

Zoe Klein is my Rabbi. I have heard her poetic voice many times over and the cadence of her words ring in my head and guide me from High Holidays to High Holidays, Shabbat to Shabbat. But *Drawing in the Dust*, Klein's first book due out in July, is no Shabbat service. The story, disguised as a biblical mystery, delves into the power of love – with buried scrolls and skeletons and evocative scenes of love and desire. And yet, if the novel resounds with the notion that love conquers all then shrouded in the dust is the revelation that without love we are doomed to Armageddon.

*Drawing in the Dust* is a story about Page Brookestone, an archaeologist extraordinaire who sacrifices her reputation on an instinct. She is approached by an Arab couple to find the source of a haunting, heated and sexual, that they believe is coming from underneath their home. As an assortment of characters assembles to help in the excavation we are swept into a whirlwind of love, desire, and mystery. The remains of Jeremiah the Prophet are discovered embraced by the skeleton of Anatiya, an unknown woman. Why they are entwined and the turmoil that results when they are separated is at the heart of their mysterious love story. In solving this mystery, Page will eventually master her own fears in a climatic ending of self-sacrifice and love.

The novel echoes with the marvelous optimism of Rabbi Klein. Consider that the story, set mostly in Israel, provides the history of a Jewish prophet, involves an Arab couple, sees the cross-cultural marriage between an Israeli woman and an Arab man, is told through the eyes of an American Christian archaeologist who may, or may not be, in love with Mortichai, a formally orthodox Jew specially trained in forensics and mortuary practices, (the misspelling of his name intentional to connect death and life in one breath). What better framework for a writer with the rabbinic leanings of tolerance.

But these aren't the writings of a Rabbi. This is fiction, and fiction magically plotted and brought to life by the mastery of Klein with years of storytelling experience. It is never heavy handed. Instead we are lost in a labyrinth of underground tunnels and hidden artifacts and characters that tell us one of those incredibly readable stories that we don't want to ever put down.

– Erica Jamieson for Sax Facts