



The Happy Heretic

Judith Hayes

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This irreverent romp over the sacred cows of religion is a humorous and refreshingly down-to-earth call for common sense. Judith Hayes, the Erma Bombeck of the secular humanist community, has the unique ability to raise serious points while making us laugh as she throws buckets of cold water on the irrational beliefs and maddening inconsistencies that often characterize popular religion. She's at her best when recounting modern-day "miracles" such as the apparition of the Virgin Mary's face in a waffle at a Fresno diner; or when she describes how she started rubbing a stuffed penguin whenever she had the urge to pray, and got the same results.

But there are also poignant stories about believing friends and acquaintances whose struggles with irrational beliefs in the face of perplexing dilemmas and personal tragedies are in many cases heartrending. She also devotes a chapter to explaining in clear, concise, layperson's terms exactly what humanism is and stands for, in particular extolling its tolerance.

"When people ask me why I write what I write," she says, "I usually answer, 'To nudge people.' This is literally the truth. I try to nudge people into thinking about things they might otherwise never give a passing thought to. I try to make it easier for them to do so by using satire, vivid imagery, and a sprinkling of merry nonsense."

By turns funny, provocative, and touching, Judith Hayes is the perfect popular spokesperson for clear thinking and reason.

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