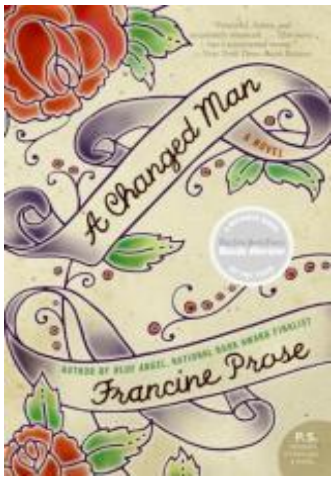
A Changed Man

by Francine Prose



About the Book

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.

Discussion Guide

1. At the start of **A Changed Man**, we see Vincent Nolan, warts and all, during his impromptu interview at World Brotherhood Watch. Who is Vincent Nolan? What were your initial impressions of his character, and how did those impressions change over the course of the novel?

2. How does Meyer Maslow's experience as a Holocaust survivor color his day-to-day outlook as leader of a human rights organization? What makes him tick? What are some essential contradictions in his personality?

3. Discuss Bonnie Kalen's attitudes toward the men in her life -- her ex-husband, Joel; her sons, Danny and Max; her new house guest, Vincent Nolan; and her saintly boss, Meyer Maslow. To what extent does Bonnie define herself in terms of these relationships?

4. How does World Brotherhood Watch use Vincent Nolan to its advantage? How does Vincent transition from neo-Nazi skinhead to national celebrity?

5. Describe Bonnie Kalen's relationship with her sons, Danny and Max. What happens to that relationship when Vincent Nolan enters their lives? Does Nolan serve as a father-figure for the boys, or is his role in the family more complex?

6. How would you characterize Vincent's reunion with his cousin, Raymond, on the television program, Chandler? What were your impressions of this development? What did you think of Danny Kalen and Meyer Maslow's involvement?

7. Would you describe Danny and Max Kalen as typical adolescents and siblings? How prominently does their parents' divorce factor into their lives? How does each one cope with the challenges of teenage adulthood?

8. How does faith factor into the choices and decisions made by Meyer Maslow, Bonnie Kalen, and Vincent Nolan? Is faith necessary for true change?

9. By the end of **A Changed Man**, Vincent's future is uncertain. Do you see any hope of a relationship for Bonnie and Vincent? What were your thoughts at the novel's close?

Author Bio

Francine Prose is the author of 23 works of fiction, including the highly acclaimed THE VIXEN; MISTER MONKEY; the *New York Times* bestseller LOVERS AT THE CHAMELEON CLUB, PARIS 1932; A CHANGED MAN, which won the Dayton Literary Peace Prize; and BLUE ANGEL, which was a finalist for the National Book Award.

Her works of nonfiction include the highly praised 1974: A Personal History; ANNE FRANK: The Book, The Life, The Afterlife; and the *New York Times* bestseller READING LIKE A WRITER, which has become a classic.

The recipient of numerous grants and honors, including a Guggenheim and a Fulbright, a Director?s Fellow at the Center for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library, Prose is a former president of PEN American Center, and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She is a Distinguished Writer in Residence at Bard College.

Critical Praise

"Piercing wit... This tale hits comic high notes even as it probes serious issues."

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