

# Chosen By Chaim Potok Study Guide Questions

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## Good Kids, Bad City

In this urgent book, Alan M. Dershowitz shows why American Jews are in danger of disappearing - and what must be done now to create a renewed sense of Jewish identity for the next century. In previous times, the threats to Jewish survival were external - the virulent consequences of anti-Semitism. Now, however, in late-twentieth-century America, the

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danger has shifted. Jews today are more secure, more accepted, more assimilated, and more successful than ever before. They've dived into the melting pot - and they've achieved the American Dream. And that, according to Dershowitz, is precisely the problem. More than 50 percent of Jews will marry non-Jews, and their children will most often be raised as non-Jews. Which means, in the view of Dershowitz, that American Jews will vanish as a distinct cultural group sometime in the next century - unless they act now. Speaking to concerned Jews everywhere, Dershowitz calls for a new Jewish identity that focuses on the positive - the 3,500-year-old legacy of Jewish culture, values, and traditions. Dershowitz shows how this new Jewish identity can compete in America's open environment of opportunity and choice - and offers concrete proposals on how to instill it in the younger generation.

### **My Name is Asher Lev**

“Extraordinary . . . No one but Chaim Potok could have written this strangely sweet, compelling, and deeply felt novel.”—The Cleveland Plain Dealer In his powerful *My Name is Asher Lev*, Chaim Potok gave the world an unforgettable character and a timeless story that The New York Times Book Review hailed as “little short of a work of genius.” The Chicago Sun-Times declared it “a story that had to be told.” Now, Chaim Potok’s beloved character returns to learn, to teach, to dream, in *The Gift of Asher Lev*. Twenty years have passed. Asher Lev is a world-renowned artist living with his young family in France. Still, he is

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unsure of his artistic direction. Success has not brought ease to his heart. Then Asher's beloved uncle dies suddenly, and Asher and his family rush back to Brooklyn—and into a world that Asher thought he had left behind forever. It is a journey of confrontation and discovery as Asher purges his past in search of new inspiration for his art and begins to understand the true meaning of sacrifice and the painful joy in sharing the most precious gift of all. Praise for *The Gift of Asher Lev* “A masterwork.”—Newsday “Rivals anything Chaim Potok has ever produced. It is a book written with passion about passion. You're not likely to read anything better this year.”—The Detroit News “Fascinating.”—The Washington Post Book World “Very moving.”—The Philadelphia Inquirer

### **Lost In Translation**

A baseball game between Jewish schools is the catalyst that starts a bitter rivalry between two boys and their fathers.

### **The Gates of November**

A baseball injury precipitates a friendship between two boys from Hasidic and Zionist families

### **History of the Jews**

Asher Lev is a gifted loner, the artist who painted the sensational Brooklyn Crucifixion. Into it he poured all the anguish and torment a Jew can feel when torn between the faith of his fathers and the calling of his

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art. Here Asher Lev plunges back into his childhood and recounts the story of love and conflict which dragged him to this crossroads.

### **The Chosen by Chaim Potok | Summary & Study Guide**

Provides teaching strategies, background, and suggested resources; reproducible student pages to use before, during, and after reading--Cover.

### **Listen, Buddy**

A collection of stories about six different young people who each experience a life-changing event.

### **Chaim Potok**

The perfect companion to Chaim Potok's "The Chosen," this study guide contains a chapter by chapter analysis of the book, a summary of the plot, and a guide to major characters and themes. BookCap Study Guides do not contain text from the actual book, and are not meant to be purchased as alternatives to reading the book. We all need refreshers every now and then. Whether you are a student trying to cram for that big final, or someone just trying to understand a book more, BookCaps can help. We are a small, but growing company, and are adding titles every month.

### **The Chosen (Study Guide)**

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(Crosscurrents: modern critiques) Bibliographical references included in "Notes": (p. [178]-184).

### **Zebra and Other Stories**

"[A] winningly obsessive history of our relationship with underground places" (The Guardian), from sacred caves and derelict subway stations to nuclear bunkers and ancient underground cities--an exploration of the history, science, architecture, and mythology of the worlds beneath our feet NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY NPR When Will Hunt was sixteen years old, he discovered an abandoned tunnel that ran beneath his house in Providence, Rhode Island. His first tunnel trips inspired a lifelong fascination with exploring underground worlds, from the derelict subway stations and sewers of New York City to sacred caves, catacombs, tombs, bunkers, and ancient underground cities in more than twenty countries around the world. Underground is both a personal exploration of Hunt's obsession and a panoramic study of how we are all connected to the underground, how caves and other dark hollows have frightened and enchanted us through the ages. In a narrative spanning continents and epochs, Hunt follows a cast of subterraneaphiles who have dedicated themselves to investigating underground worlds. He tracks the origins of life with a team of NASA microbiologists a mile beneath the Black Hills, camps out for three days with urban explorers in the catacombs and sewers of Paris, descends with an Aboriginal family into a 35,000-year-old mine in the Australian outback, and glimpses a

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sacred sculpture molded by Paleolithic artists in the depths of a cave in the Pyrenees. Each adventure is woven with findings in mythology and anthropology, natural history and neuroscience, literature and philosophy. In elegant and graceful prose, Hunt cures us of our "surface chauvinism," opening our eyes to the planet's hidden dimension. He reveals how the subterranean landscape gave shape to our most basic beliefs and guided how we think about ourselves as humans. At bottom, *Underground* is a meditation on the allure of darkness, the power of mystery, and our eternal desire to connect with what we cannot see. Praise for *Underground* "A mesmerizingly fascinating tale . . . I could not stop reading this beautifully written book."--Michael Finkel, author of *The Stranger in the Woods* "Few books have blown my mind so totally, and so often. In Will Hunt's nimble hands, excursion becomes inversion, and the darkness turns luminous. There are echoes of Sebald, Calvino, and Herzog in his elegant and enigmatic voice, but also real warmth and humor. . . . An intrepid--but far from fearless--journey, both theoretically and terrestrially."--Robert Moor, *New York Times* bestselling author of *On Trails*

### **The Visible Filth**

"Elegant and troublingly, wonderfully disturbing."  
—Victor LaValle, award-winning author of *The Changeling* This gripping novella of terror by Shirley Jackson Award-winning author Nathan Ballingrud is the basis for the film *Wounds* starring Dakota Johnson, Armie Hammer, and Zazie Beetz! An eerie

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dread descends upon a New Orleans dive bartender after a cell phone is left behind in a rollicking bar fight in the novella "The Visible Filth," which has been adapted for film by director Babak Anvari—premiering at the Sundance film festival!—and starring Armie Hammer, Dakota Johnson, and Zazie Beetz. *Wounds* will release on April 12th, 2019.

### **CliffsNotes on Potok's The Chosen**

A Study Guide for Chaim Potok's "The Chosen," excerpted from Gale's acclaimed *Novels for Students*. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust *Novels for Students* for all of your research needs.

### **Underground**

An in-depth study of the eight major novels by renowned Jewish-American writer, Chaim Potok.

### **Under the Cover of Light**

In the summer of 1976, ten-year-old Eli Book's excitement over Bicentennial celebrations is tempered by his father's flashbacks to the Vietnam War and other family problems, as well as concern about his tough but troubled best friend, Edie.

### **The Chosen**

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"Writing at its best is an exalted state, an unlocking of the unconscious and imagination and a contact with sanctity." One of America's most popular Jewish writers, Chaim Potok (b. 1929) is the author of such novels as *The Chosen* (1967), *The Promise* (1969), *The Book of Lights* (1981), and *Davita's Harp* (1985). Each of his novels explores the tension between tradition and modernity, and the clash between Jewish culture and contemporary Western civilization, which he calls "core-to-core culture confrontation." Although primarily known as a novelist, Potok is an ordained Conservative rabbi and a world-class Judaic scholar who has also published children's books, theological discourses, biographies, and histories. *Conversations with Chaim Potok* presents interviews ranging from 1976 to 1999. Potok discusses the broad range of his writing and the deep influence of non-Jewish novels-in particular, Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* and James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*-on his work. Interviews bear witness to Potok's many other influences-Orthodox Jewish doctrine, Freudian psychoanalytical theory, Picasso's *Guernica*, and Jewish kabbalah mysticism. Though labeled an American Jewish writer, Potok argues that Flannery O'Connor should then be called an American Catholic writer and John Updike an American Protestant writer. "In his mind," editor Daniel Walden writes, "just as Faulkner was a writer focused on a particular place, Oxford, Mississippi, . . . so Potok's territory was a small section of New York City." Potok often explores conflict in his writings and in his interviews. Strict Jewish teachings deem fiction an artifice and therefore unnecessary, yet since the

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age of sixteen Potok has been driven to write novels. At the root of all of these conversations is Potok's intense interest in the turmoil between Jewish culture, religion, and tradition and what he calls "Western secular humanism." As he discusses his work, he continually includes broader issues, such as the state of Jewish literature and art, pointing out with pride and enthusiasm his belief that Jewish culture, in the twentieth century, has finally begun to have a significant role in producing and shaping the world's art and literature. Whether discussing the finer details of Talmudic textual analysis or his period of chaplaincy during the Korean War, Potok is articulate and philosophical, bringing deep consideration into what may seem small subjects. Although his novels and histories take place primarily in the recent past, the Chaim Potok that emerges from this collection is a writer deeply rooted in the tensions of the present. Daniel Walden is Professor Emeritus of American Studies, English and Comparative Literature at Penn State University. He has written or edited several books, including *On Being Jewish* (1974), *Twentieth Century American Jewish Writers* (1984), *The World of Chaim Potok* (1985), and *American Jewish Poets: The Roots and the Stems* (1990).

### **In the Beginning**

While spending the winter of 1947-1948 in Miami Beach with her family, ten-year-old Sally makes up stories, casts herself in starring roles in movies, and encounters a sinister stranger.

## **The Chosen**

In 1965, Col. Thomas “Jerry” Curtis’s helicopter was shot down over North Vietnam. He was immediately captured and spent 7½ years confined in a filthy 5’ x 7’ cell at the notorious Hanoi prison camp. Thousands of miles from home and unable to communicate with his wife and children, Jerry endured months of solitary confinement, suffocating heat, freezing cold, grueling physical and psychological torture, constant hunger, and unimaginable mental duress. And yet, time and again, the Light that darkness cannot overcome became his beacon of hope. Now, for the first time in print, Jerry shares the full story of his 2,703 days in captivity and what he learned about faith, hope, and the indomitable power of the human spirit.

## **The Chosen**

It's time to fly home for dinner! In this witty picture book from award-winning and bestselling author Mac Barnett, a mother bird gives the bird next to her a message for little Peter. But passing messages on a telephone line isn't as simple as it sounds. Each subsequent bird understands Mama's message according to its own very particular hobbies. Will Peter ever get home for dinner? This uproarious interpretation of a favorite children's game will get everyone giggling and is sure to lead to countless rereads.

## **Jews and Americans**

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#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER “History matters to McCain, and for him America is and was about its promise. The book is his farewell address, a mixture of the personal and the political. ‘I have loved my life,’ he writes. ‘All of it.’ The Restless Wave is a fitting valedictory for a man who seldom backed down.”

—The Guardian (US) “A book-length meditation on what it means to face the hard challenges of long life and the sobering likelihood of imminent death...A reflection on hardship, a homily on purpose, a celebration of life — and a challenge to Americans to live up to their values and founding principles at a time when both are in jeopardy.” —The Boston Globe

In this candid political memoir from Senator John McCain, an American hero reflects on his life and what matters most. “I don’t know how much longer I’ll be here. Maybe I’ll have another five years...Maybe I’ll be gone before you read this. My predicament is, well, rather unpredictable. But I’m prepared for either contingency, or at least I’m getting prepared. I have some things I’d like to take care of first, some work that needs finishing, and some people I need to see. And I want to talk to my fellow Americans a little more if I may.” So writes John McCain in this inspiring, moving, frank, and deeply personal memoir. Written while confronting a mortal illness, McCain looks back with appreciation on his years in the Senate, his historic 2008 campaign for the presidency against Barack Obama, and his crusades on behalf of democracy and human rights in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Always the fighter, McCain attacks the spurious nationalism and political polarization afflicting American policy. He makes an impassioned case for democratic internationalism and bi-

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partisanship. He recalls his disagreements with several presidents, and minces no words in his objections to some of President Trump's statements and policies. At the same time, he tells stories of his most satisfying moments of public service and offers a positive vision of America that looks beyond the Trump presidency. The Restless Wave is John McCain at his best.

### **Starring Sally J. Freedman as Herself**

The story of the Talmud is the story of the Jewish people--a thrilling insight into Jewish culture and a devastating account of the history of anti-Semitism.

### **Teacha!**

"Powerful . . . It successfully recreates a time and place and the journey of a soul."--The New York Times  
All beginnings are hard--that is the lesson David Lurie learns early and painfully in his life. As a boy in the depression-shadowed Bronx, he must begin to hold his own against neighborhood bullies and the treacherous frailties of his own health. As a young man in a world menaced by a distant, horrifying war, he must begin once more--this time to define a resolute path of personal belief that departs boldly from the tradition of his teachers and his own father, a courageous defender of their people. Learning how to remember his past as he nourishes the future, David struggles to complete his first long journey into ancient beginnings. "A major work in every sense."--Pittsburgh Press

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## **Chaim Potok**

The original CliffsNotes study guides offer expert commentary on major themes, plots, characters, literary devices, and historical background. CliffsNotes on *The Chosen* reveals the condition of American Jews living in two cultures, one secular and one religious. In his classic novel, author Chaim Potok is describing not only the lives of the characters but his own life, as well. With this study guide, you'll be able to walk a mile in the shoes of a Jewish American of the 1940s. You'll also gain insight into the life of Potok and historical influences on this novel. Other features that help you study include Character analyses of major players A character map that graphically illustrates the relationships among the characters Critical essays Review questions and suggested writing topics Discussion of the firm version of the novel and how it compares to the original work Classic literature or modern modern-day treasure — you'll understand it all with expert information and insight from CliffsNotes study guides.

## **A Study Guide for Chaim Potok's *The Chosen***

Jason is upset that he has to move for the third time in five years, but he gains comfort from his favorite tree and from the gift of a young tree that he can take with him to his new home.

## **The Restless Wave**

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"REMARKABLE . . . A WONDERFUL STORY." --The Boston Globe The father is a high-ranking Communist officer, a Jew who survived Stalin's purges. The son is a "refusenik," who risked his life and happiness to protest everything his father held dear. Now, Chaim Potok, beloved author of the award-winning novels *The Chosen* and *My Name is Asher Lev*, unfolds the gripping true story of a father, a son, and a conflict that spans Soviet history. Drawing on taped interviews and his harrowing visits to Russia, Potok traces the public and private lives of the Slepak family: Their passions and ideologies, their struggles to reconcile their identities as Russians and as Jews, their willingness to fight--and die--for diametrically opposed political beliefs. "[A] vivid account . . . [Potok] brings a novelist's passion and eye for detail to a gripping story that possesses many of the elements of fiction--except that it's all too true." --San Francisco Chronicle From the Trade Paperback edition.

### **Chosen : with Related Readings**

From award-winning investigative journalist Kyle Swenson, *Good Kids, Bad City* is the true story of the longest wrongful imprisonment in the United States to end in exoneration, and a critical social and political history of Cleveland, the city that convicted them. In the early 1970s, three African-American men—Wiley Bridgeman, Kwame Ajamu, and Rickey Jackson—were accused and convicted of the brutal robbery and murder of a man outside of a convenience store in Cleveland, Ohio. The prosecution's case, which

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resulted in a combined 106 years in prison for the three men, rested on the more-than-questionable testimony of a pre-teen, Ed Vernon. The actual murderer was never found. Almost four decades later, Vernon recanted his testimony, and Wiley, Kwame, and Rickey were released. But while their exoneration may have ended one of American history's most disgraceful miscarriages of justice, the corruption and decay of the city responsible for their imprisonment remain on trial. Interweaving the dramatic details of the case with Cleveland's history—one that, to this day, is fraught with systemic discrimination and racial tension—Swenson reveals how this outrage occurred and why. *Good Kids, Bad City* is a work of astonishing empathy and insight: an immersive exploration of race in America, the struggling Midwest, and how lost lives can be recovered.

### **The Tree of Here**

At the center of the novel is Gershon Loran--a young rabbi, the product of a parochial New York Jewish upbringing--whose early life [was] shaped by darkly irrational circumstances It is this young man--raised in the absolute belief that 'the Jewish religion made a fundamental difference in the world'--who at the end of the Korean War, finds himself a chaplain in a country where Judaism has played no part Gershon begins to see his own people--and himself--in a new light Gershon has the most disturbing of his visions--encompassing both light and dark, both good and evil, just as life must; just as, he begins to understand, Judaism must, if it is to remain a living

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faith.

## **Eli the Good**

Chaim Potok was a world-class writer and scholar, a Conservative Jew who wrote from and about his tradition and the conflicts between observance and acculturation. With a plain, straightforward style, his novels were set against the moral, spiritual, and intellectual currents of the twentieth century. This collection aims to widen the lens through which we read Chaim Potok and to establish him as an authentic American writer who created unforgettable characters forging American identities for themselves while retaining their Jewish nature. The essays illuminate the central struggle in Potok's novels, which results from a profound desire to reconcile the appeal of modernity with the pull of traditional Judaism. The volume includes a memoir by Adena Potok and ends with Chaim Potok's "My Life as a Writer," a speech he gave at Penn State in 1982. Aside from the editor, the contributors are Victoria Aarons, Nathan P. Devir, Jane Eisner, Susanne Klingenstein, S. Lillian Kremer, Jessica Lang, Sanford E. Marovitz, Kathryn McClymond, Hugh Nissenson, Adena Potok, and Jonathan Rosen.

## **Conversations with Chaim Potok**

While Chaim Potok is most famous for his novels, particularly his first book *The Chosen* (1967)—which was listed on *The New York Times* bestseller list for 39 weeks and sold more than 3,400,000 copies—he also

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wrote plays, which are collected and published here for the first time. Rena Potok edited the collection and wrote the introduction. This book features all five of Potok's plays, production notes on each of the plays, prefaces by the directors, and the transcript of a post-performance discussion on *Out of the Depths* featuring Chaim Potok and Prof. David Roskies, which appears for the first time in print, in this volume. Includes: *Out of the Depths* (Performed in Philadelphia in 1990. The last version was a 1990 video of the staged workshop performance. The play was reconstructed for this collection by Rena Potok and David Bassuk, the play's director and co-creator, based on the video and on the final rehearsal script.) *Sins of the Father: The Carnival and The Gallery* (Performed in Philadelphia in 1990. Adapted from scenes in Chaim Potok's novels *The Promise* and *My Name is Asher Lev*.) *The Play of Lights* (Performed in Philadelphia in 1992. Adapted from Chaim Potok's novel *The Book of Lights*.) *The Chosen* (Premiered in 1999 and performed widely since then. Adapted from the novel of the same name into a play by Chaim Potok and Aaron Posner. This volume contains the most recent authorized version of the play.)

### **The Promise**

"This unique collection of short stories celebrates the creative power of imagination. At Hurwitz's invitation 10 well-known children's authors have written pieces based on a single premise: a young person finds an empty box among his or her birthday gifts. The enormously varied responses range in tone from

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amusing to heartwarmingly sad; all provide food for thought. An excellent surprise package."--School Library Journal.

### **I Am the Clay**

"[Chaim] Potok writes powerfully about the suffering of innocent people caught in the cross-fire of a war they cannot begin to understand. . . . Humanity and compassion for his characters leap from every page."—San Francisco Chronicle As the Chinese and the army of the North sweep south during the Korean War, an old peasant farmer and his wife flee their village across the bleak, bombed-out landscape. They soon come upon a boy in a ditch who is wounded and unconscious. Stirred by possessiveness and caring the woman refuses to leave the boy behind. The man thinks she is crazy to nurse this boy, to risk their lives for some dying stranger. Angry and bewildered, he waits for the boy to die. And when the boy does not die, the old man begins to believe that the boy possesss a magic upon which all their lives depend. . . .

### **The Vanishing American Jew**

A lop-eared rabbit named Buddy finds himself in trouble with the Scruffy Varmint because he never listens.

### **Birthday Surprises**

A Study Guide for Chaim Potok's "Davita's Harp,"

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excerpted from Gale's acclaimed Novels for Students. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust Novels for Students for all of your research needs.

### **The Book of Lights**

An overview of the work features a biographical sketch of the author, a list of characters, a summary of the plot, and critical and analytical views of the work.

### **A Study Guide for Chaim Potok's "Davita's Harp"**

#### **Davita's Harp**

A coming-of-age classic about two Jewish boys growing up in Brooklyn in the 1940s, this “profound and universal” story of what we share across cultures remains deeply pertinent today (The Wall Street Journal). It’s the spring of 1944 and fifteen-year-olds Reuven Malter and Danny Saunders have lived five blocks apart all their lives. But they’ve never met, not until the day an accident during a softball game sparks an unlikely friendship. Soon these two boys—one expected to become a Hasidic rebbe, the other at ease with secular America—are drawn into one another’s worlds despite one father’s strong opposition. Set against the backdrop of WWII and the

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creation of the state of Israel, *The Chosen* is a poignant novel about transformation and tradition, growing up and growing wise, and finding yourself—even if that might mean leaving your community.

### **Telephone**

Albarelli recalls his five years of English teaching at a Brooklyn school, where his Hasidic Jewish students face cultural differences as they struggle to understand their new "teacha." For young men who speak Yiddish at home and deal with a liberal world with a very conservative lifestyle, a non-Jewish teacher is a challenge.

### **The Collected Plays of Chaim Potok**

#### **Chaim Potok's *The Chosen***

In a passionate, energetic narrative, *The Promise* brilliantly dramatizes what it is to master and use knowledge to make one's own way in the world. Reuven Malter lives in Brooklyn, he's in love, and he's studying to be a rabbi. He also keeps challenging the strict interpretations of his teachers, and if he keeps it up, his dream of becoming a rabbi may die. One day, worried about a disturbed, unhappy boy named Michael, Reuven takes him sailing and cloud-watching. Reuven also introduces him to an old friend, Danny Saunders—now a psychologist with a growing reputation. Reconnected by their shared

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concern for Michael, Reuven and Danny each learns what it is to take on life—whether sacred truths or a troubled child—according to his own lights, not just established authority.

### **The Gift of Asher Lev**

In 1959 13-year-old Eva Hoffman left her home in Cracow, Poland for a new life in America. This memoir evokes with deep feeling the sense of uprootedness and exile created by this disruption, something which has been the experience of tens of thousands of people this century. Her autobiography is profoundly personal but also tells one of the most universal and important narratives of twentieth century history: the story of Jewish post-war experience and the tragedies and discoveries born of cultural displacement.

### **The Talmud □ A Biography**

For Davita Chandal, growing up in New York in the 1930s and '40s is an experience of indescribable joy—and unfathomable sadness. Her loving parents, both fervent radicals, fill her with the fiercely bright hope for a new, better world. But the deprivations of war and the Depression take their ruthless toll. And Davita, unexpectedly, finds in the Jewish faith that her mother had long ago abandoned both a solace to her questioning inner pain and a test of her budding spirit of independence. To her, life's elusive possibilities for happiness, for fulfillment, for decency, become as real and resonant as the music of the small harp that hangs on her door, welcoming all guests with its

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sweet, gentle tones. Praise for Davita's Harp "Rich . . . enchanting . . . [Chaim] Potok's bravest book."—The New York Times Book Review "It is an enormous pleasure to sink into such a rich . . . solidly written novel. The reader knows from the first few pages that he is in the hands of a sure professional who won't let him down."—People "Engrossing . . . Filled with a host of richly drawn characters. Potok is a master storyteller."—Chicago Tribune "Gripping and intriguing . . . A well-told tale that needed telling."—The Philadelphia Inquirer

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