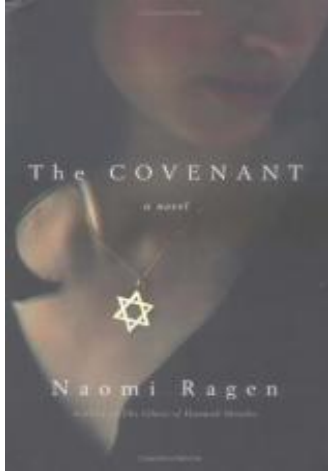


# The Covenant

by Naomi Ragen

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## About the Book

Living in Jerusalem, Elise Margulies fears for the lives of her husband and daughter every day. Then comes the day when her worst fears come true. Cancer specialist Dr. Jonathan Margulies drives his young daughter home from her ballet recital. His bullet-ridden car is found empty on the side of the road hours later. Elise, in the last stages of a difficult pregnancy, desperately calls her grandmother Leah in America for help and unknowingly revives a decades-old oath. Over five terror and hope-filled days during which ordinary people join the front lines against terrorism, the ties that bind two generations form a powerful alliance against contemporary evil.

## Discussion Guide

1. To what do you think the title of this book refers?
2. Leah, Maria, Ariana and Esther all survived Auschwitz. Did their experiences affect them all in the same way, or differently? Explain.
3. Compare the different behavior and coping mechanisms of the four friends in the camps and later in their lives. What characteristics helped each to survive? Did these traits help or hinder them when they returned to normal life?
4. Compare Elise Margulies and her grandmother Leah. In what ways are they similar, different?
5. Leah Rabinowitz experienced the horrors of Nazi Germany. Her granddaughter Elise experiences the horrors of modern day terrorism. How would you compare their experiences? In what ways were their enemies similar, different?

6. Compare how the following Muslim men are portrayed: Ismael Abadi, Musa el Khalil, and Whalid Ibn Saud. How does each view his religious obligations, family loyalties, and aspirations for the future?

7. Julia Greenberg views herself as ?a journalist. An objective journalist.? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

8. In what ways are Julia's choices and problems particular to her, and in what ways are they true of all journalists, especially those covering the war between Israel and the Palestinians? How, in your opinion, does this affect the news we see and read?

9. **The Covenant** takes place in Israel. Could you see this story taking place in another geographic locale? How would it be the same? How would it be different?

10. If you were writing a sequel to this book, what would happen to Elise Margulies and her children? What would happen to Fatima and her children?

## Author Bio

Naomi Ragen is an award-winning novelist, journalist and playwright. Her first book, JEPHTE'S DAUGHTER, was listed among the 100 most important Jewish books of all time. Her bestselling novels include SOTAH, THE COVENANT, THE SISTERS WEISS and DEVIL IN JERUSALEM. An outspoken advocate for women's rights, and an active combatant against anti-Israel and anti-Semitic propaganda through her website, she has lived in Jerusalem since 1971.

## Critical Praise

"While still maintaining her great warmth for characters, **The Covenant** is as suspenseful as a Mary Higgins Clark as you worry about the fate of characters hour by hour, minute by minute. **The Covenant** brings the headlines heartbreakingly home and redefines the unlimited boundaries of lifelong friendship."

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