



The Devil and Miss Prym: A Novel of Temptation (P.S.)

By Paulo Coelho

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A stranger arrives at the remote village of Viscos, carrying with him a backpack containing a notebook and eleven gold bars. He comes searching for the answer to a question that torments him: Are human beings, in essence, good or evil? In welcoming the mysterious foreigner, the whole village becomes an accomplice to his sophisticated plot, which will forever mark their lives.

A novel of temptation by the internationally bestselling author Paulo Coelho, *The Devil and Miss Prym* is a thought-provoking parable of a community devoured by greed, cowardice, and fear—as it struggles with the choice between good and evil.

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The Devil and Miss Prym: A Novel of Temptation (P.S.) By Paulo Coelho Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

New to the U.S. but first published in Europe in 1992, Coelho's latest (following the bestselling *The Zahir*) is an old school parable of good and evil. When a stranger enters the isolated mountain town of Viscos with the devil literally by his side, the widow Berta knows (because her deceased husband, with whom she communicates daily, tells her) that a battle for the town's souls has begun. The stranger, a former arms dealer, calls himself Carlos and proposes a wager to the town: if someone turns up murdered within a week, he'll give the town enough gold to make everyone wealthy. Carlos ensures people believe him by choosing the town bartender, the orphan Chantal Prym, as his instrument: he shows her where the gold is, confides that his wife and children have been executed by kidnapper terrorists (remember: 1992), and that he is hoping his belief that people are basically evil will be vindicated. Chantal would like nothing better than to disappear with the gold herself and thus faces her own dilemmas. Add in corrupt townspeople (including a priest), sometimes biting social commentary and, distastefully, a very heavily stereotyped recurring town legend about an Arab named Ahab, and you've got quite a little Garden of Eden potboiler. But the unsatisfying ending lets everyone off the hook and leaves questions hanging like ripe apples. (*July 3*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Internationally acclaimed author and contemporary fabulist Coelho concludes his excellent *And on the Seventh Day* trilogy with another provocative morality tale centered on a "week in the life of ordinary people, all of whom find themselves suddenly confronted by love, death, and power." As in *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* (1996) and *Veronika Decides to Die* (2001), the characters who populate the author's fictional village, a moribund community struggling to maintain its ever-elusive spiritual identity, are immediately thrust into the center of the timeless conflict between right and wrong when a stranger bearing 11 bars of gold and accompanied by the devil arrives in Viscos prepared to challenge the citizens of the town with an intriguing moral dilemma. Will the townsfolk succumb to temptation, confirming that man is inherently evil; or will goodness triumph over evil, proving that every human being has the capacity to make his own choices and decide his or her own destiny? These and other philosophical questions are posed by Coelho in the same mesmerizing, lyrical style he employed in *The Alchemist* (1993). A natural choice for book clubs and discussion groups. *Margaret Flanagan*

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Review

"Only someone Jesuit-trained could bring to Scripture the kind of coolly passionate imagination on display in Coelho's latest novel."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marie Daugherty:

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