



A BEND IN THE STARS

BY RACHEL BARENBAUM

A sweeping historical novel about an ambitious young doctor and her scientist brother who journey across Russia in 1914 to race against Einstein to solve one of the greatest mysteries of the universe.

FURTHER READING:

***The Enemy at His Pleasure: A Journey through the Jewish Pale of Settlement during World War I* by S. Ansky; edited and translated by Joachim Neugroschel**

Ansky, the Yiddish-Russian writer, organized a relief operation to help Jews trapped between the armies of Russia, Germany, and Austria during World War I. He recorded a remarkable tale of cruelty: rape, looting, expulsions of villages, humiliations, lynchings, kidnappings, torture, and massacres. This book, first published in Warsaw in 1925, after Ansky's death, offers both the sweep of history and an intimate portrait of an era of unfathomable evil, a holocaust before the Holocaust.

***Einstein's Jury: The Race to Test Relativity* by Jeffrey Crelinsten**

The dramatic story of how astronomers in Germany, England, and America competed to test Einstein's developing theory of relativity. Weaving a rich narrative based on extensive archival research, Crelinsten shows how these early scientific debates shaped cultural attitudes we hold today.

***Einstein's Jewish Science: Physics at the Intersection of Politics and Religion* by Steven Gimbel**

Is relativity Jewish? The Nazis denigrated Albert Einstein's revolutionary theory by calling it "Jewish science," a charge typical of the ideological excesses of Hitler and his followers. Gimbel explores the many meanings of this provocative phrase and considers whether there is any sense in which Einstein's theory of relativity is Jewish.

***A Child of Christian Blood: Murder and Conspiracy in Tsarist Russia* by Edmund Levin**

A dramatic account of the wrongful 1911 arrest of a Jewish factory worker for the murders of two Christian victims, a case that inspired *The Fixer*. Offers insight into period anti-Semitism in Russia while describing the show of celebrity international support for the defendant.

***Einstein and the Rabbi: Searching for the Soul* by Naomi Levy**

After being moved by a letter written by Albert Einstein, Rabbi Naomi Levy researched the story behind the letter and discusses the spiritual truth of the human condition.

***Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution* by Kenneth B. Moss**

Between 1917 and 1921, Jewish intellectuals and writers across the Russian empire pursued a "Jewish renaissance." Here is a revisionist argument about the nature of cultural nationalism, the relationship between nationalism and socialism, and culture itself—the pivot point for the encounter between Jews and European modernity over the past century.

READ-ALIKES:

***The Tenth Muse* by Catherine Chung**

Determined to conquer the Riemann hypothesis despite cultural discrimination against women intellectuals, a genius mathematician uncovers a mysterious theorem's unexpected World War II link to her family.

***Hannah's War* by Jan Eliasberg**

A young military investigator at Leavenworth Prison interrogates a Los Alamos National Lab scientist to uncover her involvement in Berlin's infamous Kaiser Wilhelm Institute a decade earlier before becoming seduced by her intelligence and quiet confidence.

***The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah**

Reunited when the elder's husband is sent to fight in World War II, French sisters Vianne and Isabelle find their bond as well as their respective beliefs tested by a world that changes in horrific ways.

***The Ambassador's Daughter* by Pam Jenoff**

In 1919, Margot Rosenthal is brought by her father, a German diplomat, to a peace conference in Paris where she meets Georg, a dashing naval officer who gives her a job—and a reason to question everything she thought she knew about where her true loyalties should lie.

***The Family: Three Journeys into the Heart of the Twentieth Century* by David Laskin**

With cinematic power and beauty, bestselling author David Laskin brings to life the upheavals of the twentieth century through the story of one family, three continents, two world wars, and the rise and fall of nations.

***Gateway to the Moon* by Mary Morris**

A young, amateur astronomer, Miguel, takes a babysitting job for a Jewish family new to his hometown in New Mexico and is surprised to find many of their family's customs are similar to the ones he's grown up with and didn't understand.

***The Invisible Bridge* by Julie Orringer**

A novel set in 1937 Europe tells the story of three Hungarian Jewish brothers bound by history and love, of a marriage tested by disaster, of a Jewish family's struggle against annihilation by the Nazis, and of the dangerous power of art in the time of war.

***The Mathematician's Shiva* by Stuart Rojstaczer**

Following the death of Rachela, a famous female math professor, mathematicians crash the shiva in order to discover the solution to the million-dollar Navier-Stokes Millennium Prize Problem, which she was rumored to have solved.

***House of Gold* by Natasha Solomons**

The outbreak of World War I forces headstrong Austrian heiress Greta Goldbaum to choose between the family she built in her new life in England and the family she left behind in Vienna.

**RACHEL KAMIN, DIRECTOR, THE JOSEPH AND MAE GRAY CULTURAL & LEARNING CENTER
NORTH SUBURBAN SYNAGOGUE BETH EL • HIGHLAND PARK, IL • RKAMIN@NSSBETHEL.ORG**

JANUARY 2021