



★ **Into Captivity They Will Go**

Noah Milligan

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In Noah Milligan's startling novel *Into Captivity They Will Go*, Caleb, a teenage boy of perceived miraculous birth, is raised by an evangelical, end-times-obsessed mother who's convinced that he is the second coming of Christ. Caleb and his mother leave his father and brother behind to embark on a path that leads them to a new community built around the Book of Revelation.

As Caleb becomes central to the theology of the Church of the Seven Seals, he finds himself torn between wanting to care for his community and his concern over his mother's more and more erratic behavior. After a tornado hits the community, the church undergoes a series of disasters and illnesses, leading to a climactic encounter with federal law enforcement. Caleb is torn from the church and his mother and lives a life of isolation until he turns eighteen.

With its unique perspective on the nature of cults, the novel deviates from similar titles in a number of ways: its charismatic religious leader is a woman, and the focal point of worship is a young boy. After the showdown with authorities, the novel's focus turns to the long-term emotional and psychological consequences of living in abusive communities. Caleb's challenges in his late teens involve universal feelings of wanting to be "normal" without the positive support to become so. As Caleb reconciles his new life and identity with his past, he also explores forgiveness and acceptance.

Into Captivity They Will Go is an immersive novel, capturing Caleb's mindset in a way that is believable and heart-wrenching. Its visceral events grapple with topics of abuse, blind faith, and moral gray areas. As a microcosm of an apocalyptic present, Milligan's clear understanding of Revelation provides a theological framework for his narrative that is compelling and terrifying.

HOLLY JORDAN (September / October 2019)

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