



# A Soldier of the Great War

Mark Helprin

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From acclaimed novelist Mark Helprin, a lush, literary epic about love, beauty, and the world at war

Alessandro Giuliani, the young son of a prosperous Roman lawyer, enjoys an idyllic life full of privilege: he races horses across the country to the sea, he climbs mountains in the Alps, and, while a student of painting at the ancient university in Bologna, he falls in love. Then the Great War intervenes. Half a century later, in August of 1964, Alessandro, a white-haired professor, tall and proud, meets an illiterate young factory worker on the road. As they walk toward Monte Prato, a village seventy kilometers away, the old man—a soldier and a hero who became a prisoner and then a deserter, wandering in the hell that claimed Europe—tells him how he tragically lost one family and gained another. The boy, envying the richness and drama of Alessandro's experiences, realizes that this magnificent tale is not merely a story: it's a recapitulation of his life, his reckoning with mortality, and above all, a love song for his family.



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