

## Wilderness House Literary Review 19/1

**Search: The First John Chance Mystery**  
by Joseph Carrabis  
Northern Lights Publishing, 461 pages

review by Dan Linton

For me, *Search* defies classification – what genre would you place a star-crossed lovers-reluctant-heroes-journey-psycho-detective-paranormal-murder-mystery-story? And honestly, that's only a few of the possible descriptors. Like any great mystery novel, *Search* winds and twists its many threads together in a very satisfying way, but it is so much more than just a mystery novel. And it accomplishes all that while at the same time diving headfirst into both the best and absolute worst of what people can be.

In *Search*, we again meet John Chance – aka Gio Fortuna – whom we first encountered in *The Shaman*. While you don't need to read *The Shaman* first, I highly recommend doing so. *The Shaman* isn't a prequel per se, more like the timelines of the two books intertwine, and the additional context added significantly to my enjoyment of *Search*.

In *Search*, Gio decides, for better or for worse, to fully embrace who he is and what he can do. The ramifications of that decision are far reaching to say the least. The stage upon which this journey is set includes a variety of depraved characters committing all kinds of heinous crimes.

The narrative of the mystery is highly engaging, but the real current flowing behind it all is about the ethics of power. If you have power, over someone or something, do you use it for yourself or for others? Do you help or harm? What if it is harmful to help? What if using power for good alienates or harms those you most love? What are the rules? (Spoiler alert, the author provides a list of principles at the end of the novel).

These are the types of questions *Search* asks of its characters and of its readers, and that is why the novel resonated with me.

