On Monday, May 24, 1999 at 8:32 p.m. precisely, Father Bertrand Beaulieu of the French Society of Casuists opens a thick, handwritten letter and makes a stunning discovery: Six pages further, he was trembling. This time the proof was neither arithmetical, nor physical, nor esthetical, nor astronomical; it was irrefutable. The proof of God's existence had been achieved. One of the many delights in Laurence Cosse's darkly funny ecclesiastical thriller, A Corner of the Veil, is the fact that the reader must accept the existence of this proof on faith. Though a handful of characters read the letter and are profoundly affected by it, Cosse holds her cards (and her proof) close to the vest; we never see it. In Father Beaulieu's mind, however, there's no doubt that what he has is the real magilla. He hurries to his friend Father Hervé Montgaroult, who, after explaining in detail and at length why it is impossible to prove the Almighty's existence, reads the proof himself and instantly falls into a beatific meditation on a world without doubt: There would be no such thing as success any longer: Do the sea or the sky have success? No more failure: Does a tree know failure? No more hierarchy among men: Is the night superior to the river? Bertrand and Hervé bring the letter to their superior, Father Hubert Le Dangeolet, who refuses to actually read the thing and tells them to keep it absolutely secret until he can figure out what to do with it. Unfortunately, in a moment of bliss, Hervé has already revealed the monumental news to his sister, who happens to be married to a high-ranking official in the French government. Soon, word of it reaches the Prime Minister and before long the entire French cabinet is involved. Once politicians involve themselves in this momentous event, A Corner of the Veil really takes off--and Cosse demonstrates that elected officials are not the only political animals to reckon with. As the author pits priest against priest and pol against pol in a life-and-death struggle over the ultimate fate of the proof, God gets lost (literally) in the shuffle. By the end of this provocative, literary page-turner, you'll be wondering if it's the Almighty or the Devil pulling the strings. --Alix Wilber
My Personal Review:
I read with interest -- and a chuckle -- the complaints of some reviewers about the 'humor' in this novel. I found humor in abundance within its pages -- not the 'belly-laugh' sort of humor that we Americans have come to expect from TV sitcoms and films, but the 'wry smile' sort of humor that is more touching and subtle. Cosse's writing is both humorous and meaningful -- but there is a lot more to this little book than humor.Interestingly enough, the book I read just prior to picking up this novel was Simon Mawer's THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS, in which a priest deals with the discovery of an ancient scroll that has the potential to destroy his church, the message within being one that repudiates all that Christianity has stood upon for nearly two thousand years. In A CORNER OF THE VEIL, the opposite occurs -- a manuscript is received by the Casuist order in France that proves, after hundreds of years and innumerable attempts by philosophers and thinkers, the irrefutable existence of God. It would seem that the church would look upon such a find as a victory of sorts -- everything they have been espousing over their history has been verified on paper, in terms that anyone can understand. And while it is true that those who read the proof -- spiritual and secular people alike -- are touched by it on the deepest possible level and reduced to tears of joy, the proof brings sheer terror and panic to the hierarchy of the church and state. Grim predictions are made that, if the proof is made public, it will mean the end of society as we know it, chaos, the end of the world. The struggles and machinations the proof sets into motion are both humorous and thought-provoking. Without giving away any more of the story, I will simply say that I felt the message to be one, not of revelation, but of affirmation. The novel is not anti-religious in any form or fashion that I can see -- nor is it indoctrinarian in the least. I found it to be intelligently conceived and written, a very compelling and moving work -- one which I can recommend heartily.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
A CORNER OF THE VEIL: A Novel by Laurence Cosse - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!