

## **BOOK LISTS** from my **BOOK GROUPS**

I've been in two monthly book groups for a very long time. One group reads books of Jewish content or by Jewish authors or that we consider Jewish books for any reason. The other group (all women) reads whatever we feel like. At each meeting, we make a joint decision about what to read next. All these books are available in the Public Library system. I'm still adding details. An asterisk (\*) means I really liked it.

### **Jewish Book Group**

#### **2010**

R. Friedman	Who wrote the Bible?	He was unable to come up with a definite answer.
Harry Bernstein	Invisible Wall	Memoir - growing up Jewish and poor in England
Edna Ferber	A Peculiar Treasure	Memoir - growing up Jewish in Appleton, WI, by the author of Showboat.
Amos Oz	A Tale of Love and Darkness	Memoir – growing up in Israel during the British Mandate and after.

#### **2009**

A Pigeon and A Boy	Shalev	An modern Israeli novel solves a personal mystery from the War of Independence
*My Father's Paradise	Ariel Sabar	History of the author's family from Jewish Kurdistan
*Everything Is Illuminated	Jonathan Safran Foer	An American's wild journey to his Russian roots. (Good book, but see the movie also.)
Daniel Asa Rose	Hiding Places	A father and 2 sons discover their family's hiding places during the war.
Dara Horn	All Other Nights	A Jewish soldier in the

		American Civil War
Roya Hakarian	Journey from the Land of No	About the author's upbringing in Iran as Jewish girl.
Bernard Avishai	The Hebrew Republic	A suggestion for a Hebrew, rather than Jewish, state.
Daniel Dennett	Breaking the Spell	About religious belief
Herman Wouk	Margorie Morningstar	Growing up Jewish, rich, and spoiled in mid-20 <sup>th</sup> century New York

<b>2008</b>		
American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer	Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin	The life and trials of Oppenheimer
*People of the Book	Geraldine Brooks	Fictional history of the (real) Sarajevo Haggadah
Man in White Sharkskin Suit	Lucette Lagnado	Memoir of Egyptian Jewish family that emigrated to NY in 1060s.
George Gershwin biographies	Various	
*Gentlemen of the Road	Michael Chabon	Medieval Jewish swashbucklers get involved in Khazar political shenanigans.
*The Zookeeper's Wife	D. Ackerman	True story of Polish zookeepers who hide Jews in zoo during the Holocaust.
How to Read the Bible	Kugel	Discusses traditional and modern interpretations of the Bible.
*Year of Living Biblically	A.J. Jacobs	Jacobs spends a year following the Bible as literally as possible.

<b>2007</b>		
Murder Duet	Batya Gur	Musical murder mystery set in Israel
Einstein, His Life and Universe	Walter Isaacson	emphasis on personal life and discussion of his science aimed at non-scientists.
What Went Wrong: The clash between Islam and modernity in	Bernard Lewis	how Islamic people responded to the rise of European power

the Middle East.		and influence.
The Librettist of Venice: the remarkable life of Lorenzo Da Ponte, Mozart's poet, Casanova's friend, and Italian opera's impresario in America.	Rodney Bold	Mozart's Jewish librettist
Lemon Tree	Tolan	Palestinian family visits the house they lived in before 1948.
The Rise of David Levinsky	Abraham Cohan	Novel about a Russian Jewish immigrant in New York at the turn of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century.
Emma Lazarus	Esther Schor	Biography of the poet who wrote the inscription on Statue of Liberty
Depths of Glory	Irving Stone	Biographical novel of "father of impressionism" Camille Pissarro
Yiddish Policeman's Union	Michael Chabon	Alternate history/ mystery set among Jewish refugees in Alaska

<b>2006</b>		
Book of Lights	Chaim Potok	Novel about a kabbalist who becomes an army chaplain in Korea.
The Manor	I.B. Singer	Experiences of an extended Jewish family in late nineteenth century Poland.
Strangers in the House	Raja Shehadeh	Autobiography of a Palestinian lawyer born in Ramallah
Crossing California	A. Langer	Fictional account of a Chicago suburb in the 1970s
*Mazel	Rebecca Goldstein	Novel about three generations of Jewish women.
At the Entrance to the Garden of Eden: A Jew's Search for God with Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land	Yossi Klein Halevy	
The Fanatic	Meyer Levin	<i>Roman a clef</i> based on Levin's obsession and conflict over Anne Frank's diary.
Crimes of the City	Robert Rosenberg	Murder mystery set in Jerusalem in the 1980s

Prisoners	Jeffrey Goldberg	American reporter's experience as a soldier in an Israeli prison.
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<b>2005</b>		
The Plot Against America	Phillip Roth	Alternate history - Lindberg is elected U.S. president and supports Hitler's policies
The Last Kabbalist in Lisbon	Richard Zimler	Murder mystery set during the anti-Jewish massacres of 1506 in Portugal
Bethlehem Road Murder	Batya Gur	Mystery set in modern Jerusalem
Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief	Andrew Newberg, Eugene d'Aquili, and Vince Rause	
Postville: A Clash of cultures in Heartland America	Stephen Bloom	Interaction between cultures in Postville, Iowa, after Lubavitch Jews open kosher slaughterhouse
various Kabbalah books		
Passion of the Mind	Irving Stone	Fictional biography of Sigmund Freud
Outwitting History	Aaron Lansky	How the National Yiddish Book Center got started.
Inheriting the Holy Land	Jennifer Miller	Viewpoints of a variety of Israelis and Palestinians

<b>2004</b>		
Book of Lights	Chaim Potok	
American Judaism	Jonathan Sarna	Religious and social history
As a Driven Leaf	Milton Steinberg	
The Liberated Bride	A. B. Yehoshua	
The Essential Talmud	Adin Steinsaltz	Survey of the Talmud - history, structure & content, and method
*The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Klay	Michael Chabon	Post-war cousins who become comic book writers.
The English Disease: A Novel	Joseph Skibell	Novel about an angst-filled Jewish intellectual
The Bible Unearthed	Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman	Impact of current archeological studies on our understanding of the Bible
Herzog	Saul Bellow	Another novel about an angst-filled Jewish intellectual

<b>2003</b>		
*The New Rabbi	Stephen Fried	Follows the process of hiring a new rabbi for a major synagogue in Philadelphia.
*The Coffee Trader	David Liss	A novel about commercial speculation by Portuguese Jews in 17 <sup>th</sup> century Amsterdam.
Spinoza: A Life	Steven Nadler	Biography
His Brother's Keeper	Yossi Beilin	By an Israeli politician, about ties between Israel and the American Jewish community.
Daniel Deronda	George Eliot	Novel about a 19 <sup>th</sup> c. Jewish Englishman. (The movie is good also.)
Peony	Pearl S. Buck	Chinese-Jewish family in the 1840s.
Father, Sholom Aleichem	Marie Waife-Goldberg	Biography

<b>2002</b>		
Black Box	Amoz Oz	Novel told entirely in the form of letters, telegrams and notes.
*The Ritual Bath	Faye Kellerman	Detective story involving orthodox Jewish detectives. This is the first and best of the series.
The Book of Daniel	E.L. Doctorow	Novel based on the trial and execution of the Rosenbergs.
We are your Sons	Michael and Robert Meeropol	Written by the sons of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, it is part autobiography and part discussion of the case.
Six Days of War	Michael Oren	Detailed discussion of the six day war.
*Revenge	Laura Blumenfeld.	After Blumenfeld's father was shot by a Palestinian terrorist in Jerusalem, she went to Israel to meet the shooter.

<b>Previous Years</b>		
The Red Tent.	Anita Diamant	Biblical stories from Dina's point of view
Gifts of the Jews	Thomas Carlisle	
Jew Store	Stella Suberman	
Sotah.	Naomi Regen	
*The Physician	Noah Gordon	
One People Two Worlds		Two rabbis (orthodox, reform) discuss their points of view
Color of Water	James McBride	Jewish father, black mother.
Turbulent Souls	Stephen Dubner	Son of converts away from Judaism returns to his roots.
The Harlot by the Side of the Road	Jonathan Kersch	Subtitled "Forbidden Biblical Stories"
The Iron Cage	Rashid Khalidi	Palestinian Struggle for Statehood
The Essential Klezmer		
The Thirteenth Hour	Barbara Sofer	
After a Long Silence	Helen Fremont	
Bintel Brief		"lonely hearts" letters to the Yiddish press
One Palestine Complete	Tom Segev	Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate
The Inextinguishable Symphony	Martin Goldsmith	Holocaust love story – a violist and a flutist
Jew vs. Jew	Samuel Friedman	
The River Midnight	Lilian Nattell	Growing up in a Polish shtetl at the turn of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century
The Search for God at Harvard	Ari Goldman	NY Times reporter returns to school for divinity degree
*For the Relief of Unbearable Urges	Nathan Englander	Short Stories
Three Cities	Sholem Asch	
The Ghost of Hannah Mendes.	Naomi Regen	
Small Worlds	Alan Hoffman	
The Sacrifice of Isaac	Neil Gordon	
See Under: Love	David Grossman	
Old Men at Midnight.	Chaim Potok	
The Chosen	Chaim Potok	

## My Women's Book Group

### 2010

Ishmael Beah	A Long Way Gone	Memoire of a Child Soldier in Sierra Leone
Mary Ann Shaffer	Guernsey Potato Peel and Literary Society	Getting through the German occupation in the Channel Islands
Ayaan Hirsi Ali	The Infidel	Growing up Somali and finding oneself
Gail Collins	When Everything Changed	The women's movement from the 1960s.

### 2009

The Nine	Jeffrey Toobin	Insight into the Supreme Court Justices
River of Doubt	C. Mallard	Theodore Roosevelt's expedition in the Amazon
*The Book Thief	Marcus Zusac	A Jewish orphan survives the pain of WW2 through books.
Anne Faddiman	The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down	Describes history of Hmong and conflict of cultures via story of girl with epilepsy.
Geraldine Brooks	Nine Parts of Desire	Women in Muslim society
David Benioff	City of Thieves	An adventure in staying alive during the siege of Leningrad
Toni Morrison	A Mercy	
Per Petterson	On Stealing Horses	

### 2008

People of the Book	Geraldine Brooks	Fictional history of the (real) Sarajevo Haggadah
Three Cups of Tea	Greg Mortenson	building schools in Afghanistan

Stumbling on Happiness	Daniel Gilbert	Why people are/aren't happy
Water for Elephants	Sarah Gruen	about a circus vet
The Uncommon Reader	Alan Bennett	Queen Elizabeth reads novels
Range of Motion	Elisabeth Berg	husband goes into coma
One Thousand Splendid Suns	K. Hosseini	Also wrote Kite Runner

<b>2007</b>		
Suite Francaise	Irene Nemirovsky	French author died in Holocaust
On Beauty	Zadie Smith	
Rules for Old Men Waiting	Peter Pouncy	
Sweet Summer	Bebe Moore Campbell	summers with her father in the south
Bend in the River	V.S. Naipul	
Slaughterhouse Five	Kurt Vonnegut	
Glass Castle	Jeannette Walls	Girl growing up in intentionally impoverished home
The Wind Done Gone	Alice Randall	Gone with the Wind, a different perspective
God's Secretaries	Adam Nicolson	writing the King James Bible

<b>2006</b>		
First Wives Club	Olivia Goldsmith	Rejected 1 <sup>st</sup> wives take revenge
Mountains Beyond Mountains	Tracy Kidder	
Our Endangered Values	Jimmy Carter	
Accordion Crimes	Annie Proulx	
How to Breathe Underwater	Julie Orringer	
What's the Matter with Kansas	Thomas Frank	
The Bad Beginning	Lemony Snicket	

<b>2005</b>		
Desert Solitaire		
*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime	Mark Haddon	About an autistic boy
Ordinary Lives	Elizabeth Berg	
Under the Banner of Heaven	Krakauer	Mormons, very interesting
*The Name of the Rose	Umberto Eco	Medieval mystery
A Free Man of Color		

<b>2004</b>		
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*The Eyre Affair	Jasper Fforde	Pun-filled alternative universe mystery story for book-lovers. The whole series is great fun.
Women of the Silk	Gail Tsukiyama	Young girl sold into silk trade.
*Cry the Beloved Country	Alan Paton	South Africa. Very sad.
Reading Lolita in Teheran		
*Devil in the White City		On the making of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, set alongside a serial murder.
Kite Runner	K. Hosseini	
The Piano Tuner		

<b>2000-2003</b>		
Candide	Voltaire	In this best of all possible worlds...
The Pilot's Wife	Anita Shreve	During Irish "troubles"
My Year of Meats	Ruth Ozeki	Novel about unethical practices of the American meat industry, set in Japan.
Things Fall Apart	Chinua Achube	Western world comes to Nigeria
Four Letters of Love	Niall Williams	
The Innocents Within		
The Greatest Generation		World War II vignettes
Loot	Erin Elkins	Jewish art stolen by Nazis
The Short History of a Prince	Jane Hamilton	
Gallileo's Daughter	Sobel	
Jazz	Toni Morrison	

<b>1998-99</b>		
The Professor and the Madman	Simon Winchester:	The making of the OED
The Divine Secret of the Ya Ya Sisterhood	Rebecca Wells	
Roommates	Max Apple	Story of a grandson and grandfather.
Welcome to the World Baby Girl	Fannie Flagg	
Our Kind	Lawrence Gordon	
The Poisonwood Bible	Barbara Kingsolver	Missionary family in Kenya
The Sparrow	Mary Doria Russell	Jesuits on another planet
The Horse Whisperer	Nicholas Evans	
Yellow Raft in Blue Water	Michael Dories	
Cold Mountain		Civil war story
The Beekeeper's Apprentice	Laurie R. King	

The Physician	Noah Gordon	Medieval physician
The Gates of November	Chaim Potek	
Children of God	Mary Doria Russell	Sequel to The Sparrow
The Weight of Water	Anita Shreve	

<b>1996-97</b>		
I Married Wyatt Earp	Josie Marcus	Wyatt Earp's Jewish wife
The Book of Ruth	Jane Hamilton	
Time After Time	Allen Appel	Revisits the Russian Revolution
Tortilla Curtain		Mexican Immigrants in California
The Color of Water	James McBride	Interracial son deals with things
Snow In August	Peter Hamill	
The Celestine prophecy		
Moo	Jane Smiley	in a Midwest college, things happen
Women of the Inner Sea	Thomas Keneally	
Snow Falling on Cedars	David Guterson	Japanese family in Seattle that was interred during WW2
Ladder of Years	Anne Tyler	Married woman goes off to find her own life
New Passages	Gail Sheehy	
Emma	Jane Austin	
Tales of the City	Armistead Maupin	Life in San Francisco
The Weight of Water		

<b>1994-95</b>		
What Johnny Shouldn't Read		
The English Patient		
Object lessons	Anna Quindlan	
Death in a Tenured Position	Carolyn G.Heilbrun	mystery
The Children of Men	P.D. James	
The Road of Coorain	Jill Ker Conway	
True North	Jill Ker Conway	
Like Water For Chocolate		
Having our Say	Delaney	100 year old sisters
Pigs in Heaven	Barbara Kingsolver	
D-Day	Stephen Ambrose	A history
The Shipping News	E. Ann Proulx	
Men are from Mars, Women are From Venus	John Gray	
Animal Dreams	Barbara Kingsolver	

<b>1992-93</b>		
Composing a Life	Mary Catherine Bateson	Life of the anthropologist
Brain Surgeon	Lawrence Shainberg	
Before and After		
Women and Doctors	John M. Smith	
Wild Swans	Jung Chang	3 generations of Chinese women
A Time to Kill	John Grisham	Legal mystery
Meeting at the Crossroads	Lyn Michel Brown	
Boys Will Be Boys	Miriam Miedziah	
Fried Green Tomatoes	Fannie Flagg	
What's Bred in the Bone	Robertson Davies	

<b>Not sure when</b>		
Piano Tuner	Daniel Mason	
Disturbance of the Inner Ear		crazy cellist
An Unequal Music	Vikram Seth	weird violinist & girlfriend
Secret Life of Bees	Sue Monk Kidd	
Revenge	Laura Blumenfeld	father shot by Arab terrorist; she communicates with shooter
Daughter of Persia	Farmaian	
Interpreter of Maladies	Lahiri	short stories
War Torn		women journalists writing about Vietnam
Prodigal Summer	Barbara Kingsolver	forest ranger
Bee Season	Myla Goldberg	kid in spelling bee, strange family
To the Heart of the Sea	Philbrick	whaling
Map of Love		Arab and American cousins