



Black Elephants: A Memoir

Karol Nielsen

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An aspiring writer and reporter, Karol Nielsen went trekking through the Peruvian Andes at the height of the Shining Path terror, looking for adventure and a good story. She found Aviv, an Israeli traveler fresh out of his mandatory military service—a war-weary veteran of the first intifada—dreaming about peace. *Black Elephants* follows this idealistic pair as they explore the Americas, until Aviv, inexorably drawn to his homeland, asks Karol to come with him to Israel. There, the couple's lovingly laid plans—for Aviv to attend university, and for Karol to work on a kibbutz, study Hebrew, and get to know his family—are suddenly tested by the eruption of the first Gulf War. Nielsen's memoir paints a poignant and harrowing picture of love during wartime. Against a backdrop of bursting bombs and air-raid sirens, gas masks and sealed rooms, relationships are frayed, and romance becomes a distant memory. This story, so candidly and clearly told, powerfully illustrates the terror, loneliness, and absurdity of war and its invisible casualties.

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