an hour in paradise stories



Joan Leegant

TAKING ITS TITLE FROM THE YIDDISH PROVERB

"Even an hour in Paradise is worthwhile," Joan Leegant's startling debut features ten outstandingly original and prize-winning stories. Contemporary and fresh, these are stories that mine the Jewish tradition with an edge. Provocative and offbeat, in settings from Jerusalem to Queens, from the outskirts of Hollywood to Sarasota, Florida, An Hour in Paradise gives us characters who soldier on, despite the odds, in search of divine and human connection, aware that even a glimmer—that single heavenly hour—is worthwhile.

A former drug dealer turned yeshiva student faces his past while visiting a dving AIDS patient. A disaffected young American in the ancient city of Safed ventures into Kabbalist mysticism and gets more than he bargained for. Three sisters—one a Hindu, one an Orthodox Jew, and one a struggling actress just trying to get by-find unexpected happiness with the help of an unseen, yet beloved, hand. A Boston rabbi whose morning minyan is visited by a pair of mysterious guests considers the possibility that they are not the mortals they seem. An aging Jerusalemite chronicles his country's changes during the Biblical year of rest. Interspersed with these are tales of love lost and found-between fathers and sons, old childhood sweethearts past their prime, and strangers thrown together by circumstance and chance.

By turns poignant and comic, unflinching and compassionate—with a dose of fabulist daring—the stories in *An Hour in Paradise* explore the dangers and unforeseen rewards of our most fundamental longings.



Joan Leegant has won numerous awards for her short fiction, including the Lawrence Foundation Award and finalist citations in the Katherine Anne Porter Prize, the Tobias Wolff Award, and Glimmer Train's Short-Story Award for New Writers. She is the recipient of an artist grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and fellowships at The MacDowell Colony. Her stories have appeared in *The New England Review, Prairie Schooner, Bellingham Review,* and *Nimrod*, among other journals and anthologies. Born in New York, she lives in Newton, Massachusetts, with her husband and sons and teaches writing at Harvard University and Hebrew College.

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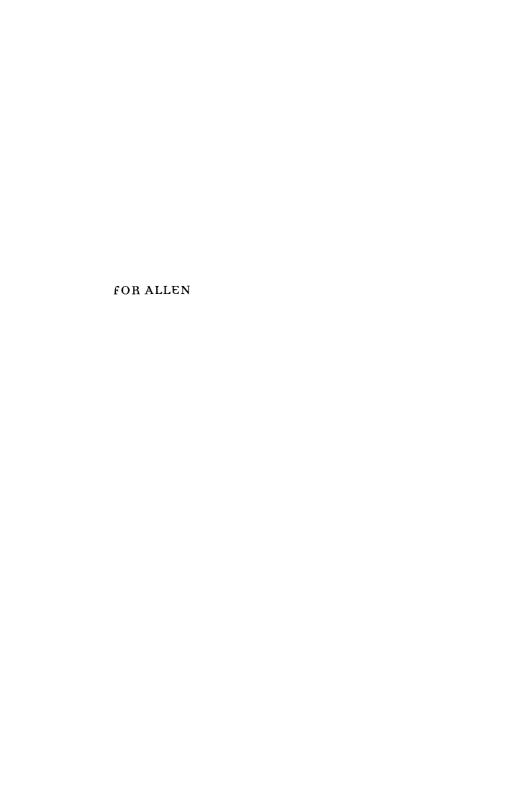
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—riddish proverb

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