



Jesus Boy

Preston L. Allen

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"Allen has created a consummate tragicomedy of African American family secrets and sorrows, and of faith under duress and wide open to interpretation. Perfect timing and crackling dialogue, as well as heartrending pain balanced by uproarious predicaments, make for a shout-hallelujah tale of transgression and grace, a gospel of lusty and everlasting love."

--*Booklist*

"Like Dostoyevsky, Allen colorfully evokes the gambling milieu—the chained (mis)fortunes of the players, their vanities and grotesqueries, their quasi-philosophical ruminations on chance. Like Burroughs, he is a dispassionate chronicler of the addict's daily ritual, neither glorifying nor vilifying the matter at hand."

--*The New York Times Book Review, on All or Nothing*

Into an austere community of Christian believers at the Church of Our Blessed Redeemer Who Walked Upon the Waters come the star-crossed African American Romeo and Juliet. In the world of *Jesus Boy*, Romeo is sixteen-year-old Elwyn Parker, a devout and sincere piano prodigy who learns too late that the saintly girl he has had a crush on all his life is inexplicably pregnant and soon to be wed. Juliet is the beautiful widow, Sister Morrisohn, age forty-two, who, in the pain and confused emotions of her grieving, ends up in Elwyn's arms.

Despite the problems posed by their age difference and the strict prohibitions of their strong religious beliefs, Elwyn and Sister Morrisohn's love is true, and as it grows among the ascetics, abstainers, and holy ghost rollers of their church, it exposes with wit, poignancy, and insight the dark secrets and ancient crimes of the pious. In *Jesus Boy*, Elwyn learns through tragedy and epiphany that the holy are no different from the rest of us.

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