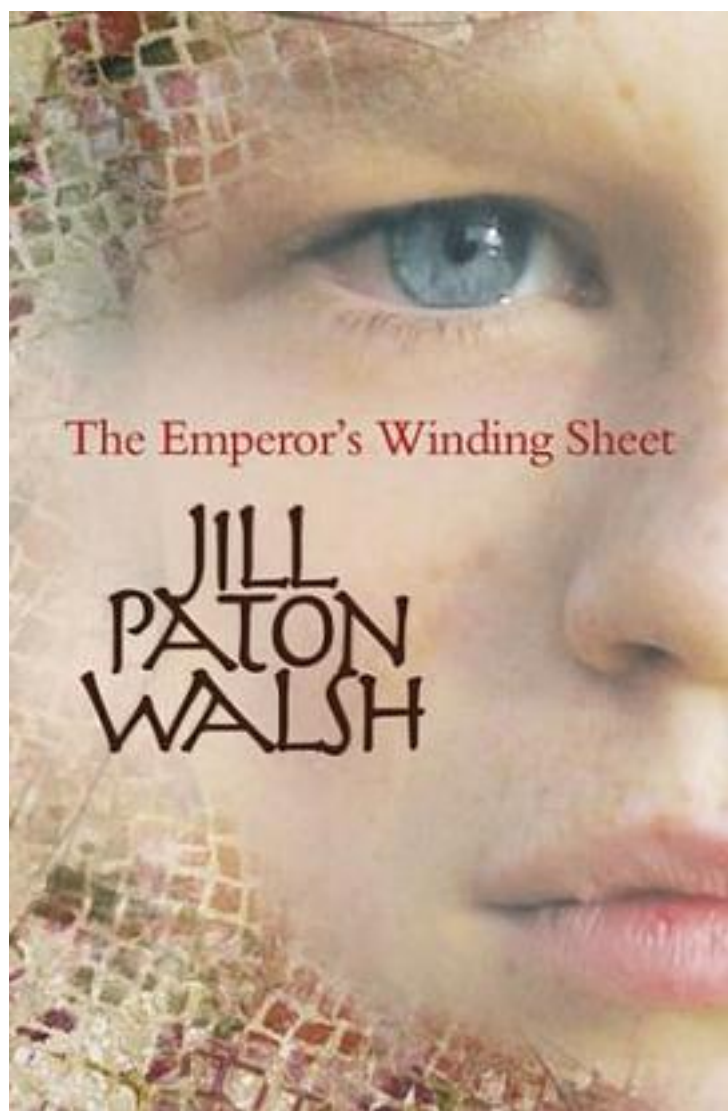


The Emperor's Winding Sheet



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In this exciting historical adventure, a famished, exhausted, and terrified boy drops from the tree in which he has hidden just as Constantine, last Emperor of the Romans, is about to receive his crown. Thus Piers Barber, shipwrecked young seaman from Bristol, England, now renamed Vrethiki ("lucky find"), becomes an unwilling talisman to the Emperor, for it has been prophesied that if even one person who is at his side when he takes the crown stays with him always, the City will not perish. Jill Paton Walsh brings a meticulous eye for detail and storyteller's skill to this tale of the fall of Constantinople and the siege that marked the end of the Byzantine Empire. Fractured by bitter rivalries and corruption, the City nevertheless inspired its defenders to extraordinary feats. Through the darkening months, Vrethiki finds renewed faith, inspired too to see the City as a vision worth dying for and the Emperor as his own true lord.

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