



To the End of the Land (Vintage International)

David Grossman

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From one of Israel's most acclaimed writers comes a novel of extraordinary power about family life—the greatest human drama—and the cost of war.

Ora, a middle-aged Israeli mother, is on the verge of celebrating her son Ofer's release from army service when he returns to the front for a major offensive. In a fit of preemptive grief and magical thinking, she sets out for a hike in the Galilee, leaving no forwarding information for the "notifiers" who might darken her door with the worst possible news. Recently estranged from her husband, Ilan, she drags along an unlikely companion: their former best friend and her former lover Avram, once a brilliant artistic spirit. Avram served in the army alongside Ilan when they were young, but their lives were forever changed one weekend when the two jokingly had Ora draw lots to see which of them would get the few days' leave being offered by their commander—a chance act that sent Avram into Egypt and the Yom Kippur War, where he was brutally tortured as POW. In the aftermath, a virtual hermit, he refused to keep in touch with the family and has never met the boy. Now, as Ora and Avram sleep out in the hills, ford rivers, and cross valleys, avoiding all news from the front, she gives him the gift of Ofer, word by word; she supplies the whole story of her motherhood, a retelling that keeps Ofer very much alive for Ora and for the reader, and opens Avram to human bonds undreamed of in his broken world. Their walk has a "war and peace" rhythm, as their conversation places the most hideous trials of war next to the joys and anguish of raising children. Never have we seen so clearly the reality and surreality of daily life in Israel, the currents of ambivalence about war within one household, and the burdens that fall on each generation anew.

Grossman's rich imagining of a family in love and crisis makes for one of the great antiwar novels of our time.

From the Hardcover edition.

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