



How This Night Is Different: Stories

Elisa Albert

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Elisa Albert's debut story collection marks the arrival of an extraordinary new voice in fiction. In *How This Night Is Different*, Albert boldly illuminates the struggles of young, disaffected Jews to find spiritual fulfillment. With wit and wisdom, she confronts themes -- self-deprecation, stressful family relationships, sex, mortality -- that have been hallmarks of her literary predecessors. But Albert brings a decidedly fresh, iconoclastic, twenty-first-century attitude to the table.

Holidays, gatherings, and rites of passage provide the backdrop for these ten provocative stories. The characters who populate *How This Night Is Different* are ambivalent, jaded, and in serious want of connection. As they go through the motions of familial duty and religious observance, they find themselves continually longing for more. In prose that is by turns hilarious and harrowing, Albert details the quest for acceptance, a happier view of the past, and above all the possibility of a future.

From the hormonally charged concentration camp teen tour in "The Living" to the sexually frustrated young mother who regresses to bat mitzvah-aged antics in "Everything But," and culminating with the powerful and uproariously apropos finale of "Etta or Bessie or Dora or Rose," *How This Night Is Different* is sure to titillate, charm, and profoundly resonate with anyone who's ever felt conflicted about his or her faith, culture, or place in the world.

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