

The Inbetween People

Emma McEvoy

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The Inbetween People takes place in war-torn, Intifada-era Israel. Against this backdrop two young men, a Jewish pioneer and an Israeli Arab, become friends only to discover that the country's past holds them in its thrall more than they knew.

When we meet Avi Goldberg, he is in military prison. His Arab friend is dead. It is through Avi's writings, interspersed with letters from his father to his absent mother, that this novel of longing and sadness unfolds. The boys only wanted to live, to have homes and perhaps families, yet bombs detonate, bullets fly. War intrudes. Stymied by the weight of history, the curse of violence, Saleem and Avi find their lives are not entirely their own.

The writing is rich and nuanced. Even Saleem's bearing is affected by the world in which they live: He "had a quiet way of moving, as if the world he walked in was very fragile, and everything he touched was brittle."

Indeed, such sadness and a distinct sense of longing, the longing for normalcy, for home, and for peace, occupy first-time author Emma McEvoy's devastating yet restrained prose. She now lives in West Cork with her husband and son and formerly lived on a kibbutz bordering Lebanon and Israel.

LEIA MENLOVE (Summer 2013)

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