

The Liberated Bride by A B Yehoshua. Peter Halban 2003.

A B Yehoshua deserves to be known as Israel's greatest living writer on the basis of his previous works, and this assertion is further supported by his latest novel, The Liberated Bride.

A huge read in every way (the book is over 500 pages long), The Liberated bride has at its heart Professor Yochanan Rivlin, retired from his department but engaged and tormented by writing a book on the implosion of Algeria. His private life is also far from crisis-free, as he struggles with the mysterious breakdown of his son Ofer's marriage and the demands of his wife Hagit's role as a judge. Add to this his involvement with the family of an Arab post-graduate student of his, and some surprising, amusing and emotionally devastating experiences arise.

This is an amazingly rich read, full of wholly plausible characters who are beautifully observed. A B Yehoshua has produced a gem of a book, enhanced by a first rate translation by the indefatigable Hillel Halkin.

This is a must read for all who love good fiction.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh