

BookMarks

High Conflict: Why We Get Trapped and How We Get Out

By Amanda Ripley

Simon & Schuster, 368 pp., \$28.00

“High conflict is the invisible hand of our time,” writes journalist Amanda Ripley in this guide to using conflict productively. Unlike “good conflict,” which can mobilize people for lasting change, high conflict thrives on false binaries and demonization, easily tips into violence, and benefits the few while harming the many. Ripley explores these dynamics by presenting insights from psychology and social science alongside several case studies. A small-town argument about water fees ensnares a professional conflict mediator. A group of liberal Manhattan Jews and a group of conservative Michigan prison guards run an experiment together to see if they can learn to listen to each other. Ripley is a teacher at heart, and the lessons she presents in this book are both practical and inspiring.

Hope Valley: A Novel

By Haviva Ner-David

Bedazzled Ink, 240 pp.,
\$16.95 paperback

This tender novel, set in the Galilee region of Israel at the start of the second intifada, tells the story of an unexpected friendship between two Israeli citizens, one Palestinian and one Jewish. The story unfolds from alternating perspectives as the two women, Ruby and Tikvah, collide over claims to the same piece of land, dig into their family histories, and struggle with their own mortality. The character development is complex, and neither protagonist is totally likable—but both come to be deeply lovable by the end of the story. The novel is carried forward by an intriguing plot involving a lost diary as well as by the strength of its underlying themes, which include inherited trauma, forgiveness, and the healing power of art.



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