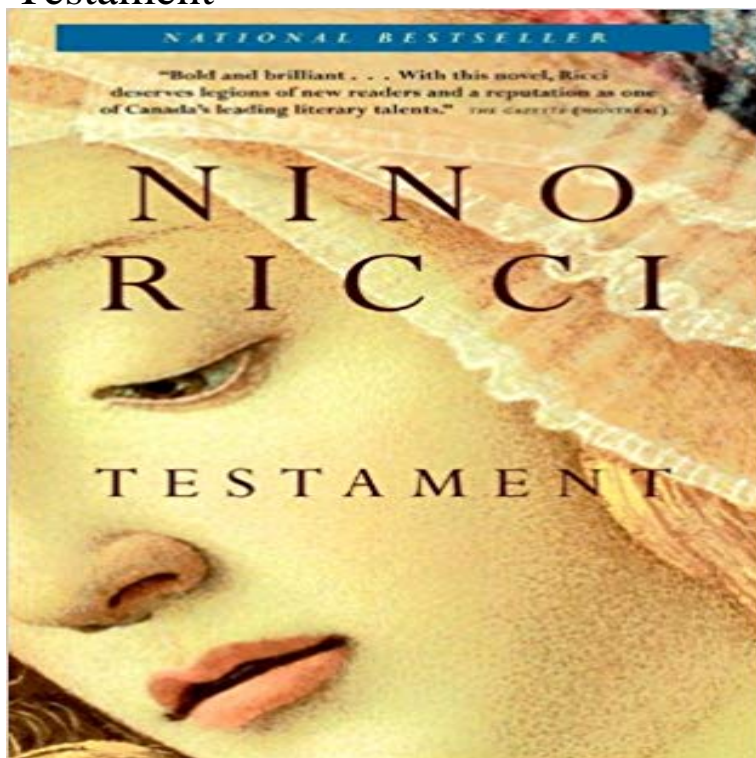


Testament



From Governor General's Award-winner Nino Ricci, one of Canada's most highly acclaimed literary voices, *Testament* is a bold work of historical fiction. Set in a remote corner of the Roman Empire at a moment of political unrest and spiritual uncertainty, it re-tells the life of a holy man of enormous charisma who alters the course of human history. Grounded in extensive research, and written with the poetic sensibility that has earned Ricci an international reputation, *Testament* vividly re-creates first-century Palestine in elegant but accessible prose to explore the story of the man we know as Jesus. *Testament* at once distances us from the familiar accounts by using Hebrew and Aramaic names. Moreover, he offers the story of Yeshua (Jesus) through the eyes and testimony of four fictional followers, reminiscent of yet utterly different from the Gospels, giving fresh perspective and a captivating narrative to an age-old story.

- Yihuda of Qiryat (Judas Iscariot) is a rebel freedom fighter working for Rome's overthrow, who sees Yeshua come in from the desert. He is drawn to him; and yet he is full of doubt, always an outsider, too intellectual to simply accept and be accepted. Tell me your secret, he thinks, make me new.

- Miryam of Migdal (Mary Magdalene), whose family make a living curing fish, is captivated by the way Jesus includes her among his followers, who he encourages to ask questions and challenge him. For this woman, kept back by society from intellectual stimulation, he reached inside me with his words to touch the inmost part of me.

- Yeshua's mother Miryam tells us plainly that he was the result of a rape by a Roman legate; she was forced to marry an old man named Yehoceph, and give birth in his rough lodgings. Her eldest son quickly set himself apart from his siblings. She shows how he learned from different teachers, always quick to challenge received

knowledge.- Finally, we read the account of Simon of Gergesa, a Greek shepherd who sees Jesus with hundreds of followers on a hill across the lake, and comes to the shore to hear him. This was strange enough, for a Jew, to come out in search of us Syrians and Greeks. Simon, who finds great sense in Jesus teachings, relates to us the last days of the Jewish preacher.

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