



Lies, First Person

Gail Hareven

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From the 2010 winner of the Best Translated Book Award comes a harrowing, controversial novel about a woman's revenge, Jewish identity, and how to talk about Adolf Hitler in today's world.

Elinor's comfortable life—popular newspaper column, stable marriage, well-adjusted kids—is totally upended when she finds out that her estranged uncle is coming to Jerusalem to give a speech asking forgiveness for his decades-old book, *Hitler, First Person*.

A shocking novel that galvanized the Jewish diaspora, *Hitler, First Person* was Aaron Gotthilf's attempt to understand—and explain—what it would have been like to be Hitler. As if that wasn't disturbing enough, while writing this controversial novel, Gotthilf stayed in Elinor's parent's house and sexually assaulted her "slow" sister.

In the time leading up to Gotthilf's visit, Elinor will relive the reprehensible events of that time so long ago, over and over, compulsively, while building up the courage—and plan—to avenge her sister in the most conclusive way possible: by murdering Gotthilf, her own personal Hitler.

Along the way to the inevitable confrontation, Gail Hareven uses an obsessive, circular writing style to raise questions about Elinor's mental state, which in turn makes the reader question the veracity of the supposed memoir that they're reading. Is it possible that Elinor is following in her uncle's writerly footsteps, using a first-person narrative to manipulate the reader into forgiving a horrific crime?

Gail Hareven is the author of eleven novels, including *The Confessions of Noa Weber*, which won both the Sapir Prize for Literature and the Best Translated Book Award.

Dalya Bilu is the translator of A.B. Yehoshua, Aharon Appelfeld, and many others.

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