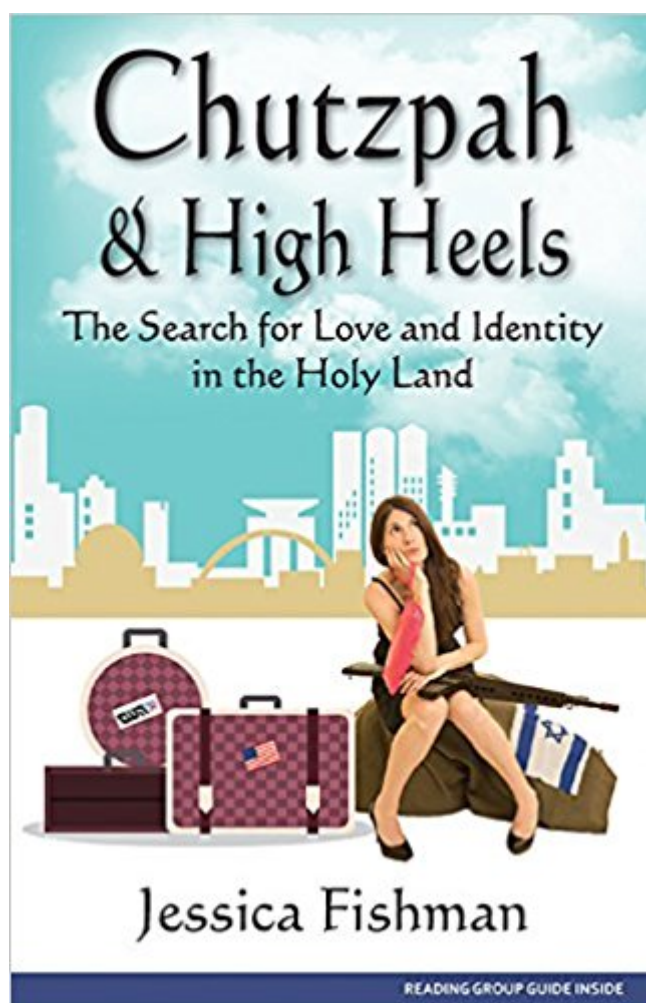


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# Chutzpah & High Heels: The Search For Love And Identity In The Holy Land



## Synopsis

Having grown up in Minnesota, Jessica Fishman moves to a land in the Middle East that is full of idiosyncrasies, terrorists, and beautiful, olive-skinned men. When she arrives in Israel, she is a wide-eyed immigrant hoping to survive on Zionism. But instead of working the land on a kibbutz or being swept off her feet by a strong, sensitive Israeli soldier, Jessica is faced with a barrage of ridiculous obstacles. She overcomes notorious Israeli bureaucracy, makes embarrassing mistakes learning Hebrew, serves in an army of teenagers, and dates cocky Israelis, until she finally meets one obstacle, rooted in the very ideology that brought her to Israel, that tests the core of her identity. With self-deprecating wit, Jessica takes us on a personal journey through these challenges, weaving a humorous yet heartbreaking tale about losing and finding identity, and offering a seldom-before-seen snapshot of Israeli culture.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Jessica Fishman dedicated her life to being Jewish. She left her whole life behind in Minnesota -- including her Hadassah-President mother and her synagogue-centric family -- in order to live in Israel, serve as a Lone Soldier in the IDF, represent Israel to the world in the IDF Spokesperson unit, and search for a nice Jewish guy to spend her life with. Yet, despite all this dedication -- which came with its share of challenges and struggles -- the Israeli government does not consider Jessica Jewish. Jessica has a crucial story to tell. Hers is a story about how the Jewish state deals with Jews of the world, how fanatic versions of Orthodoxy have taken over vital areas of Israeli governance, and how this antiquated system has instilled an entire society in cultures of judgment

and exclusion rather than into an ethos of love and compassion. The story is required reading for anyone concerned with the moral compass of the Jewish state and the ultra-Orthodox monopoly on being Jewish in Israel today.” --Dr. Elana Maryles Sztokman, PhD, is an award-winning author, and leading Jewish feminist thinker, educator and activist. She specializes in gender inclusion in the Jewish world, and has worked with communities, organizations and individuals around the world on advancing gender inclusion and gender equity. In August 2015, she founded The Center for Jewish Feminism to provide resources and connections among Jewish feminists around the world.

”Jessica’s story provides a critical perspective for both Israelis and American Jewry. For all its sharp criticism of different facets of life in Israel, it is a Zionist treatise anchored in a deep love for the State and its people. At the same time, it presents a challenging indictment of the new generation of American Jewry. This is not a story of black and white, but rather of Jewish life’s complexity, of core values, and of the realities facing both major Jewish communities.” --Rabbi Uri Regev, Esq., CEO of Hiddush -- Freedom of Religion for Israel, Inc.”With wit, wisdom, and tears, Jessica Fishman, an idealist, a Zionist, and a Jew everywhere but Israel, tells of her encounter with Israel’s despicable refusal to accept non-Orthodox conversions. She wins some and loses some as she engages our emotions together with hers.” --Mark Lavie, award-winning journalist covering the Middle East, and author of Broken Spring”Jessica tells the story of her struggle for authenticity and belonging with honesty and humor, even as we spiral, intensely, to the core of her being and identity--to her unapologetic, truest self.” --Rabbi Susan Silverman, activist and author of Casting Lots: Creating a Family in a Beautiful, Broken World

Jessica Fishman moved to Israel after graduating from Indiana University with degrees in journalism and business. The creator of the popular Aliyah Survival Blog, Jessica has written a number of articles about Israel, and her story has been featured in leading Israeli and Jewish media.

I signed up to receive this book when it would be published a few years ago, having read the author’s blog and wanting to embark on a similar journey. Now in my senior year and preparing to spend a year or two in Israel, I got the email a few days ago and immediately devoured it on my Kindle, and am so glad I did. The story is masterfully told, and the author is able to seamlessly inject lessons she learned about herself and the country throughout the book. I enjoyed getting to know Jessica and country through her perspective, and identified with her in many ways, for example the road blocks for getting married in Israel as a conservative or reform Jew. I would recommend this to anyone interested in understanding how difficult it is to make a life in Israel as an immigrant, the

"who is a Jew" question, and simply because it is a great page-turner! -Isa g.

I had the opportunity to live a great deal of this story as it was unfolding. I had the privilege of watching Jessica grow up in our community as her rabbi and as a dear friend of the family. Seeing her develop the passion for the Jewish state and Jewish people in college and seeing her determination to make her home in Israel, I was unprepared for the unfolding of the narrative which she shares and sadly had to experience. Jessica unpacks the story in an endearing fashion, filled with both the pain of having to retell it and the sharp, and sometimes stinging, humor which she possesses. Her clarity of thought and her determination to move beyond the pain is perhaps the most powerful piece of this book. recently she came back to Minnesota to speak about the book. Her presentation was engaging, and a crowd which was mixed across denominational lines came away impressed and awed by her strength and her story. An important book to read for those who are as concerned about Israel's soul as they are about Israel's physical security.

This is a great read- very entertaining [funny, heartrending, and dramatic at turns] and fascinating all around. Not only is the story of the author's journey worth reading in its own right, but the insight into Israel as a country and the cultural picture it paints of the nation is incredibly interesting. The personal tale Ms. Fishman shares paints a refreshing portrait of another human being and helps remind me how big the world is and how different we all can be- and that diversity is a grand thing. If I had one disappointment in the book it'd be that it wasn't long enough [meant as a compliment, really] and didn't go into enough detail about the wild and wooly world of Israeli politics, laws, military motivations, and customs. I'd love to read a companion book that fleshes out more of how the bureaucratic processes for various services work [or don't] in Israel and which delves into some of the other idiosyncrasies touched on in the telling of the story but which aren't fully explored [fairly, for the sake of pacing]. I imagine there are already books out there covering those subjects but one written by Ms. Fishman, I suspect, would be much more entertaining! Back to the book that's been written, though... Another thing I loved was the knowledge I gained on the interconnection between the religious and secular powers in Israel- which ultimately lead to what I interpret as the crux of the story- and how they're far more complicated than I realized. What I learned in the book has changed how I view Israel, for certain. It's a much more complex country than I'd realized- and I knew it was complex to begin with. I truly hope there's a sequel forthcoming- would love to read the story of what happened next and how Ms. Fishman has gotten to where she is now.

Jessica Fishman's book *Chutzpah & High Heels* is adorable: laugh out loud funny and clever. She has recaptured my 20s for me!!! This book is a MUST READ for anyone who cannot decide they are Jewish -American (or any other nationality) or American (or any other nationality) Jewish. Fishman captures the complexity of what it means to be Jewish and all the complications of what it means to be Jewish and she does it all with edgy humor. If you have ever lived or made aliyah or just visited Israel, you MUST read this book! I cannot wait for her next book!!!

I absolutely LOVED this book! I would recommend it highly to anyone interested in Israel, and what life is "really" like. If you've spent time in Israel on a program in high school, college, or any other time, or are contemplating moving to Israel, this book will put many things into perspective. At times, I was laughing out loud, and at others, I was upset for what the author was going through. I have already recommended it to friends & family & I know that at some time in the future, I'll read it again as I truly enjoyed it. I'm hoping that Jessica Fishman continues to write. I know I would buy another book written by her.

I loved this book, which was written in a moving yet entertaining style, and which evoked strong emotions in me, partly in empathy, as the author deftly draws you in to her emotional world, and partly in reminding me of similar experiences in my own life. Fishman sends a very important message that I hope will be heeded.

This is a story of someone who found a fight without looking for one, or at least not the one she expected, and didn't back down from it. Because of that, it starts out as one pretty interesting book and then turns out to be a rather different and quite compelling one. It's a good piece of writing and language (by someone who clearly likes language) and it makes you think about what you stand for -- can't ask for more than that.

I read this from a military memoir perspective and found a surprisingly entertaining story of a young woman's quest to be with, and be accepted by, her people. Jessica provides an inciteful look into serving in the IDF while overcoming gender, language and societal barriers try to prove she was "jewish" enough for her homeland. Thanks, Jessica for educating us on the divide between Jewish ethnicity and Judiasm.

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*Chutzpah & High Heels: The Search for Love and Identity in the Holy Land* High Fiber Recipes: 101

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