



## The Traitor's Emblem

*Juan Gomez-Jurado , Daniel Hahn (translator)*

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Based on a true story: A Spanish sea captain rescues four German castaways during a treacherous storm in 1940. He doesn't know who they are or where they came from, but one of them gives him a mysterious gold-and-diamond emblem before disembarking. Decades later, the captain's son receives a substantial offer for it and is told an astounding story behind the object: it holds the key to Paul Reiner's lifelong quest. . . .

Munich, 1919. After his family falls into disgrace, fifteen-year-old Paul dreams of the heroic father he never knew. But one night, seconds before committing suicide, Paul's cousin reveals a terrible secret about his father's death. This discovery turns Paul's world upside down and leads him on a hunt in Nazi Germany to uncover the mystery surrounding his father's death.

*The Traitor's Emblem* is an epic novel spanning decades of family betrayal, impossible love, and the high price of vengeance. Set against the menacing streets of Depression-era Munich and the cruel rise of Nazism, Gómez-Jurado's spellbinding thriller proves again that he is a master of narration.

## The Traitor's Emblem Details

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## From Reader Review The Traitor's Emblem for online ebook

### **José Luis says**

<http://30dediferencia.com/2015/08/01/...>

Son varios los libros que me he leído de Juan Gómez-Jurado, el último reseñado en este mismo blog hace algún tiempo. No soy demasiado amigo de libros que tienen la masonería como parte de la historia, creo que llegó un momento en que me saturé de ese tipo de historias, pero en este caso se trata más bien de una pequeña excusa que nos va a permitir sumergirnos en una época complicada, la Alemania de entreguerras, el ascenso de la Alemania nazi, la llegada de Hitler al poder, y mientras tanto podremos conocer la historia de Paul y Alys, dos personas que se enamoran, y que vivirán multitud de vicisitudes juntos y separados... Una historia que atrapa, con traiciones, secretos familiares, intereses económicos, odio, venganza, y la búsqueda por parte del protagonista de datos que permitan conocer quién fue verdaderamente su padre. Unos personajes algo superficiales, como suele ser habitual en este tipo de historias, aunque ciertamente no sea lo que más nos importe y un final algo precipitado con giro inesperado incluido.

No creo que sea el mejor libro de Gómez-Jurado, de hecho me gustaron mucho más *La leyenda del ladrón* o *El paciente*, pero es una buena lectura si queremos algo sencillo que enganche y que además esté bien escrito. Una historia que además se puede adquirir por menos de un euro y medio en formato digital.

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### **Mason Dixon says**

By the time I got to the last 50 pages of *The Traitor's Emblem*, I was oddly reluctant to read on. Yes, I was eager to find out what happened next. But I didn't want the journey to end. The story is thrilling and believable, kept to a human scale. I wish Gomez-Jurado had spent more time describing Paul's growing realization, and how the search for his father's murderer did it changed him.

The author is deft in bringing even minor characters to life with a few vivid strokes. It is a pleasure to see that craftsmanship at work. The book is the best one I have yet read about the Interbellum period. It will delight anyone who wishes to learn more about this tragic period of modern history. Well recommended!

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### **César Caracuel says**

Es el primer libro que leo de este autor, además ha sido éste por sugerencia de él mismo, a través de Twitter. En *El emblema del traidor*, nos sumergimos en la Alemania entreguerras, el ascenso de la Alemania nazi, cuando Hitler subió al poder, y vivimos la historia de Paul y Alys, dos personas que se enamoran, y que a lo largo de años luchan contra los errores que sus familias cometieron, pero a pesar de todo, acabando juntos. Traiciones, secretos de familia, matrimonios que pretendían ser concertados, odio, venganza, y la búsqueda por parte de Paul de la verdad, de cómo falleció su padre, desmontando las mentiras que su madre le contó para protegerle de niño.

Los personajes están muy cuidados y detallados, sin excesos ni relleno innecesario. Además esta historia nos permite adentrarnos un poco en el desconocido mundo de las sociedades secretas, las logias. La masonería,

para ser concreto.

No quiero descubrir la trama, comentar que ésta concluye de forma adecuada, sin prisas, sin dejar cabos por atar ni historias por terminar. De hecho el autor nos cuenta algo al finalizar, y es que a veces no siempre las novelas son todo ficción...

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### **Antonio says**

Yo ya sabía de sobra el buen hacer de Gómez-Jurado a la hora de contar historias. Sin embargo, lo que más agradezco por 'El emblema del traidor' es la genial manera de transportarnos a ese momento histórico. Durante los días que he dedicado a este libro he procurado documentarme yo también sobre el tema y he visto un par de documentales sobre Adolf Hitler, he escuchado algunos podcast sobre el nazismo para intentar comprender mejor la situación y tengo en mente leer algunos libros sobre el tema.

Una novela fabulosamente escrita con una historia de venganza digna de ser trasladada al cine en una de las épocas más apasionantes de la historia de la humanidad. Además, sabemos que al menos el principio de la novela está basado en hechos reales. Si realmente el trasfondo es cierto probablemente nunca lo sabremos pero... ¿y si lo fuera?

El resto de mi opinión lo podéis encontrar en *El Planeta de mis Nimios*

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### **Entertainmentfocus says**

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.** *The Traitor's Emblem* is the latest novel from Spanish writer Juan Gómez-Jurado. The setting is a different European country, as the story follows the lives of two closely-related but feuding German families through the twin horrors of the World Wars.

The book opens with a tantalising prologue of a storm at sea in 1940, from which four enigmatic Germans are rescued from drowning. One of the saved – a man with only one eye – imparts a departing gift to their valiant Spanish saviours – a solid gold and diamond emblem. It's the story behind this mysterious man and his priceless but sinister gift that forms the rest of the narrative. The identity of the one-eyed man remains a puzzle until very late in the book, and turns out to be an astonishingly clever twist in a plot full of delightfully clever surprises.

Although the World Wars and other effects such as the economic depression in Germany after the Treaty of Versailles, and the inevitable rise of the Nazi party form the backdrop of the novel, *The Traitor's Emblem* isn't overtly political. Although it helps to know the basics, a thorough understanding of Twentieth Century history isn't required to enjoy the story, as Gómez-Jurado ensures that the plot is always character-driven. There are plenty of mysteries that slowly unfold, as Gómez-Jurado keeps a masterly grip on the unweaving of his tale. Why the gold and diamond emblem is considered a traitor's emblem, lending itself to the title of the piece, and why it's worth a fortune is one of the central enigmas, linked to the esoteric cult of the Masons, with which two of the characters become embroiled.

In a deliberately confusing opening, it's not clear who the protagonist of the story is (the device of a story within a story, a tad hackneyed these days perhaps, is put to imaginative use), but it emerges as Paul Reiner,

a young man whose family work as servants for the rich Shroeders, even though his mother is the sister of the lady of the house. There are sustained and deeply entrenched rivalries and secrets between the families. From childhood Paul experiences a bitter feud with his cousin Jürgen, a handsome bully who flouts his wealth and status (he will inherit his father's title of Baron) over his lowly cousin. Paul falls for the Jewish Alys Tannenbaum, whose wealthy father wants to arrange a marriage between her and Jürgen, whom she despises. Their lives are destined to remain forever entwined, and despite the massive historical events happening all around them, fate contrives to bring the three of them into contact time and time again.

Gómez-Jurado is a writer of consummate skill. He makes you care for the main characters and their fates, whilst creating a richly complex and compelling story. *The Traitor's Emblem* is a real page-turner, with something exciting or unexpected happening in each of the short chapters; so it's easy to devour the whole book in only a few sittings. The beauty and quality of the prose (thanks to an excellent translation by Daniel Hahn) ensures that doing so is a real pleasure.

There's nothing that fundamentally doesn't work about the book. The characters; their believable romances and obsessions; the intriguing plot that constantly astonishes and the quality of the prose and the grip Gómez-Jurado keeps on the timeline as the story belts through the years are all first-rate, and the work of a mature and highly gifted writer.

There are some truly exceptional moments, but it is difficult to discuss them in detail without giving away major spoilers, and it's the unremitting revelations that are one of the book's greatest assets. In fact, there are several occasions where the reader learns something even about dead characters that completely alters their perception of them. I will say that a climactic scene in the Nazi concentration camp Dachau is truly breathtaking.

Readers of a nervous disposition should be warned that some passages are delightfully gruesome. The fate of Jürgen's brother Eduard, who returns home from World War One with missing limbs, is simultaneously moving and grotesque. It's he who whispers a secret into Paul's ear from his sickbed, telling him that his long dead father didn't die at sea, but was murdered. Paul's quest to find out the truth about his enigmatic father and the nature of his death drives him like an obsession, worsening the older he gets.

*The Traitor's Emblem* is a fantastic read that should appeal to a wide range of people. It's extremely beautifully written, which more literate readers will enjoy. Whilst the thriller tends to be a genre favoured by men; the character of Alys is strongly written, and there's a well-developed element of romance. The period setting and the intriguing mysteries should appeal equally to both sexes.

Thankfully, given that the market reached saturation point some years ago for the genre, there aren't any elements of the supernatural in the story. Instead, *The Traitor's Emblem* stands as a solid historical thriller. Highly recommended.

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### **Robert Ashbacher says**

Other reviews go into more details, but here is my own quick response to *The Traitor's Emblem*. Once I started reading, I simply could not put it down. This was a true page-turner, as it was very well developed, and structured as a novel. Also, there is no doubt a tremendous amount of research was conducted by Gomez Jurado, with a lot of information around which to frame a story. One of the best historical novels I've ever read. It's disguised as a thriller, but when you think about it this is the tale of how Germany went downhill

because of Hitler. Think about it while you enjoy this great novel.

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### **Leo C. says**

En una sola palabra... ¡ESPECTACULAR!

Juan Gómez-Jurado ya me cautivó con "La Leyenda del Ladrón" y esta no se queda atrás ni mucho menos.

¡Qué me ha encantado se queda corto!

Que haya una historia real detrás es lo que más me ha gustado. Si alguien quiere ampliar información:

Video(1/3): <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8mu...>

Video(2/3): <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8n2...>

Video (3/3) <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8n2...>

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### **DebbieSanders says**

Spanish journalist turned author Juan Gomez-Jurado is going places, winner of the impressive sounding 'Premio de Novela Ciudad de Torrevieja' (even more impressive when you learn the prize was a half million US\$), the rights to his first book (God's Spy) have been sold in 42 countries, his first two books claim 3 million readers and his third and latest 'The Traitors Emblem' is being translated into 40 languages.

'Traitors Emblem' is set in post world war one Germany against the background of poverty and misery when a bucketfull of D-Marks would not buy you a bread roll and continuing through the later rise of Hitler's Brownshirt and Blackshirt bully boys as fascism started to take hold of every facet of everyday German life. Mr Gomez-Jurado does pick up on the prevailing atmosphere of fear for both Jews and non Jews. He has also done some pretty detailed research on German Masonry as Freemasonry and it's persecution is also one of the central themes.

Other reviewers have given an idea of the story, suffice to say the plot is fairly credible, some twists you see coming and some you don't. The story is dark in places, sons paying for the sins of their fathers and sinning themselves, some quite graphic violence but it is a page turner that keeps you immersed, the characters are well developed, the style is good but I do wonder if it has lost a fraction in translation. Solid five star reading and I will look out for his other titles.

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### **Connors says**

Fun to read! A work of fiction that created enough intrigue to make me look up some facts. The writer was able to really paint a visual image of that difficult times - very entertaining!

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## **Anne says**

Now on sale for Kindle, this book is only \$0.99. I've not read it (yet), but it's been on my TBR forever and now I don't have to smudge my hardcover! Get your copy [here](#).

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## **Librarian says**

This is a well crafted novel with nicely defined, believable characters. The main action is set in the years before the Second World War during a time of political upheaval in Germany.

The story is of dark family secrets and the rivalry and bitterness between Paul and Jurgen involving the liberated young woman, Alys. Slowly these turn to hatred and the need for revenge.

Finally the family secrets and the creation and meaning of the 'emblem' are revealed.

This novel has plenty of action and intrigue to hold the reader's attention.

Recommended as a worthwhile read.

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## **María E Sanz says**

Hace un par de horas que he terminado de leer "El Emblema del Traidor" y aún estoy conmocionada y emocionada con esta novela, sin ninguna duda, la mejor de las publicadas hasta ahora por Juan Gómez Jurado.

Soy una lectora compulsiva, unos libros me gustan más, otros menos, pero a veces, me cuesta encontrar un libro que me toque de verdad el corazón. Hacía muchos meses que no encontraba un libro que me entusiasmara de verdad. Pues bien, este lo ha hecho, y tardaré bastante en olvidarlo.

Es una historia fascinante, con unos personajes increíbles, y con un protagonista con el que empatizas desde el primer segundo en que aparece.

Magnífico es también el marco histórico en el que se desarrolla la novela, la Alemania de entreguerras, ese período convulso e importantísimo de la Historia de Europa, pero que, y yo me pongo la primera, conocemos tan poco.

Grandiosos también el Prólogo y el Epílogo, que recomiendo leer con muchísima atención.

En fin, no sé si esta novela, tiene algún defecto, supongo que sí, pero en este momento, yo no soy capaz de encontrarle ninguno.

¿Y qué puedo decir de Juan Gómez Jurado? Cada libro que publica es mejor que el anterior. Con este ha puesto el listón muy alto, pero estoy convencida de que el próximo libro que publique lo superará.

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## **Claire says**

I received this book as part of the Amazon Vine Program. I was attracted to this novel by its setting - Munich during the time of the Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazis.

I won't give a blow-by-blow account of the plot; I don't like to give away too much as it spoils the enjoyment for the reader. The tale is set in motion by the mystery of a strange medal-like object which a Spanish captain passes on to his son; only in 2002 is the origin of the emblem finally explained.

Gómez-Jurado skilfully uses the backdrop of an economically ruined Germany with all its despair, political turmoil, anger, violence and decadence to tell his back-story of Paul Reiner's search for the truth about his father's death and the reasons for the bitter treatment he and his mother endure working as servants in the home of their aristocratic, but bankrupt relatives. After an altercation with one thuggish cousin and the suicide of another, Paul learns that a dark secret has been kept from him; meanwhile mother and son are forced to leave and fend for themselves...

I had no difficulty in accepting the picture of Munich from the 20's and 30's that the author paints; there is always a danger that attitudes or linguistic phrases that sound a little too modern when historical settings are employed can creep in, but I didn't find anything objectionably anachronistic here and the historical details and events woven into the plot seem to be accurate; the narrative flows at a good pace - short chapters with cliff-hanging endings ensure you keep reading - a good device - and this author knows how to use it! I can't comment on the quality of the translation, but the language is of a good standard throughout. It was - for me - a fast, easy and very enjoyable read with an ambitious breadth to the plot. Some of the characters are a little two-dimensional and credibility is stretched in places, but I think on the whole this is a pretty recommendable mystery/thriller which will appeal to a wide readership. A postscript explains the true story that led to the novel being written.

I do think we'll be hearing a lot more of Gómez-Jurado...

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## **Tess says**

My husband is a blogger, and he received the Advance Reading Copy of this novel. This book is set mainly in the period leading up to WW11, most of the events taking place in Munich. It concerns two boys as they grow into men. Jürgen, the son of a baron, is a nasty piece of work who becomes a dedicated follower of Adolf Hitler. He ends up in the SS working under Reinhard Heydrich with Adolf Eichmann as a colleague. He is violent by nature and so well suited to his role in the SS, where he is given the task of infiltrating Masonic Lodges. Heydrich wants lists of members, intending to have them disposed of. (As the author tells us, Heydrich was famous for his extensive, and deadly, card-index system).

The other boy is Paul Reiner. Paul wants to know what really happened to his father. He realises that the explanation given for his death is not true and spends several years, many of them in Africa, trying to work out who shot him and why. The love interest centres on Paul, who falls for Alys Tannenbaum, a Jewish-American girl recently returned from the United States.

Jürgen and Paul knew each other as boys and Jürgen never tires of victimising Paul, though it is noticeable that when he attacks him he likes to do it mob-handed, with the support of his friends.

The author has put a lot of work into this book. Some of the set pieces, such as the attacks on Paul, are described in great detail. The novel is expertly plotted, with one grisly episode and a twist towards the end which I won't spoil things by revealing. A recommended read.

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### **Chris says**

This had all the potential to be a very good book. Unfortunately, it ended up being merely OK. The story begins with the captain of a Spanish boat rescuing a group of Germans lashed to a raft in a howling storm. In return for saving their lives, the leader of the group gives him an unusual medal that appears to combine Masonic symbols with things definitely unMasonic. The rest of the book is the tale of how that medal came to be and how the German man got it. It is the story of a Munich family in Weimar Germany. There are two cousins, Jurgen and Paul, close in age but nothing alike in temperament. Jurgen shows all the signs of being a sociopath. It's no spoiler to say he will fit in perfectly with Adolph Hitler's thugs. Paul is obsessed with the father he never knew, convinced there is more to the story of his father's death than what he's been told. Then there is the girl, Alys—beautiful, headstrong, and the daughter of a wealthy Jewish industrialist. She's in love with Paul but promised by her father to Jurgen. These figures battle it out, literally and figuratively, against the desperation that followed World War I and the rise of Nazism. Where the book fails is in the characterizations. None has a lot of depth. Paul is heroic and Jurgen is evil at almost comic-book levels. Alys is the disobedient daughter we've seen in a thousand books. Also, the revelations about Masonry, which seem like they should be much more essential to the plot, come and go with large gaps in between. And yet the story is compelling enough to keep you reading. The ending is relatively satisfying with a nice plot twist. But I couldn't help closing the book without thinking there should have been more.

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### **Almudena Navarro says**

Increíble! Súper recomendable

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### **Lucy Spillmann says**

The Traitor's Emblem is a thoroughly enjoyable novel. It is written really simply and as a result is not a challenge to read the way some novels can be. I like novels that have any kind of link with the social impact of the two world wars and this covers both wars to a certain extent and was done very interestingly. Initially I was not keen on the opening scene as I felt it gave away the fates of some of the characters but actually it is not as simple as I thought. The final scenes were surprising in a good way with some twists I did not see coming. I do feel frustrated with the events some characters go through (particularly Paul) but I can see why you have to make them endure the bad to enjoy the good. Overall an enjoyable, easy and often surprising read.

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### **Guadalupe says**

Con una buena historia y un marco histórico muy interesante ha conseguido Gómez-Jurado elaborar un libro de los que atrapan desde las primeras páginas.

El autor además ha trazado la historia de tal manera que no deja ningún fleco suelto y tampoco incurre en demasiados hechos “de los que no hay quien se crea”, construyendo una novela redonda, con un ritmo que se mantiene constante.

Los personajes están bien dibujados aunque echo de menos un poco más de profundidad en sus personalidades, supongo que si el autor no lo ha hecho ha sido precisamente para no romper el ritmo de la novela.

El periodo de entreguerras es sin duda un personaje más, creo que la frase: “ El miedo era patente en cada rostro, por lo mucho que todos se esforzaban en disimularlo”, es demoledora.

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### **Laurie Evans says**

This is a book that has you on the edge of your seat for the entire storyline. Gomez Jurado does a wonderful job connecting historical facts with fiction. The love story plot it was good, but not perfect. All in all, The Traitor's Emblem is a great novel.

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### **Beth says**

THE TRAITOR'S EMBLEM begins in the Straits of Gibraltar in March, 1940. In the midst of a terrible storm, the crew of the Spanish naval vessel, Esperanza, rescues four German sailors from a life boat. The rescue could have cost Captain Manuel Gonzalez Pereira his life but he couldn't leave the Germans to die. Agreeing to alter his course, Captain Gonzalez takes the Germans to a point near the coast of Portugal. As a token of his gratitude, the German officer, a man with one eye, leading the group gives Gonzalez a gift, a medal made of solid gold. The German puts his finger on his chest and says “verrat” – treachery . Then he puts his finger on Gonzalez's chest and says “rettung” – salvation. Then he and his three compatriots disappear.

Gonzalez retires from the sea and when he can spare time from his bookstore, he researches the medal he was given in 1940. “It was a double-headed eagle set on an iron cross. The eagle was holding a sword, and there was a number 32 above its head and an enormous diamond encrusted in its chest.” Gonzalez learns that it is a German Masonic emblem but the Germans did not use “noble” metals such as gold, silver, or platinum so its origins are mysterious.

When Gonzalez died, his son, Juan-Carlos, inherited the shop and the mysterious medal. In 2002, an old man came to the shop to give a talk about his book on Freemasonry. No one came and to make his guest more comfortable, Juan-Carlos showed the man the picture of the medal. The old man began to haunt the shop and Juan-Carlos. He offered to buy it, he begged and pleaded. Juan-Carlos agreed but only after the old man told him the story of the strange Traitor's Emblem.

From 2002, the story goes back to 1919 and the terrible years between the end of World War I and the rise of the Nazi party in Germany. Set primarily in Munich, it is the story of Paul Reiner, his hunt for the true story behind the death of his father, his relationship with his cousin, Jurgen, and his interest and membership in the Masonic Society.

The story deserves to be read and enjoyed on its own merits; to tell more is to tell too much. What can be said without intruding on the story is that the author creates an atmosphere in the book that engulfs the reader

as it does the characters in the story. Paul Reiner is a sympathetic character. His cousin, Jurgen, becomes a willing participant in the nascent SA, a bully who wants to damage and corrupt. Jurgen's internal corruption is such that he is part of the inner circle of Reinhard Heydrich and Adolph Eichmann. When asked to infiltrate Masonic Lodges to uncover yet another Jewish conspiracy, Jurgen is more than willing. He knows Paul is a member of the Masons. Paul isn't Jewish but Jurgen is not unwilling to use whatever he can to get rid of the cousin he hates.

Until researching some of the information in the book, I did not know that the Masons had been another victim of Nazi paranoia. As a secret society, it could not continue to exist in Germany. Members who had achieved high degrees in the society were suspected of being Jews or hiding Jews. The author provides a great deal of information about Masonic rituals and the handshakes. I do not know if this is material from the Masons or the fruit of the author's imagination. I prefer not to know; either way is intriguing.

In the Author's Notes, Gomez-Jurado provides this information – "The Masons were the object of persecution during the Nazi dictatorship in Germany: more than eighty thousand of them died in the concentration camps. An ancient Masonic legend claims that the fall of all the lodges was the fault of one single Mason who sold all the others out to the Nazis."

Children reported their parents for listening to the BBC. Neighbors turned neighbors into the Gestapo for infractions that would have been impossible to prove but led to the deaths of the accused anyway. If the Masons were destroyed by one person, it would not have been unusual in that time and in that place.

I reviewed Gomez-Jurado's *THE MOSES EXPEDITION*. That book and *THE TRAITOR'S EMBLEM* do not seem to have been written by the same person. Two absolutely different stories written in two absolutely different voices is an accomplishment that can only be achieved by a very talented author.

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