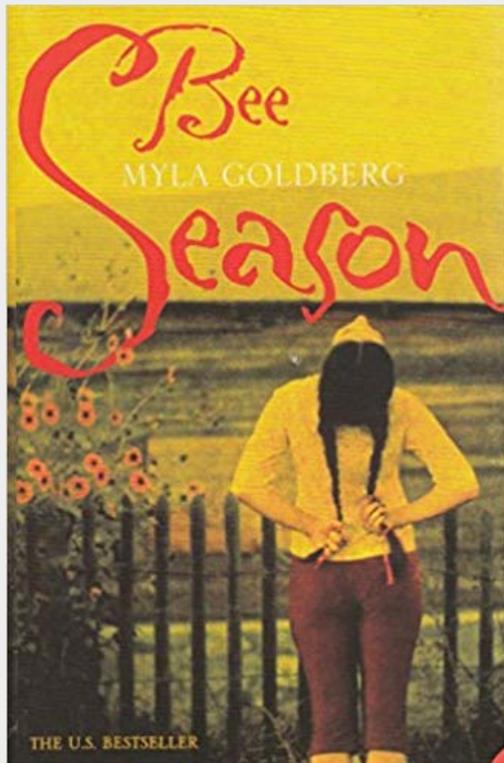


Xbee Season by Myla. Goldberg



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ISBN: 0007791313

ISBN13: 978-0007791316

Author: Myla. Goldberg

Book title: Xbee Season

Pages: 275

Publisher: Harper Collins Promotion (2007)

Language: English

Size PDF version: 1918 kb

Size ePUB version: 1288 kb

Size FB2 version: 1704 kb

Other formats: azw lit txt lrf

Eliza Naumann, a seemingly unremarkable nine-year-old, expects never to fit into her gifted family: her autodidact father, Saul, absorbed in his study of Jewish mysticism; her brother, Aaron, the vessel of his father's spiritual ambitions; and her brilliant but distant lawyer-mom, Miriam. But when Eliza sweeps her school and district spelling bees in quick succession, Saul takes it as a sign that she is destined for greatness. In this altered reality, Saul inducts her into his hallowed study and lavishes upon her the attention previously reserved for Aaron, who in his displacement embarks upon a lone quest for spiritual fulfillment. When Miriam's secret life triggers a familial explosion, it is Eliza who must order the chaos. Myla Goldberg's keen eye for detail brings Eliza's journey to three-dimensional life. As she rises from classroom obscurity to the blinding lights and outsized expectations of the National Bee, Eliza's small pains and large joys are finely wrought and deeply felt. Not merely a coming-of-age story, Goldberg's first novel delicately examines the unraveling fabric of one family. The outcome of this tale is as startling and unconventional as her prose, which wields its metaphors sharply and rings with maturity. The work of a lyrical and gifted storyteller, Bee Season marks the arrival of an extraordinarily talented new writer.



Reviews of the [Xbee Season](#) by Myla. Goldberg

1. Zetadda

Bee Season is a beautifully, flawlessly written novel that takes us through the journeys of 4 members of a family- father, mother, brother and sister. We see scenes from their past, shaping them into the people they are today. We see them as they interact with each other, and the changes that disrupt their lives. The plot and subplots are far too rich and complex to try and explain here- and besides, other reviewers will probably cover those. It's a powerful book, filled with insight and emotion. There are some raunchy scenes to be sure, But Goldberg's usage of sex, masturbation, and nudity are never gratuitous; she is always teaching you about her characters, advancing the plot, and setting the stage for chapters yet to come.

I can see that my attempts to do this book justice are failing so I will close by saying that this is a book that deserves to be read- I hope you'll take the time to enjoy this masterpiece.

2. Antuiserum

The Naumann family might have seemed like a high-achieving, scholarship-valuing Jewish family, like so many others. Saul, the father is a cantor in the local synagogue. Miriam, his wife, is a lawyer who won't talk about her work. Aaron, the son, is slated to become a rabbi. Eliza is the dullard of the family--her father humiliated when she's not tapped for the Talented and Gifted program at school. Then, everything changes, when Eliza wins the school spelling bee, and goes on to district, regional, and national bees. Everything changes, and not all for the better.

The Naumann's marriage, you see, is coming apart at the seams, Miriam has a strange and dangerous hobby, Aaron is looking for spiritual transcendence he can't find in his synagogue, and Eliza--well, Eliza becomes her father's favorite, setting in motion events that might have been predicted, if her parents had been paying attention. That's all I'll say about the plot. You'll have to read Bee Season for yourself.

Author Myla Goldberg writes brilliantly. Somehow she brings together

family dynamics, the trials of adolescence, Jewish mysticism and spelling in an unlikely but intoxicating brew. There are flashes of humor early on, less so as the story spirals downward to disaster. Somehow I felt connected to the characters through all their troubles, and wished I could help. What a book! I recommend this one highly. Reviewed by Louis N. Gruber.

3. Munigrinn

Eliza Naumann is an average elementary school student with modest goals, because she was slotted into that post by not making the grade to be named to the highly-coveted Talented and Gifted class.

But she seemingly catches lightning in the jar by qualifying for the finals in the national spelling bee, which brings stardom in atypical places...including the home. And instead of finally bringing the family together with her success in competitions, the unique artistry begins a seismic fracture of a foundation that was actually built with a number of lies.

Love, sadness, jealousy, secret lives and the quest for spiritual peace in a dysfunctional setting are expertly explored by author Myla Goldberg: Eliza's father Saul has all the answers in life, but none of the questions; her mother Miriam is living in shadows that can only end badly when exposed to sunlight and her older brother Aaron desperately needs an adult role model when he's pushed off the family pedestal after the honey from the spelling bees becomes too sweet for the parents.

And as the storm clouds swirl, Eliza tries hard to understand the many changes. Her success brings a new/old status in school and being "discovered" by Saul, who has a grand idea on crafting words for a wordly vision. The youngster must also come to terms with the emerging eccentric behavior of Miriam and bring clarity to the rivalry with Aaron, since she clearly sees him pulling away from the orbit of the stated family values.

The closing scene may be a new beginning on a trail of seizing control when expectations run high - and become an end in itself for those living vicariously off the exploits of someone else - which may be the biggest victory of all for the ultimate underdog.

4. Hystana

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