Clarion Review

General

The Jesus Gene
James Mays
Mpro Books
978-1-84728-831-8
Three Stars (out of Five)

The truth has been discovered in an archeological dig: Jesus didn't die. In the first in a series about Other World James Mays has drawn together historical myth Satanic Cult metaphysical speculation and modern science in a setting of intrigue and danger. Jesus escaped death fled to the south of France and married Mary Magdalene. Of course the Catholic Church can't afford to let that be known so they've become bodyguards to the secret.

The real work behind the scenes takes place in Barlow Springs Arkansas at the National Center for Carcinogen Research where the descendants of Mary Magdalene are translating the library of documents and fragments that were unearthed in the scandalous dig. In accordance with the Directive Sid MacMillan and Sandra Wang the leaders of the NCCR are planning to end this world even as they save as many people as possible by transporting them to the Other World.

Plans are nearing completion when Dr. Kyle Corbin is brought in. Part of a Witness Protection Program Corbin comes with his compliment of Federal Marshal Stephen Gibson. Sid and Sandra's plans are complicated when the marshal learns about the body of Dr. Maury Furman who worked at the NCCR. The shriveled mummified nature of the body arouses his curiosity and curiosity about the work of the NCCR is exactly what Sid and Sandra don't need. In fact to stop it they are willing to kill again.

High tech surveillance cameras hidden microphones genetic alteration cultic ritual sacrifices murders and more are scattered through the plot as Marshal Gibson investigates and Sid and Sandra seek to stop him with the help of Barlow Springs' sheriff Don the local hit man. As you might expect in such an action story the personalities are a bit shallow and the one attempt to deepen the marshal's character is unconvincing.

Although there are points of tension the reader is drawn by curiosity about the complex

plot which is unrolled in bits and pieces. Several times however an incident is unpersuasive because the reader hasn't been fully prepared. Sandra's aches pains and Lupus—which haven't been mentioned for 145 pages—interfering with the deadline to complete the plans is just such a case. Other events are simply unbelievable because they are nearly impossible such as buying a step van in a small town at midnight or two people walking away from a car crash down a 100 ft. cliff with only scratches. In the end the reader may feel robbed because Marshal Gibson is set up as the hero of the story but is not allowed to bring resolution. Someone else turns out to have control of the situation.

Despite the need for better crafting of the story line *The Jesus Gene* and its surprise ending is enjoyable. If the subject matter is of interest to the reader he will be looking forward to the rest of the series.

David George