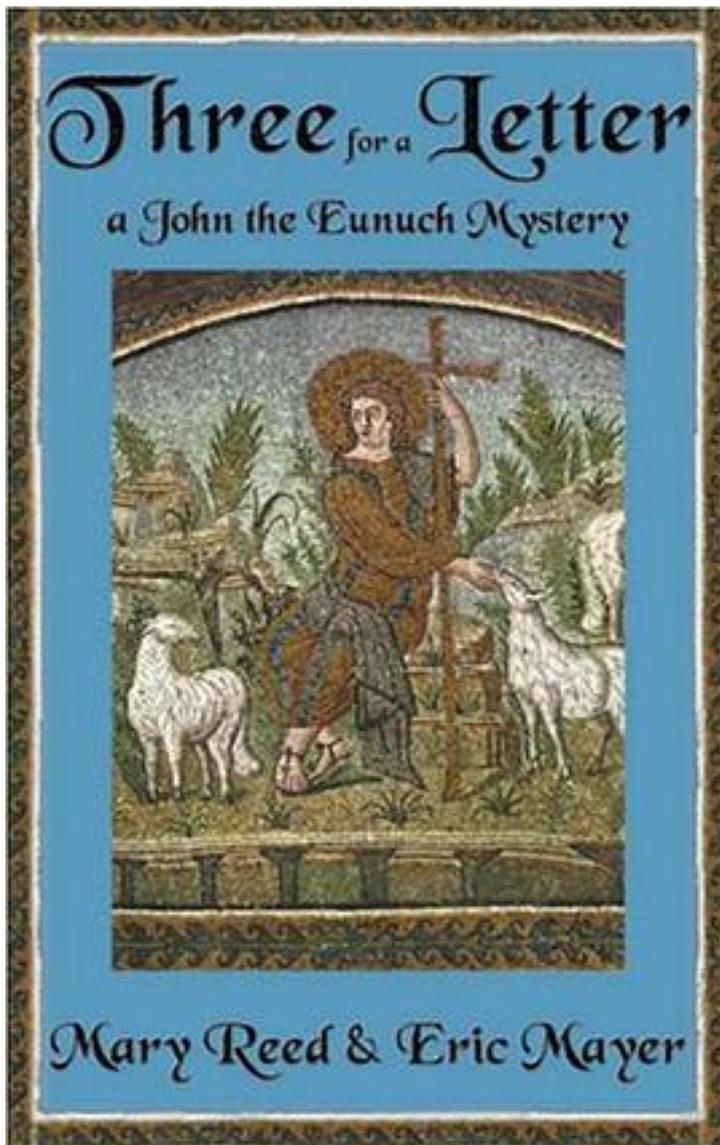


Three for a Letter



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It is 539 AD and as the reconquest of Italy draws toward its close, a pair of eight-year old twins descended from the last Ostrogothic king have become valuable pawns in Emperor Justinian's plans to restore the glory of Rome. Unfortunately, during the performance of a play at a banquet honoring the two young diplomatic hostages, death makes an entrance and claims one brother. Then Empress Theodora's favorite mime vanishes and John, Lord Chamberlain to Justinian, is ordered to find both the missing mime and the murderer. In this third John the Eunuch novel, his investigations are hampered by squabbling courtiers, servants harboring social ambitions, an eccentric host, and an egotistic inventor, not to mention the complications posed by a herd of prophesying goats and a protective whale. His friends the Mithran Anatolius and the excubitor captain Felix only add to John's worries when they fall under the spell of two ambitious women. Can the trio avoid Theodora's wrath as they work to protect a child and stop a heartless killer? It is uncertain whether the solution lies within the villa where all have assembled or back in Constantinople--or in some other world altogether.

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