

Jesus and John

Adam McOmber

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John must take the lead for the first time in his life to save himself and his beloved Yeshua in Adam McOmber's otherworldly novel *Jesus and John*.

After the resurrection, Yeshua is not himself. Silent and unresponsive, He leads a concerned John to a bizarre, labyrinthine Roman palace. Despite a kind welcome, John soon becomes convinced that they are unsafe and should leave at once. But, like a spider's web to a trapped fly, the palace is deadly, endless, and impossible to leave unchanged.

The story humanizes characters who so often seem untouchable. John, still in mourning for his lost lover, takes charge in the search for the palace's unseen mistress, the Gray Lady. All the while, he hopes beyond hope that he can somehow restore Yeshua to what He was. Yeshua, in flashback, is a strange figure: vulnerable enough to worry over, yet ethereal enough that even attentive, loyal John does not really understand him.

The Gray Palace is an ancient house of horrors: an eerie place full of trap-like chambers and secretive residents. Spare prose describes every room John passes through. Each is more creative and harrowing than the last, pitting John against revolving rooms, skies filled with lantern-stars, and a house within a house.

With every step along his suspenseful journey, John comes closer to finding the Gray Lady and the answers he seeks. But even the journey's end brings no simple solutions. John, accustomed to living on faith, is satisfied with what he has been given and what he has discovered. His adventure leaves him and the reader with much to think about, inspiring interpretation and reflection long after it ends.

Jesus and John turns a fresh, fantastical eye to the familiar story of Jesus and the apostles and other religious tales.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (July / August 2020)

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