



The Truth About Leaving

Natalie Blitt

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In Natalie Blitt's romance, *The Truth About Leaving*, high school senior Lucy Green discovers that things seldom go as planned.

Fresh on the heels of a breakup, Lucy meets Dov Meiri, a new Israeli student whose future as a conscript in the Israeli army sets a tense framework for a surprising plot. Despite Lucy's determination not to fall in love with someone who will only leave, she does. Lucy has to navigate parental expectations and personal dreams while everyone around her plans for college.

The plot touches on timeless high school themes, from forging an identity to nurturing passions—which, for Lucy, translates to ballet and poetry. These escapes, along with Dov, keep Lucy afloat despite a complicated home life. Her mother's out-of-state job proves more of a challenge than the Greens imagined, leaving Lucy in the role of a surrogate mother for her brothers. Undercurrents of ambition and selfishness don't entirely surface.

Only the wise intervention of teachers, a childhood friend, and Lucy's eclectic grandmother push Lucy to start defining her boundaries. The work is not diminished by the fact that others influence Lucy's decisions; the courage is hers, along with the wisdom to know when to listen.

Lucy and Dov's encounters move from their meet-cute into an idyllic, sweet, and memorable connection. Dov is a regular teen with sometimes greater than everyday burdens, and Lucy's interest in his native Hebrew stems from a genuine place. Dov's love for her deepens with careful consideration. The book navigates the divide between Lucy's Evanston and Dov's Jerusalem with skillful, delicate turns.

The Truth About Leaving is an alternative map to the future and a heartening reminder to take love and life day by day.

KAREN RIGBY (January/February 2019)

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