

## Seducing the Rabbi

■ **Fiction.** By Jala Pfaff. Blue Flax Press, \$14.95. Grade: B+

**Plot in a nutshell:** Linguistics professor and self-professed nice Jewish girl Aviva Goldberg has bet her friends that she can bed 30 men in the year between one Bolder Boulder and the next. "What an eloquent turning of the tables on those preying bar guys!" she says. Just call her Joan of the Orgasm Arc.

The path to her goal is littered with human detritus, notably the masochist, the inevitable under-endowed man, the inevitable married man, and the inevitable smoker rendered impotent by cannabis.

Throughout, Aviva is true to her somewhat conflicting standards (i.e. Number 3's shaved head sends her to the big O, but a naturally hairless Jackson Browne lookalike leaves her cold. Aviva discovers his bald pate when he takes off the hair

she's lusting over, and introduces his wig with: "Aviva, Elvis." Number 3 is also one of her students. Not a good idea, but to be fair, our heroine isn't out for a relationship here. Love 'em, leave 'em, get on with her bet.)

Pfaff gives Aviva a life outside of her crusade. She drinks coffee at the Trident and disses the student population's dress, manners and apparent lack of basic education. To her dismay, her job depends on student evaluations such as "I thawt the perfesser wasnt the write level for us." Sigh.

**Sample of prose:** Aviva and prey meet up with some tourists on a hike: "... they're all wearing jeans and various kinds of dressy leather sandals to hike in, and the women are wearing perfume, hairspray and (now runny) makeup. I'm extremely impressed that they've made it this far; it's rare to see 'foreigners' up this high on any trail." Nothing like the snobbishness of the Boulder transplant.

**Pros:** Pfaff has a good ear for Texas accents, and reproduces them well, if a little too much for a reading eye.

**Cons:** Can it truly be this bad? Is Boulder really home only to the weird and dispossessed? And, Pfaff bungles the title of Edwin Starr's immortal *War, Huh, Whatizzit Good For, Absolutely Nothing*.

**Final word:** In her small world, Pfaff is an astute and merciless observer. What could she do in a bigger pond?

Christine Jacques

