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Wecker, Helene. The Golem and the Jinni

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Turn of the century New York City was a vibrant place with many thriving immigrant populations, even as it is today. In Wecker's magical debut novel, however, there are two out-of-the-ordinary immigrants hidden among the more mundane inhabitants of the Jewish quarter and the Lebanese quarter. Chava, a golem of clay straight out of Jewish folklore, finds herself completely at loose ends when her owner dies immediately after awakening her. Masterless and terrified, she wanders without purpose or understanding until taken in by a kind rabbi who recognizes her true nature even as he fears it. He manages to help Chava procure a job in a bakery and some degree of independence even while preparing, in secret, for what he fears will be her eventual fate—the murderous, unstoppable rampage of which all tales of the golem speak. Meanwhile, silversmith Arbeely accidentally releases a jinni from a thousand-year-old flask while repairing it. The jinn, dubbed "Ahmad" by Arbeely, was captured by a sorcerer and bound first into a human form and later, into the flask. He is a creature of fire, accustomed to freedom and independence beyond even that enjoyed by the average human and he chafes at his new situation. When the masterless slave of clay and the bound spirit of roaming fire eventually meet, the results will be completely unpredictable.

Philosophical, spiritual, mystical, and magical, *The Golem and the Jinni* is also completely believable and entirely compelling. Beautiful language, complex, well-crafted characters, and settings which completely engage the reader's imagination make this book one which will appeal to fans of, not only magical realism, but also fantasy, folklore, and historical fiction.

wecker and golem jinni
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