

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

IN SEARCH OF FATE

De Benedict, Anthony

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BOOK REVIEW

In De Benedict's debut novel, a brilliant executive faces a crisis of faith and morality that will affect the entire human race.

Adam Questor is the Nobel Prize-winning vice president of a global pharmaceutical corporation. After one of his top researchers, John Smite, commits suicide, he's not only shocked by the death, but also left with a moral dilemma. Only days before, Smite showed him lab results that would change the course of human history if they were shared with the company or anyone else. Questor flees to the solitude and tranquility of a monastery to contemplate his options—and his lost faith. His domineering, unethical boss, Ralph Edwards, desperate to learn what Questor knows, sends in an attractive psychiatrist named Evelyn Wyman, as well as a pair of thugs to follow Questor's every move and record his conversations. Later, an artificial intelligence program that holds the key to John's incredible discovery begins contacting Questor directly. Soon, he has the answer to life's greatest mystery and must rely on the help of Wyman and a resourceful monk to protect it from his boss. In this thriller with religious overtones, global conspiracies, and a man and woman on the run, De Benedict takes themes from novels like Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* and crafts them into a more contemplative narrative. He swaps out those books' puzzles and riddles for more complex philosophical debates, and readers who appreciate thought-provoking ideas over cheap thrills will welcome this new perspective. However, the exhaustive discussions also tend to slow down the story, replacing opportunities for suspense and tension with extended exposition and esoteric references. Instead of communicating with one another in a natural way, characters tend to deliver long, dense monologues that analyze problems or explain scientific, religious, or psychological points ("*Before you go into your dissertation on how the Church ignored Duns Scotus in favor of Aquinas, would you just answer my simple question?*"). Fortunately, Questor is a consistently intriguing character who's admirable, reasonable, and complex, and his internal narrative provides a unique adventure.

An unusual thriller that's more thoughtful than suspenseful.