

The Submission by Amy Waldman.

William Heinemann: London 2011.

Since the destruction of the Twin Towers in September 2001, the space that was almost instantly labelled Ground Zero has been something of a battleground between disparate interests – the families of the dead, the civic authorities, elected politicians and sundry teams of architects; an excellent flavour of which may be found in Daniel Libeskind's 2004 book *Breaking Ground*.

The plot of *The Submission*, an immensely clever title in the context of the book, is concerned with choosing the right plan for creating a Memorial to the murdered at Ground Zero. The successful bid, after a blind judging, turns out to be that submitted by an American Muslim, at which point all hell breaks loose.

Amy Waldman's superb first novel is concerned with prejudice and subjectivity, national and personal identity, human frailty and personal resilience, the perceived threat posed by Islam to America in the light of the 9/11 attacks, and the ability of some human beings to hate and mistrust others, regardless of the circumstances.

The pace of *The Submission* never wavers, and predicting the outcome is almost impossible; this is a thoroughly enjoyable and thought-provoking read and would make a marvellous film.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh