



# Good for the Jews (Michigan Literary Fiction Awards)

*Debra Spark*

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". . . a smart, sprightly, sex-drenched, and neatly plotted novel . . ."

---Alan Cheuse, National Public Radio and the *Chicago Tribune*

"Spark is at her sly, funny, and cutting best in her third novel, a clever and affecting variation on the biblical story of Esther."

---*Booklist*

"Spark's prose is tight, funny, insightful and occasionally heartbreaking as it probes the current education system, the arts and society's ills."

---*Publishers Weekly*

*Good for the Jews* is a smart, funny, sexy novel set in Madison, Wisconsin, during the Bush administration. Part mystery and part stranger-comes-to town story, *Good for the Jews* is loosely based on the biblical book of Esther. Like Esther, Debra Spark's characters deal with anti-Semitism and the way that powerful men---and the women who love them---negotiate bureaucracies.

At the core of the story of right and wrong are young, attractive Ellen Hirschorn and her older cousin Mose, a high school teacher who thinks he knows, in fact, what is "good for the Jews"---and for Ellen, too. Their stories intertwine with those of the school superintendent, his ex-wife and son, and a new principal. Workplace treachery, the bonds of family, coming of age, and romantic relationships all take center stage as the characters negotiate the fallout from a puzzling fire.

Spark's evocative writing style and sharp, understanding treatment of her diverse characters draw the reader into this surprising page-turner, a finalist for the 2009 ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year Award.

Debra Spark is the author of two previous novels, *The Ghost of Bridgetown* and *Coconuts for the Saint*, as well as *Curious Attractions: Essays on Fiction Writing*. She's been a fellow at Radcliffe College's Bunting Institute and a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts award. Her short stories, essays, and reviews have appeared in publications including *Food and Wine*, *Esquire*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*,

and *Yankee*. She is a professor at Colby College and teaches in the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College. She lives with her husband and son in North Yarmouth, Maine.

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