



3 1/2 Years

Jeremy Jones

Rick O'Neil, Designer

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In an eerie world in radical need of course correction, a Christian convert stands up against a man bent on world domination in this apocalyptic thriller.

In Jeremy Jones's apocalyptic thriller *3 1/2 Years*, a recent Christian convert is faced with biblical challenges as tensions rise in Israel.

Josh is a bitter addict who lives in Washington, DC, and feels numbed by his personal traumas. Christians, whom he considers to be hypocrites, also make him angry. He shares all of this with his therapist. But as Josh works at clearing out foreclosed homes that belonged to born-again Christians who were taken in the rapture, he, too, becomes a believer. He is reformed in an instant and leaves his vices behind. Meanwhile, Vincente—a genius, a cool-minded narcissist, the world president, and a man raised among the mafia—holds an interview with a journalist covering his rise to sainthood. The journalist is himself embroiled in a soul-crushing deal that he can't break.

A distant narrator regards these people with a mix of drama and scrutiny. In the dystopian background, chips are implanted in humans; there's nuclear fallout, new political alliances, and a war that stokes Arab–Israeli conflicts. It's an eerie world, and one that the cast feels is in need of a radical course correction.

But digressions involving the personal stories of others not central to the plot dilute this apocalyptic focus. And the central characters are too emblematic: their backgrounds are exaggerated so that they can stand in for particular perspectives, which has the effect of alienating the audience from a sense of their humanity. Those who do not fill such functions are quickly dispensed with. Josh's attempts to usher others toward their own conversions are hasty rather than heartfelt, and Vincente's decision to position himself as akin to a messiah are bombastic.

Still, Josh and Vincente are men who are driven by their convictions, and their stories eventually converge. It becomes clear that Josh is destined to help others, while Vincente is bent on destroying them. When Josh lands in Israel to meet his father, he encounters Ariella, a member of an elite Israeli counterterrorism team. Their connection is rushed by the urgency of their mission to face Vincente's dangerous social machinations. Their efforts to help their fellow Christians, who have become pariahs, are a late-stage development in the book, one that is made too dramatic because of italicized words and its heavy-handed parallel to a biblical story. A message of endurance and faith, even in times of persecution, pervades the book through to its open-ended conclusion.

In the dynamic, series-opening thriller *3 1/2 Years*, Christians face the serpentine actions of powerful forces in their years of tribulation.

KAREN RIGBY (September 30, 2022)

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