



# The Jesse Tree

Books Reviewed:

[The Jesse Tree](#) [1]

Issue:

[145](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[George Hunt](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

A Jesse tree is a picture of the lineage from jesse, the father of King David, to Christ. In medieval renderings, still to be seen in stone and stained glass in places such as Dorchester Abbey, the genealogy was represented as a vine or a tree whose branches bore as fruit images or symbols of the ancestors of Christ and the prophets who proclaimed his coming. McCaughrean uses this icon to grow a tree of stories linking the old and new testaments. She plants her tree in a seaside resort where a testy old carpenter is carving a new Jesse tree into a panel of oak in the local church. His work is constantly interrupted by a chatty boy who demands to know the significance of the pictures. The carpenter gradually gets to tolerate and like the child, and the stories unfold as the tree nears completion. This book is an outstandingly successful demonstration of McCaughrean's skill at retelling traditional stories for contemporary audiences. Bee Willey's bright illustrations bring out both the vividness of the stories and the poignancy of the developing bond between the old man and the child, a poignancy sharpened by visual and textual motifs of childhood and childlessness. The book provides a delightful refresher course on salient points of Bible history for anybody who wants one; the religious element is clearly emphasised but it does not attempt to preach. Highly recommended for readers of all ages.

Running Order:

65

---

Source URL (retrieved on Jun '20): <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/145/childrens-books/reviews/the-jesse-tree>

## Links:

[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/the-jesse-tree>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/145>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/george-hunt>