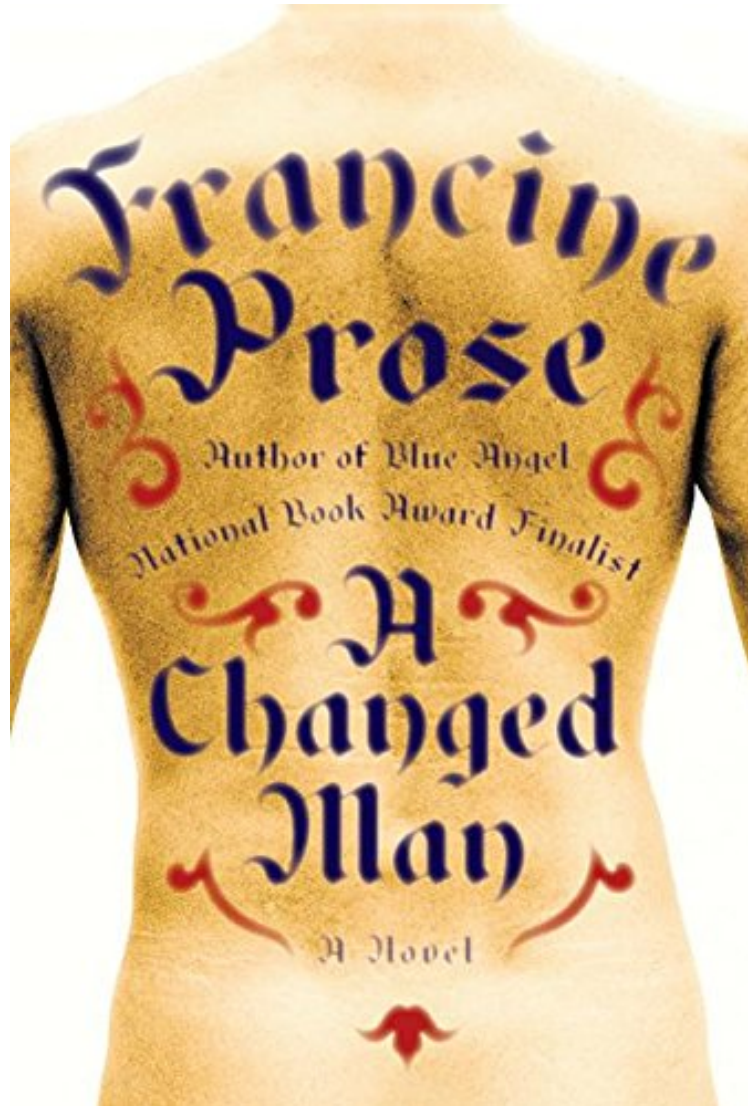


[Library ebook] A Changed Man: A Novel

A Changed Man: A Novel

Francine Prose

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Francine Prose : A Changed Man: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Changed Man: A Novel:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It took awhile for the import of this book to ...By PrimeFan_AIIt took awhile for the import of this book to sink in. I find it especially relevant in the current day and age (mid-2017). It is true that there's a certain style of speaking by one of the characters that was a hurdle for me; getting over it and reading the full book has reaped endless rewards.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Trying to emulate Kafka's "The Metamorphosis"By trainreader"A Changed Man" is the sixth Francine Prose novel I've read, and although I

obviously like the author alot (otherwise, why read six of her books?), I can't say that this was one of my favorites. The "point" of the book seems to be what was drummed into us students in my tenth grade English class after reading Kafka's "The Metamorphosis": people have capacity for change (or redemption), but perhaps it's the ones surrounded and/or touched by the main character (who has undergone the most obvious or visible transformation), who have changed even more profoundly. Here, our main character (Vincent), while not changing as dramatically as Samsa did in "The Metamorphosis", converts from a wayward neo-nazi to someone who works for an Eli Weisel type Holocaust survivor (Meyer Maslow); although the author deliberately (I think) keeps us guessing about Vincent's true motivations most of the way. With Meyer's encouragement, Vincent is taken in by his assistant, Bonnie Kalen, a divorced mom of two boys (stereotypically plain looking and apprehensive but ready to blossom into -- well, you know the drill) who develops feelings towards Vincent, made stranger by the fact that her first husband was perfect by all superficial appearances -- a handsome Jewish doctor, but in reality unfaithful and self-centered. Another prominent character, the pot-smoking fearful Danny (Bonnie's 16 year old son) at first understandably distrusts his new housemate, but guess what? Danny changes (metamorphosizes) too due to Vincent's influence! There are some very good things about "A Changed Man." First, as any Francine Prose fan knows, she's a superb writer who, while sometimes off-the-mark in her observations, can also be remarkably astute. I particularly found exceptional her portrayal of the sorrow that divorce can cause a family, especially the children. Second, the potential hypocrisy that often arises when the leader of a charity must self-promote in order to fundraise, is perceptively described. Third, Prose never fails to do her research, whether it be describing the effects of an allergic reaction to peanuts, or the tattoos of a neo-nazi. However, to be frank, I found the story, as a whole, unconvincing and a bit boring, and hope that Francine Prose's next novel is better. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. very funny at times By liteheartedsomewhat interesting story...very funny at times.

On an unseasonably warm spring afternoon, a young neo-Nazi named Vincent Nolan walks into the Manhattan office of World Brotherhood Watch, a human rights foundation headed by a charismatic Holocaust survivor, Meyer Maslow. Vincent announces that he wants to make a radical change in his life. But what is Maslow to make of this rough-looking stranger who claims to have read Maslow's books, who has Waffen-SS tattoos under his shirtsleeves, and who says that his mission is to save guys like him from becoming guys like him? As he gradually turns into the sort of person who might actually be able to do that, Vincent also transforms those around him: Maslow, who fears that heroism has become a desk job; Bonnie Kalen, the foundation's fund-raiser, a divorced single mother and a devoted believer in Maslow's crusade against intolerance and injustice; and Bonnie's teenage son, Danny, whose take on the world around him is at once openhearted, sharp-eyed, and as fundamentally decent as his mother's. Masterfully plotted, darkly comic, *A Changed Man* illuminates the everyday transactions in our lives, exposing what remains invisible in plain sight in our drug-addled and media-driven culture. Remarkable for the author's tender sympathy for her characters, *A Changed Man* poses the essential questions: What constitutes a life worth living? Is it possible to change? What does it mean to be a moral human being? The fearless intelligence, wit, and humanity that inform this novel make it Francine Prose's most accomplished yet.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Prose (*Blue Angel*; *The Lives of the Muses*) tests assumptions about class, hatred and the possibility of change in her latest novel, a good-natured satire of liberal pieties, the radical right and the fund-raising world. The "changed man" of the title is Vincent Nolan, a 32-year-old tattooed ex-skinhead who appears one morning in the New York offices of World Brotherhood Watch, a foundation headed by Meyer Maslow, a Holocaust survivor. Vincent declares that he has had a personal conversion (never mind that it was triggered by a heavy dose of Ecstasy) and wants to work with the foundation to "save guys like me from becoming guys like me." Meyer takes Vincent on faith—and convinces Bonnie Kalen, the foundation's fund-raiser, to put Vincent up in the suburban home she shares with her two sons, Max, 12, and Danny, 16. Prose tears into this unusual premise with the piercing wit that has become her trademark. Vincent becomes a media darling of sorts, and everyone wants a piece of him: the liberal donors and the television talk shows; Meyer, a figurehead so celebrated that even his close friends kiss up to him; and maybe even divorced Bonnie, who finds herself drawn to Vincent's charms. In more hostile pursuit of Vincent is his cousin Raymond, a member of the Aryan Resistance Movement, from which Vincent stole a truck, drugs and cash. In these circumstances, can a man truly change? And what is change—not only for Vincent but for the other principals as well? Prose doesn't shy away from exposing the vanities and banalities behind the drive to do good. Fortunately, her characters are sturdy enough to bear the weight of the baggage she piles on them. Her lively skewering of a whole cross-section of society ensures that this tale hits comic high notes even as it probes serious issues. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From *The New Yorker* One sun-spangled afternoon at a rave, Vincent Nolan, a palooka who may be the most hapless neo-Nazi on record (he's thrummed up his politics so that his unsavory cousin, Ray, will let him crash on his couch), has a conversion experience: things go all glowy, he sees the error of his nefarious ways, and, soon afterward, he's ascending to the Manhattan offices of the World Brotherhood Watch, to offer his services to its founder, Meyer Maslow. Clearly, Maslow is based on Elie

Wiesel, though Prose tries to forestall this assumption by giving Wiesel a cameo role elsewhere. Vince is taken home by Maslow's mousy assistant, a harassed single mother, who manages to overlook the Waffen-S.S. tattoo and fall for him, and, at a benefit at the Met Museum, he becomes a poster boy for the P.C. set. As a sendup, the book is quite fun, but too often Prose's writing falls victim to the very earnestness that she satirizes. Copyright © 2005 The New Yorker
From Bookmarks Magazine
Critical opinion varied widely on this latest novel by veteran Prose, who has written 11 novels as well as many nonfiction books. Champions found it filled with biting wit and hilarious episodes pitting the drifter skinhead against the entrenched upper classes, which added up to an entertaining examination of important contemporary issues. Detractors found the plot too static and reliant on caricature, didn't believe in or care about Vincent's transformation, and thought the ending predictable. Reading an excerpt of this novel in your favorite bookstore or online may be the best way to see if the concept and tone of *A Changed Man* carries you away or leaves you cold.
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