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A Prayer for the City

Buzz Bissinger

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A Prayer for the City Buzz Bissinger
Current Affairs/Urban Studies

"An extraordinary book, an insider's account of the daily
workings of a big-city administration."
--Witold Rybczynski, The New York Review of Books

A Prayer for the City is Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Buzz Bissinger's true epic of Philadelphia mayor Ed Rendell, an utterly unique, unorthodox, and idiosyncratic leader who will do anything to save his city: take unions head on, personally lobby President Clinton to save 10,000 defense jobs, or wrestle Smiley the Pig on Hot Dog Day--all the while bearing in mind the eternal fickleness of constituents whose favor may hinge on a missed garbage pick-up or an overzealous meter maid. It is also the story of citizens in crisis: a woman fighting ceaselessly to give her great-grandchildren a better life, a father of six who may lose his job at the Navy Shipyard, and a policy analyst whose experiences as a crime victim tempt her to abandon her job and ideals. Heart-wrenching and hilarious, alive with detail and insight, A Prayer for the City describes a city on its knees and the rare combination of political courage and optimism that may be the only hope for America's urban centers.

"A Prayer for the City gives a unique insider account. . . . [It] is a superb book. . . . Bissinger's writing, sparse and urgent, always shines . . . and his narrative crackles with descriptive force." --The Miami Herald

"A full-scale portrait of a struggling American metropolis that brings to mind such classics of urban reportage and analysis as J. Anthony Lukas's Common Ground and Nicholas Lemann's Promised Land."
--The New York Times Book Review

"What we see through Bissinger's unique lens is profoundly touching and inspiring, poignant and sad. . . . If you really want to feel the
heartbeat of the American city--and find a source of hope for its
revival--you will find it here." --The Philadelphia Inquirer

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