



## The Inbetween People

*Emma McEvoy*

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When Avi Goldberg, the son of a Jewish pioneer, sits at a desk in a dark cell in a military prison in the Negev desert, he fills the long nights writing about his friend Saleem, an Israeli Arab he befriended on a beach one scorching July day, and the story of Saleem's family, whose loss of their Ancestral home in 1948 cast a long shadow over their lives.

Avi and Saleem understand about the past: they believe it can be buried, reduced to nothing. But then September 2000 comes and war breaks out—endless, unforgiving and filled with loss. And in the midst of the Intifada, which rips their peoples apart, they both learn that war devours everything, that even seemingly insignificant, utterly mundane, things get lost in war and that, sometimes, if you do not speak of these things, they are lost to you forever.

Set amongst the white chalk Galilee Mountains and the hostile desert terrain of the Negev Desert, The Inbetween People is a story of longing that deals with hatred, forgiveness, and the search for redemption.

The haunting poetic tone is not unlike that of Ben Okri's The Famished Road, whilst the themes examined are similar to those dealt with by Pat Barker in The Ghost Road. The simplicity of the tone is unflinching throughout, and depicts the eternal search for a home and a sense of place.

## The Inbetween People Details

Date : Published January 2013 by The Permanent Press (first published November 1st 2012)

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Author : Emma McEvoy

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## From Reader Review The Inbetween People for online ebook

### Brenda Ayala says

This just wasn't my kind of book. I'm already not a fan of books that jump around to different sections of the plot. And the fact that the dialogue was just meshed into the paragraph made it unappetizing to me. If I so much as glanced up from the book for a second then looked back, I'd lose my place and have to reread a bunch of run-on sentences to figure out where I was again. There were a lot of descriptions of people that just had no relevance to the story.

And I had no connection to the characters. I felt no strong connection between Saleem and Avi. I couldn't understand why Daniel kept writing to Sareet, or why a man was so damn obsessed with writing about the breeze or what have you. I can honestly say I have never met a single person who was so intent on writing about impertinent things in a handwritten letter to someone. The fact that it was the woman that left him for another man just made it even more farfetched to me.

I don't know. This just didn't grip me the way it did for others who read it. It was alright; it probably won't stick with me.

(I received this in a First Reads giveaway.)

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### Birdie says

I found this book a bit challenging to follow, however the story was compelling. Avi, a Jew, is serving time in a Military prison and writes of the past and his friendship with his Arab friend Saleem. The book moves from present day to the past and is written in the first person. The author is definitely talented, I just had a hard time following everything.

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### Jennie says

The writing was pretentious; the chapters skipped between time & character & my biggest grievance: when & why did authors decide quotation marks were unnecessary. I couldn't finish this book; reading it was exhausting.

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### Christoph Fischer says

"The Inbetween People" by Emma McEvoy is a compelling and engaging read about the friendship of two men, one Jewish, one Arab; it is about injustice, killing and the human experience of it, all woven into the history of the two men's families.

At times confusing us with a less conventional writing style and the use of various narratives the story however beautifully portrays the deep and heart felt conflicts, ambiguous feelings and decisive moments in the character's lives.

The great title hints at the human experience where people find themselves in-between right and wrong, or between two wrongs, friendship between warring people.

Reading the thoughtful and touching pages was a wonderful experience, the language is beautiful and the flow is smooth and bitter-sweet.

As this is about the human experience the author did well not to enter into historical or political territory and focus on the emotional dimension.

This is a great achievement.

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### **Udine says**

An excellent book, the perspective of the characters, some Israeli, some Arab were believable and heart wrenching. There is an essence I often find in immigrants, both in person and in writing that I find captivating and it really comes down to their view of the world as opposed to the world-weariness of the average American (myself included). I found that quality in this book. The importance of a simple vase and what it might represent, though the object has little monetary value was just one example in the story. The book spoke of the problems between the groups in Israel but without finger pointing or grandstanding, which is also refreshing.

I am putting this on my list for my Book Group choice when my turn comes around to choose.

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### **Roy says**

good read

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### **Hermien says**

I loved the writing, the structure of the book and the richness of the characters.

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### **Amy says**

This is a stunning novel. I needed to let it settle with me. It's a challenge to adequately describe its beauty and potency. Avi Goldberg writes from military prison because he refuses to serve in the Israeli Defense Forces [IDF]. He writes about his friend Saleem, an Israeli Arab he met. Their stories intertwine despite cultural differences and past troubles.

see my complete review here: <http://entertainmentrealm.com/2013/01...>

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### **Sheila says**

A beautiful novel, set in the haunting landscapes of Israel's desert, Emma McEvoy's *The Inbetween People* is filled with evocative scenery, haunting scenes, genuine characters, and an aching sense of that human desert of emotions between absence and loss. Avi is a Jew; Saleem was an Arab. Both served in the same army. Both loved the same scenery. And both were hurt by past neglects and present demands. But now Avi writes to the friend he says he killed, while his father writes to the wife he drove away. One tends a garden. The other stands by watching a garden tended. And father and son both thread their own paths in time through the weeds of memory.

Israel is a land defined by its long history and refusal to forget. In such a place, how do the wounded let go? How can life go on? But flowers bloom in the desert sand and hope is never quite dead. Avi and his father's stories intertwine with those of their loved ones and play out against a backdrop of beauty and pain. The words they can't find lurk in letters and wait to be told.

Past and present grow together in this novel, gaps filled in and puzzles slowly solved, secrets exposed. But somewhere between absence and loss there's a place of hope and acceptance. A child can sit after standing too long, and comfort can grow strong. Flowers do bloom in the desert. Children do hold their mother's hands. And every journey's end holds the promise of renewal.

A wise novel for our times, as Israel's people fight again and again; a story that writes the pages of history small as the pattern of color on a long-lost vase; a tale that takes no sides and sets prisoners free; Emma McEvoy's *The Inbetween People* is unflinchingly honest, heart-breakingly real, and hauntingly beautiful; a true masterpiece.

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Disclosure: I was lucky enough to be sent a free bound galley of this novel from the publisher.

### **Gill's Great Book Escapes says**

I loved this book, reading it was a breath of fresh air.

This is a tale that the character Jewish Avi Goldberg appears to need to tell to make sense of his own life. Avi is in prison writing about his friend Saleem an Israeli Arab. He writes about, both his and Saleem's family history and is a jigsaw of a tale, one which you cannot let go until the whole story has been read.

I loved the way the intricacies of their lives unravels slowly, how there is a sense of injustice and justice in war.

I was expecting a standard story, but enjoyably Emma McEvoy drew me into the lives of the characters.

There is a sense of peace and calm in the words, so that you can imagine sitting in the heat of the sun as you listen to story being told to you.

This book has sensitivity, love, sadness, and keeps the story being unravelled in your head when you put the book down.

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### **Ben Rand says**

Beautiful, haunting story. Maybe the best I've read since *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

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### **Esther Marie says**

A well-written book. Simple, yet elegant, and with a sort of unknowable set of characters. Parallels are simply drawn between various sets of characters as the book progresses, but elements of all the relationships within this novel remain shadowed and nebulous. A well-constructed first novel. I will keep an eye out for future releases from McEvoy.

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### **Karen says**

The *Inbetween People* is a short but very powerful novel. The writing is exquisitely beautiful, more like poetry than prose in many places. Avi, a young Jewish man, is in a military prison for one month, the length of time he would be doing his reserve duty, if he hadn't refused to do it, and while there he is writing about his Arab friend Saleem and his family. The reasons why Avi has refused to do "his duty" become clear as the book progresses. McEvoy uses the phrase "inbetween people" near the end of the book in a way that seemed appropriate to her, I suppose, but for me, the inbetween people are all those in the Israeli mess caught, as our main characters were, between two sides in a never-ending war of violence and revenge killing. A wonderful piece of writing.

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### **Lorri says**

How does one cope when a mother picks up, without warning and abandons the family, setting off for another country to live with a man other than your father? How does a child of four handle the death of his mother, from childbirth, within the environment of conflicts in Israel?

The *Inbetween People*, by Emma McEvoy, is a novel that quite brilliantly depicts two individuals who become friends. Ari Goldberg is Jewish. Saleem is an Israeli Arab. The two meet and through the years we read about their struggles to maintain their lives within the constant struggles that are ongoing between the Jews and the Arabs.

The majority of the book deals with the issues of the loss of their mothers. Ari's mother and her abandonment of the family takes its toll in every facet of his life. He tries to extinguish his feelings and his thoughts on her, but they resurface to haunt him.

The same is true of Saleem, and how the loss of his mother affected him and the rest of his family. Ari's father tried to shield him as best he could, but even he felt the constant loss. The loss of his grandmother's house, which was eventually occupied by Israelis, affected how the family managed to survive the indignity of being forced to leave their home.

Ari begins to write from a prison cell, and he writes of the loss of his mother. Saleem joins the Israeli army, as an Arab, hoping to help the conflicts occurring.

I thought *The Inbetween People* had a lot to offer in regards to family dynamics, especially how loss defines a person. The characters tried to bury their losses, tried to hide their memories from themselves, to no avail. It also is an excellent story regarding conflicts between Jews and Arabs, and the forced societal pressures thrust upon them.

Can we bury the past? When familial, emotional trauma constantly fills us, mentally, physically and emotionally? We can become like people in limbo, stuck in time in between the past and the present. The connections of time become intertwined. Through McEvoy's beautiful prose, almost poetic prose and word imagery, we are given a lot to ponder in that respect.

The story is a metaphor for love, loss and redemption, within a framework of an ongoing social situation in Israel.

I finished it in a few hours, as it was a slim volume. It did have a strong message, within the short framework. McEvoy's prose is filled with loveliness, and a feeling of melancholy illuminates the pages. I found *The Inbetween People* to be an excellent read regarding the emotional issues surrounding motherly loss and regarding the issues of conflict within a country's changing attitudes and ideals. Emma McEvoy encompassed those issues well.

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### **Nicky says**

*The Inbetween People* is an illuminating novel written by Emma McEvoy, who tells the story of damaged lives tangled together. The story revolves around several major themes such as: war and the shift that takes place as cultures and people recover from such; The themes stretch across all aspects of human nature, but it is the development of self that receives the most attention. I really really enjoyed this book and found it hard to believe that this is her first novel. The writing style is beautiful, like a slowmoving dream. The language is unbelievable sensual and the story is like nothing you will ever read. It stuck with me for a while and my thoughts revolved around the characters while reading it, but after I read the last sentance - I felt like reading it again, in order to catch things, I may have missed. I for sure would recommend this book to anybody with reading taste. I am looking out for Emma McEvoys second book.....with excitement!

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