

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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★ **The Wanderers: A Story of Exile, Survival, and Unexpected Love in the Shadow of World War II.**

By Daniela Gerson

Mar. 2026. 336p. illus. Grand Central, \$30 (9780306834301); e-book (9780306834325). 943.8

Gerson's *Wanderers* opens with a meet cute and a slow, budding romance that reveals an improbable connection: Gerson and her new love Talia's grandparents lived across the street from each other in a small Polish town called Zamość. The coincidence continues when she and Talia discover that both of their families survived the Nazi invasion of Poland by toiling with other Polish Jews in a labor camp in Soviet Siberia. Gerson knits together anecdotes recreated from family interviews and documents with stories of her own investigative trips to Uzbekistan, Poland, Israel, and war-torn Ukraine to follow in both families' footsteps. This nonlinear and sweeping story relays horrors inflicted by Nazis, Polish bystanders, and Russians juxtaposed with moving depictions of people defying authority to help, both in the early twentieth century and in the present as Gerson works to unearth nuggets of information to help her, Talia, and, someday, their twins, better understand how their families handled the trauma of multiple displacements. Her impassioned tale spans decades, continents, languages, and coping mechanisms, and it provides a significant voice to a lesser known experience of Polish Jews. Gerson doesn't shy away from the hard realities their families faced and the legacy and consequences that remain for current and future generations worldwide.

— H K Curtiss