



# The Ring of Solomon

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**The Ring of Solomon** Jonathan Stroud , Simon Jones (Narrator)

It is 950 B.C.E., and King Solomon rules Jerusalem with a steely hand; a hand on which gleams a magic ring of immense and unforgiving power. Solomon has just begun work on his marvelous temple, charging Khaba, a formidable magician in his royal court, to oversee its construction. The workforce is an ill-behaved bunch of demons, a particularly unruly djinni named Bartimaeus among them. True to form, Bartimaeus promptly gets kicked off the temple project and assigned the even more miserable task of hunting bandits in the desert. There he crosses paths with Asmira, a highly skilled and loyal captain of the Queen of Sheba's guard, on a suicidal mission to save her country from Solomon's imminent attack. Of course, Bartimaeus has no intention of helping her. That is, until Asmira makes him an offer he cannot refuse. . . .

A spellbinding addition to Jonathan Stroud's *New York Times* bestselling Bartimaeus audiobooks, *The Ring of Solomon* brims with dazzling wit, unforgettable characters, and powerful themes of freedom and slavery, with or without magical bonds.

## The Ring of Solomon Details

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# From Reader Review The Ring of Solomon for online ebook

## Linda says

Both youth and Jonathan Stroud are wasted on the young. Seriously, the Bartimaeus books are far too fabulous to be sequestered in the same section with the Gossip Girls and the Twilight series.

The nice thing about this entry in the series is that it stands alone quite nicely. By the time you're finished with it, if you haven't already read the first three, you'll be running full-tilt to get your hands on them.

The plot? Oh, it's just your standard girl meets djinni meets evil magician meets king meets the Queen of Sheba, featuring a hippo wearing a skirt.

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## Knjigoholi?arka says

Nakon što je po treći put odbila braćunu ponudu kralja Solomona, kraljica Balkis od Sabe (Sheba) našla se pred ultimatumom: ili će plaćati visok godišnji danak Jerusalmu, ili će njena mala kraljevina biti napadnuta kroz 14 dana. Umesto odgovora, kraljica šalje svoju možda ne najbolju, ali svakako najverniju ratnicu, Asmiru, na tajni zadatak kako bi ubila kralja Solomona i otela mu Zlatni Prsten, koji svome nosiocu daje neverovatne moći i zapravo čini Solomona zastrašujućim vladarom, a Jerusalm centrom tadašnjeg sveta. Na svom putu do Jerusalma, Asmira sreće Bartimaeusa, drskog, sarkastičnog duha sklonog pevanju lascivnih pesmica, trenutno u (kao i uvek, prisilnoj) službi jednog od Solomonovih Zlatnjaka, Egipćanina Khabe. U ovom susretu i Asmira i Bartimaeus vide obostranu korist - Asmiri je potrebna pomoć jednog Višeg Stvorenja kako bi izvršila svoj zadatak, dok Bartimaeus u Asmiri vidi nekoga ko će mu pomoći da zadobije natrag svoju slobodu...

Ova knjiga je verovatno jedna od boljih koje sam čitala u žanru fantasy/humor knjiga - zabava od prve do poslednje stranice, prožeta britkim i pomalo zajedljivim humorom glavnog protagoniste, duha Bartimaeusa. Love/hate odnos između Asmire i Bartija je neopterećen eventualnim romantičnim klišeima koji se javljaju između muškog i ženskog junaka u sličnim slučajevima, budući da su u pitanju ratnica i krvožedni ljudožderski djinn, moliću lepo, te smo pošteđeni raznih pogleda ispod obrve, slučajnih dodira ruke i sličnih gluposti.

Ono što se meni naročito dopalo jeste pitanje koje se provlači između redova - šta je odanost, a šta poslušnost? Šta je patriotizam, a šta služba? Da li je kraljica isto što i nacija, i spašava li zapravo Asmira svoju zemlju, ili samo bespogovorno prati naređenja svoje kraljice, odgojena u slepoj veri da suveren jedne zemlje uvek zna najbolje? Možda je čudno što sam u jednoj knjizi, koja je zapravo 100% pure fun and nothing but fun, uspela da izbunarim ovakve dileme, ali hej, čitanje između redova je oduvek bila moja specijalnost!

Preporuka svima koji vole magiju, Pračeta, istoriju starog sveta i nilske konje koji plešu u suknjicama (verujte mi, ima i toga).

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## Alyssa says

Bartimaeus is in trouble with a powerful king, and is put with a harsh master, who he soon also annoys. When he is set out on a dangerous mission, he meets a girl who offers to try to get his freedom. He knows she is hiding something, but he goes with her. She eventually becomes his new master, but he is on a mission that will most likely result in death for her and Bartimaeus the djinni, leaving Bartimaeus with a new goal of not dying.

This book takes place many years before the Bartimaeus Trilogy, and is full of action.

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## Malia says

I really loved this book, the fourth (but actually a prequel) in the series! Bartimaeus was as fabulous as I remembered him. Further, I found the setting of ancient Jerusalem served to add to the whole feeling of exoticism, particularly with the famous figure of King Solomon in the midst of the action.

If you were a fan of the previous three books, I am sure you will enjoy this one, too. But even if you are new to the stories of the djinni Bartimaeus, this is a good place to start, as it can easily be read as a standalone. Now I only wish Stroud would continue the series!

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## Jayson says

**(B) 72%** | More than Satisfactory

*Notes:* Its new setting adds nothing: unoriginal, it relies on stock children's themes and another flat rehash of series formula.

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## Silvana says

I love love love this book!

Please please PLEASEEEEEEE Jonathan Stroud, write another prequel/sequel/epic poem/play/novella/memoir/thesis/whatever of Barty! We, his adoring fans, could never get enough of him!

Ok, back to the book. This is your typical Barty-like adventure. High-speed chases, extreme danger, lots of demons (scary, weird, yucky, you name it), strong (but flawed) characters, and of course...the trademark acerbic, sarcastic, narcissistic comments from our dear beloved jinni.

O Barty, how I LOL-ed so hard when I read about when Solomon caught you in your pygmy-hippo-in-a-skirt guise tossing stones to build the Temple Mount while you're supposed to use human guise and do the work manually...

I think I really envy Ptolemy :( My life would be sooooo colorful if I have Barty around. One thing for sure, I'll never get bored.

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## Amina says

FAN-TAS-TIC!!!

Can't wait to read the three other books!

Jerusalem, 250 B.C.E, King Solomon is ruling his kingdom with an iron fist (or a very powerful ring to be more specific), demanding immense revenues after terrorising other kings and queens of far off lands. Magicians, recognizing the supreme power of the ring, are competing for the king's favors, enslaving djinn, afrits and marids to get the most beautiful and powerful magic curiosities to add to the king's huge collection.

When the kingdom of Sheba - ruled by generation after generation of queens, known for its very important frankincense trade- is threaten, its queen Bolkis, refuses to bow to another ruler and sends a young girl named Asmira, a palace guard to kill Solomon and get the ring, But how can she accomplish what hundreds have failed to do?

Meanwhile, sarcastic Bartimaeus is causing as much trouble as he can, and when he gets rid of his master, he gets sentenced to work for Khaba, the most evil magician of Solomon's lot.

In spite of being a middle ranking djinn, Bartimaeus has more than one trick up his sleeve!

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## MadameMelli says

Leider gefiel mir die Vorgeschichte zu den Abenteuern von Bartimäus und Nathanael nicht so gut. Die Geschichte wies einige Längen auf und die meisten Fußnoten waren nicht soooooo witzig wie gewohnt. Es gab trotzdem noch genügend Stellen, die mich zum Lachen gebracht haben und das Ende hat vieles noch einmal herausgerissen, weshalb das Buch gute 3,5 Sterne von mir bekommt.

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## Chachic says

Originally posted here.

Bartimaeus is back, with his trademark wit, humor and impudence. In the world created by Jonathan Stroud, demons are slaves to magicians who summon them from the Other Place. They are forced to accomplish tasks that usually involve prestige for their masters. There are many kinds of demons and Bartimaeus isn't even one of the most powerful. He more than makes up for it in his own cunning way and has even served several powerful masters. In The Ring of Solomon, he serves Khaba the Cruel, who is one of King Solomon's seventeen magicians. Bartimaeus is in a bind because Khaba is a strict master and he doesn't get to create mischief as often as he wants. Also, he's stuck on earth when every demon craves to go back to the Other Place because prolonged stay on earth drains a demon's essence. Things become even more complicated for Bartimaeus when he meets Asmira, a personal guard of the Queen of Sheba, sent to accomplish a seemingly impossible task.

Fans of the Bartimaeus Trilogy will be delighted by this installment. What's good about it is I think it works

well as a standalone. This would serve as a good introduction to anyone who's curious about Jonathan Stroud's work but is unwilling to take on a series. It has all the elements that made me thoroughly enjoy the trilogy – an action-packed plot spiced with plenty of humor (and lots of footnotes care of Bartimaeus' storytelling). The story is told from alternating points of view – in this case, Asmira's and Bartimaeus'. Asmira's strength lies in the military arts – she's been trained her whole life to protect the Queen of Sheba at all costs. She has very limited experience when it comes to handling demons but she has to learn how to deal with Bartimaeus when she reaches a crucial aspect of her mission. It's funny how fascinated Bartimaeus is of certain humans – their motivations, their character, their determination – and how that fascination eventually leads to his involvement in something bigger. This one reads like a historical fantasy as opposed to the modern setting of the trilogy, which is enjoyable because you get to see Bartimaeus (and even some other comrades) in a different setting. All in all, a very satisfying read and just what I needed when I felt like reading something fun during the holidays. Recommended for fantasy fans or anyone who's interested in hilarious narrators.

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### **Ashish says**

Solomon's Ring comes across like a summarized version of the other 3 books. Good people turn out to be bad, bad people turn out to be good, there are seemingly insurmountable odds that are heroically overcome, there are plucky young warrior women, jaded heroes exhausted with their burden, uncompromisingly evil villains, hilarious side notes and slapstick magic.

Why do I feel I've seen this somewhere before?

While definitely entertaining enough, you don't get an opportunity to connect with the characters. The kind of depth that came out in Nathaniel, Bartimaeus, even Faquarl and Kitty, doesn't happen with Asmira, Solomon, Khaba, or anyone else. Motives remain largely arbitrary or cliché'd. Even the setting doesn't live up to its potential... and most damning, the magic feels commoditized, without any sense of awe or discovery. It's running on rails.

Decent enough flight reading, but not a keeper.

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### **Katy says**

When I finished The Bartimaeus Trilogy, I was hungry for more. Adding on to the trilogy would probably have been a disaster, but creating a sister book with the same humorous cheek of Bartimaeus', and living his adventures before his days with Nathaniel, was genius!!!! I started reading with a smile, and I finished it smiling. In addition, It left me wanting to go back and read the whole trilogy again!

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### **Lucijaa says**

Don't know what to say about this book except that is one of the best ones out there!

I'm a big fan of Bartimaeus since I was a child, and imagine how thrilled I was when I found out Jonathan Stroud wrote one more book about Bartimaeus!

I was amazed by this book, and I have to say that with years, Jonathan hasn't lost his touch, and wrote another great book about Bartimaeus.

After reading this book, I kinda miss Nathaniel because I absolutely love having him and Bartimaeus in the same team.

It's pretty cool that we can observe interaction between Faquarol and Bartimaeus. I find their relationship very fascinating, specially in this book when they are what we could say *co-workers*.

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**$\Delta x \Delta p \geq \frac{1}{2}$  ? says**

Barty! Barty! Barty!

What a rofl book. Just laugh, laugh and laugh until my stomach hurts. Since first page, *The Ring of Solomon* was soooooooo funny that me started laughin' so hard.

Oh Barty, we love you. This book is hilarious, funny, and exciting. I think Barty is the most beloved fantasy characters all time. awesome!

I like this book it is a lot fun 'n you should get this book you will love Barty more and more and more and more!

Great job Mr. Stroud. Please, give us more Barty's stories.

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**Frank says**

Quite some time has passed since I read the Bartimaeus trilogy. As my ten year old just picked up the first book, I decided to give the prequel a try to familiarize myself again with the series. I have no regrets. Bartimaeus is witty as ever. The plot is enjoyable. I hope there will be more books in this series soon.

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**Daria says**

It's Jerusalem, 950 B.C.E., but, much to our sheer delight, Bartimaeus could have been Dismissed out of 21st century London only moments ago. It seems that two millenia are nothing for this sharp-talking djinni, for Bart's as charmingly insolent as ever.

And Bartimaeus really is the highlight of the work. It's no wonder that Asmira struggles to be equally as appreciated by readers as Bartimaues is, just as Nathaniel and Kitty do in the original Bartimaeus Trilogy. The reader, so ensnared by the capricious, troublemaking shape-shifter, can only sigh in frustration when the narrative switches to the infintely more boring, third-person voice concerning the tale's human characters. But I don't complain as much here as I did in *Golem's Eye* (I had little love for Kitty), because Asmira's point of view is as full of action as is that of Bartimaues, and, fortunately, Asmira's part of the story is incredibly important to the overall plot. Of course, there is something lacking in Asmira's department. Something favoring the guises of Sumerian youths and mumu-wearing hippos. Something incredibly egotistic,

admirably self-centered, impressively courageous, and just too clever, snazzy, and sharp-tongued to ever be properly commemorated in words.

(Somewhere, Bart is reading this and preening. Maybe I'll end up in a footnote in one of his later exploits. Maybe he'll send me his autograph...)

The ending does not reach the emotional impact or scope of sacrifice which haunts the ending of *Ptolemy's Gate* (no, this finish is more reminiscent of the end to *Amulet of Samarkand*), but this is unsurprising. While some might accuse the "twist" for failing, and for the ending being too goody-goody, it is probably because these readers, like I, have already read the previous three books and are obviously in the know that Bart will come out of all this unscathed (and probably composing a rude limerick in the process). Unlike the ending to *Ptolemy's Gate*, which holds the reader breathless and on tenterhooks, the final battle (oh so Jonathan Stroud) in *Ring of Solomon* is taken in with a slightly more relaxed air. But don't worry, it's not that relaxed. It still manages to quicken the unwary reader's pulse – that is, when the reader isn't busy giggling off one of Bart's pointer footnotes. It is the reader who wears a grin of triumph when, in a dark moment, all hope seems lost.

I found Stroud's discussion on the issues of slavery and power very interesting. What does it mean to be psychologically enslaved? To what use must great power be put? Again, here one finds a great balance between philosophy, action, and wit, as is common with all of Stroud's books. Philosophy aside, there are plenty of spirits to summon, knives to throw, humans to devour, temples to build, and magicians to outwit. To use a popular cliché, readers of this book will "burn the midnight oil to the finish," undoubtedly. I certainly had.

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## Rachel says

Revisiting the world of Bartimaeus, fans will be rewarded with everything we loved about the original books: a fast-paced, entertaining adventure with a satisfying ending. Most importantly, there's Bartimaeus himself, back with his footnotes and customary cheek.

Bartimaeus is one of the most unforgettable and entertaining characters come to kid's fantasy in the past few years, and there's no doubt he could carry several more good novels like *The Ring of Solomon*. Surpassing the original trilogy is a different matter. I like the character of Asmira, but she is nowhere near as wonderfully flawed as Nathaniel was, nor did I want to root for her as strongly as I rooted for Kitty. The whole book lacks the epic urgency of tone achieved in the trilogy. Since this is a stand-alone novel, perhaps it's not a fair comparison. But now that Stroud's proved he's still got his skill (and his sense of humor), I hope he'll branch off into something different and uniquely wonderful.

I should also mention the nice cover illustration, which makes me grateful that Jonathan Stroud's books are shelved in the children's section. If this was a YA book, there'd probably be an edgy, dramatically angled shot of Asmira and Bartimaeus as airbrushed teenagers, though we all know that Bartimaeus' preferred form and pose would be a hideous goblin blowing a raspberry. Apparently us adolescents are too hormonally charged to appreciate that.

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## Jay Daze says

Argh! This book took forever to get started. I wish there was some way to skip over about a hundred pages, the loong time it takes for Asmira and Bartimaeus to start working together, and foreground the nicely nasty maneuvering early on in the book instead of saving it up for a reveal later on. Only after the unveiling does Asmira start to become slightly interesting in her zealotry, but that only lasts for a few scenes.

The prequel to Bartimaeus Trilogy, the story is set in ancient Jersusalem where King Soloman (the one with the song) rules with the aid of a magic ring that contains a powerful demon. When the country of Sheba is threated a young palace guard, Asmira, is sent to kill Solomon and bring the ring back to her queen. Meanwhile Bartimaeus is just one among many of the spirits that has been bound by the circle of magicians that serve Solomon, and he delights in causing as much trouble as he can. The book is told in alternating chapters from Asmira and Bartimaeus' view points which might explain why it takes so long for the two characters to finally start doing something.

I really enjoyed the backbiting and self-serving human characters in the trilogy that came before this book, as well as the ever sarcastic and witty Bartimaeus. But this book takes Stroud's strong point as an author, his acid view of human nature and makes it into a secret. Which left me reading a pretty bland boring book all the way up until what, page 306? I mean, yeah, Bartimaeus is still great. You get the funny footnotes. But I already know his story, his magical predicament. Jersusalem and Sheba aren't really evoked in a way that brought it to life as anything more than a generic Hollywood backlot.

This one book felt far longer than the other three books combined. On the strength of this book, I wonder if Stroud has anything more to say about this world. I love Bartimaeus but does he do anything different here than he did in the trilogy? Then there is the problem with prequels. This story happens before **The Amulet of Samarkand** and I have the feeling that Stroud ran into the problem that nothing much new CAN happen.

Well, I guess I'm not being fair. Bartimeaus isn't really supposed to change. The burden of movement falls on the shoulders of his co-star Asmira. But I found her stiff and boring. She doesn't start to get interesting until far, far into the story which was too late for me.

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## Adam Rex says

Maybe it's the heroic rogue of a main character, or the Arabian setting, or possibly even the Disney logotype on the spine of the jacket, but I got to thinking about the animated feature Aladdin. The first ten minutes of that movie contain a sprawling musical action set piece in which we learn that the titular hero

–Has to steal to eat

–HAS to eat to live

–Works really, really hard at it

–And did we mention he's an orphan?

and anyway after he finally absconds with his hard-won loaf of bread he just gives it to the first adorable pair of street urchins. Contrast this with heroic rogue Bartimaeus, who in the first twenty pages of The Ring of Solomon

–Defiles an ancient temple

–Burgles a holy relic

–And kills and eats an old man.

The djinni Bartimaeus, and by extension Stroud, is not going to make some cloying play for our affections. This is not SPOILER ALERT a story about reformation END SPOILER ALERT. I'm even going to go out on a limb and say that Bartimaeus is refreshingly without an arc here. Throughout the book he behaves only in the singularly free-thinking fashion that has made him the irritant of both humans and spirits alike, what with his universal impudence and humorously digressive footnotes. In the interest of full disclosure I should mention that I previously read *The Amulet of Samarkand*, the first of the original Bartimaeus trilogy, so I'm aware that he's starred in at least four stories now. I suspect that Stroud understood early on that he had a very special character here, and it wouldn't do to keep neutering him with sentiment in Act II of every book. He is who he is, and I think he would be alarmed to know that I found him to be the most human of all Stroud's characters.

His first-person chapters alternate with third-person chapters that focus on other actors, particularly a young and deadly Sheban named Asmira who is tasked with assassinating the powerful Solomon in order to save her homeland. And here lies my chief criticism of the book: Bartimaeus is so effervescent that chapters in which he doesn't appear (much less narrate) sometimes come off like flat soda by comparison. Bartimaeus is such a force that he spills out in every direction—through the fourth wall, into the margins of the page, and onward into self-awareness and anachronism, such as when he invokes copyright (actual copyright) to protect one of his signature fighting moves, which he informs us he's been using since 2800 B.C.E. Note that *The Ring of Solomon* is set 900 years before there was a C.E. to be B.

Anyway, every chapter left me wanting more—if Stroud and I were in a Scheherazade/King Shahry?r situation I totally would not have killed him at any point.

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## Maninee says

Year: 250 B.C.

Location: Jerusalem

The mighty king Solomon rules over Jerusalem and terrorises the neighbouring kingdoms of Edom, Sheba and many such others. He commands a horde of marids(highest level of djinn); bucketfuls of afrits(second level of djinn) and hundreds of djinnns. Commoners fall back in awe of his personality, magicians bow their heads in respect, entire empires bow to his will and tumble under his gaze. And all because of one reason. The Ring. *The Ring*. The ring that gives it's wearer control over legions of powerful spirits by simply touching it while other magician's have to draw pentacles and learn difficult spells. And then there's the spirit of the ring which is practically the most powerful spirit ever. Solomon's reputation travels across the seven seas to far off lands. Magicians, recognising the power of the king swarm like bees around him, carrying out his every command, hoping to win his favour. Solomon's harem is filled with giggling wives, all vying for his attention. Meanwhile, Solomon, taking advantage of his powers demands immense revenues from other kingdoms misusing power brutally.

One such kingdom, is Sheba. The land is ruled, generation after generation, by a hereditary queen, surrounded by her young female bodyguards and priestesses. Here the men sow the land while the women take care of the political and diplomatic areas of life. The land survives on it's frankincense, it's main item of trade. So when Solomon demands a high amount of that for nothing in return the Queen must resolve to kill Solomon to escape the shame of bowing down to another ruler. So she sends her best bodyguard, Asmira, to kill the mighty emperor. But how can a mere mortal accomplish what hundreds have failed to do?

Add to all this Bartimaeus, a middle ranking djinn, the hilarious djinni whose sarcasm and pompousness

I loved this book. It had everything you could wish for in an epic fantasy novel: adventure, suspense, action, bright and flawed characters, impending doom and a save-the-world-from-doom situation. The writing is rich and melodious, it's so *soothing* after all the chick lit I've been reading in a while.

## Totoro says

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