus the professional coincidences and antagonism (how convenient: His dad's the local sheriff! How inconvenient: the angry F-i-L works in the same prison!) just plain wore me out.

Having said that, the writing is clean and accessible and the storyline - when you can get to it - is well-plotted. Mind you, I couldn't believe the final murder could possibly happen given events earlier in the book.

7/10

Sheila Myers says

I have mixed feelings about this book. I did rate it five stars because the author incorporated all of the important elements needed to write a novel such as good plot and character development. Things I didn't like were some of the theology, making all the corrections officers seem like rednecks seems a little unbelievable (although admittedly I don't know much about prison life), and that some parts of the story should've probably been told earlier in the story.

L.Magne says

Writer needs an editor

Every woman in this book is beautiful or more beautiful. In a one-horse town, and in a penitentiary. Horny chaplain, super horny writer. Who badly needs an editor to cut down on the lengthy inappropriate metaphors.

And extensive descriptions of alcoholism and how it destroys lives. The chaplain is in recovery, the ex-father in law is still in it, etc. Makes for much cumbersome reading. Show, don't tell. A lot of telling, not so much showing.

Well, I got this book for free, and I got what I paid for.

Dave says

I read this book as part of a 5-book package purchased at deep discount. I liked it enough to keep reading more of the books in the series, although I would rate it at 3.5 stars (not 4) if that option had been available! I liked the protagonist, especially that he is not portrayed as a physical superman who can whip anyone who crosses his path. He does seem to be morally admirable, while admitting that he is weak and sometimes thinks 'unclean' thoughts. I am not religious personally, so I normally shy away from stories with a "Christian" element to them. It was not a problem with this book, in fact the religious elements added to the plot and made it more interesting. While the story was interesting, I did not like the way everything was explained and tidied up in the last chapter. I feel like the author was cheating the reader to hold back information until he needed it to make all the pieces of the puzzle fit neatly in place. I will make allowances because I understand this was Lister's first novel.

Michael says

Michael Lister is a chaplain with the Florida Dept. of Corrections. He spins a didquieting story about corruption, sexual activity, drug dealing and violence inside a Florida prison.

John Jordan was a former cop who had a calling to the ministry. He's assigned as chaplain at Porter Correctional facility.

In the opening scene, Jordan witnesses a prisoner being killed. It appears that the prisoner was hiding in a garbage bag, attempting to escape.

Superintendent Edward Stone considers Jordan's law background and good relationship with the prisoners and orders him to help in the investigation along with Tom Daniels, the IG. Daniels is an arrogant and condescending official who displays dislike for Jordan and his meddling.

Chaplain Jordan treats the prisoners fairly and is able to get information about one prison official who works on the late shift. This man sees the prison as his own domain and treats prisoners and their wives with contempt.

While the investigation is under way, we learn of the personal side of the minister as he discusses his alcoholic past and his failed marriage. He seems to have put this behind him as he begins dating a young woman from town.

When complications arise and Jordan is falsely accused of certain crimes, the story becomes a testament to his faith. As in the Biblical story of Job, the pain and suffering that this good man endures, almost makes him despair, but his inner strength and faith, saves him.

This is a story of a man overcoming his past and attempting to improve the life of others It deserves a wide audience. The author does a good job of using his background in corrections to create a realistic and enjoyable story.
