

Woman of Valor, by Lynne Golodner

An honest review.



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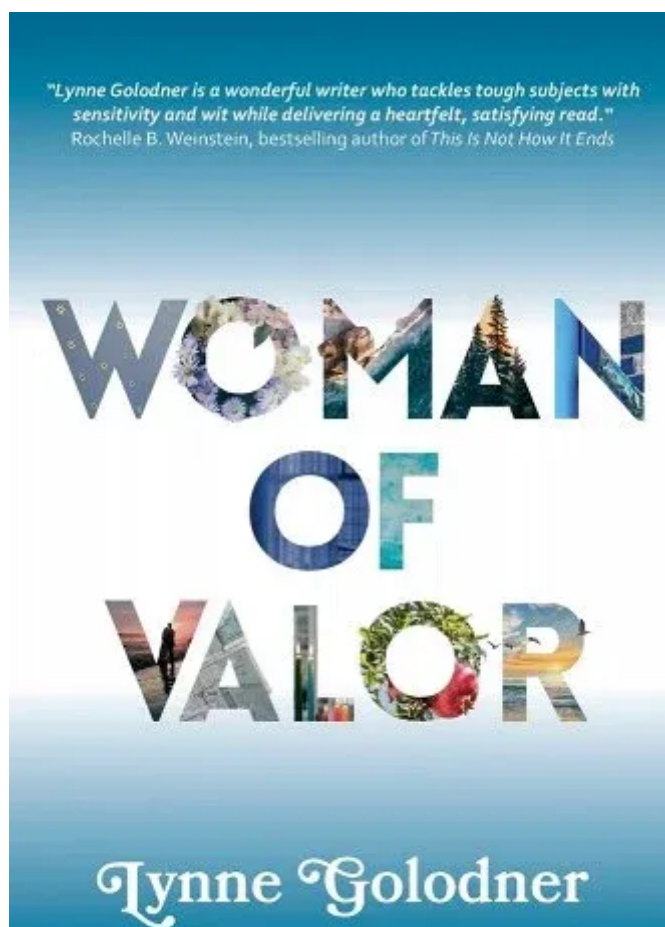


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Woman of Valor is a story of love between a woman and her husband, the family they have created, and the community in which they have built their entire lives. Nothing is ever as simple as we imagine it to be and our choices can often surprise even ourselves.



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felt my faith roots lived within the Jewish community, though I've never had much exposure to it. So when **Lynne Golodner** graciously allowed me to read an advanced copy of her book, [Woman of Valor](#)¹, I approached the reading from a place of curiosity.

Sally felt immediately familiar, like a friend whose life I can see into behind closed doors. I can see my life mirrored in her own- washing the dishes after supper, changing her shirt after being soaked through with splashes of water, checking on her children from the door of their bedrooms as they sleep. But as soon as she lies down in a bed separate from her husband, I pay attention. I have stepped into new territory, and I want to learn more.

Although Sally is born of Jewish blood, she does not grow up observing the Jewish faith with her family. The influence of her Jewish grandparents is minimal, and over time we come to understand a little more about the disconnect between her Jewishness and her upbringing. However, through happenstance or perhaps fate, she is assigned a story through her employer *Chicago Magazine* to look deeper into various religious sects surrounding the city. The connection Sally makes with the Orthodox Jewish women she meets is undeniable. Soon, she finds herself going through conversion, and not long after, marrying the love of her life.

In the years after marrying Barry, the love she has for him only deepens. You can feel the intense passion she feels for her husband, the way she admires him. She gives birth to three children who quickly become her entire world, and their lives become a routine. The rhythm of each day is influenced by religious practice and purpose. Community is critical and observances are everything.

One day, Sally's young son comes home from school visibly disturbed, and the unraveling of the truth behind why sets their family on edge. The disruption of their lives creates a need within Sally that is only further perpetuated by the differing understanding she and her husband have about the Orthodox community. She finds respite in a connection from her previous life, emails from the man she once thought she would marry, but the situation begins to collapse.

Golodner paints an honest picture of how life can quickly get away from you, and how circumstances outside of our control can influence even the most devoted hearts. The way the Orthodox Jewish community is described is not one of criticism, but of care and love and transparency. The rules and observances which guide this

community stem from an understanding of humanity, and seek to guide each member towards a closer connection to God and one another. Watching Sally continue to live the life she chose, while also stepping backwards into the life she left behind is, at times, uncomfortable. However, through stories such as *Woman of Valor*, we cannot deny how human nature can cause us to question even our deepest beliefs, regardless of love, religion, or sense of self.

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This book is for anyone who has ever questioned what they thought they deeply wanted or have felt lost in the decisions they made. I felt anger and embarrassment towards Sally at times, but also deep compassion and empathy for her at others. I believe Sally is representative of different parts of most of us as women, the parts we are proud of and the parts of which we are wary. A true *eshet chayil*.

About the Author

Lynne Golodner is the author of 9 books, a writing coach and marketing coach based in Detroit, and she writes the weekly Rebel Author Newsletter on Substack. Learn more at <https://lynnegolodner.com/>. Her first novel, [Woman of Valor](#), releases September 26th and can be found anywhere you purchase books. Join the virtual launch here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvceuqjotHtOBrYHIil8doHvGVAK9oMc6#/registration>

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