



The Forsaken

Ace Atkins

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Thirty-six years ago, a nameless black man wandered into Jericho, Mississippi, with nothing but the clothes on his back and a pair of paratrooper boots. Less than two days later, he was accused of rape and murder, hunted down by a self-appointed posse, and lynched.

Now evidence has surfaced of his innocence, and county sheriff Quinn Colson sets out not only to identify the stranger's remains, but to charge those responsible for the lynching. As he starts to uncover old lies and dirty secrets, though, he runs up against fierce opposition from those with the most to lose—and they can play dirty themselves.

Soon Colson will find himself accused of terrible crimes, and the worst part is, the accusations just might stick. As the two investigations come to a head, it is anybody's guess who will prevail—or even come out of it alive.

The Forsaken Details

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From Reader Review The Forsaken for online ebook

Jane Brant says

Definitely my favorite of the series so far..cohesive with well-defined, complex characterization. A lot of Quinn Colson's family history is also revealed. The female characters in this book take a pivotal role in the story's overall power; they feel more integrated into the storyline than just add-ons. There's a strong use of country music references that fill-in details for the mindset of one of female characters...almost became an introductory course as I had to listen to so many of them for the first time as they are not part of my musical experience.

Judy Collins says

Ace Adkins' *The Forsaken* (Quinn Colson Series #4) is a gritty Deep South series, of small town politics, corruption, and dirty secrets.

A nameless black man wanders into a small Mississippi town, and two days later is lynched for rape and murder he did not commit.

Thirty-six years later Sheriff Colson attempts to track down the true culprit of the crime; however, as in most small towns, some secrets are not meant to be uncovered. He handles hot and cold cases from the past with corruption, drug dealing, and crime.

As Tibbehah County is recovering from tornadoes, Colson and his deputy are being investigated for their actions. Colson and his female Deputy Sheriff, Lillie Virgil are being framed for shooting a corrupt police officer with the implicit suggestion that if they go after a 30 year old cold case to catch the killer then all would be taken care of.

Corrupt county commissioner and Johnny Stagg are both behind the investigation to control Quinn for their own purposes—connecting to leader of a biker gang Stagg fears who is about to be released from prison, all tie back to the crime in 1977.

Full of dirty secrets of the past and family history, for some redneck southern politics, power, corruption, strip clubs, and drugs and small town manipulation.

I thought the book had a great setup; and some great writing. However, should have read the book instead of listening to audio. The narrator *Brian D'Arcy James*, had the most annoying voice, which ruined the overall performance.

Meg says

I've reread the first four books in this series ahead of starting books 5-7. The first four stood up well on the second read and in fact were improved by reading them back-to-back (I read them piecemeal the first time).

Really enjoy this series - characters, dialogue and setting are all brilliantly dark and spare.

Brilliant! I've loved this entire series but this is the best one yet in my opinion. Great, well-developed characters and the kind of writing that really transports the reader. As Kemper already noted in his review (which I have no idea how to hyperlink to on an iPad) this would be a brilliant HBO series in the same vein as Justified or Banshee.

Raena says

I received an ARC of this book from the publisher. This is the story of a cold case. In '77, two girls were raped and shot. One of them survives, the other does not. Then a group of men brutally kill a black man for the crimes. It turns out the man they killed was innocent. This is somewhat of a spoiler, but it is also on the plot blurb. This really should just tell you to go ahead and keep reading. I promise the book will go somewhere.

I jumped right into this series in the middle. This seems to be fine as long as you have a primer for who all of the characters are.

Quinn- Main character, sheriff

Caddy – Quinn's sister

Jean- Quinn's mom

Stevens- Quinn's lawyer

Lillie- Deputy

Jason- Quinn and Caddy's father, also the name of Caddy's son

Johnny Stagg- Bad guy

Ringold- Works for Johnny

Chains- Worse guy

Ophelia- Coroner, Quinn's girlfriend

Diane Tull- Victim of crime in '77

Hank Stillwell- Father of other victim in '77

This is boiling the characters down to their very basics, but once I had all of this worked out, I was able to follow the story easier without having to flip back pages(on an Epub book) and try to see how everybody was related.

Overall, I enjoyed the book. It was my first experience with any book by Ace Atkins, and I feel that I may have been missing some background information, but that as long as I understood who the characters were that there was a good story there without necessarily needing to read the other books. As I have not read the other books, I cannot be sure, but I believe that the "cases" in the other books were referenced a few times in this book. It also seemed to jump in right after a crazy shootout that probably happened in the previous book.

There were some parts of the book that made me think (as someone who lives in Memphis), that Atkins is not necessarily from here. For instance- I have never heard anybody call it the Sonic. It is just Sonic. There was some "name-dropping" of Memphis businesses, and that is all it seemed like. Congratulations, you know about Gus' and Rendezvous. For me, this distracted from the Southern feel Atkins was going for because most of the southern references had no real substance.

As far as story goes, it was a reasonably interesting story, but it took about half the book to really figure out what was even being investigated. I like some mystery to my mysteries, but the answers to questions were revealed at about the same time as the questions. The mystery for me was figuring out what the book was about. Once I did, I enjoyed it and was interested in finding out the whole story.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

I'm the kind of person that read books way out of order. I started with book five, then I got to book three and then I read book four (this one). And that is all the audiobooks that I had so I ordered book one and two and now I'm just waiting for some time over to read them. On the plus side, listening to the audio version of this book was way easier than book five because now I know who is who. The worst problem listening to a couple of books in a series in a row is actually remembering what happened in each of the books.

Sheriff Quinn Colson is contacted by a woman that survived a brutal rape, but had to watch her best friend get killed. Now she wants Quinn to look into the case again because she knows that the wrong man was lynched for the crime. This is not easy said and done, there are deep buried secrets and many people are not happy about this reopening of a closed case.

As I stated in my review for book five is this series perfect if you have read all the Longmire books and looking for something similar. Quinn may not be the new Walt Longmire, but he's a very interesting character, being an ex-soldier that took over the sheriff job after his uncle. His deputy Lillie Virgil is just as tough and cool as Vic from the Longmire series. Together are they a fabulous team. As for the case, it will get very personal for Quinn when he learns that someone in his family may have been there when the man got lynched...

James Thane says

This is another excellent addition to Ace Atkins' Quinn Colson series. In the first book, *The Ranger*, Colson, who served as a U.S. Army Ranger in Afghanistan and Iraq, returned home to Tibbehah County in northeastern Mississippi. Shortly thereafter, he was elected County Sheriff, and he has spent the first three books in the series wrestling with a series of challenges confronting the county and a number of personal problems as well, involving his immediate family.

These problems continue into the present volume. Because of their actions at the conclusion of the previous book, Quinn and his lead deputy, Lillie Virgil, are facing trumped up criminal charges that could cost them their jobs and send them both to prison. At the same time, County Commissioner Johnny Stagg, a corrupt old reprobate who controls virtually all of the vice in Tibbehah County faces a worrisome problem of his own. Twenty years ago, most criminal behavior in the area was run by a man named Chains LeDoux, the leader of an outlaw biker gang. Stagg was instrumental in sending LeDoux to prison before taking over most of the criminal activity in the area, but now LeDoux is finally being paroled and has made it clear that he intends to return home and take revenge against Stagg. Stagg has been a thorn in the side of Quinn Colson ever since Colson became sheriff and he now concocts a scheme attempting to use Colson to send LeDoux right back to prison.

Finally, an ugly incident from the county's past has now also reared its head again. Thirty-six years earlier, two young girls were attacked one night. One girl was raped; the other was murdered. While sheriff's deputies stood aside and watched, a mob trapped a man they believed to be guilty of the crime, then lynched him and set fire to the body. The girl who survived the attack has now returned home as a mature woman and has asked that the case be reopened, suggesting that the mob may have killed the wrong man.

Quinn Colson must wrestle with all of these problems while at the same time attempting to protect his own freedom and to sort out some very serious family issues that also have their roots deep in the past. It's a complex job and Atkins brilliantly weaves the threads of the story in a way that keeps the reader on edge from beginning to end. These are all engaging and believable characters and the setting of Tibbehah County is expertly rendered. The reader feels that he is riding right along side Colson as he drives the dusty county roads, fighting against the various corrupt forces that threaten both him and his home county. A great read.

Virginia Campbell says

Jericho, Mississippi is recovering from a devastating tornado and dealing with the aftermath of a violent, far-reaching crime spree in "Forsaken", the fourth installment in author Ace Atkins "Quinn Colson Series". Sheriff of Tibbehah County, Quinn Colson is in badge-deep, helping his hometown clean up the ravages of the storm and dealing with allegations of his own culpability, along with his deputy Lillie Virgil, in the criminal conspiracy which left few unaffected. Adding to the tension of the situation is the looming shadow of a decades old crime, one which was never truly solved and which led to the brutal death of an innocent man. As Quinn tries to put all the pieces together from so long ago, he must fight to keep his name clear and the future of his position as sheriff from being cut short. With each new entry in this series, we learn more about Quinn's background and become more involved with his personal life. This time, the story is interspersed with flashbacks of his father, Jason, who was once a famous Hollywood stuntman, and who had long left his wife and children behind. As Quinn's investigation takes more twists and turns, it starts to hit closer to home, and answers he thought he wanted may be more than he expected. A first-rate read from author Ace Atkins, "Forsaken" definitely leaves readers wanting more of Quinn Colson and company and their adventures in Tibbehah County.

[Review Copy Gratis Amazon Vine](#)

Dorothy says

Continuing with the Mississippi theme in my summer reading, I turned to Ace Atkins' Southern noir series featuring former Army Ranger, now county sheriff, Quinn Colson.

Colson is the sheriff of fictional Tibbehah County in Northeast Mississippi, a place somewhere near Tupelo, birthplace of King Elvis. He heads a seven person police force, aided by his chief deputy, Lillie Virgil. From the county seat of Jericho, they do battle with the forces of evil in Tibbehah County, which seems to be a hotbed of sin and moral turpitude, not to mention political corruption.

Jericho and Tibbehah County are still recovering from a recent killer tornado that came close to leveling the town, but progress is being made, and, in some cases, the new Jericho being built is a great improvement over the old destroyed town.

Much of that improvement has come through the efforts of Johnny Stagg, District Supervisor and local businessman and, not incidentally, redneck crime lord. Stagg is behind much of that aforementioned sin, moral turpitude, and political corruption. But it can't be denied that he has aided in the rebuilding of the town.

Meanwhile, Sheriff Colson and Deputy Virgil are being investigated because of a big shootout that occurred at the end of the last book. (It does pay to read these books in order.) Colson's enemies see this as a chance to either get him out of office or to control him while he's in office, and there's another election coming up. It's all politics, but that doesn't make it any more palatable.

Into this frothy mix of disaster recovery and political intrigue comes news that a very bad guy, leader of a motorcycle club that created havoc in the town thirty years before, is about to be released from federal prison after serving his time. This is especially bad news for Johnny Stagg who sees the man as a mortal enemy and fears that when he returns to town he will try to take over from the current redneck crime lord.

Thirty years before, in 1977, something terrible happened in Jericho. Two young teenage girls were abducted along a county road. One was raped and both of them were shot. The younger of the two died. Law enforcement did not catch the man who did it, but shortly afterward, a black man, a stranger in town who had been living rough in the nearby national forest, was taken up by vigilantes, beaten and lynched. He was unknown. His name was never discovered. The vigilantes had convicted him of the abduction, rape, and murder. Later, the surviving victim saw the man who had actually committed the crime in town. The vigilantes had murdered an innocent man.

At the time of these crimes, the sheriff's office only did a half-hearted investigation, but now, the whole thing has been brought to light again because the surviving victim has talked to Sheriff Colson. He and Deputy Virgil are determined to get to the bottom of these very cold cases.

Johnny Stagg has become one of the most interesting characters in this series. He runs a "family restaurant" with a notorious strip club and truck stop located out back. He's trying to build up a drug pipeline, working with some of the Memphis mafia, and he has his fingers in every pie being baked in Tibbehah County. He's a sleazebag and a small town manipulator, masquerading as just another "good ole boy." He keeps looking for the key that will allow him to lock up control of the sheriff and his staff. If he can find it, he will have a totally free hand in building his crime empire.

Locking up Quinn Colson won't be easy though. He lives by the code he learned as an Army Ranger. He is the epitome of incorruptibility and morality. He has a lot of frustrations with the nuances of police work, but fortunately his excellent deputy has his back there. They make a good team.

Ace Atkins writes very knowledgeably about the area where these stories are set. It's an area I know well and I can attest that the language used by his characters and the opinions and attitudes expressed here are spot on. It all makes for a very noirish mix and an entertaining summer read.

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

This is the fourth installment of Ace Atkin's crime fiction series featuring former Army Ranger Quinn Colson, now Sheriff of Tebbeah County in rural northeast Mississippi.

The Forsaken begins a few short months after the tornado that devastated the county as Quinn and his deputy, Lillie, are faced with possible charges for the dramatic confrontation in The Broken Places that left a corrupt sheriff and his deputy from another county dead, and over \$200,000 in cash from a decades old armoured car robbery missing.

It's no surprise that Johnny Stagg is behind the investigation into the shooting but his motive is. It seems Stagg's past is about to catch up with him and, needing Colson on his side for this particular battle, he has concocted an elaborate scheme to ensure Quinn's support.

Doing his best to ignore Stagg's machinations, which isn't doing his chances for re-election as Sheriff any good, Colson is drawn into investigating a decades old cold case involving the rape and murder of a young girl, and the subsequent lynching of the black man accused of committing the crime. Finding evidence that the man was innocent, Colson is determined to identify the men and bring the members of the lynching party to justice.

The narrative moves between the past and the present, and once again, Colson's professional and personal life become tangled when he learns that both his uncle, the former town Sheriff, and his absentee father, were most likely involved in the crime.

As I have come to expect, the dialogue is genuine, the humour quick and there is enough action to keep things interesting. The rural setting is well drawn and the details authentic. The characters are terrifically well drawn, often deeply flawed but interesting and nuanced.

Though The Forsaken could conceivably be read as a stand alone, I wouldn't recommend it as familiarity with the primary characters and their history adds depth to the story. I continue to enjoy this gritty series and I'm looking forward to reading The Redeemers.

Mike (the Paladin) says

Okay, so I'm a fan.... Quinn, Lilly, Caddy, Quinn and Caddy's father Jason...Caddy's son Jason (or little Jason) the whole cast of well drawn/written characters.

With a couple of cold cases rearing their heads and "the powers that be" wanting to keep them, "under cover" you can guess how Quinn will react and what (some of) the results will be.

This series of books does use racism as a plot device and frankly many if not most of the people who are identified as Christians come off looking, less than ideal. Still the stories are well written and the characters work very well. The fact that the seamier and/or darker side of life often shows it's less than attractive head is just "part of it". The books aren't offensive if you can, you know think about what's said. A big part of this story (meaning the story revealed in the entire series) has a lot to do with what happened in the past and what might be called "reaping what we sow".

We get a good book and an almost enthralling story. I surprise myself in that I really like these (that may have to do with a lot of things. I feel like I Quinn quite often). I recommend these, enjoy.

Kathy says

Ace Atkins has the ability to take you to Mississippi and immerse you in the lives of his characters. He knows the area and the people who make up the small towns. As a result when you read one of the Quinn Colson series you are there. You can feel the atmosphere of good and evil, you know the history and you know the characters. This book helps fill in some gaps in the readers' knowledge of Quinn's daddy. The same bad guys, the same good ones. Everyone flawed in their own way. The book is a fast read but not a shallow one. Fleshed out characters, a very descriptive setting, and lots of action will make this book an excellent addition to the series.

Reviewed from an ARC from LibraryThing.

Tom Tischler says

Thirty Six years ago a lone black man wanders into Jerico, MS. with only the clothes on his back and a pair of paratrooper boots. Less than two days later he was accused of rape and murder and a posse lynched him. Now new evidence has surfaced and sheriff Quinn Colson not only wants to identify the strangers remains but to charge those responsible for the lynching. He is soon uncovering old lies and dirty secrets and he is running up against fierce opposition from those with the most to lose. He soon finds himself accused of terrible crimes and the worst part is the accusations just might stick. As the two investigations come to a head it's anyone's guess who might come out of this alive. This is book four in the Quinn Colson series. It's a little bit slow but not a bad story. Book five The Redeemer a continuation of this will be out in July.

Monnie says

This is the fourth book in the series featuring Quinn Colson, an Afghanistan War veteran who returns to his small-town roots in Jericho, Mississippi. He's followed his late uncle's footsteps by getting elected sheriff, although that seems to be where the similarities stop; his uncle, it seems, was known to be on the take, in cahoots with some very shady characters including Johnny Stagg, a very crooked local politician.

That past alliance returns with a vengeance here, as Colson and his very capable deputy Lillie Virgil get roped into investigating a hanging that took place 37 years ago. Back then, two teenage girls were abducted, with one raped and shot and the other murdered; soon thereafter, a black man thought to have been the culprit was horribly beaten and hanged by a group of local vigilantes. The killing was totally swept under the rug and stayed there until now, when the surviving victim - who later saw the man who murdered her friend and knows that the wrong man was hanged - finds the courage to reveal what she knows to Colson and ask for his help.

In the middle of the whole mess is Colson's long-estranged father, an off-and-on movie stunt man who left the family (including his wife/Colson's mother, Jean, and Colson's sister, Caddy) years ago. Meanwhile, the leader of a hell-raising motorcycle gang has been released after years in jail and makes a noisy and triumphant return to Jericho with his pack, intending to pick up where they left off. And as details of the long-ago murders begin to emerge, liaisons are unearthed that many think should remain buried, including a possible link to Colson's long-gone father.

As in all the other books, the characters here are the real story; every single one, including Colson, is flawed (some considerably more than others) - and watching how they interact and develop, for better or worse, is a big part of why the books are so good. This is another winner, and when the next one comes out, I'll be at the front of the line once again.

Kemper says

If the FX network is looking for another book series about rural crime to develop into a TV show to replace *Justified* after its upcoming final season, it could do a helluva lot worse than buying the rights to Ace Atkins' Quinn Colson series.

As Tibbehah County tries to recover from a devastating round of tornadoes, Sheriff Colson and his chief deputy are being investigated for their actions in the previous book. Corrupt county commissioner and redneck kingpin Johnny Stagg is behind this investigation as part of his effort to control Quinn and use him for his own purposes. This connects to the leader of a biker gang Stagg fears who is about to be released from prison. The gang has returned in force to pave the way for his return, and all of it ties back to a crime that occurred in 1977.

Atkins scores again with another great tale that sees Quinn unearthing some ugly secrets tied to his family history. I especially enjoyed how Johnny Stagg has gradually been built up into the Boss Hogg of this series. As a sleazy local politician who likes to claim the moral high ground even as he runs a strip club and is trying to build a drug pipeline, Stagg has become one of the most interesting characters. He's a sidewinder, never coming at Quinn directly, and he's a master of small town manipulation. The series has subtly become an on-going cold war between Stagg and Quinn, and the more we find about the history of Tibbehah County, the more we realize that Stagg has been a cancer rotting it out for some time.

Quinn remains the steady moral center of the series with his code of a former Army Ranger mixing with the rural good manners of a Southern gentleman. It's a nice touch that Colson remains more soldier than lawmen, often leaving the nuances of police work to his chief deputy, Lillie. His growing frustration with the locals who are often too stupid or too blind to recognize what Stagg is also seems to be fitting for a guy who finds himself back in the small town he swore never to return to.

Like the last book, this one leaves a fair number of plot threads dangling, but it's clear that Atkins is doing this deliberately as part of telling a larger story about the secret history of his fictional patch of Mississippi.

Also posted at Kemper's Book Blog.

Eric says

Not only does this book continue the narrative of Tibbehah County after the devastating tornadoes that made up the climax of the previous installment, *The Broken Places*, it travels back to a murder that occurred thirty years ago that Quinn is now investigating -- a murder that his father may have been somehow involved in.

This series keeps getting better and better. It is so good that when this book was released, it jumped right to the front of my to-read list, and it did not disappoint. This is definitely the work of an author at the height of his creative powers. Highly recommended.
