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The Sleepwalker's Guide to Dancing: A Novel

By Mira Jacob



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The Sleepwalker's Guide to Dancing: A Novel By Mira Jacob

NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *THE BOSTON GLOBE*, *KIRKUS REVIEWS*, *BUSTLE*, AND EMILY GOULD, *THE MILLIONS*

For fans of J. Courtney Sullivan, Meg Wolitzer, Mona Simpson, and Jhumpa Lahiri comes a winning, irreverent debut novel about a family wrestling with its future and its past.

With depth, heart, and agility, debut novelist Mira Jacob takes us on a deftly plotted journey that ranges from 1970s India to suburban 1980s New Mexico to Seattle during the dot.com boom. *The Sleepwalker's Guide to Dancing* is an epic, irreverent testimony to the bonds of love, the pull of hope, and the power of making peace with life's uncertainties.

Celebrated brain surgeon Thomas Eapen has been sitting on his porch, talking to dead relatives. At least that is the story his wife, Kamala, prone to exaggeration, tells their daughter, Amina, a photographer living in Seattle.

Reluctantly Amina returns home and finds a situation that is far more complicated than her mother let on, with roots in a trip the family, including Amina's rebellious brother Akhil, took to India twenty years earlier. Confronted by Thomas's unwillingness to explain himself, strange looks from the hospital staff, and a series of puzzling items buried in her mother's garden, Amina soon realizes that the only way she can help her father is by coming to terms with her family's painful past. In doing so, she must reckon with the ghosts that haunt all of the Eapens.

Look for special features inside. Join the Random House Reader's Circle for author chats and more.

"With wit and a rich understanding of human foibles, Jacob unspools a story that will touch your heart."—*People*

"Optimistic, unpretentious and refreshingly witty."—**Associated Press**

"By turns hilarious and tender and always attuned to shifts of emotion . . . [Jacob's] characters shimmer with life."—*Entertainment Weekly*

"A rich, engrossing debut told with lightness and care."—*The Kansas City Star*

“[A] sprawling, poignant, often humorous novel . . . Told with humor and sympathy for its characters, the book serves as a bittersweet lesson in the binding power of family, even when we seek to break out from it.”—***O: The Oprah Magazine***

“Moving forward and back in time, Jacob balances comedy and romance with indelible sorrow. . . . When her plot springs surprises, she lets them happen just as they do in life: blindsidingly right in the middle of things.”—***The Boston Globe***

“This is an effortlessly gorgeous and rich book. Its prose is lovely and precise, alternately luminous and direct; its observations of people and families and the physical world are poignant and a delight. The dialogue is sharp, funny, and true. This is a triumphant debut!”—**Jonathan Ames, author of *Wake Up, Sir!***

“Comparisons of Jacob to Jhumpa Lahiri are inevitable; . . . both write with naked honesty about the uneasy generational divide among Indians in America and about family in all its permutations.”—***Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)**

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The Sleepwalker's Guide to Dancing: A Novel By Mira Jacob Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

This atmospheric behemoth of a book, Jacob's ambitious first novel, follows the fortunes of the Eapens, an Indian American family dealing with tragedy and loss. Told from the perspective of daughter Amina, a 30-year-old professional photographer, the book moves backward and forward in time from 1979, which finds the Eapens on a visit to India; to 1983, when tragedy first strikes the family, now living in Albuquerque, New Mexico; to 1998, when that same tragedy, which involved Amina's firebrand older brother, Akhil, revisits the family as Amina's father, Thomas, faces a possibly terminal illness. Jacob has written a closely observed, scrupulously detailed story of an extended family dealing with the difficulties of living in America and with each other. That the past is always present in their lives provides a dramatic tension that at once brings them together and threatens to drive them apart. Jacob has done an excellent job of balancing these elements as she has created a memorable and dramatic portrait of a family in flux. --Michael Cart

Review

"With wit and a rich understanding of human foibles, [Mira] Jacob unspools a story that will touch your heart."—*People*

"Jacob's novel is light and optimistic, unpretentious and refreshingly witty. Jacob has created characters with evident care and treats them with gentleness even as they fight viciously with each other. Her prose is sharp and true and deeply funny. . . . This is the literary fiction I will be recommending to everyone this summer, especially those who love multigenerational, multicultural family sagas."—*Associated Press*

"This debut novel so fully envelops the reader in the soul of an Indian-American immigrant family that it's heart-wrenching to part with them. . . . Thanks to Jacob's captivating voice, which is by turns hilarious and tender and always attuned to shifts of emotion, her characters shimmer with life. [Grade:] A—"—*Entertainment Weekly*

"*The Sleepwalker's Guide to Dancing* is a rich, engrossing debut told with lightness and care, as smart about grief as it is about the humor required to transcend it."—*The Kansas City Star*

"[A] sprawling, poignant, often humorous novel that's worth missing cocktails on the deck in order to finish a chapter . . . Told with humor and sympathy for its characters, the book serves as a bittersweet lesson in the binding power of family, even when we seek to break out from it."—*O: The Oprah Magazine*

"Beautifully wrought, frequently funny, gently heartbreaking . . . Moving forward and back in time, Jacob balances comedy and romance with indelible sorrow, and she is remarkably adept at tonal shifts. When her plot springs surprises, she lets them happen just as they do in life: blindsidingly right in the middle of things."—*The Boston Globe*

"Always engrossing and often feels so true to life that it's a surprise that it's not."—*The Austin Chronicle*

"Comparisons of Jacob to Jhumpa Lahiri are inevitable; . . . both write with naked honesty about the uneasy generational divide among Indians in America and about family in all its permutations."—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

"[Jacob] has a wonderful flair for recreating the messy sprawl of family life, with all its joy, sadness,

frustration, and anger.”—***Publishers Weekly***

“Jacob’s writing is refreshing, and she excels at creating a powerful bond between the reader and her characters, all wonderfully drawn and with idiosyncratic natures—the mother, Kamala, for instance, is a born-again Christian—that make them enchanting. Recommended for those who like engaging fiction that succeeds in addressing serious issues with some humor.”—***Library Journal***

“A memorable and dramatic portrait of a family in flux.”—***Booklist***

“Punchy, clever, and stuffed with delicious chapatis, Mira Jacob’s first novel jumps effortlessly from India to the States, creating a vibrant portrait of a world in flux.”—**Gary Shteyngart, author of *Little Failure***

“*The Sleepwalker’s Guide to Dancing* seizes the reader early and never lets go. Its electricities reside in Mira Jacob’s acute details and the sadness, anger, and humor of her characters. This novel tells many wonderful stories while also telling, beautifully, the story that counts the most.”—**Sam Lipsyte, author of *The Fun Parts***

“Mira Jacob has written an utterly dazzling, epic debut. The story of an Indian American family is at once completely relatable and totally fresh. A beautifully timed novel, *The Sleepwalker’s Guide to Dancing* is intricately woven and sparkingly played out, and it triumphs. I did not want this breathtaking book to end.”—**Julie Klam, author of *Friendkeeping***

“I read this in one sitting. I couldn’t have stopped—wouldn’t even have noticed—if my house had caught fire. Mira Jacob is a born storyteller and a fantastic writer. *The Sleepwalker’s Guide to Dancing* is a truly great book.”—**Abigail Thomas, author of *A Three Dog Life***

“*The Sleepwalker’s Guide to Dancing* is a time-traveling multigenerational saga that still remains intimate in its feel and central focus. For all of its witty and loving attention to the power of familial bonds, it is most eloquent on the subject of a grief so profound that its everyday weight pulls the griever closer to the dead than to the living. And yet the overall effect, miraculously, is celebratory.”—**Jim Shepard, author of *You Think That’s Bad***

“*The Sleepwalker’s Guide to Dancing* is an effortlessly gorgeous and rich book. Its prose is lovely and precise, alternately luminous and direct; its observations of people and families and the physical world are poignant and a delight. The dialogue is sharp, funny, and true. This is a triumphant debut!”—**Jonathan Ames, author of *Wake Up, Sir!***

“What a thrill to discover Mira Jacob, a warm, witty new voice in American fiction. *The Sleepwalker’s Guide to Dancing* is both rich and wise. I savored every page.”—**Amanda Eyre Ward, author of *How to Be Lost***

About the Author

Mira Jacob is the founder of Pete’s Reading Series in New York City and has an MFA from the New School for Social Research. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and son. *The Sleepwalker’s Guide to Dancing* is her first novel.

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

William Jewell:

Often the book *The Sleepwalker's Guide to Dancing: A Novel* has a lot details on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of profit. The book was written by the very famous author. Mcdougal makes some research before write this book. This specific book very easy to read you can get the point easily after reading this article book.

Ruby Sprankle:

People live in this new morning of lifestyle always try and and must have the spare time or they will get wide range of stress from both daily life and work. So , once we ask do people have free time, we will say absolutely sure. People is human not really a huge robot. Then we inquire again, what kind of activity do you have when the spare time coming to a person of course your answer can unlimited right. Then ever try this one, reading ebooks. It can be your alternative in spending your spare time, the particular book you have read is usually *The Sleepwalker's Guide to Dancing: A Novel*.

Raymond Littlefield:

In this era globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The fitness of the world makes the information better to share. You can find a lot of personal references to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You can observe that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. The particular book that recommended to you personally is *The Sleepwalker's Guide to Dancing: A Novel* this guide consist a lot of the information with the condition of this world now. This specific book was represented how does the world has grown up. The terminology styles that writer value to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some study when he makes this book. That is why this book appropriate all of you.

Marcia Marshall:

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