



Heaven's Prey

Janet Sketchley

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A grieving woman is abducted by a serial killer--and it may be the answer to her prayers.

Despite her husband's objections, 40-something Ruth Warner finds healing through prayer for Harry Silver, the serial killer who brutally raped and murdered her niece. When a kidnapping-gone-wrong pegs her as his next victim, Harry claims that by destroying the one person who'd pray for him, he proves God can't--or won't--look after His own. Can Ruth's faith sustain her to the end--whatever the cost?

Heaven's Prey is about a villain's last chance at redemption and a vulnerable woman's obedience to pray for her enemy--not the gentle inspirational read many associate with the Christian genre. The novel was a finalist in the 2014 Word Awards (suspense category).

Heaven's Prey Details

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Author : Janet Sketchley

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From Reader Review Heaven's Prey for online ebook

Mark says

I ran across this author on a Facebook group and thought her books sounded good. I commented, and that comment led to an offer to review a couple of her books. This is the first book in the Redemption Edge Series.

I believe this is the author's first book, and it is a great debut novel. The book was very suspenseful with a great Christian message woven throughout it. Although fictional, it does show how God can work in anything, even the kidnapping at the hand of a cruel rapist and killer.

The book goes back and forth between the present and the past, showing the growing up years and descent into his crimes of murder and rape of the killer, Harry, which breaks up the book a bit instead of it all being about a criminal hiding out with his captive. Although not every person who develops an addiction to pornography, the story shows the dangers of getting involved in pornography and the downward trend it has as the addict needs something more hardcore and extreme after a while. We know that it does happen that people starts out with pornography and graduate to rape and/or murder.

I enjoyed the book a lot. It was suspense, which I enjoy, and had a great plot and characters. It carries a great lesson that no matter what situation we are in, God can work it out for the best, and that He can reach anyone, no matter how far gone they seem to be.

Even if I didn't have the second book waiting to read and review, I'd be wanting to read it after this one. I highly recommend.

Renee says

Janet Sketchley takes us where we don't want to go, only to shine the Light of Hope on a life without none. Heaven's Prey focuses on healing... a woman's heart and a man's soul.

Instead of the criminal, the author explores the man, both the dark side and the bright. She takes the reader down intricate paths of horror and elation. One moment, you'll find yourself inside the mind of a madman, the next? A charming friend. Be careful, you may just like Harry.

On the other side, a woman's grief's all-consuming. Where else to find solace but in prayer? But life isn't that easy for Ruth. She's not just fighting herself, but her husband as well. When she's kidnapped, her very faith is put to the test. She finds those prayers aren't quite enough and digs a little deeper. The result is amazing.

Ms. Sketchley tells an astounding story of healing and redemption in a way that makes you sit back and take a look. I rarely give a book five stars, but Heaven's Prey deserves this rating. So, five stars it is, and I pray you're willing to do more than peek.

H.L. Wegley says

A gripping suspense story that peers into the heart of God

Beware! There are possible spoilers in this review.

Janet Sketchley has written a well-researched and well-written suspense novel, emphatically Christian in content and message. The message is that God's desire for justice is balanced by His grace and mercy such that no person is beyond redemption. Sometimes God's people reject this aspect of His heart. Forgetting how much He has forgiven them, they often judge others as being beyond redemption, but not Ruth, the heroine of the story. If anyone thinks the story of Harry Silver goes beyond the bounds of believability, I must say that I know of a case where someone even more depraved than Harry was redeemed. Is God's justice satisfied in such cases? Yes, more than satisfied ... at the cross.

Snitchcat says

A good story and good writing trump all.

What would you do if you were kidnapped by your niece's rapist and murderer?

Ruth Warner soon finds herself asking the same question.

Her niece was raped and murdered. She finds peace in prayer, asking God to help this criminal. Then she learns that he has escaped prison and is on the run. Every prayer she has asked God to help him. And His answer is to deliver Ruth as hostage to this rapist/murderer.

This is a story from two viewpoints: Two characters struggle to face and accept their past and present. This inner conflict manifests in their physical, emotional and mental interactions with those directly involved in their lives.

Told in limited third person, the story follows Ruth's harrowing experience and the criminal's internal turmoil. The heroine and the villain are painted in 3D detail. Real people, filled with flaws and perfection, light and darkness.

Their journeys draw you in and do not release their grip until the final word.

Pacing is a little slow to start, but after a few sentences, the story finds its stride and races towards the finale.

Descriptions are sprinkled adequately throughout the narrative. But it is the emotions and psychological descriptions that truly bring the story alive.

However, my one disappointment with the story is its ending. It was too implausible for me due to the religious element. I found that heavy-handed.

But! I am not the original intended audience. However, this story's premise caught my interest. Even after I learned "Heaven's Prey" was Christian fiction, I read it anyway.

Regarding the Christianity side of this narrative, I skipped almost all direct reports of prayers and mentions of God. There was too much of it to suit me.

On the other hand: if you want a good story that pulls you in so much you can just about ignore the prayers and mentions of God, this is that story.

Good story and good writing trump all. Worth the read.

Paula Vince says

Ruth Warner accepts a challenge to pray for Harry Silver, the man who viciously raped and murdered her beloved niece, Susan. While this helps ease her torturous fury and grief, Ruth's husband, Tony, cannot understand why she would pray for such a monster. One evening, circumstances force Ruth face to face with Harry, as his next intended victim.

Whoa, as a fellow contemporary fiction author, I like to think I write books that deal with challenging subjects, but Janet Sketchley has raised the bar further than I thought it could possibly move! I would never have dreamed of trying to get into the head of a character like Harry Silver, a serial rapist and murderer. Many people would nod their assent that God would willingly forgive the most depraved criminal, yet this book shows it in a very powerful way.

Any readers who feel that forgiveness will always elude them must surely come to the end of this book knowing that they may accept it as much as this main character, for you certainly can't call him a hero. Even when you consider the heartache in Harry's past which is revealed by flashbacks, it's clear that many other young men with similar losses never choose his path. Yet he is a man pursued by a loving God who doesn't want to lose him. It's radical, in-your-face forgiveness.

Another thing we can take away from this book is the power of prayer.

Not only is God shown to move through our prayers, but we need to be careful before we commit ourselves. As Ruth's harrowing experience shows, we have no idea how they may be answered!

Thanks to the author and ChooseNOW Publishing for giving me a copy in return for an honest review.

Sara Goff says

I have never read a more profound message of forgiveness and God's unconditional love than in *Heaven's Prey* by Janet Sketchley. Imagine God putting you face to face with a potentially psychopathic serial killer. You have no idea where you are, other than in some musty-smelling cabin, deep within unfamiliar woods. You have one weapon: prayer. Can you look evil in the eyes and stay calm? Can you maintain faith as the days pass that God is hearing your cries for help?

Harry Silver, the man who brutally raped and murdered Ruth's niece Susan, now accidentally has Ruth in his claws instead of the girl who was supposed to be his ninth young blond victim. Only Ruth is middle-aged and, in Harry's estimation, rather dumpy. This infuriates him and rouses his demon-possessed soul. He vows to make Ruth suffer for the mix-up.

But Harry wasn't born this angry; in fact, he had a mother who loved him deeply and who first introduced him to God as his Heavenly Father. So what went wrong for Harry, a champion race car driver by his early

twenties, who at one point even had the girl of his dreams? After we understand the events of his innocent childhood, the one question remains, can he accept God's love and forgiveness when everyone but his hostage, Ruth, tells him it's too late.

Sketchley's writing is on par with great literary fiction, and her spot-on pacing of the story never feels rushed or belabored. Heaven's Prey is an outstanding read for the bravest of hearts. I cannot recommend it enough as the ultimate story of hope.

Janice Dick says

Ruth Warner, a middle-aged woman whose niece was brutally murdered, has been praying for the murderer in an attempt to find peace. The perpetrator, a well-known racecar driver named Harry Silver, has become a serial killer, and is about to claim another victim in a convenience store when Ruth unknowingly walks in. In the chaos, Ruth is mistakenly abducted. During the harrowing hours that follow, the characters face situations they hadn't anticipated, as the story of Harry's past is revealed and God continues His work in their lives.

Author Janet Sketchley tells this story with grace and skill; this is an amazing debut novel. Her characters grow and change in a realistic manner, in fact, at one point I found myself sending off a quick prayer for Ruth as she faced the darkest of times. The characters' dialogue is realistic and natural, easy to follow, and the point of view is clear and expertly handled.

The plot offers unexpected twists and turns, but moves smoothly and efficiently, a success in cause and effect. Sketchley uses strong action with all the right beats to make this story a movie in the mind of the reader. Conflict appears on many levels from the very first page: between characters and nature, character against character, character against God; and the tension escalates through to the final page.

In my opinion, the research is stellar. The world of the racing circuit comes alive as Harry learns the ropes and wins more and more races. Also, the police procedures seem valid and reasonable. It is my belief that if the author takes such care to dig for background facts, she can also be trusted to present credible spiritual truths and take-aways.

The entire story of Heaven's Prey is presented as a well-formed unit. The beginning offers all the necessary facts without telling, the middle holds up well as tension increases, and the ending brings the whole to satisfactory completion. Technically speaking, I had a general impression of the author's expertise and commitment to excellence.

This is a story of faith in the face of darkness, of trust in a God we don't always understand. It is a story of inhuman cruelty, but also of forgiveness and peace beyond human understanding. It's not a comfortable story, but one well worth reading, with inspiring values. Once you've finished reading the story, check out the Author's Comments at the end of the book.

Mary Hosmar says

Ruth Warner is on her way home from a prayer meeting her husband, Tony did not want her to attend. These

prayer meetings, and especially praying for convicted serial killer, Harry Silver, where threatening the harmony of their marriage and, as far as Tony was concerned, not in the least necessary. Now Ruth wants to bring a peace offering and stops at the local variety store to pick up some chips. What could possibly be less threatening than that?

Janet Sketchley soon lets us know.

Heaven's Prey begins with a scenario to which many of us can relate. We've experienced the conflicts that arise when one person in a marriage, a team, an office, or anywhere there are groups involved, steps out in faith. What we have not experienced is what happened to Ruth. Her prayers are being answered in a way she never would have believed possible and definitely did not have in mind when she prayed.

The story takes us from the depth of man's depravity to the depth of God's forgiveness and love. Only through that love would anything such as is recounted in the novel be possible.

Having said that, I must confess that at times, I found the story somewhat difficult to believe – so many near escapes and miracles in such a short period of time. How can one person (Ruth) experience all those events during and come out of it relatively unscathed? But then, just because I haven't experienced them doesn't mean God can't do them. With Him all things are possible.

I enjoyed the book despite these misgivings. I suppose my reaction is the same reaction I have when I see movies or read books which, in my opinion, seem too overdone. Chalk it up to my inexperience of life that way – and thank God for it.

This is the first book of the Redemption's Edge series and the redemption comes through loud and clear. I look forward to reading the next one.

I won this book, no strings attached, during the author's on-line book launch party and offered to review it.

Marji Laine says

I couldn't put this book down because it was so intense. And yet I had to close my eyes from time to time because of that very intensity.

Time and again, I had to stop and wipe my eyes. A normal reaction when I'm reading about the power of God and the presence of His redemption. Janet Sketchley has an amazing talent for drawing readers into the story. And once pulled in, it was easy to stay. I will say that there are a number of lengthy flashbacks through the middle of the story. They didn't bother me. On the contrary, they revealed insight, not only to the villain, but to the spiritual journey as well. However, if flashbacks get on your nerves, you won't like this one.

The subject matter makes this an adult novel, and some of the scenes are violent, but this story does keep with the genre of Christian Fiction. Despite the premise, the author keeps things clean - a remarkable feat, considering the characters with which she dealt. I can recommend it to Suspense lovers without qualm.

Elma Schemenauer says

This novel highlights the power of God over pornography, abuse of women, and evil in general.

The main character, Ruth Warner, is a somewhat boring forty-something Christian who persistently prays

that God will save Harry Silver, a rapist and killer of young women including her niece. One evening, as Ruth returns from a prayer meeting, she's mistakenly abducted by none other than Harry instead of his intended victim, a dishy blond.

What follows is a long psychological, physical, and spiritual battle between Ruth and Harry. He takes her to a remote cottage, where he abuses her though not to the point of rape. Ruth isn't his type: too old, wrong hair, sheep-like. However, he does plan to rape her eventually, fueling his passion with the hard-core pornography he's addicted to.

Ruth prays that God will help her escape, and also keeps praying that her captor will come to faith in Christ. The first part of her prayer seems to be answered when Harry becomes so ill with an intestinal disorder that he no longer knows she's there. She slips away from the cottage, only to be caught and returned by Harry's accomplices, drug dealers who have been watching the place with WebCams.

By this time Harry is regaining a shaky grip on reality. Sometimes he knows who Ruth is and repeats his threats of rape and murder. Sometimes he thinks she's a kind lady sent to take care of him, perhaps his mother, who died when he was a boy.

Ruth, now bolder than before, tells Harry in no uncertain terms that he needs to ask God for deliverance and forgiveness, and invite Jesus into his heart.

Harry protest that God either can't or won't help him, just like God couldn't or wouldn't help his Christian mother when she suffered domestic abuse. However, Ruth and her Saviour finally get through to Harry. He becomes a new creature in Christ, turns himself in to police, and goes to jail for his many crimes.

The future looks dark for Harry Silver, but now he has a divine Friend, the Creator of the universe, to help him. An epilogue hints that other good things may be in store for him.

Author Janet Sketchley is an earnest and powerful writer. She's sure of her message, no wavering, no inconsistencies. Her story is crystal clear. She stresses the main plot points, even repeating them from time to time. In some novels, this might irritate readers, but she does it in such a way that it's a plus.

Sketchley is good at letting us in on her characters' thoughts and feelings. Examples: "Ruth had only one...anchor against the rising tide of fear. But even prayer took a conscious act of will." Ruth's agnostic husband, frantic with worry after she's abducted, thinks "Face this alone? How could he face it at all?"

The story's characters come across as real people with the occasional exception. Example: Ruth's niece seems too good to be true. Also I'm not sure of the theology behind what she says as Harry is abusing her: "It's not me you're hurting. It's Jesus."

The story includes several flashbacks, all well written and well placed, though some are too long for my taste; for example, the account of how Harry began his career as a racing car driver. On the other hand, this account allows Sketchley to do one of the things she's best at: write about action. Throughout the novel, her action scenes are exciting and authentic.

Sketchley doesn't shy away from describing evil. She's particularly strong when portraying the hold that pornography can have on a person. In one flashback, Harry is invited to spend three days on a yacht with friends. He decides he can't go because he "couldn't face three days cut off from his porn." Sketchley is equally frank about domestic abuse, as well as the effects of illegal drugs.

Some of what her characters think and say regarding their Christian faith is predictable. But some of it is so fresh and moving, it made me cry. Examples: Harry's mother talking to the boy Harry about the beatings she endures at the hands of her husband: "Jesus puts his arms around me. If not, I couldn't make it." Ruth's pastor being interviewed on TV about the abducted Ruth: "He faced directly into the camera and raised his hand, palm forward. 'Harry Silver, I command you, in the power and the name of Jesus Christ, to leave His servant Ruth alone. You have no authority over her, and you will not harm her in any way.'"

I'm glad Harry didn't harm Ruth in any lasting way, and glad he found redemption. I look forward to Book Two in the author's planned series, *Redemption's Edge*.

Heaven's Prey is available from the publisher, Choose NOW Publishing,
<http://nicoleodell.com/product/heaven...>, or from Amazon and many other online book sellers.

Lynn Davidson says

This was a novel hard for me to read but also hard to put out of mind. I had to know how it ended, and not only in order to write a review.

In *Heaven's Prey* by Janet Sketchley we meet Ruth, the main female character who is still mourning the loss of her niece, a young woman who had been brutally attacked and murdered. We meet Tony, Ruth's husband who refuses to accept the God to Whom his wife prays ... for the killer! In a dramatic turn of events we meet the killer, Harry, who had escaped from prison and was not on the west coast of Canada where everyone was looking for him, but in Nova Scotia – on Canada's east coast.

Mild spoiler alert: On her way home from a prayer meeting Ruth makes a stop at a convenience store. That's when things get dramatic. In an odd turn of events Harry is there and kidnaps Ruth, not knowing her connection to his last victim (her niece) before he was caught. This traumatic event leads to dramatic change in the lives of Ruth, Tony and Harry.

Janet Sketchley is a strong writer. *Heaven's Prey* is well-structured, dramatic, hard to read in places because of content, and keeps the reader interested in knowing if/how Ruth will survive, and what will happen to Harry.

Although this novel is a story of redemption and forgiveness it is definitely not a book for young readers. If you enjoy a good suspense with no foul language, scenes that are on the edge but not graphic, drama that rises and falls and increases again, then this is the book for you.

Heaven's PREY by Janet Sketchley was a finalist in the 2014 Word Awards in the suspense category.

Steph Nickel says

Janet Sketchley has done an amazing job on her first novel. I want the novels I read to evoke an emotional

response and Heaven's Prey delivers - big time!

Valerie Comer says

What if your niece had been brutally murdered by a serial killer? The only way Ruth Warner can get any peace at all is by praying for Harry Silver, the famous race-car driver turned killer. At least he's behind bars...until he escapes.

Ruth stops at a convenience store on her way home from prayer meeting only to muddle into a robbery in progress. Before she realizes what's happened, she's kidnapped and in Harry Silver's grasp. He's furious that she interrupted him—he'd pegging the young cashier as his next victim and had no intention of grabbing the plump middle-aged woman. When she admits she's been praying for him for several years, he tells her calling on God now won't do her a bit of good. It hadn't helped his last victim any. Ruth's niece.

Can Ruth's faith sustain her to the end, whatever the cost?

Heaven's Prey is not your usual suspense novel while at the same time it contains many heart-pounding scenes. While the reader is chewing nails, worrying about Ruth's safety, Sketchley takes us deep into Silver's mind. How can a man who once knew the height of fame, who was once a "good" man, become a depraved killer? Does God's love pursue him? Is there any hope of restoration for one who stooped so low?

Eric Wright says

Sketchley writes with rare power the kind of book that I dislike reading, a book about horror and serial killing. And yet her plot, her characterization, the skill of her writing pulled me on to the finish. Don't read this before you go to bed!

Violet says

The storm that 46-year-old Ruth Warner braves to attend her weekly prayer meeting is a perfect opening to *Heaven's Prey*, a debut novel by Nova Scotia native Janet Sketchley. Ruth's husband Tony can't understand why she would go out on such a night to pray for Harry Silver, the serial killer who abducted, then butchered their beautiful niece Susan.

But Ruth's nightmares of Silver's destiny without salvation drive her, especially now that he has escaped from prison and other Susans may be in danger. Little does Ruth guess, when she stops at a convenience store on her way home, who will soon be in Silver's clutches.

Heaven's Prey is suspense at its most gripping. In it Sketchley makes us face our worst nightmares in the company of a depraved man with no compassion, seemingly no conscience, and a deep-rooted hatred of God and everyone associated with Him. At the same time we delve, through flashbacks, into Silver's past, following his rise to stardom on the NASCAR circuit even as his addiction to pornography spirals him into a world of obsession and lust.

Sketchley's vigorous prose places us squarely in each scene, whether it's tied up in an isolated Nova Scotia cottage or careening around racetrack obstacles: "Danger came from what he couldn't see. ...The tire rubber would delaminate in long strips and flail his chassis to bits" – Kindle Location 1702.

Though the subject matter is edgy, I appreciated Sketchley's avoidance of gratuitous and disturbing description. What comes through in this bite-your-nails tale is the possibility of redemption. God, the tireless pursuer intent on capturing even the worst of sinners, is the real hero of this story. Discussion questions at the end of the book help readers debrief and make sense of what they've just lived through.

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