

★ **Meet Me in the Strange****Leander Watts**

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In an intoxicating swirl of futuristic imagery and existential inner reflection, *Meet Me in the Strange* treats music and spirituality as one and the same.

Davi lives in a wondrous hotel in a city filled with oddities and beauties. In this future world, culture has been infused with alien yet lovely customs. A museum includes a simultaneously fantastical and ordinary space exhibit; a record shop houses the most unique popular music. Exhilarating prose describes a world that is bright and brilliant, with spots that are dark and utterly ordinary.

Characters are also all about contradictions, including Anna Z—maybe special; maybe crazy—whom Davi befriends because of their mutual love of musician Django Conn, is enamored with, and attempts to save. She delivers long-winded speeches that could be received as either rants or sermons. To protect her, Davi hides her away in the family hotel, using hidden rooms and tunnels. Though this is done in the name of Anna's protection, it's also done to keep her.

The story is told through Davi's eyes, though Davi is not broadly described; only minor details are included to flesh them out, like Davi's taste in music. Davi's gender is never revealed; they assume a sort of implicit androgyny. This mysteriousness is mirrored in the turns of the prose, as the reader is allowed to belong to an enigmatic world and observe it with awe.

*Meet Me in the Strange* is a wondrous, alien tale, not quite like any other story out there.

HANNAH HOHMAN (March/April 2018)

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