

# *The* EIGHTH WONDER — A NOVEL — *of the* WORLD

by  
LESLIE EPSTEIN

author of *SAN REMO DRIVE* and *KING OF THE JEWS*

“The fate of Italy’s Jews during World War II and the visionary folly of a truculent anti-Semitic genius are the subjects of Epstein’s sprawling, ambitious tenth novel... a synthesis of history and imaginative daring, akin to *Catch-22* and the encyclopedic historical fiction of Thomas Pynchon and William T. Vollmann.”

—KIRKUS REVIEWS (STARRED REVIEW)

“A novel as ambitious as the Babel-like tower it describes.”

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (STARRED REVIEW)

Leslie Epstein’s last novel, the *Los Angeles Times* best-seller *San Remo Drive*, was hailed as “shocking and poignant” (*Boston Phoenix*), “stunning” (*Deseret News*), and “haunting” (*Seattle Weekly*). It was chosen by the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Boston Globe* as one of the best novels of 2003, and by the *New York Times* as a Notable Book of 2003. Now, this fall will see the publication of Epstein’s epic new novel of Fascist Italy, **THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD**.

This novel tells the story of Amos Prince, a famed American architect who wins a competition to build a monument for Mussolini—La Vittoria, a mile-high tower that will become, upon completion, the world’s tallest structure. In the course of attempting to complete the monument against myriad obstacles, Prince will lose his family, his country, and perhaps even his mind. Epstein also tells the story of Prince’s devoted protégé, a young American Jew, who must choose between his devotion to his master and his monument on one hand; and his people, the threatened Jews of Italy. In doing so, he too will lose both.

The book includes a “Glossary of the Players,” which offers brief portraits of the fictional characters as well as the historical figures who form the dramatis personae of the novel. But the historical figures include not only those who are explicitly named, such as Mussolini and Pius XII, but also others who are strongly suggested. Amos Prince, for example, might be seen as an amalgamation of Ezra Pound and Buckminster Fuller.

**THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD** offers a compelling portrait of the nature of Fascism, and how the impulses behind it—in religion, politics, and art—are in full force in Europe and America today. Within this examination of the intertwining of politics, art, and race in the twentieth century, Epstein displays the mixture of comedy, irony, and tragic consequences that have become the trademark of his work.

Leslie Epstein is the author of nine previous works of fiction, including *San Remo Drive* and *King of the Jews*, and is the longtime director of Boston University’s Creative Writing Program.

“Epstein’s forte is absurdist literature combining comedy and tragedy, as in his *King of the Jews*. Now he turns his kaleidoscopic view to a novel of Fascist Italy, offering a huge historic as well as fictional cast of characters stretching back to the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon....Highly recommended.”

—LIBRARY JOURNAL

THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD by Leslie Epstein