ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

CHRISTIAN

Palace of Gifts
Kathleen Currieri-Rosson
Xlibris
978-1-4691-6792-3
Two Stars (out of Five)

Palace of Gifts by Kathleen Currieri-Rosson is an allegorical novel that captures the universal search for meaning.

The story takes place in a kingdom ruled by the Good Master, who knows and recognizes everyone. Every citizen of the kingdom is designed to be a servant of the Good Master, and each citizen has a gift to give. The Good Master wants the people to "long for his presence." His love and care set the stage for the action of the story, creating a comforting and nurturing feeling in the reader.

The story follows a girl named Faith, who has a Desire named Service and whose life is centered on pleasing the Master—just the way the society and the Master desires. She wants to pursue her purpose more fully and live in the Chamber of Service. Readers follow Faith as she forges ahead on a path of uncertainty. Her quest to fully possess inherent gifts drives Faith, as well as the other characters she finds herself walking alongside.

The book lacks a deeply felt conflict. The use of childlike language in a long, text-heavy narrative geared to older readers keeps them a step—or more—ahead of Faith. The language also severely minimizes any sense of urgency and gives the book a didactic feel. The author's overt calls to the reader heighten this effect. For example, "Imagine a time or an event that calls upon everything you know, and it calls from the unknown. It's as if your future beckons you."

Kathleen Currieri-Rosson's message of extraordinary courage, perseverance, and humility is also hindered by her use of allegory. Unlike *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Hinds' Feet on High Places*, her narrative lacks depth. A simplistic allegory is not a good fit for today's fast-paced readers—young or old—and Currieri-Rosson's particularly basic allegory doesn't have the spark necessary to engage an audience.

Melissa Wuske