

Tocmai am terminat o carte extraordinara ... Great House de Nicole Krauss.O recomand ca o carte foarte frumoasa. **Eva Szende**

<http://www.amazon.com/Great-House-Novel-Nicole-Krauss/dp/0393079988>

Review from amazon

An imposing wooden desk with nineteen drawers floats through this book like a buoy, and sometimes with shackles, loosely uniting four disparate but interconnected narrative threads. The desk is largely a monument to Jewish survival, loss, and recovery, and mirrors the dissolution, pain, and dire hope of each character. Additionally, it is a coveted object, given a poignant and existential significance by the chorus of voices that are bound to it by their memories.

"Bend a people around the shape of what they lost, and let everything mirror its absent form."

This elegiac story opens with Nadia, a now divorced and successful writer, who received the desk in 1972 from a Chilean poet, Daniel Varsky. Daniel needed a place to store furniture, and Nadia had an empty house. After a long night that resulted only in a brief kiss, he leaves her his desk, as well as other pieces of furniture, and returns to Chile and the tragic conditions of Pinochet's Junta regime. He never returns. Years later, during a particularly low period of her life, she receives a call from a woman, Leah Weisz, who alleges to be Varsky's daughter, and who has called to claim the desk. In the midst of this narrative, we occasionally break to Nadia confessing to an unknown "Your Honor." Nadia's attachment to the desk is profound and the loss of it signals keen despair. Leah and her brother have lived a nomadic (yet insular) privileged life with their father, George, a mordant, esteemed antiques dealer who is legendary for his prowess in recovering any loss object. He is obsessed with scrupulously reconstructing his father's study, to make it the way it was before the Gestapo pillaged it during World War II. Odd as this may seem, this reassembling in relation to Jewish culture and history is sublime.

There is another Jewish family, a father with two sons, Dov and Uri, whose link to the desk is more obscure and is revealed in the latter part of the book. He plaintively details the loss of his wife, Eve, and confesses to the tenuous relationship with his sons. Its climactic section is the weakest and most strained of all. I suspect that Krauss used it as a more concrete connective device. We also meet a grieving widower, Arthur, whose wife, Lotte, once in possession of the desk, died of Alzheimer's and left an elusive trail to a dark secret. Arthur warily and then desperately decides to investigate her past. The strands of Arthur's narrative lead to connections with other voices and a searing selfexamination. Certainties are founded on shifting sand; a commanding desk holds many compartments.

The central denouement (there is more than one climactic scene) is the most moving and mystical of all the segments of the book, and for this reader, poetic and riveting. Its link to ancient Jewish culture is beautifully rendered and breathtaking. It makes sense of the entire book, as well as the title. I am tremendously indebted to Nicole Krauss for hypnotically transporting me to this summit of Judaic history.