

Friedrichstrasse Central

Geoff Logan

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The quest in Friedrichstrasse Central draws fascinating elements into a muddle of genres.

An ancient treasure with prophetic implications ensnares an unlikely duo in Geoff Logan's *Friedrichstrasse Central*.

Australian geologist Ivan "Iva" Davies is restless and journeys to Singapore in search of something more. There, he stumbles across a ring; when attempting to return it to its rightful owner, he discovers its legendary pedigree. A series of events brings him to an old Nazi who draws him into the hunt for a Templar treasure and a unique prophecy. As Iva sinks deeper into the mystery, he becomes the target of shadowy organizations searching for the legacy of two knights.

There are two main story arcs: Iva's quest and his Nazi partner's backstory. His partner, Peter Maueraberger, used to have a relatively high position in the Nazi party and worked to recruit the famous psychologist Carl Jung. Iva's arc focuses on the main story beats, including the ring and a copper scroll. When he connects with Peter, their two narratives twine together as Peter explains things to Iva. From there, the book's focus shifts to a treasure hunt.

A prologue reads like a synopsis, explaining the history of two Knights Templar known as the Gemini Knights and their failure to capture a temple prophesied to usher forth a seemingly apocalyptic end, though that apocalypse is never fully explained. However, the novel proper deals very little with the Gemini Knights. The book struggles between genres and juggles its disparate elements to confusing effects. Artifacts like a supernatural and sentient doll are interesting but come to feel superfluous.

Characterization is inconsistent and is fed by shallow exposition, with backstories explored through lengthy monologues. Character motivations are unclear. Both historical and fictional characters are at best roughly outlined, and they blend together as a result.

Prose is awkward and unfocused, and the dialogue is broken up with unusual groupings of ellipses for no discernible reason. The narrative style switches between points of view with confusing effects. Much of the action in the story's present day is either explained to Iva or comes through information dumps that slow the narrative rather than injecting it with excitement.

The story's turns and developments are convoluted, and interest in the quest quickly wanes. It's never entirely clear exactly what each character's motivations and goals are.

In *Friedrichstrasse Central*, an ordinary man is pulled into a historical adventure with supernatural undertones—a quest that muddles genres but includes fascinating elements.

JOHN M. MURRAY (June 14, 2018)

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