

Secrets

By Frederick Ramsay

Warning- the back of the book description doesn't do justice to the story within. An up and coming young star of the Philadelphia diocese was on his way to being a bishop when he was maligned and cast out of the assistant rectorship at his prestigious mainline church. The Reverend Doctor Randolph Blake Fisher, Jr., now the Vicar of the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Episcopal Church, is still in a pickle. One of the parishioners in the hidebound Appalachian mission is using a gun instead of prayer to ease their soul. The main characters in this story: the priest, the sheriff and the church secretary; are well drawn and connected to the story. The secondary characters are less so, I never could keep parishioners Rose, Grace and Minnie separated and the sheriff's deputies were extraneous to this story; but even these brief personal glimpses may have importance to the overall series.

Mr. Ramsay executes a clever turn of phrase and creates intelligent, insightful dialogue. The sheriff and the priest are both personable guys with the ability to express themselves philosophically in language that is neither pedantic or preachy. You may have to do a little looking within when you find out why:

Fat men in Speedos are a symbol of our societal decay;
In order to live, a church must be defined in terms of
 the people, not as a building, and
Donut holes are problematic.

I enjoyed this story. Even though I felt that a few more threads would have tied the package up more firmly, *Secrets* gave me what I look forward to in a mystery. I didn't know who did it until the last telephone call was made, and I kept turning the pages the entire time.

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