



## Suddenly, Love: A Novel

*Aharon Appelfeld*

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## **Suddenly, Love: A Novel** Aharon Appelfeld

A poignant, heartbreaking new work by “one of the best novelists alive” (Irving Howe)—the story of a lonely older man and his devoted young caretaker who transform each other’s lives in ways they could never have imagined.

Ernst is a gruff seventy-year-old Red Army veteran from Ukraine who landed, almost by accident, in Israel after World War II. A retired investment adviser, he lives alone (his first wife and baby daughter were killed by the Nazis; he divorced his shrewish second wife) and spends his time laboring over his unpublished novels. Irena, in her mid-thirties, is the unmarried daughter of Holocaust survivors who has been taking care of Ernst since his surgery two years earlier; she arrives every morning promptly at eight and usually leaves every afternoon at three. Quiet and shy, Irena is in awe of Ernst’s intellect. And as the months pass, Ernst comes to depend on the gentle young woman who runs his house, listens to him read from his work, and occasionally offers a spirited commentary on it.

But Ernst’s writing gives him no satisfaction, and he is haunted by his godless, Communist past. His health, already poor, begins to deteriorate even further; he becomes mired in depression and seems to lose the will to live. But this is something Irena will not allow. As she becomes an increasingly important part of his life—moving into his home, encouraging him in his work, easing his pain—Ernst not only regains his sense of self and discovers the path through which his writing can flow but he also discovers, to his amazement, that Irena is in love with him. And, even more astonishing, he realizes that he is in love with her, too.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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