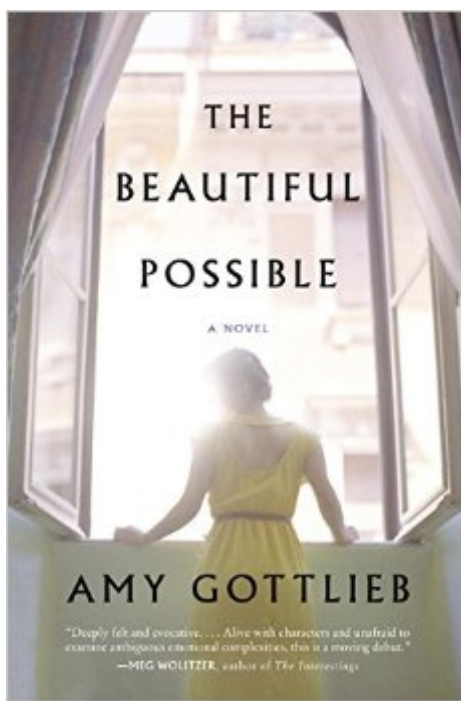


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# The Beautiful Possible: A Novel



## Synopsis

This epic, enthralling debut novel "in the vein of Nicole Krauss's *The History of Love*" follows a postwar love triangle between an American rabbi, his wife, and a German-Jewish refugee. Spanning seventy years and several continents "from a refugee's shattered dreams in 1938 Berlin, to a discontented American couple in the 1950s, to a young woman's life in modern-day Jerusalem" this epic, enthralling novel tells the braided love story of three unforgettable characters. In 1946, Walter Westhaus, a German Jew who spent the war years at Tagore's ashram in India, arrives at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City, where he meets Sol Kerem, a promising rabbinical student. A brilliant nonbeliever, Walter is the perfect foil for Sol's spiritual questions "and their extraordinary connection is too wonderful not to share with Sol's free-spirited fiancée Rosalie. Soon Walter and Rosalie are exchanging notes, sketches, and secrets, and begin a transcendent love affair in his attic room, a temple of dusty tomes and whispered poetry. Months later they shatter their impossible bond, retreating to opposite sides of the country "Walter to pursue an academic career in Berkeley and Rosalie and Sol to lead a congregation in suburban New York. A chance meeting years later reconnects Walter, Sol, and Rosalie "catching three hearts and minds in a complex web of desire, heartbreak, and redemption. With extraordinary empathy and virtuosic skill, *The Beautiful Possible* considers the hidden boundaries of marriage and faith, and the mysterious ways we negotiate our desires.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Some readers may not care for what happens in the relationships between the characters in this

story , may not agree with what they do on a moral level. That was never an issue for me because the relationships here are so genuine, the characters so passionate and some things that seem wrong felt so right . These characters are each in their own way flawed , and the author has done a wonderful job of drawing them out as they evolve over the years . Walter , a German Jew, a refugee to India is haunted by his losses . He comes to New York to study Jewish texts , not as a believer but as a scholar. Sol is a rabbinical student with hopes of his own shul and a life with his fiancée Rosalie. Rosalie is the independent daughter of a rabbi and would have been a good rabbi herself. The lives of Walter , Sol , and Rosalie become enmeshed from when Sol and Rosalie first meet Walter and over the years and miles that come to separate them and they stay connected over decades. They are connected by friendship , by love and by so much more that becomes evident as the story progresses . The narrative even reflects this as paragraphs about one of them or two of them are followed by a paragraph about the one or the other two , even if they are not in the same place . I can't comment on the religious aspects of this story in some ways as I'm not Jewish and perhaps a Jewish reader will have a better understanding . However , I felt the sense of faith, the sense of disbelief, and at other times the uncertainty of one's faith. I felt the humanity of people's shortcomings, the lack of understanding sometimes of who they were , the depth of their passions , the depths of their losses and the depths of their love. I felt connected to each of them in some way and I loved the ending . Can't ask for much more . I was drawn to read this first by this amazing title, which is now my favorite book title and by the more than enthusiastic review of my Goodreads friend, Elyse . Thanks , Elyse for introducing me to Amy Gottlieb. Thanks to HarperCollins and Edelweiss for the opportunity to read this advance copy.

The Beautiful Possible: A Novel  
FTC Disclosure: I received a copy of this book from the publisher via TLC Book Tours in exchange for a fair and honest review. Opinions expressed are mine. I cannot remember reading a debut novel and finding myself so entranced with the writer's choice of words and ability to create music all around me. Such is the quality of Amy Gottlieb's writing in The Beautiful Possible. As the story progressed and the morality of the players came into question, I wasn't sure this book was for me. However, the characters are genuine, self-satisfied, choosing for themselves, and with no intent to harm others. Once the characters were well aligned and the story arc began to rise, there was no turning my back on The Beautiful Possible. Not being Jewish, I sometimes felt as if I was flying at half-mast, but this did not detract from my enjoyment of the book. Sol's total commitment to his Jewish faith and his rabbinical calling suffers at times due to Rosalie's less than total commitment to her Jewish faith. A third party, Walter--not Jewish, really not

religious--but enraptured by Rosalie and a friend of Sol's. Ultimately, Rosalie becomes the mortar holding this unique gathering of three in the midst of complexities of desire, broken hearts, and redemption. Central to the success of the story is the wisdom which permeates as the characters travel in time from 1938 to the early 2000's. Times change, people change. With change comes wisdom. This is a love story, or perhaps I should say love stories. But also a story of the love of words. Therein lies the magical aspect of Amy Gottlieb's writing. She is capable of penning a story which, by its words, leads you to another place, another time, almost another world, and you never left home. Kudos to the author! To my readers, don't miss this one!

This book starts in Germany during Hitler's rise with a young man named Walter, his fiancée Sonia and his father all living in an apartment. Walter and Sonia are making plans to leave and go to Palestine as it's not really an ideal place for Jews. Plans are just coming together when Walter's father and Sonia are killed and Walter finds himself alone. He leaves intending to follow the plan but he ends up in India instead of Palestine. He follows a man in a felt hat off of the boat and his life changes its course. In New York Rosalie and Sol are engaged to be married. Sol is finishing his schooling to be a Rabbi and Rosalie is looking forward to being a wife and mother. Into this peaceful existence comes Walter who is brought to the Seminary to study by the man in the felt hat who studies religions and wants Walter to be his protégé. Walter befriends both Sol and Rosalie. First Sol as they study together and challenge each other. Then Rosalie and she finds so very different from Sol. She soon finds herself falling in love with Walter and he with her. What she doesn't know is that Sol also loves Walter. Sol and Rosalie marry and start having children but all is not as they dreamed. Sol is a rabbi but he is not fulfilled by his calling. Rosalie is a wife and mother but she is not fulfilled by this life she always thought she wanted. Both long for the excitement that Walter brought into their lives. He does pass in and out but he doesn't stay long. I'm making it all sound so mundane and ordinary but it's not. The book is full of life and love and complications. It's got heartache, joy and the minutia of everyday life. People live, they love and they die and it's messy and real. The writing is magical and full of bits of Jewish mysticism and lessons from the Torah. What I loved most was how real the book was. The only weakness at all in the writing of Sol and Rosalie's sons. They were underdeveloped and seemed there just so that they could have children. But beyond that minor complaint I truly enjoyed this book "another one that stretched my reading boundaries this year." I received a free copy for my honest review

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