



## My Friend Jesus Christ

*Lars Husum , Mette Petersen (Translator)*

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**When Jesus Christ arrives uninvited at your flat, and gently but firmly advises you to clean up your life, well, naturally, you do as you're told** When Nick is 13, he loses his parents in a car crash. His sister, seven years his elder, is left to look after him. As he grows up, she longs to lose this brotherly millstone around her neck, but he cannot bear the thought of losing her protection. So Nick goes to extremes to retain her care and attention, putting himself, his girlfriend, and others in harm's way, striking up with a gang, and administering violence to order. One day he goes so far that as a suicide attempt. On the other side of tragedy, he returns to his flat to find an intruder on his sofa—a biker who proves immune to Nick's menace. The biker convinces Nick, first, that he is Jesus Christ, and, second, that he must now take charge of Nick's life. Nick is moved to return to his home village, where he sets about reconstructing himself, and doing penance for his failures. He even finds love anew. But does he know what to do with it? And has he really learned anything from his sister or from his miraculous new mentor?

## My Friend Jesus Christ Details

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## From Reader Review My Friend Jesus Christ for online ebook

### Silvia says

the book is kinda weird for me. of course there were moments of inspiration and wisdom. i didn't like the last pages - they left me confused and shocked but seemed bizzare at the same time.

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### Rita says

#### *L'INOSSERVATO GESÙ*

La trama mi ha coinvolta moltissimo, nonostante mi aspettassi Gesù fosse un personaggio-chiave, mentre invece passa quasi inosservato e nemmeno viene chiarito l'incontro col protagonista sia stato reale o frutto dell'immaginazione di quest'ultimo. La batosta è arrivata col finale, che mi ha fatto venir voglia di strappare le pagine una ad una.

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### Evi?ka de Blois says

Po prvotním šoku se te? musím smát. Tento p?íb?h je má sp?ízn?ná duše, musím se více zam??it na Dánsko. Budu vám tvrdit, že to je vtipné, i když hned zkraje p?ijde hlavní postava o panictví tak, že znásilní opilou holku... a kope do hlavy malé kluky. Je v?bec v po?ádku takové p?íb?hy ?íst? Je to dost špatný p?íb?h a taky p?íb?h boží, vždy? jej navštíví i sám Ježíš. Vyvolá ve vás v?tšinu existujících emocí, až je z vas emocionální smoothie a nevíte, co vlastn? ?íct. Tohle bych cht?la probrat s Nietzschem nad sklenicí vody. Píšu si to na bucket list.

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### Bjorn says

The good thing about trying to bash in Jesus Christ's head is that he's immortal. Plus, he forgives you afterwards. Though there might be strings attached.

But let's start from the beginning: Nikolaj is a Bad Person. The son of a widely loved pop star and an orphan from a very young age, he's been raised by his teenage sister with far too much money to spend and turns into a Freudian nightmare. He gets in bad company, and looking for some sort of place in life he turns to violence, destruction, manipulation. His best friend is a skinhead called Satan. He abuses his girlfriend. He sets out to ruin his sister's marriage to make sure she only cares about him.

And when he finally hits bottom, sunk as low as a rich human being in a rich Western country can sink, driven away and ruined the lives of everyone who's ever made the mistake of trying to be kind to him, he wakes up in the middle of the night and finds a bearded guy in sandals in his kitchen. He tries to brain the intruder with an ashtray and nothing happens. And Jesus tells Nikolaj that this is it: it's time not only to sin no more, but to atone. Leave Copenhagen, move back to the backwater small town your mother fled to become a star, and try to be a Good Person.

My Friend Jesus Christ, the debut novel of a Danish writer translated into English a few years ago, starts to

confuse me right around that point, and even after finishing it I'm not sure what to make of it. If it was really black comedy before then it switches into overdrive around the halfway point, as Nikolaj and his newfound friends (apparently, nothing makes you more popular than admitting that you're a bad person) start to set right everything he's messed up in his life to get Jesus to leave them alone. He has to fix everything he's done to the people he hurt (the ones who are still alive), whether they want him to or not. It's not a religious book, even if you assume that that's really Jesus in it and not just a hallucination by a very disturbed young man. Husum has worked with Lars von Trier, and any fans of his will recognize the themes - violence, evil, self-sacrificing women, and a sense of dark humour that just keeps coming. See: Jesus Christ literally tackle Satan! See: our hero get into it with Jehovah's witnesses! See: Danish small town dwellers freak out over the amount of black people in Copenhagen! Etc.

But at the same time there's a crawling sense of unease: as good as the idea of atoning for your sins and making up for it sounds, are we really supposed to sympathize with Nikolaj when he stops controlling and manipulating people to hurt them and instead starts controlling and manipulating them to [-]feel better about himself[-] help them? It's striking how much changes, both in Nikolaj himself and how everyone else sees him, when he openly admits what a horrible person he's been and decides to change his wicked ways, but also how little changes: Nikolaj turns from Bad to Good, but it's still entirely about him and he's still the one in charge. Or is he...?

My Friend Jesus Christ, while hardly a literary masterpiece raises both laughs and some pretty interesting questions of why this type of story fascinates us, and whether it should - if we, by celebrating those who try to atone for the wrong they do, actually turn wrongdoers into ideals. I'm just not sure how much of that is deliberate by the writer. If Husum just wanted to write a story about how easy it is to turn your life around and how everyone is required to forgive those who ruin their lives, I suppose he will just have to do the Christian thing and forgive me for seeing more in it than he intended.

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### **Anouk says**

Hated the first 50 pages, hated the main character, liked the middle and hated the end.....

It was entertaining, but I had some troubles with feeling for the main character, who was mean, violent, depressed, irritating and just the "sex, drugs and RocknRoll"part was way more important to the storyline than the actual characters.

Overall not too bad, just not my kind of book

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### **Martina says**

Prvnich sto stran jsem myslela, ze se za tu knizku budu smazit v pekle.

Cerny humor & blasfemie. Pak se dej obratil a z knihy se stal takovy vyvojovy roman na dansky zpusob. Sex, nasili a Svedci Jehovovi included.

Pred nedavnem vysla v cestine pod nazvem Muj kamos Jezis, myslim, ze by stala za omrknuti!

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### **Jasmien says**

Dit is het boek met het hoogste what the \*!?-gehalte dat er bestaat. Als in, je zegt bij elk hoofdstuk wel

minstens een keer 'what the \*!?. Alsof de auteur elk hoofdstuk 50 plottwisten op een bord schreef en dan de meest vreemde koos. Maar toch valt het allemaal wel op zijn plaats eigenlijk. Echt geweldig boek eigenlijk. Maar heel erg weird.

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### **Brona says**

I actually read this book in an evening as I had to read it for book club. This was my book choice and I expected so much better. I was disappointed as it was not the comedy I expected, nor was it interesting or captivating. I had a dislike for the protagonist and really could not have cared less about his journey. Jesus was not nearly enough of a central character and was only a passing character. The author could have done so much more with what I thought was a very good premise for a novel.

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### **Dexter Caulfield says**

This book was very different from what I was expecting - it has some funny parts (if you fancy jet black humor) but it's a very depressing story overall. The first quarter got me really excited, the rest wasn't all that great but it was good enough to keep me interested until the heart-wrenching end.

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### **Chiara says**

Idea buona, ma alla fine si è rivelato un libro un po' inccludente, che non ha lasciato nulla di che..

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### **Becky says**

I knew nothing about this book before reading it apart from what was on the cover. I was expecting something humourous, akin to Bruce Almighty, but this read more like Chuck Palahniuk; gritty and full of unpleasantness with all the humour that was present being rather dark in nature. Ultimately rather more optimistic than Palahniuk (though still somewhat ambiguous) I found this book interesting, different and easily readable.

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### **Camilla says**

Danske forfattere er generelt ikke min kop the, men Husum skriver så underholdende, og historien er så enestående og sjov, at jeg nød hver side. En lidt for dramatisk/amerikaniseret slutning på en ellers dejlig historie.

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### **Mientras Leo says**

Interesante, diferente, original... me ha gustado

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<http://entremontonesdelibros.blogspot...>

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## Miška Kuzmiaková says

Trošku rozpačité, no ťálo sa to veľmi dobre a ľahko. Príbeh je až pomaly tragicky, kde chlapec príde o všetko. Rodičov, sestru, sám seba, jediné čo ma, je spustnutý život plný zlých rozhodnutí. Ľi je Jezis v príbehu skutočný, alebo nie, je nepodstatné aj pre neveriacich, keďže nenabada k viere, len k náprave života. Napriek tomu, že dej je stále v Európskom štáte, je cititelne, že tie severské krajiny majú úplne iné zmýšľanie ako my v strede Europy.

Ľakala som od toho viac, a záver má dosť sklamal a bola som neho až znechutená. Hoci s odstupom ľasu je tam asi skrytá myšlienka, že aj keď spravíš veľa chýb a snažíš sa svoj život napraviť a máš už pocit, že už je to dobré a aj sám si lepším ľlovekom, príde situácia, že opäť zlyhas a je už len na tebe ako sa k tomu postavíš, ľi sa jedná stiahnuť opäť na dno, alebo zabojuješ o ten lepší a krajší život.

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## Tim says

Seeking redemption, let alone finding it, can be a long and tortuous path. But what happens if Jesus Christ -- or at least a man claiming to be Jesus Christ -- is making suggestions here and there? That's the road on which Nikolaj Jensen is set in Danish writer Lars Husum's first novel, *My Friend Jesus Christ*.

When we meet Niko, as he's known to friends and family, he is struggling with a never-ending and always growing pit and ache in his stomach. Although Niko's mother became a Danish national treasure as a pop singer, she and Niko's father die in a car accident when Niko is 13. He was cared for by his older sister, who also manages and invests the earnings from their mother's songs. But Niko's fear of losing her increases as she begins living her own life, gets married and has a family. Niko increases his carousing and fighting, gaining the reputation of "an up-and-coming young psychopath." His path of self-destruction includes suicide attempts, trying to erase that knotting pain in his stomach.

Niko believes things may finally be changing for the better when he meets Silje, who turns out to be the singer in a tribute band to Niko's mother. Niko falls deeply in love with her but can't control the demons inside. During a minor argument he ends up savagely beating Silje and then attempts suicide in his sister's home. His actions eventually drive his sister to suicide herself, an event that crushes him.

The knot is tearing down everything to make room for itself. Walls, rooftops, floors, everything is being smashed to pieces in the loudest possible way. Suddenly the noise and pain stop, because what's the point of giving me a stomach ache when I no longer function? All is silent, the demolition is over, the knot is everywhere and I am no longer me. I am the knot.

It's at this point that Jesus Christ steps in. Actually, he breaks in. Niko wakes up early one morning to the sounds of a prowler in his apartment. Niko sees a man who's "tough, long-haired, bearded and big and strong, and [who] oozes confidence" entering his bathroom. When the man comes out, Niko clocks him in the head with an ashtray. Niko meets Jesus, or at least someone who claims to be Jesus and there to make Niko "a better man."

This encounter reflects part of the tone of *My Friend Jesus Christ*. Husum takes a light, at times humorous,

touch to the issues Niko faces. At the same time, the sparse language of the work, translated from the Danish by Mette Petersen, retains a balance of seriousness and sincerity. That quality may reflect Husum's time as a screenwriter prior to the book, first published in Denmark in 2008 as "My Friendship with Jesus Christ" and now in its first English translation.

Although Niko is relatively convinced that Jesus is a "nutter," when Jesus touches him the knot disappears. Jesus advises Niko to move from Copenhagen to Tarm, the village in Jutland where his parents grew up. Niko's mother never returned to the town and refused offers to perform there after running away with Niko's father to escape her own abusive father. Figuring he has little or nothing left to lose, Niko moves there.

Once in Tarm, Niko quickly comes to treasure the area and makes a handful of friends and acquaintances, including a friend from his childhood who shows up in town, a promiscuous hairdresser, and an attractive Jehovah's Witness who comes to Niko's door. Acting again on the advice of Jesus (or the "nutter"), Niko convinces his friends, a group he calls "NATO," to return with him to Copenhagen to help him try and right the wrongs he's done. With a variety of twists, turns and complications, the group devotes itself to that mission with Niko getting occasional advice -- and even some assistance in a fight -- from Jesus.

*My Friend Jesus Christ* is about a search for individual redemption, not Christian fiction or even markedly religious. In fact, some Christians might even object to the book's portrayal of Jesus. Like Niko, the reader gets hints that the evidence supports the man's claims that he is Jesus but we are never actually sure.

Husum seems at his best in describing Niko before he meets Jesus, doing a first-rate job of portraying a soul in agony. That effort, though, makes some of the balance of the book seem a bit of a misfire. Niko's easy acceptance of the idea of moving to Tarm and his mollification there and later don't quite fit the self-destructive and tormented Niko of the first third of the book. Likewise, at times events in Copenhagen seem a bit too much like a blithe excursion than the struggle of an anguished soul. Additionally, although the ending is certainly appropriate for a story about a search for redemption, it is a bit confusing.

Despite those flaws, *My Friend Jesus Christ* entertains in its own idiosyncratic way.

(Originally posted at A Progressive on the Prairie.)

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