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# PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

by

Bestselling author and Pulitzer Prize-winner

## Geraldine Brooks

### Early Praise for PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

“Now in her dazzling new novel, **PEOPLE OF THE BOOK**, Brooks allows both her native land and current events to play a larger role while still continuing to mine the historical material that speaks so ardently to her imagination. ... Brooks is too good a novelist to belabor her political messages, but her depiction of the Haggadah bringing together Jews, Christians, and Muslims could not be more timely. Her gift for storytelling, happily, is timeless.”

—Margot, Livesey for *Publishers Weekly*

★ “With an ingenuity equal to that standing behind her Pulitzer Prize-winning *March*...a marvelously evocative journey backward in time.”

—*Booklist* (starred)

“...enthraling historical mystery...Rich suspense based on a true-life literary puzzle...”

—*Kirkus*

“ **PEOPLE OF THE BOOK**...sweeps us irresistibly away...hugely entertaining yarn...”

—*ELLE*

Geraldine Brooks captivated readers with her acclaimed novels *Year of Wonders* and the Pulitzer Prize-winner *March*. With **PEOPLE OF THE BOOK** (Viking; STRICT on-sale: January 1, 2008; \$25.95; 384 pages), she has crafted a riveting page-turner. Ingeniously conceived, suspenseful, and evocative, this novel follows a rare illuminated manuscript through centuries of exile and war.

As a young girl growing up in a suburban neighborhood of Sydney, Australia, Geraldine Brooks longed to discover the places where history happens and culture comes from. This passion eventually led her to the *Wall Street Journal*, where she covered crises in Somalia, the Middle East, Africa, the Balkans, and Bosnia. While in Sarajevo reporting on the Bosnian war, Brooks first heard about the Sarajevo Haggadah, a priceless, exquisitely beautiful, six-hundred-year-old book, and one of the earliest Jewish volumes ever to be illuminated with images, which became the inspiration for **PEOPLE OF THE BOOK**.

As the novel opens in 1996, Australian book conservator Hanna Heath is called to handle the job of a lifetime: analysis and conservation of the famed Sarajevo Haggadah salvaged from the shelled Bosnian museum by a courageous librarian. In its pages Hanna discovers a series of artifacts—an insect wing, a wine stain, saltwater crystals, and a white hair. As she investigates these items, the narrative travels back in time (1940s Sarajevo, Vienna in 1894, Venice in 1609, Tarragona in 1492, and Seville in 1480) and in vivid,

intimate detail, we encounter the life and times of the people of the book: the Muslim librarian in Sarajevo who saved it from the Nazis during World War II; the Venetian ecclesiastical censor who in a fit of rage and personal anguish also protected it from destruction; the scribe who wrote the text; and the mysterious illuminator whose striking illustrations grace its pages. Hanna's investigation unexpectedly plunges her into the intrigues of fine art forgers and ultra-nationalist fanatics. Her journey towards the truth takes her all over the world, and into the private reaches of her own troubled heart.

The reader comes away knowing something about parchment making, gold leaf-beating, and the modern laboratory technology that detects and identifies ancient mysterious markings. We learn about the Vatican's book-burning mandate in the 1600s, the torture tactics of the Inquisition, the impossibly intricate methods of Muslim miniature painters in the 1400s, and the teenaged guerilla soldiers in the mountains beyond Sarajevo who briefly formed brigades to fight the Nazis. Underlying every layer of information, every beat of world civilization, and the convincingly intimate portrayal of every character is the story about the unlikely survival of a remarkable book.

Both threads of the novel—the historical and the contemporary—pulse with suspense, drama, and modern urgency. Bearing the stamp of the storytelling gifts that won Brooks the Pulitzer Prize, **PEOPLE OF THE BOOK** is a novel of sweeping historical grandeur, intimate romance and gripping mystery. It is a remarkable achievement.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**GERALDINE BROOKS** is the author of *March*, the recipient of the 2006 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction. She is also the author of *Year of Wonders*, *Nine Parts of Desire*, and *Foreign Correspondence*. During eleven years as a correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, her beats included some of the world's most troubled areas including Bosnia, Somalia, and the Middle East. Born and raised in Australia, Brooks lives on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, with her husband, the author Tony Horwitz, their son, and their three dogs

#### **PEOPLE OF THE BOOK**

Geraldine Brooks

A Viking Hardcover ▪ On-sale: January 1, 2008

\$25.95 ▪ ISBN: 978-0-670-01821-5

**#1 Booksense Pick for January**

*People of the Book* Audio: 978-0143142980

#### **Also available from Viking and Penguin Books:**

<i>March</i>	978-0-14-303666-1	\$14.00
<i>March</i>	978-0-670-03335-5	\$24.95
<i>Year of Wonders</i>	978-0-14-200143-1	\$14.00
<i>Year of Wonders</i>	978-0-670-91021-2	\$24.95

#### **Geraldine Brooks will be touring to:**

Martha's Vineyard, MA \* Boston, MA \* New York, NY \* Washington, DC  
Philadelphia, PA \* Raleigh, NC \* Durham, NC \* Sarasota, FL \* Miami, FL  
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Chicago, IL \* Minneapolis, MN \* Seattle, WA \* San Francisco, CA  
Sacramento, CA \* Los Angeles, CA \* Long Beach, CA

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