



At the End of the World, Turn Left

Zhanna Slor

Agora Books (Apr 13, 2021)

Hardcover \$25.99 (289pp)

978-1-951709-25-9

Two sisters seek personal freedom and the truth in Zhanna Slor's novel *At the End of the World, Turn Left*.

Masha hasn't been back to Milwaukee since she moved to Israel five years ago. Now, she returns because her younger sister, Anna, has disappeared, and their father has asked Masha to find her. As Masha assembles clues to her sisters whereabouts, she starts to question everything she thought she knew about her family. Masha comes to realize that Anna has been completing a puzzle of her own.

Masha's homecoming is tense for multiple reasons. After Israel, the seamy section of Milwaukee is a jarring change. Painful reminders of her wild youth are everywhere, forcing her to confront old pains even as she tries to focus on Anna. Meanwhile, Anna, who always forced herself to be the well-behaved daughter whom Masha was not, found that a lifetime of being browbeaten by her parents left her vulnerable to other people's dangerous ideas about happiness and justice. She learns to listen to herself, and only to herself; doing so is necessary if she is to be at all satisfied with her life.

The story switches between Masha's investigation and accounts of what happened to Anna months before. Both of their voices are infused with subtle sarcasm; they make poignant observations about immigration, religion, and rebellion. Despite never speaking or meeting within the story, Masha and Anna are bound by more than blood: the same curiosity, the same stubbornness, and the same determination to make their own way, no matter the price, runs through both of their veins.

At the End of the World, Turn Left is a novel about the irresistible, even destructive lure of the past.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (May / June 2021)

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