



A Prayer for the City

Buzz Bissinger

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In 1990, Buzz Bissinger's **Friday Night Lights** became an acclaimed bestseller and national sensation, igniting immediate debate about the role of high school football in small-town Texas. Now, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist does for big cities what he did for small towns in this epic story of one remarkable politician's efforts to save a dying American City.

Mayor Edward Rendell will do almost anything for Philadelphia. He will clean the bathrooms in City Hall, endure a joint appearance with Mickey Mouse, and personally lobby President Clinton to keep jobs in the city. He is that rare politician who is larger than life in his ambitions, compassion, and flaws--a man wise enough to see the comic absurdity of his job, yet crazy enough to think he can actually revive his declining city.

To succeed, Rendell must negotiate a tough new contract with city workers who are threatening to strike and wreak havoc on the city. He must allay African-American leaders engaged in a zero-sum game of racial politics. He must combat the loss of tens of thousands of jobs that have brought the Workshop of the World to its knees.

As Rendell and his brilliant chief of staff, David Cohen fight these political battles, four citizens of Philadelphia engage in their own personal struggles, each one connected to events at City Hall:

Jim Mangan is a thirty-seven-year-old welder with a wife and six children. Unless the mayor can achieve a miracle, he and thousands of others will lose their jobs at the city's historic Naval Shipyard.

Linda Morrison is a city-employed policy analyst who believes urban life can improve if the mayor embraces unprecedented change. But will Rendell have the courage? Will she be able to sustain her love for the city, or will the pressures of crime and taxes drive her away?

Mike McGovern is a prosecutor whose anger at the urban violence of the city fuels his drive for justice. As he questions the personal cost of what he does, he faces one of his toughest trials, seeking life imprisonment for a teenager charged with murder.

Fifi Mazzucca is an elderly woman from the inner city raising four great-grandchildren while faithfully

visiting her son in prison and hoping she'll live to see the day when he is freed.

At turns heart-wrenching and hilarious, **A Prayer for the City** dramatically illustrates high-pressure politics and the threat of economic decline facing so many cities. No author has ever written with such humanity and insight about a politician in power and the way cities really work.

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