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THE MIKVAH QUEEN
The Award-Winning Novel by Jennifer Natalya Fink

Rebel Satori Press will release *The Mikvah Queen* by Jennifer Natalya Fink on September 15, 2010. The novel, which won the Dana Award and was a semifinalist for the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award, is already garnering praise.

Hailed as ‘compulsively readable’ by Eileen Myles, ‘refreshing’ by Michael Lowenthal, and ‘movingly drawn’ by Rebecca Walker, *The Mikvah Queen* is a coming-of-age story with many disco twists. In the anti-everything hippie culture of early ‘80s Ithaca, New York, what rituals can a girl borrow, steal, or invent to make sense of puberty? Jane Schwartz, a lonely, Talmud-quoting, disco-worshipping eleven-year-old girl, builds a mikvah (Jewish ritual bath) in the porta-sauna of her middle-aged neighbor, Charlene Walkeson, in hopes of saving Charlene from the ravages of cancer. Will Jane also save her fierce, fragile self? Out of fragments of disco, feminism, cooking shows, Christian salvation narratives and Jewish law, Jane forges her own theology. *The Mikvah Queen* offers no radical transformations; it is instead a story of incremental changes and incomplete human connections. Winner of the Dana Award for the Novel and a finalist for the Amazon Breakthrough Novel Contest, *The Mikvah Queen* is a remarkable exploration of postmodern Jewish identity, cancer, the confusion and promise of ‘70s alternative culture, and the power of ritual.

Dr. Jennifer Natalya Fink is a professor of English at Georgetown University, a literacy activist, and an all-around hell-raiser. She is the author of two previous award-winning novels, *BURN* and *V* (both from Suspect Thoughts Press), and is the founder and Gorilla-in-Chief of The Gorilla Press, an organization that promotes youth literacy through bookmaking. Nominated for the Pulitzer, National Jewish Book, and National Book Award, Fink is also the winner of the Dana Award, *STORY* Magazine's short fiction award, and twelve other awards. She is the U.S. judge for the Caine Prize for African Literature, and has published widely on literature, literacy, and hybridity, most notably in the anthology *PERFORMING HYBRIDITY* (Minnesota), which she co-edited with May Joseph.

Rebel Satori Press is an independent publisher of books on experimental spirituality and revolutionary personal transformation. Founded in 2001, Rebel Satori has published the ground-breaking and award winning journal *Ashé!* Starting in 2007, the press began developing full-length works from the journal's family of authors. The press publishes books on diverse topics ranging from Buddhist to western esotericism. In 2009, the press launched it's first specialty imprint, since then QueerMojo has published cutting edge works of literary fiction, non-fiction and poetry for the Gay, Lesbian, Transgendered communities. QueerMojo has quickly become one of the nation's leading GLBT publishers. Additional imprints are set to follow in 2011. Rebel and its imprints publish both new/experimental fiction, creative/inspirational non-fiction and inspired poetry.

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Writing from the edge... Enlightenment Without a Cause
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THE MIKVAH QUEEN

Jennifer Natalya Fink, Ph.D.

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Advance Praise for THE MIKVAH QUEEN:

The first time I ever heard about how hard it was to be a left handed person I whirled around and began to sympathetically imagine the difficulties of phone booths and toll booths and doors – all of it, the world, arranged for the comfort of righties. If anyone had next explained to me that part of what was so uncomfortable about being female was exactly the same – not just the machinery of the world but its dictionaries and handbooks, the bibles and schools—then I would have known why maneuvering it all in this car, my body was so inexplicably hard. With dazzling humor and devastating weirdness and skill *The Mikvah Queen* is one of the first books I would hand to a girl in the new world where we begin to tell it all and even celebrate the excess of females and their perversities and beauties the way everything generally likes to celebrate men. Jennifer Natalya Fink's book is excitingly odd and gross and disgustingly new. It's so good to go this far with a thought and a world as if it were your own. I think Jonathan Lethem, I think Phillip Roth and then I think no, she went past. She's shooting by the discomfort in them. I feel welcomed in *The Mikvah Queen* like a human for a change. Is this sci-fi? Females imagine and laugh? Their bodies are real and slipping into a bath they ask why. This compulsively readable book wants to know.

--Eileen Myles

In this era of contrived quirkiness, how refreshing to read a novel that comes by its oddness honestly. Among other elements: a hair-chewing heroine, a series of trainwreck sexo-Judaical parables (see: *The Half-Louse That Fell Out of the Vagina*), and a nudgy, irrepressible Voice of God. *The Mikvah Queen* is an intense meditation on the female body — its contamination and purification, and who gets to control those concepts — but at heart it's also a story of compelling friendship between a girl and a woman, a coming-of-age Jew and a facing-death WASP, as each meets the challenges of change.

--Michael Lowenthal

I find the characters in *The Mikvah Queen* haunting, and so vividly and movingly drawn. Their dilemmas are so clear, and their connection filled, symbolically, with such potential.

--Rebecca Walker