

Lovers and Strangers - Two Novellas by David Grossman.
Bloomsbury 2005.

Lovers and Strangers contains two novellas - Frenzy and In Another Life. One of the joys of reading David Grossman is that his writing possesses infinite variety. These novellas could hardly be more different from Someone to Run With, but they are just as compelling.

Frenzy takes place largely in two very confined spaces: the car in which Shaul's sister-in-law Esther drives him on a far from magical mystery tour, and Shaul's mind in which feverish speculation about his wife's extra-marital activities arouses a wide range of emotion. The exchanges between the two are shocking for them both as the level of intimate confidences rises, and the reader's heartbeats increase with those of the protagonists!

In Another life is concerned with a perennially fraught relationship, that between mother and daughter, and especially with what happens when the ill health of one forces rapprochement, forgiveness and reconciliation, albeit tinged heavily with regret, anger and bitterness.

David Grossman takes his readers into the very mind of his characters and shields us from nothing. He is one of the most psychologically exacting and exciting writers at work today.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh