

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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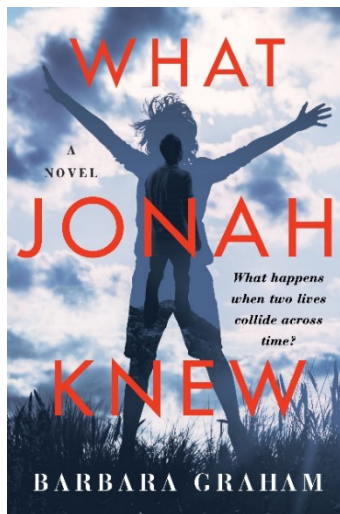
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# WHAT JONAH KNEW

by

## Barbara Graham



**A seven-year-old boy mysteriously recalls the memories of a missing 22-year-old musician in this psychological thriller about the fierce love between mothers and sons across lifetimes, a work of gripping suspense with a supernatural twist.**

“In Graham’s genre-bending fiction debut, two women’s lives become intertwined in a heartrending story about grief, trauma, and the love between mothers and sons. For mystery fans who like to ponder the larger issues.”

— *Booklist*

“A spellbinding literary thriller packed with psychological suspense and profound questions about motherhood, trauma, and how death illuminates life.”

—Amy Tan, author of *The Joy Luck Club* and *Where the Past Begins*

**HARPER**

“In this captivating novel, Barbara Graham takes us straight to the heart of devastating human emotion, love, loss, and the mysteries of life and death. *What Jonah Knew* is a metaphysical journey wrapped up in the breathtaking pages of a psychological thriller.”  
— **Wendy Walker, author of *All is Not Forgotten***

Writer [Barbara Graham](#) has spent her adult life mining the depths of parenthood, contemporary spirituality, and the human psyche in personal essays, journalistic pieces, nonfiction books, and plays. While researching an article for *Self* magazine on past lives, she became fascinated with the subject, and it stayed with her until one day inspiration struck. That inspiration takes form in her dazzling debut, the gripping psychological thriller, **WHAT JONAH KNEW** (Harper Paperbacks, \$17.99; Trade Paperback original; ISBN: 9780063230187; on-sale: July 5, 2022). A compelling page-turner, the novel also takes a deep dive into trauma and memory through multiple lenses: epigenetics, Zen, Tibetan Buddhism, and decades of research at the University of Virginia on very young children who spontaneously recall a previous life.

As the book opens, Helen Bird will stop at nothing to find Henry, her musician son who has disappeared in upstate New York. Though the cops believe Henry’s absence is voluntary, Helen knows better.

While she searches for him—joined finally by police—Jonah is born to Lucie and Matt Pressman of Manhattan. Lucie does all she can to be the kind of loving, attentive mother she never had, but can’t stop Jonah’s night terrors or his obsession with the imaginary “other mom and dog” he insists are real.

Whether Jonah’s anxiety is caused by nature or nurture—or something else entirely—is the propulsive mystery at the heart of the novel.

All hell breaks loose when the Pressmans rent a summer cottage in Aurora Falls, where Helen lives. How does Jonah, at seven, know so much about Henry, Helen’s still-missing son? Is it just a bizarre coincidence? An expression of Carl Jung’s collective unconscious? Or could Jonah be tapping into something far more mysterious?

Faced with more questions than answers, Helen and Lucie set out to make sense of the insensible, a heart-stopping quest that forces them to redefine not just what it is to be a mother or a human being, but the very nature of life—and death—because of what Jonah knows.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**



**Barbara Graham** is an author, essayist, journalist, and playwright. Her work has appeared in many magazines and websites, including *Glamour*, *O, the Oprah Magazine*, *Mindful*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Psychotherapy Networker*, *Redbook*, *Self*, *Time*, *Tricycle*, *Utne Reader*, *Vogue*, and *npr.org*, in addition to being collected in numerous anthologies. She is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Eye of My Heart*, the national bestseller *Women Who Run with the Poodles*, and *Camp Paradox*, a memoir. Her plays have been produced Off-Broadway at the WPA Theatre in New York and at theaters around the country. For more about Barbara Graham and her writing,

visit: <https://barbaragrahamauthor.com/>

### **MORE PRAISE FOR *WHAT JONAH KNEW*:**

“I was hooked from the very beginning by the wonderful characters, unique plot and mystical influences of this fine, complex thriller.”

—**Anne Lamott, author of *Help Thanks Wow* and *Operating Instructions***

“Profoundly entertaining and entertainingly profound. What *Jonah Knew* is a celebration of the vital and powerful ties that bind us-to our children, to our selves, and to each other-across space and time.”

—**Ruth Ozeki, author of *The Book of Form and Emptiness* and *A Tale for the Time Being***

“Barbara Graham is a literary alchemist. *What Jonah Knew* not only grabs you from the first page, it makes the mystical believable and the human predicament shine with wit, wisdom, and love.”

—**Tara Brach, meditation teacher and author of *Radical Acceptance* and *Radical Compassion***

“Both a riveting mystery and a deep dive into the impact of grief, *What Jonah Knew* offers us not only hope but a fascinating meditation on the nature of love, identity, and reality itself.”

—**JoAnne Tompkins, author of *What Comes After***

“Barbara Graham’s shimmering novel brings new meaning to the concept of inherited family trauma and the very divide between life and death.”

—**Mark Epstein, MD, author of *The Trauma of Everyday Life* and *The Zen of Therapy***

“Barbara Graham writes with clarity, courage, and heart. *What Jonah Knew* shines light on complicated issues and brings the reader to a new understanding of what it means to be fully human.”

—**Molly Giles, author of *Wife with Knife* and *Rough Translations*, winner of the Flannery O’Connor Award for Short Fiction**

“I love *What Jonah Knew*. As a Buddhist teacher and a reincarnation skeptic I was delighted to find that having read the first page, I read it straight through cheering the book’s wit and complexity, and wondering, after all, *who knows?*”

—**Sylvia Boorstein, Buddhist meditation teacher and author of *It’s Easier Than You Think: The Buddhist Way to Happiness***

“Barbara Graham is a rare talent who blends comic brilliance with psychological and spiritual insight. *What Jonah Knew* plumbs the depths of the human heart while ingeniously tackling life’s hardest questions.”

—**Mark Matousek, author of *Sex Death Enlightenment***

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**WHAT JONAH KNEW**

**By Barbara Graham**

Harper Paperbacks / HarperCollins Publishers

ISBN: 9780063230187

\$17.99/ \$21.99 Can.; Paperback; 400 pages

**On-sale: July 5, 2022**

**ALSO AVAILABLE IN THESE FINE FORMATS:**

Harper Paperbacks E-book: 9780063230200

HarperLuxe Large Print Trade Paperback: 9780063242319

HarperAudio Digital Audiobook: 9780063230224

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**Book Tour for WHAT JONAH KNEW**

*All events are in person unless otherwise noted*

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**Friday, July 8 at 6 p.m. PDT**

**Santa Rosa, CA**

Copperfield's Books

In conversation with Lee Kravetz, author of *The Last Confessions of Sylvia P.*

[Learn More](#)

**Sunday, July 10 at 4 p.m. PDT**

**Corte Madera, CA**

Book Passage

In conversation with Sylvia Boorstein, author of *It's Easier Than You Think: The Buddhist Way to Happiness*

[Learn More](#)

**Wednesday, July 13 at 6 p.m. CDT**

**Madison, WI**

In-person and livestreaming

Mystery to Me Bookstore

In conversation with novelist and poet Dale Kushner, author of *The Conditions of Love*

[Learn More](#)

**Thursday, July 14 at 7 p.m. EDT**

**Cleveland, OH**

Cuyahoga Library

ZOOM

In conversation with JoAnne Tompkins, author of *What Comes After*

[Learn More](#)

**Saturday, July 16 at 1 p.m. EDT**

**Washington, DC**

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Politics & Prose, Connecticut Avenue store  
In conversation with Ari Shapiro, host of NPR's All Things Considered

**Monday, July 18 at 8 p.m. EDT**

New York, NY  
Scribblers on the Roof,  
Anshe Chesed Synagogue, 251 W. 100<sup>th</sup> Street

**Tuesday, July 19 at 7 p.m. EDT**

Leesburg, VA  
Bespoke Books  
VIRTUAL  
[Learn More](#)

**Saturday, July 23 at 2 p.m. EDT**

Woodstock, NY  
Golden Notebook Bookstore at Nancy's Artisanal Creamery, 271 Tinker Street  
In conversation with Abigail Thomas, *author of What Comes Next and How to Like It*  
[Learn More](#)

**Tuesday, July 26 at 7 p.m. EDT**

Oakmont, PA  
VIRTUAL  
Mystery Lovers Bookshop  
In conversation with Wendy Walker, author of *Don't Look for Me*  
[Learn more](#)

**Wednesday, July 27 at 7 p.m. CDT**

Minneapolis, MN  
Magers & Quinn Bookstore  
In conversation with Carol Dines, author of *This Distance We Call Love*  
[Learn more](#)

**Wednesday, August 3 at 7 p.m. PDT**

Montclair Village in Oakland, CA  
A Great Good Place for Books  
In conversation with Susan Griffin, author of *Women and Nature*

**Thursday, August 4 at 7 p.m. PDT**

Sausalito, CA  
Sausalito Books by the Bay  
In conversation with Geneen Roth, author of *Women, Food and God* and *This Messy, Magnificent Life*

**Thursday, August 11, 7 p.m. PDT**

San Francisco, CA  
Bookshop West Portal  
In conversation with Steven Winn, culture critic and author of *Come Back Como*

**HARPER**