

What to Do About the Solomons

Bethany Ball

Atlantic Monthly Press (Apr 4, 2017)

Hardcover \$25.00 (288pp)

978-0-8021-2457-9

What To Do About the Solomons is an absorbing debut novel that is resonant with familial dramas, grudges, and love.

This literary debut introduces the Solomons in a sprawling, complex family drama that is awash with secrets and and turmoil.

The five Solomon siblings grew up on a kibbutz in the Jordan River Valley, under the relatively neglectful eyes of their parents, Yakov and Vivienne. Marc, accused of money laundering through his financial consulting business, lives in Los Angeles with his wife and three children. Actress Shira, selfish and fickle, bounces from man to man with her son Jordan in tow. Subversive Dror is never satisfied with his position in the family or in life; and Zev lives in Singapore with his husband, refusing to return to Israel without an invitation from his father, one that never materialises. Only Keren remains on the kibbutz, with her husband Guy and their children.

Ball's writing is meandering and occasionally ambiguous, much like a large family gathering to a newcomer. Immediately immersed in the Solomons' family drama, we are left to sort out the longstanding grudges, ancient affairs, and new developments as best we can. Though disconcerting at first, eventually the family's history emerges. As they all come and go between Israel and Los Angeles, from the kibbutz to Jerusalem, we are rewarded with a better understanding of what keeps this clan together, though sometimes at arm's length.

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ILYSSA WESCHE (March 15, 2017)

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