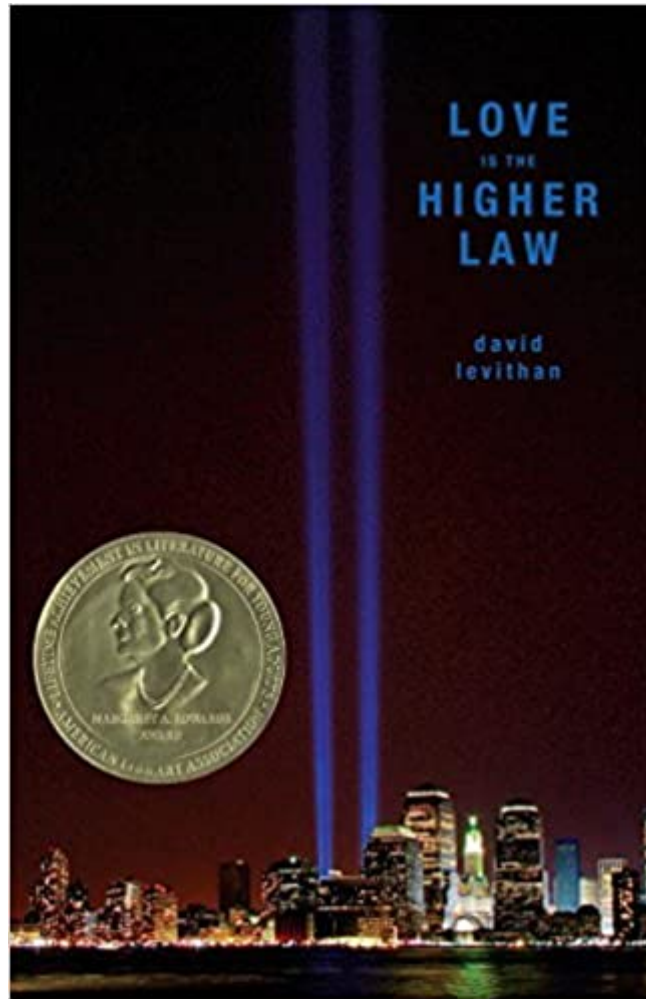




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Love Is The Higher Law



Synopsis

Bestselling author David Levithan (*Every Day*; *Boy Meets Boy*; *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* with John Green) treats the tragic events of September 11th with care and compassion in this novel of loss and grief, but also of hope and redemption. "First there is a Before, and then there is an After. . . . The lives of three teens—Claire, Jasper, and Peter—are altered forever on September 11, 2001. Claire, a high school junior, has to get to her younger brother in his classroom. Jasper, a college sophomore from Brooklyn, wakes to his parents' frantic calls from Korea, wondering if he's okay. Peter, a classmate of Claire's, has to make his way back to school as everything happens around him. Here are three teens whose intertwining lives are reshaped by this catastrophic event. As each gets to know the other, their moments become wound around each other's in a way that leads to new understandings, new friendships, and new levels of awareness for the world around them and the people close by. David Levithan has written a novel of loss and grief, but also one of hope and redemption. As the characters slowly learn to move forward in their lives, despite being changed forever, one rule remains: love is indeed the higher law. A MARGARET A. EDWARDS AWARD WINNER

From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 920L (What's this?)

Paperback: 176 pages

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Language: English

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 41 customer reviews

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 8 Up

• Claire and Peter are friendly acquaintances at their New York City high school. Jasper is a freshman in college. They attend a mutual friend's party, and Peter and Jasper make a date for the evening of September 11, 2001. They reschedule and have an excruciating date a week later. Claire and Jasper meet again by chance at Ground Zero when neither can sleep. Claire is called to action, Peter is reverent, and Jasper, a kind of "expert dodger," can't feel a thing. The three come to develop a deep friendship. Levithan's character development is quick and seamless. He defines the trio's personae by how they perceive the tragedy, how they interact, and how they observe the world. The author's prose has never been deeper in thought or feeling. His writing here is especially pure—unsentimental, restrained, and full of love for his characters and setting. Though the trio's talks and emails are philosophically sophisticated, *Love Is the Higher Law* is steadily paced and tightly, economically written. Discussion of the U.S. invasion of Iraq feels like overkill, but it brings the novel to an appropriately queasy end. Levithan captures the mood of post-9/11 New York exquisitely, slashed open to reveal a deep heart.

• Johanna Lewis, New York Public Library

END --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

David Levithan is a children's book editor in New York City. He lives in Hoboken, New Jersey.

From the Hardcover edition.

I wasn't sure what to expect from this book when i purchased it other than i had read David levithan's books *Everyday*, and *Another Day*. He has this interesting writing style that is very plain and direct, not over flowery, but can put complicated emotions and concepts into simple terms to get them across. If i had to describe it in few words i say he writes poetry with plain words. This book for me explored some hard to define feelings of indirect loss. Im going to try and describe that as, when the main characters felt the absence of something that didn't directly impact there lives, and how that absence triggered a variety of emotions like anxiety, numbness, and detachment. This isn't a book that you need to curl up with a box of tissues to read. However there is a lot of observations from the main characters that gives you a lot to digest in a meaningful way. Personally, i started reading this book the night a childhood mentor of mine died of cancer (to help clear my head). Though it wasn't my intent, reading this book helped me process the complicated concept of dealing with a loss of someone that meant a lot to me though they weren't currently an active part of my life.

A very sweet novel taking you through three view points if teenagers, two seniors and one college kid. It explores what happened that day from near and far. It takes you up in their grief and how the

three characters and the nation processed 9/11. I would recommend it. Especially for those readers, that were nit able to grasp the full extent of that day. I myself was in third grade and could not understand what a building in New York meant to us, nor what it meant to have the planes hijacked and crashed. This book creates meaning for those that were not there

I remember having a conversation with a family friend a year or so after 9/11. We were talking about humanity and the good and the seriously ugly that comes out of humanity. And after we talked about some pretty ugly things, one being all the people who died on 9/11, I made a comment that quieted us both. I said (not verbatim), "Well, there wasn't a single call of vengeance or hate or anger that came from those buildings or those planes. They were all of love." I remember him pondering that for a moment and saying, "I guess humans aren't so bad after all." We lived through 9/11. We remember where we were that day. What we were doing. Who we were with. But our children and students don't. I am teaching middle school students who were born after that horrible day. They hear about the horror, but none remember it. So how do we teach them about a day we will never forget? David Levithan has the right idea with *Love is the Higher Law*. He talks about the people who survived that day. And you didn't have to be in the towers to be a survivor. Claire was sitting in homeroom when it happened. When she saw people bustling around and whispering to her teacher, she was scared something had happened to her mother. What she didn't expect was a tragedy that would take so many people's mothers and fathers. Jasper was sleeping. With his parents in Korea, he was using the time to indulge in late nights and later mornings and had disconnected the phone. For a family halfway around the world with their son in the middle of a terrorist attack, nothing can be scarier than him not picking up the phone. Peter is in Tower Records, picking out the next great album and day dreaming about his date that night with a cute boy named... Jasper. When he walks outside, he removes his headphones because any song he heard as he watched the second plane hit the towers would have been forever tainted by the horror he was witnessing. When the towers went down in NYC, many people died. But while many people survived, a small piece of them went down with the towers. Everything stopped in the city that never sleeps and certainly never stops. And three young adults all living very different lives found their lives intertwining and never losing sight of what their city lost: the facade of safety and imperviousness. Claire, Jasper, and Peter all survived in very different ways, but they carry the towers and what happened that day with them each and every day. The importance of this book is that it is not a dictation of facts of what happened that day. It is a personal, human story of three teenagers living through the scariest day of their lives. I think this is a story that teens today could not only relate to, but also get a better image of

what happened that day. But the story doesn't stop with that day. It continues for days and years after, showing the true influence 9/11 made on those kids. What was particularly important for me was how different their reactions are. When we look at the way people deal with tragedy, we have to acknowledge the widely differing reactions and this book chronicled three of those. In particular, Jasper was unable to get it out of his mind while Peter just wanted to move on with his life. While this book wouldn't tell the whole story of what happened that day, it would be a great companion to any lesson on the subject for teens. It is very realistic and upfront about the lives of these three teens, a skill Levithan is a master at. He doesn't hide behind stereotypes and fluff, but rather delivers a story that will leave you different by the last page. This is a short story, a little over 150 pages, so it is good for an older reader who struggles to focus on longer books or as a part of a larger unit about this time period. Levithan does it again. He brings the humanity out of the shadows and into the light.

If this novel doesn't affect you you are probably an unfeeling person...just saying! This book is about 9/11, but seen through the eyes of three teens who live in NYC. You would think that it would be depressing and downtrodden, but no, Levithan took the saddest event in US history and wrote a book about hope around it. He shines a light on the good of people. This book is told from three different characters perspectives. All of them are insightful and intelligent. They each were effected, but in completely different ways. You get to be a witness to the ways they handle it, the friendships they make and eventually to their healing. There's no way to read this book and not remember where you were that day. I was a freshman in high school, so I was awake. I was at school in science class and somehow word reached our corner of TN very quickly because we turned on the TV before the second Tower was hit. We watched as the first Tower fell and people were running away. At the time, I don't think I comprehended that magnitude of what was happening. How could I? I had no scale to judge it by. It was of course a day that none of us will ever forget. David Levithan took this day on beautifully. Not just any author could have done it. This book is hard for me to review. Not that it was a difficult book to read, it's just difficult to put it into words. You should read it for yourself!

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