

Jac Be Nimble

James Peters

FriesenPress

(284pp)

978-1-03-913044-9

*In the urban mystery novel *Jac Be Nimble*, a charming street busker seeks revenge while proving himself to be a master of the sleight of hand.*

James Peters's novel *Jac Be Nimble* follows a magician's greatest, captivating disappearing act.

Jac relocated from Australia to Canada years ago. It wasn't a search for novelty that drove his move: Jac was on the run, and has been for most of his adult life. Mourning Gilly, his lost best friend and first love, Jac makes a living busking, with the occasional theft thrown in. But then Foster, his former benefactor and the man whose actions Jac blames for Gilly's death, decides to host an exhibit of his collection of rare children's books in Victoria. Jac's subsequent decisions draw Albert, yet another enemy, back into his life.

As a hero, Jac's charm and moral ambiguity are centered from the first. However, some contradictions occur, as when Jac muses that he might have turned vengeful from being reminded of Foster; this is followed up by a statement that Jac never cared to psychoanalyze himself. Still, his talent for prestidigitation has a propulsive effect. He carries out a heist that is convoluted in appearance yet delightful in its ultimate simplicity. Its lead-up and aftermath are exciting and suspenseful, with some moments of pure fun for balance. And Jac interacts with a wide array of people who play off of each other in involving ways.

But the narrative repeats details previously mentioned or thought about by its cast, resulting in monotony. And it includes a romantic subplot between Jac and Abigail, a woman he begins by using and then develops real feelings for. She is constructed well, but in a short space, via conversations that reveal her personality and dreams. Still, her relationship with Jac is underdeveloped; even their consequential first date is underattended to, so that their relationship seems to begin at its midway point.

Where the central intrigue is concerned, clues are dropped at regular intervals. They appear to be directed at Foster and Albert at first but they soon take on a new meaning. A series of plot twists arise in the book's concluding chapters, infusing scenes that once seemed superfluous with new importance. They result in audience satisfaction—and new possibilities for Jac.

In the urban mystery novel *Jac Be Nimble*, a street busker seeks revenge while proving himself a master of the sleight of hand.

CAROLINA CIUCCI (August 23, 2022)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.