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A Little Too Close to God: The Thrills and Panic of a Life in Israel

David Horovitz

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When David Horovitz emigrated from England to Israel in 1983, it was the fulfillment of a dream. But today, a husband and a father, he is torn between hope and despair, between the desire to make a difference and fear for his family's safety, between staying and going. In this candid and powerful book, Horovitz confronts the heart-wrenching question of whether to continue raising his three children amid the uncertainty and danger that is Israeli daily life. In answering that question he provides us with an often surprising, myth-shattering, and shockingly immediate view of a country perpetually at a crossroads, yet fundamentally different than it was a generation ago.

The Israel that Horovitz describes is at once supremely satisfying and unremittingly harsh. It is a land of beauty and spirit, where the Jewish nation has undergone remarkable renewal and a vibrant society is constantly being reshaped. But Horovitz also describes how the unrelenting tension has produced a people that smokes too much, drives too fast, and spends far too much of its time arguing with itself.

He makes clear the lasting effects of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination; the increasing incursions by the ultra-Orthodox into the domain of daily life; the anxieties that beset parents as their children approach the age of mandatory military service; and the constant fear of violent attack by fundamentalist extremists. (The book in fact opens, hauntingly, with a description of the aftermath of a bombing just outside a Jerusalem restaurant -- the very place where Horovitz had eaten lunch the day before.)

As Americans wrestle with their feelings toward Israel, and as Israel struggles with the question of whether a Jewish state and the principles of democracy are truly compatible, Horovitz illuminates the myriad quotidian experiences -- both good and bad -- that define the country at this volatile time.

Here is the moving, mordantly funny, and uncompromising account of one Israeli's life.

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