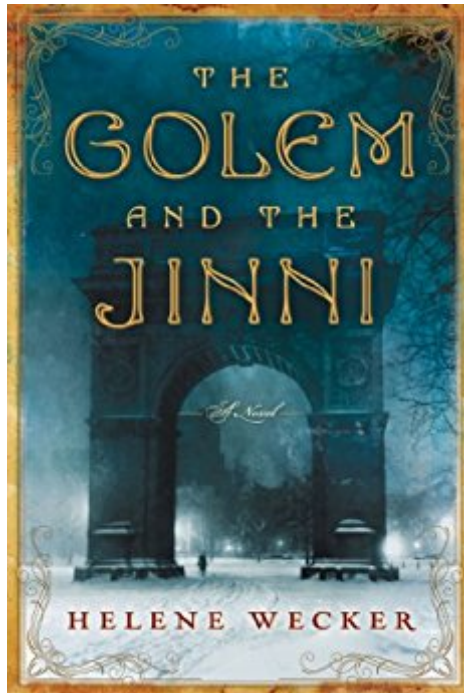




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# The Golem And The Jinni: A Novel (P.S.)



## Synopsis

» In *The Golem and the Jinni*, a chance meeting between mythical beings takes readers on a dazzling journey through cultures in turn-of-the-century New York. Chava is a golem, a creature made of clay, brought to life by a disgraced rabbi who dabbles in dark Kabbalistic magic and dies at sea on the voyage from Poland. Chava is unmoored and adrift as the ship arrives in New York harbor in 1899. Ahmad is a jinni, a being of fire born in the ancient Syrian desert, trapped in an old copper flask, and released in New York City, though still not entirely free. Ahmad and Chava become unlikely friends and soul mates with a mystical connection. Marvelous and compulsively readable, Helene Wecker's debut novel *The Golem and the Jinni* weaves strands of Yiddish and Middle Eastern literature, historical fiction and magical fable, into a wondrously inventive and unforgettable tale.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I found this book enchanting and beautiful to read. The story is interesting, the characters are well developed and relatable, and it's set against the background of 2 fascinating cultures. The premise is this: golems come from the Jewish mythology, which tells that a particularly skilled rabbi can

create himself a servant by animating a clay image of a person. The jinni is a disembodied, supernatural being from the Middle Eastern mythology, and can be enslaved by humans through the use of magic. They both find themselves in the immigrant communities of New York, trying to find their place in the world, torn between their true nature and the need to blend in among beings that are so similar and yet so different from them. I found the snapshots of daily life in the Syrian and Jewish immigrant communities fascinating, I learned much I didn't know about them. The way the author interweaves the magic and mythical part into the mundane was very well done. The book is just well written, start to end, I couldn't find any faults in it. I look forward to this author's future books, but this will be a hard act to follow!

Myths meet. A jinni and a golem walk into a park, under a sad statue, and a tale rolls. There's good and lesser, idealism and practicality, foolishness, much mingling, and life shares and finds a way. Worthy of any very fine Arabian night's telling. Oh, and reading.

A wonderfully rich and colorful story of old magicians, mystical creatures, and the kinds of magic that are often lost in historical novels -- especially Kabbalism, which has its own rich and fascinating mythology that is sadly overlooked in modern fiction. The only shortcoming is its reliance on "telling rather than showing" characters' feelings -- at times, the story is more in a character's head than following their actions in the world around them -- but the characters and plotlines are so richly woven that it's a pleasure from start to finish.

What would happen if the ghosts from the legends of one culture interacted with the ghosts from another culture? The author of this book had a fantastic idea: a cross-cultural meeting of ghosts, taking place in New York of the late 19th century. Each fantasy creature, a Golem made of clay and a Jinn made of fire, settles in the immigrant community where their legends come from: the Golem in the orthodox Jewish community and the Jinn in Little Syria. The Golem, in a departure from original Golem legends, takes the shape of a woman, created to serve as an obedient wife to a master-husband who travels to New York from Poland. The Jinn was entrapped in a flask in Syria, and once freed from it (after being brought to New York) cannot shift from the human form that was imposed on him by an evil magician's curse. The adventures of these two non-humans in New York, their meetings with their own community, with members of New York society and with each other, make for a rich, well-imagined story. A wonderful tale of the immigrants' soul in a meeting with a new country and with other immigrant communities and their cultural heritage.

I don't often read magic realism but I'm very glad I was moved to purchase and read this on my new Kindle Paper-white. I normally have 3 to 5 books underway at any given time. This was a book that commanded most of my attention until I finished it last night. I read all the end notes and wished for more. I have added Helene Wecker to the list of authors whom I intend to follow in the future. The story involves a Rabbi cum-Wizard who creates a novel form of Golem for a man who is unable to find a spouse. The Golem is in the form of a comely woman; built from clay, she is waiting for a special command from her new master in order to come to life. On a voyage from Europe to New York City, the man learns he is dying and realizes he won't make it before he dies. Before he expires, he visits the ship's baggage area, opens the box containing the Golem, and reads the words that bring her to life and bind her to him. Then he dies. Meanwhile, in a part of Manhattan known as Little Syria, a neighborhood metal worker receives an ancient copper oil lamp for repair. As he's fixing the lamp, he drops it and a genie suddenly appears from it. The genie is mystified - he remembers his life as a genie (jinni) in a Syrian desert but has no memory of how he came to be imprisoned in the lamp. As the Golem finds her way in a new and strange land, the Jinni is also trying to find his way. Eventually the two meet and the story unfolds. The Golem and the Jinni soon discover they have much in common - in spite of the different cultures they came from. As both try desperately to hide their true natures, an evil from the distant past makes plans to control both of them. A compelling and hard-to-put-down story. This book will appeal to anyone who likes magic-realism and just darn good writing and story-telling. It's not hard to imagine that the author is a Jewish woman married to a man with Arab ancestry.

This is not my style of book but I was entranced by all the stories and I was bound to finish it, much like the Jinni or Golem to its' master. Slightly too wordy at times and a bit stretched out- but I have no regrets and would recommend this to anyone

There just are not enough stars - I just finished this fantastic book! The Golem and the Jinni was crafted like a fine weaving of well phrased words. I admit I do not know much about Jewish or Arab cultures, 1890 New York is also a new subject for me. I was enthralled by the magic that is so artfully presented in this lovely story! Even things that are frightening have such an empathetic edge, they are softened to be quite palatable. The research seems thorough, very believable, I learned about things I knew very little about before. I was so wrapped in all the characters, and glad to see there was not the entire "and they all lived happily ever after". The story so beautifully

unfolded, I wondered how all of the different characters were going to be tied together, how the paths would eventually cross. I loved the way the Golem and the Jinni both worked at becoming human, the emotions developing and evolving. It is amazing this is a first book, I will read anything that she writes.

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