



The Judas Gate

Jack Higgins

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A disturbing tape has made its way to British intelligence. It contains battlefield chatter from an ambush in Afghanistan, in which 12 U.S. Army Rangers and a British medical team died. Most of the Taliban voices are Afghan, but the voice of the commander bears an Irish accent. Sean Dillon is put in charge of hunting the traitor down.

The Judas Gate Details

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Author : Jack Higgins

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From Reader Review The Judas Gate for online ebook

Graeme says

Good exciting read kept me entertained from start to finish

Steve says

August 2018 I was going to give this story ***** but got intimidated by all the terrible rating or simply average ratings. Not many ***** on this story. So I damped my enthusiasm down to ***** but disagree with other readers who dislike this story. I liked the new North African venue and some of the new North African characters. I thought both antagonists were splendidly written. The personality conflicts and differences in the Talbot family seem to be the source of much discord. For me, this was another page turner!!!

Michael Toomey says

Jack Higgins was my favourite author as a teenager. And then I revisited him with 'Judas Gate' when I was in my 30s...and found that he has not aged well.

To start off, the book is clearly, obviously ghostwritten, and lazily ghostwritten at that. There seems to have not been a single drop of passion injected into the project at any stage, and it comes off exactly as it is: a sleazy money-grabbing exercise.

The idea of Dillon and Ferguson being super-deadly-secret-agents at this stage is laughable. Dillon must be pushing 70, and Ferguson must be close to 90. Of course, since then, there have been another four Sean Dillon novels, go figure. Any author with a modicum of respect for their own creations would have retired or killed off Dillon and Ferguson by now, but not Jack Higgins.

Every character in the novel is ridiculous. They spend so much time guzzling whiskey, no matter whether they're fundamentalist Muslims or major political leaders, that they all must have spent the entire duration of the novel horribly drunk.

All of Higgins's traditional set-pieces are on display, so the book is entirely without surprise or tension; however, there is one quirk added: rather than having the set pieces play out, Higgins has them all happen 'off-camera', with the reader only being informed of them through off-handed remarks by the various characters.

I have never seen such lazy cynicism in my entire life. Avoid this, and every Sean Dillon book after The President's Daughter, like the plague.

Abhy Nadar says

Not so great. Too much gossiping. When whatever intelligence community is discussing reaches terrorists by simple gossip it is a terrible plot for me and in this novel everything works around gossip.

Bev Taylor says

treachery has a price

sean dillon is led to afghanistan after a group of us rangers r murdered by an ied and an ambush. it appears that a large number of muslims r being recruited to fight for al queda and led by a man called shamrock

his unlikely ally in the p.m's private army is holley who at one time was trying to kill him during the time of the irish troubles

their adventures lead them to ireland and algiers and an ambush in which they have to turn the tables to survive

a quick read with good characterisation although i found it impossible to believe that that they did not realise immediately that the suggested location of shamrock at a destination was so co-incidental that it must have been deliberate

also why they did not try to trace preacher after lancey asked him to look after his mother who was suffering from cancer in the event of his death; not really believable that both hakim and mickeen gave u valuable info just minutes before their deaths

3.75stars

bev

Jakk Makk says

Not sure how this got on my audio-menu, but it's a stiff upper lip full of DNF.

Kenneth Cook says

i can't get enough of Jack Higgins books and Sean Dillon

Greg says

What can I say about *The Judas Gate*? Large stretches of boredom, interrupted by moments of "hmmm, time to open my eyes now?" Dillon returns, with a major new character (Daniel Holley) who seems to have no real reason for existing. I usually enjoy Jack Higgins' books for treadmill reading, but this one was a few steps below his usual work. I almost wondered if it was written by a ghostwriter or co-author (as has happened with too many of Tom Clancy's book ideas). but no, it appears to have been written solely by

Higgins. Disappointing.

R Bartel says

Higgins remains at the top of his form in this latest saga of Sean Dillon, General Ferguson and company as they ferret out the latest of their public enemies when they discover an Irishman is apparently aiding and abetting the enemy in Afghanistan. With only a recording of the voice as a British team is all but destroyed, Dillon and team set out to locate and eliminate this threat to their country. But the enemy has nothing left to lose and attacks from the shadows of anonymity. Twice various members of the team are sent into ambushes – who will come back alive? When the attacks become personal, who will remain unscathed? When the man is brought before them face-to-face, who will recognize him for who and what he really is?

This is the seventy-third title published by Higgins, the eighteenth in the Dillon series. Like most of his books, this is military intrigue, and is also somehow connected to the Irish/English problem that has reigned in those islands for centuries.

Mr. Patterson, I'm a fan!

Edward L says

Another good book in the Sean Dillon series. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Lots of twists and turns and excitement.

Richa says

The theme seemed very cliched to me... The story is fast and lot of action happening here, but somehow, it lacked the engaging quality of a good thriller. It might have been better... An okey-dokey book. Can be easily given a miss.

Nancy says

This book had many highs and lows. Dragged on a lot, but the story was exciting. It could have been told in a lot less pages.

Rob says

This was my first Jack Higgins and it might be my last. To be fair this is book 18 in the series and number 18 is not the right end to start a series. But for all that I'm hard pressed to say anything good about this book. The plot left a lot to be desired. The characters were no more than cardboard cut outs. The pace was like a wet afternoon. When the end came my first reaction was, thank God that's over.

I have friends that tell me the earlier books are good so I might give Mr. Higgins the benefit of the doubt and see how book one works out.

Recommended as cure for insomnia.

Sean Kelly says

I like Jack Higgins, his characters, and his stories. I have read his efforts since I was a young reader at which point the content was probably inappropriate for me. I've followed Dillon from his days as an IRA villain to his current role as wry anti-hero...

That preamble out of the way, I didn't love this one but didn't hate it either. I likely suspend my disbelief, or at the very least my critical eye, when I read Higgins (and Cussler, and Clancy, and, well, you get the idea). So if you're looking for either a ringing endorsement or harsh criticism you're going to have to look elsewhere. It's just another Higgins. I read it. I liked it. I'll read others. End of story.

Jerome says

Judas Gate, by Jack Higgins, is one of the dullest, so-called action books I have read. What began as an intriguing, action-filled series starring Sean Dillon has deteriorated into little more than a tale of tedious plotting, endless talking, and almost constant drinking among characters who have lost their individuality. I wonder how the special unit headed by Ferguson can get anything right with all they drinking they do. I also wonder how Shamrock, the Irish-born villain, can plot anything with his constant drinking. Maybe it's the Irish way, according to Higgins; if so, it doesn't paint a very positive portrait of a warm and loving people.

This is one is a disappointment, mostly because the characters keep behaving in unrealistic ways without motivations that make any sense, and because there's lots of cross-over and confusion about who's who among the supposed good guys.

The behavior is the worst part. Supposedly very experienced spies, reformed terrorists, and special forces types blab about secret stuff, tell people things they shouldn't, and generally mouth off in such a way that the other side inevitably hears about it. Then they discover they've been discovered, and walk blithely into danger anyway, which no sensible person who has seen action would do, and manage to overcome all odds to triumph over incredibly inept opposition. This happens repeatedly, and strains the reader's "willing suspension of disbelief".

The locations are meant to be glamorous, but wind up being two-dimensional cardboard backdrops, and inserted not for any particularly believable reason, but because action books clearly need to take place in glamorous locations.

The author relies on three recurring plot devices:

- people whose business is guarding secrets discuss secrets in places where they are easily overheard
- people whose business is guarding secrets discuss secrets with people they ought not to trust
- secrets are divulged on deathbeds.

There is no sense of urgency in what happens in the story. We learn that a dying soldier had accidentally recorded an Irish-speaking commander of a Taliban unit in Afghanistan that had attacked and killed a dozen US. Army Rangers and members of a British medical team, in an ambush. The chase is on, of course, to find that apparent traitor who calls himself Shamrock. We also hear of a mysterious Preacher, the Al Qaeda leader in London, who somehow manages to remain safe as an academic, despite his constantly using a cell phone to contact those he controls, including Shamrock; surely, MI5 should have intercepted his calls, especially with key word recognition programs. Along the way, we hear a lot about the Troubles and their aftermath in Ireland, yet see little of the consequences of that often brutal and tragic period in Irish history. We also hear about the fighting in Afghanistan, but most of the action is off stage; all we get is a lot of talking about it. What was promoted as a revenge novel in which, I imagined, Sean Dillon would go off to Afghanistan and find and destroy Shamrock--or bring him back to the U. K. for trial--became a big disappointment.

Another major issue I have with the novel is the lack of character development through individual portraits. I had to read the first two hundred pages twice to get any sense of each character. They sound alike, use similar phrasing, and are little more than cardboard cutouts, including the villain, Shamrock, as well as secondary characters Higgins introduces. The principals, such as Sean Dillon, General Ferguson, Daniel Holley, and Harry Miller--who should stand out as being sharply etched images--sound alike; with my eyes closed, I could not tell them apart. Even Harry and Billy Salter have lost their individuality as street thugs and are now little more than shallow images of themselves. Indeed, Billy used to be quick-tempered, "muscle" for Harry; in this book, he plays a minor role. In fact, he is even taken out of a critical mission at the end, in the Khufra Marshes of Algeria, by Ferguson (Higgins), after Billy was shot at near point-blank-range in the chest; while saved by a chest protector, he was deemed too weak to go after Shamrock.

What little action is there, occurs sporadically, and doesn't feel or sound believable. We have an amazing shot by Dillon, at dawn, in a pouring rain, off-balance, and at some distance in misty marshes, as he wounds Shamrock, but even that is contrived. We also have an attack on Ferguson in Pakistan, which is also artificial. That attack raises the question of why Ferguson would even go on such a mission; he must be in his 70s by now, and retired. When he does appear, Ferguson plays a minor role in what happens. Even Roper, the highly skilled communications expert and researcher employed by Ferguson, is just another name; we know nothing about how or why he is in the chair and how he manages to thrive on a few hours of sleep. I also wonder how he manages to do his critical work with all the alcohol he drinks. Many of the character details were introduced in previous books; the reader who is new to Higgins needs some of the background details, otherwise he will be completely lost in this novel.

Higgins also seems to have a problem with women. He killed off Hannah Bernstein, an effective member of Ferguson's unit, in an earlier novel; Dillon's lady friend, Monica Starling, is mentioned, but only in passing, being shipped off by Higgins to Harvard; and Shamrock's mother becomes an avenging angel. It is as though Higgins doesn't know what to do with his women; so he figuratively get rids of them. As a cheat, Higgins opens the door to a sequel with Shamrock's mother predictably telling Dillon, after her son's funeral service, that she is going to avenge her son's death. This is the same device Higgins used with Kate Rashid in early adventures with Sean Dillon. We know what will happen to Shamrock's mother.

Finally, Higgins irritatingly uses a variation of "and he did," when a characters asks to be told about an event in the story. Rarely do two characters ever share information directly. And, of course, to make a character sound Irish, we have several "Old sods" or Old souls."

The edginess of a taut thriller is gone in Judas Gate. I have read all of Jack Higgins' work from when he wrote as Harry Patterson through James Graham to today; the Judas Gate is the biggest disappointment so far. I think it is time for Higgins to retire Sean Dillon, as he did with Liam Devlin, and bring in new blood as the driving force in action thrillers, not merely part of more intellectual exercises.

