



The Book of Jonah: A Novel

By Joshua Max Feldman

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"THE STORYTELLING, INFUSED WITH ENERGY THROUGHOUT, GATHERS MOMENTUM AND CULMINATES IN AN ENIGMATIC, UNEXPECTED ENDING."?The New York Times Book Review

The modern day Jonah at the center of Joshua Max Feldman's brilliantly conceived retelling of the Bible's Book of Jonah is a lucky guy: healthy and handsome, with two beautiful women ready to spend the rest of their lives with him, and an enormously successful legal career that gets more promising by the minute. He's celebrating a deal that will surely make him partner at his firm when a bizarre vision at a party changes everything. Jonah tries hard to forget what he's seen, but this disturbing sign is only the first of many he will witness, and before long his life is unrecognizable. As this funny and bold novel moves to Amsterdam and then Las Vegas, Feldman examines the way we live now while asking an age-old question: How can we explain the unexplainable?

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, February 2014: This novel reads like the literary lovechild of filmmaker Albert "Lost in America" Brooks and author Joshua "Then We Came to the End" Ferris. On the surface, it's a comedy about a smart, successful guy--a young Manhattan lawyer--who, despite his big-deal job and not-one-but-two wonderful women in love with him, can't seem to be happy. So far, so annoying, right? But wait: don't throw the book across the room just yet. The task Feldman has set for himself is to make us understand, even to like, Jonah--and by the time our hero has maneuvered himself out of his glam life (through a half-hearted attempt at corporate whistleblowing), we're rooting for him. And then there's Judith, Jonah's brainiac counterpart: a young woman orphaned by 9/11, a young woman also seeking solace, albeit in different ways. (Her sections of the novel are so strong you might ask why Feldman didn't name his debut *The Book of Judith*.) When a chance meeting puts these two lost souls together, they are both forever changed. While it's based very loosely (mercifully) on the biblical story of the same name, and for all that Jonah's and Judith's Jewishness is a factor in the novel, *The Book of Jonah* is more than a religious parable. It's a universal, timeless tale of loss and the longing for meaning. --Sara Nelson

From Booklist

Feldman's intriguing first novel, a modern retelling of the Bible's Book of Jonah, examines the dilemma of faith amid life's failures and loss. Blessed with ambition and good looks, Jonah Jacobstein is a 32-year-old New York City corporate lawyer who has recently been placed on a high-profile case. While out celebrating that evening, he experiences a vision of the city being destroyed, a catastrophic vision right out of the Bible. As Jonah struggles to comprehend this inexplicable vision, the first of several, and the questions it brings, his life spirals out of control. He calls it quits with an on-again, off-again lover, confesses his infidelity to his girlfriend, destroys a family member's relationship, and sends an incriminating email that leads to his termination at work. Alone and unemployed, Jonah journeys abroad, living an aimless life with no recognizable ties to his past. While wandering, he crosses paths with Judith, a hardened young woman whose own tale of loss and struggle for meaning parallels Jonah's. Feldman's expansive tale offers an invigorating, timeless exploration of existential crises within a contemporary world. --Leah Strauss

Review

"Finely wrought characters and a pulsing, page-turning narrative." *Star Tribune*

"The storytelling, infused with energy throughout, gathers momentum and culminates in an enigmatic, unexpected ending . . . The risk-taking and sheer weirdness of *The Book of Jonah* is worth applauding." *The New York Times Book Review*

"A beguiling first novel . . . Feldman gives ample proof that he can write about well-dressed New Yorkers with the same prickly wit that Claire Messud offered in *The Emperor's Children*. His satire lacks that astringent bitterness that can make some witty novels seem heartless. And his willingness to pose the big questions to the whirlwind makes for unusually thoughtful reading." *The Washington Post*

"Brave and necessary . . . one of the few novels I've read recently that is a genuine page-turner." *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

“*The Book of Jonah* is a debut that heralds great promise . . . Feldman works new and inventive wonders from an ancient template.” ?*Star Tribune*

“It is rare that a novel juxtaposes the contemporary world and the biblical one in such dramatic fashion *The Book of Jonah* is a compelling read, a clever deconstruction of modern life as reflected in an ancient and timeless lens.” ?*Abraham Verghese, author of Cutting for Stone*

“Feldman captures the contemporary New York zeitgeist, but also effectively tackles questions of biblical proportions: How can we live in a world we can't comprehend? How can we serve a God whose will we can't understand?” ?*Shelf Awareness*

“Deft and entertaining . . . What a sweet tale this is. While Feldman's prose is assured and sophisticated, the story is one of the oldest. And, in this telling, is worthy of repeating.” ?*New York Daily News*

“As up-to-date as an iPhone 5S and as timeless as the question it asks: How do we live a righteous life? For all the ironic cool of his novel's slick, modern surface, like writers of the best moral fiction, Joshua Max Feldman touches us in ways that are anything but superficial.” ?*Bookpage*

“[An] enticing debut novel.” ?*Publishers Weekly*

“Feldman is clever in his use of the Jonah story, and his novel is of the same strange and enigmatic quality as the original.” ?*Kirkus*

“Feldman's expansive tale offers an invigorating, timeless exploration of existential crises within a contemporary world.” ?*Booklist*

“Joshua Max Feldman's debut novel is impressive experimentation with allegory and the antihero...Feldman transforms the archaic dichotomy of good-versus-evil into a profoundly contemporary rumination on the binary of evil and truth.” ?*The National Jewish Book Council*

“The text of the biblical Book of Jonah is minimal, and its God and its Jonah are ciphers, and their motives enigmatic, but the Jonah of Joshua Feldman's novel is fully realized, a New York corporate lawyer making recognizable compromises until, brushed by the divine, his world dissolves. This engaging novel gives form to an opaque and ancient story while retaining that story's mystery.” ?*Zachary Mason, author of The Lost Books of the Odyssey*

“Joshua Feldman offers a shrewd, humorous, and entertainingly modern twist on the Old Testament prophet. He's written a bold and very funny book.” ?*Sarah Shun-lien Bynum, author of National Book Award finalist Madeleine is Sleeping*

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