



Transcendental (The Transcendental Machine)

By James Gunn

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Transcendental (The Transcendental Machine) By James Gunn

Riley, a veteran of interstellar war, is one of many beings from many different worlds aboard a ship on a pilgrimage that spans the galaxy. However, he is not journeying to achieve transcendence, a vague mystical concept that has drawn everyone else on the ship to this journey into the unknown at the far edge of the galaxy. His mission is to find and kill the prophet who is reputed to help others transcend. While their ship speeds through space, the voyage is marred by violence and betrayal, making it clear that some of the ship's passengers are not the spiritual seekers they claim to be.

Like the pilgrims in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, a number of those on the starship share their unique stories. But as tensions rise, Riley realizes that the ship is less like the *Canterbury Tales* and more like a harrowing, deadly ship of fools. When he becomes friendly with a mysterious passenger named Asha, he thinks she's someone he can trust. However, like so many others on the ship, Asha is more than she appears. Uncovering her secrets could be the key to Riley's personal quest, or make him question everything he thought he knew about Transcendentalism and his mission to stop it.

James Gunn's *Transcendental* is a space adventure filled with excitement and intrigue that explores the nature of what unifies all beings.

A *Kirkus Reviews* Best Fiction Book of 2013

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Fascinating, frustrating conundrums are the core of this novel by one of the oldest living SFWA Grand Masters. Riley, a disillusioned soldier of fortune, has been sent on a pilgrimage in search of a machine rumored to offer transcendence, which here means fulfillment of one's potential. Riley's anonymous employers are worried that faith in transcendence might disturb the Galactic Federation's uneasy balance of power following a devastating war between humans and aliens. His orders are to destroy the machine and kill the mysterious prophet guarding it. But Riley is only one among a crowd of human and alien pilgrims aboard a rundown spaceship; all are suspicious of each other, and only a few are willing to explain themselves in lengthy tales that might or might not be true. Gunn keeps the action dancing nimbly through uneasy alliances, abrupt betrayals, and sudden violence as the ship sails through the starless void toward its destination. Perhaps inevitably, the conclusion is anticlimactic, making the novel feel like the first installment of a much longer story. (Sept.)

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Gunn, whose science fiction novels include the classics *Star Bridge* (1955) and *The Immortals* (1962), hasn't published a new title in about eight years, which is too long for a voice as strong as his to remain silent. Considering how good this novel is, readers will probably forgive him his lengthy absence. The story involves a human ex-soldier, Riley, who's coerced into joining an interstellar, multirace pilgrimage in the hopes of identifying the Prophet, the man or, perhaps, the alien being who promises transcendence to another spiritual plane at the end of the long journey. Identify the Prophet, and then kill him—that's the plan. But as Riley begins to learn more about his fellow passengers aboard the dilapidated spaceship *Geoffrey*, he begins to question his mission and his own feelings about transcendence. Very loosely structured like a far-future *Canterbury Tales* (the ship is named after Chaucer, and individual chapters recount the stories of some of the key characters), with literary allusions to works as varied as T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, the novel offers a thoughtful and thought-provoking examination of the delicate nature of personal faith and the power of human (and nonhuman) relationships. An ambitious and resoundingly successful novel from the resurgent Gunn. --David Pitt

Review

"Jim Gunn doesn't publish a new novel very often, but when he does it's a whopper. *Transcendental* is his best yet, and in it he demonstrates his possession of one of the most finely developed skills at world-building (and at aliens-creating to populate those worlds) in science fiction today. Read it!" ?*Frederik Pohl, bestselling author of Gateway*

"James Gunn, after a long, stellar career in science fiction, is a master of the narrative art--as he shows in this Chaucerian pilgrimage through the galactic future." ?*Robert Silverberg, bestselling author of Lord Valentine's Castle*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dirk Sullivan:

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in most way. By being competitive currently, people have do something to make these survives, being in the middle of the particular crowded place and notice by simply surrounding. One thing that occasionally many people have underestimated the idea for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a book your ability to survive boost then having chance to remain than other is high. To suit your needs who want to start reading a book, we give you this Transcendental (The Transcendental Machine) book as nice and daily reading publication. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

Stephen Wilson:

The publication untitled Transcendental (The Transcendental Machine) is the guide that recommended to you to study. You can see the quality of the reserve content that will be shown to you actually. The language that publisher use to explained their ideas are easily to understand. The article author was did a lot of study when write the book, to ensure the information that they share to you is absolutely accurate. You also could get the e-book of Transcendental (The Transcendental Machine) from the publisher to make you a lot more enjoy free time.

Kayla France:

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