



Temple of the Two Jaguars

Edward Curry

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Edward Curry plays with reality and time in his first novel *Temple of the Two Jaguars*. Motivated by this innovative idea Curry tells the tale through the eyes of narrator Ryan Keshaw a man who experiences dreams that may be clues to a past life he led among the Maya. Because of these dreams the protagonist joins an expedition to find the Rosetta Stone and this is where the adventure truly begins.

The premise of this book is not only interesting because it revolves around adventure but because it dips into a rich and very real history. The Rosetta Stone has long been an object of admiration and makes a strong backbone for this tale. Additionally Curry makes good use of Mayan history: these details are woven into the narrative structure and do not seem clunky or misplaced. In fact Curry's use of history is especially remarkable because of its references to time. Reality and time are not static or concrete entities and dreams are as real and relevant as the Stone for which the characters search.

The major feat of this novel is the depiction of Ryan's dreams. Curry balances reality with the dream world. He begins with a dream and from the start the reader is as off-kilter as the narrator. These dreams are well-crafted and Curry may have felt as though he could be more creative in a setting that plays with reality and perception. It is in this dream world that the past present and future collide and suspense is built.

Though the novel includes a good story its kryptonite is that it relies too heavily on this plot. It's as if Curry has so much action and background information to relate that he forgets about pacing and description. Setting and dialogue particularly suffer because of this oversight. This writer is most successful when he's crafting scenes full of anticipation. In these moments the action is swift and description isn't so much a factor as is what happens next.

The novel's best moments occur when Ryan is on the expedition and experiences a collision of time and culture: He must confront the warriors and customs of the past to not only obtain important artifacts and knowledge but also to know his past self and find peace of mind. Curry's novel is a cosmic melting pot worthy of any adventure-seeking reader.

LISA BOWER (April 3, 2008)

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