



Reverend Katz Library

New Book Reviews

July 2019

It is cold outside! Please enjoy our new book reviews and come to the library to make some choices for your winter reading.

Mark Chagall, Chagall by Chagall. ART CHA

Five themes--the village of Vitebsk, avant-garde Paris, love, the theatre, and the message of the Bible--provide the organizing framework for a work that combines Chagall's prose and poetry with the paintings, drawings, prints, and etchings.

Roxanne Veletzos, The girl they left behind. F VEL

A sweeping family saga and love story that offers a vivid and unique portrayal of life in war-torn 1941 Bucharest and life behind the Iron Curtain during the Soviet Union occupation—perfect for fans of Lilac Girls and Sarah's Key.

On a freezing night in January 1941, a little Jewish girl is found on the steps of an apartment building in Bucharest. With Romania recently allied with the Nazis, the Jewish population is in grave danger, undergoing increasingly violent persecution. The girl is placed in an orphanage and eventually adopted by a wealthy childless couple who name her Natalia. As she assimilates into her new life, she all but forgets the parents who were forced to leave her behind. They are even further from her mind when Romania falls under Soviet occupation.

Yet, as Natalia comes of age in a bleak and hopeless world, traces of her identity pierce the surface of her everyday life, leading gradually to a discovery that will change her destiny. She has a secret crush on Victor, an intense young man who as an impoverished student befriended her family long ago. Years later, when Natalia is in her early twenties and working at a warehouse packing fruit, she and Victor, now an important official in the Communist regime, cross paths again. This time they are fatefully drawn into a passionate affair despite the obstacles swirling around them and Victor's dark secrets.

When Natalia is suddenly offered a one-time chance at freedom, Victor is determined to help her escape, even if it means losing her. Natalia must make an agonizing decision: remain in Bucharest with her beloved adoptive parents and the man she has come to love, or seize the chance to finally live life on her own terms, and to confront the painful enigma of her past.

Merav Mack and Benjamin Balint, Jerusalem : City of the book. HIS MAC

A captivating journey through the hidden libraries of Jerusalem, where some of the world's most enduring ideas were put into words.

In this enthralling book, Merav Mack and Benjamin Balint explore Jerusalem's libraries to tell the story of this city as a place where some of the world's most enduring ideas were put into words. The writers of Jerusalem, although renowned the world over, are not usually thought of as a distinct school; their stories as Jerusalemites have never before been woven into a single narrative. Nor have the stories of the custodians, past and present, who safeguard Jerusalem's literary legacies.

By showing how Jerusalem has been imagined by its writers and shelved by its librarians, Mack and Balint tell the untold history of how the peoples of the book have populated the city with texts. In their hands, Jerusalem itself—perched between East and West, antiquity and modernity, violence and piety—comes alive as a kind of labyrinthine library.

Miriam Sved, A universe of sufficient size. F SVE

"Miriam Sved has woven three generations and two periods of history into a page-turning, emotional rollercoaster to remind us all that families are messy, complicated and that the repercussions of decisions made decades ago can come back to haunt you... I cannot recommend this book highly enough." Heather Morris, author of *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*
Budapest, 1938. In a city park, five young Jewish mathematicians gather to share ideas, trade proofs and whisper sedition.

Sydney, 2007. Illy has just buried her father, a violent, unpredictable man whose bitterness she never understood. And now Illy's mother has gifted her a curious notebook, its pages a mix of personal story and mathematical discovery, recounted by a woman full of hopes and regrets.

Inspired by a true story, Miriam Sved's beautifully crafted novel charts a course through both the light and dark of human relationships: a vivid recreation of 1930s Hungary, a decades-old mystery locked in the story of one enduring friendship, a tribute to the selfless power of the heart.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Miriam Sved is a Melbourne-based writer whose debut novel, *Game Day*, was published by Picador in 2014. She has been a contributing editor on the feminist anthologies *Mothers and Others* and *Just Between Us*, and the upcoming *#MeToo: Stories from the Australian movement*. Her novella 'All the Things I Should've Given' was a winner of Griffith Review's 2018 Novella Project, and her short fiction has been published in *Best Australian Stories*, *Meanjin*, *Overland* and elsewhere. *A Universe of Sufficient Size* is her second novel.

Armando Lucas Correa, *The daughters tale.* F COR

From the internationally bestselling author of *The German Girl*, an unforgettable family saga exploring a hidden piece of World War II history and the lengths a mother will go to protect her children—perfect for fans of *Lilac Girls*, *We Were the Lucky Ones*, and *The Alice Network*.

BERLIN, 1939. The dreams that Amanda Sternberg and her husband, Julius, had for their daughters are shattered when the Nazis descend on Berlin, burning down their beloved family bookshop and sending Julius to a concentration camp. Desperate to save her children, Amanda flees toward the south of France, where the widow of an old friend of her husband's has agreed to take her in. Along the way, a refugee ship headed for Cuba offers another chance at escape and there, at the dock, Amanda is forced to make an impossible choice that will haunt her for the rest of her life. Once in Haute-Vienne, her brief respite is interrupted by the arrival of Nazi forces, and Amanda finds herself in a labour camp where she must once again make a heroic sacrifice.

NEW YORK, 2015. Eighty-year-old Elise Duval receives a call from a woman bearing messages from a time and country that she forced herself to forget. A French Catholic who arrived in New York after World War II, Elise is shocked to discover that the letters were from her mother, written in German during the war. Despite Elise's best efforts to stave off her past, seven decades of secrets begin to unravel.

Based on true events, *The Daughter's Tale* chronicles one of the most harrowing atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis during the war. Heartbreaking and immersive, it is a beautifully crafted family saga of love, survival, and redemption.

Anshel Pfeffer, *Bibi: The turbulent life and times of Benjamin Netanyahu.* BIO NET

For many in Israel and elsewhere, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is an embarrassment, a threat to democracy, even a precursor to Donald Trump. Yet despite repeated scandals and missteps, he continues to dominate Israeli public life. How are we to account his rise, his hold on Israeli politics, and his outsized role on the world's stage?

In *Bibi*, the Haaretz journalist Anshel Pfeffer argues that we must understand Netanyahu as representing the triumph of the underdogs in the Zionist enterprise. Born in 1949, one year after the state of Israel itself, Netanyahu came of age in a nation dominated by liberal, secular Zionists in the tradition of David Ben-Gurion. Yet from the start Netanyahu identified with the groups at the margins of Israeli society: the right-wing Revisionists, the orthodox, the Mizrahi Jews, the small-time professionals living in the new towns and cities dotting the Israeli landscape. With a vision integrating Jewish nationalism and religious traditionalism, Netanyahu cultivated each faction individually and then fused them into an often unstoppable coalition.

At the same time, Netanyahu is a child of America, where he spent many years as a young man, and where he learned the techniques of modern political campaigns as well as the necessity of controlling the media cycle. The product of the affluent East Coast Jewish community and the Reagan era, Netanyahu's politics and worldview were formed as much by American Cold War conservatism as by his family's hardline right-wing Zionism.

As Pfeffer demonstrates in this penetrating biography, Netanyahu's Israel is a hybrid of ancient phobia and high-tech hope, tribalism and globalism—just like the man himself.

Tadeusz Pankiewicz, *The Cracow Ghetto Pharmacy*. HOL PAN

One Polish pharmacist's eyewitness account of the history of the Krakow Ghetto. First published in 1947, Tadeusz Pankiewicz's memoir vividly depicts the horrors inflicted upon the inhabitants of the Jewish district. From his pharmacy in the heart of the ghetto, Pankiewicz watched a tragedy unfold -- a tragedy that would claim the lives of his friends and neighbours.