

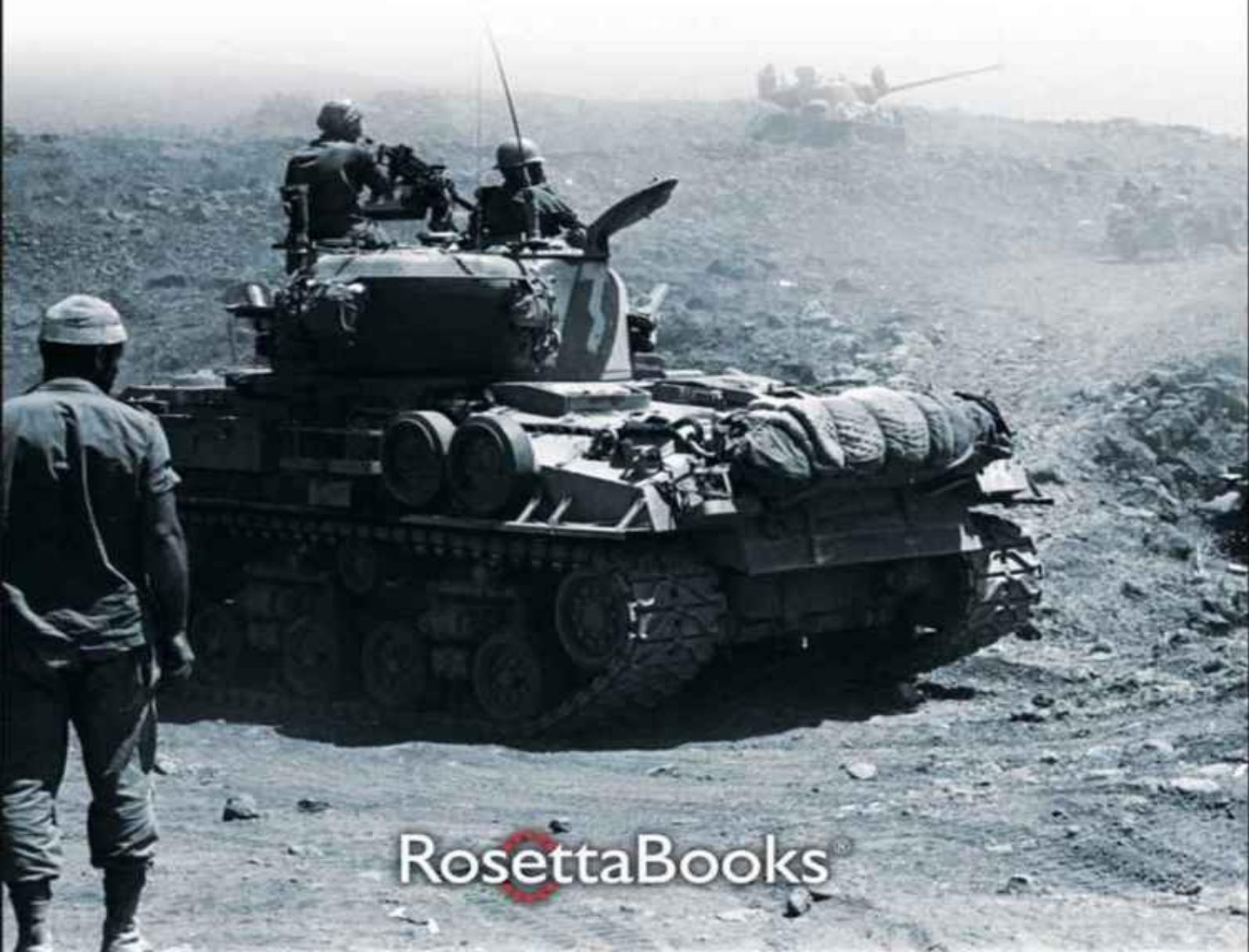
THE PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR

HERMAN

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THE HOPE



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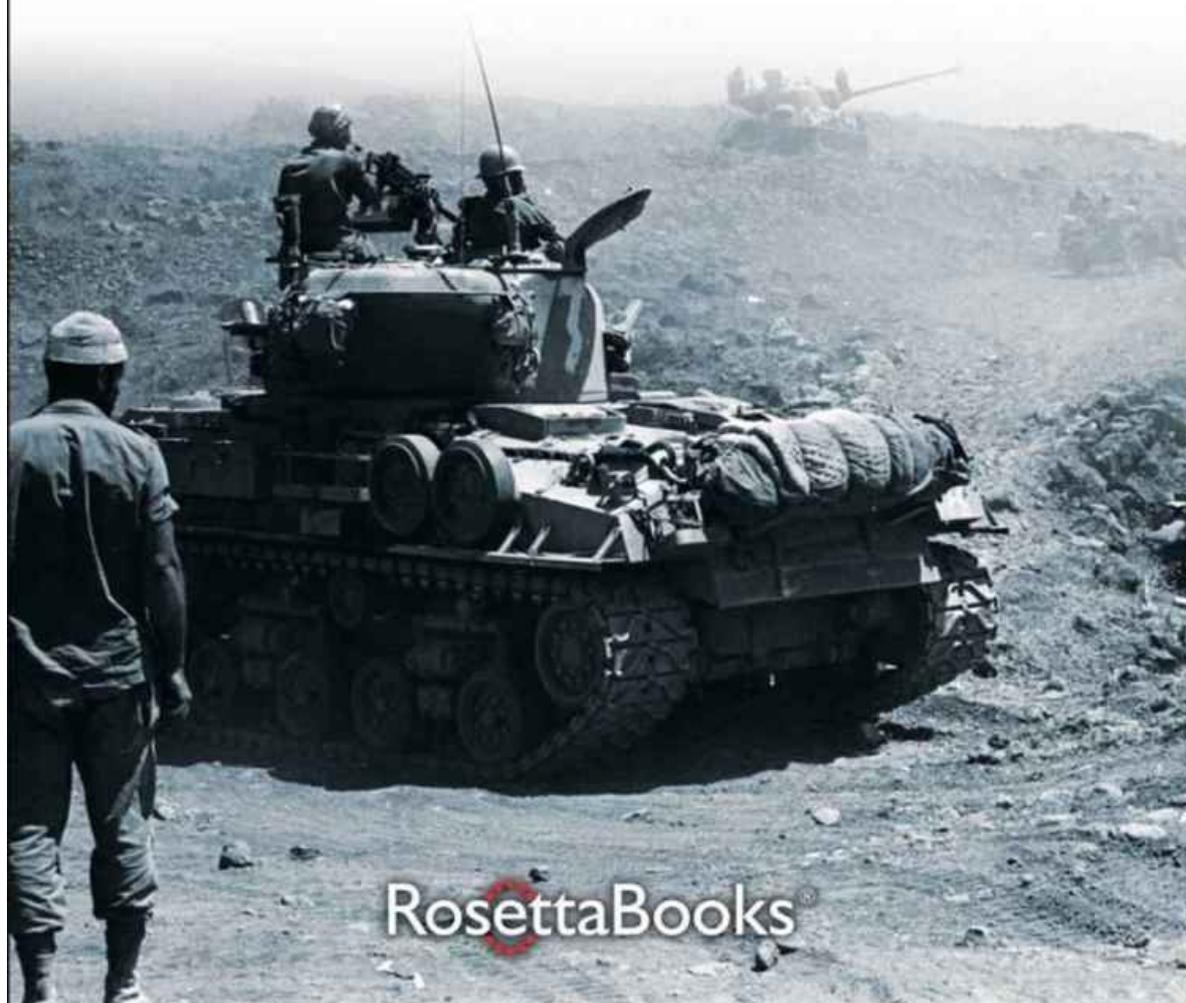
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Leading Characters

The Barak (Berkowitz) family

ZEV BARAK, born in Vienna, name Hebraized from Wolfgang Berkowitz. Army field officer, military emissary to America, later military attaché in Washington

Nakhama, his wife

Noah, his son

Galia, his daughter

Ruti, his daughter

Meyer Berkowitz, his father, in the foreign service

Michael Berkowitz, his religious brother, a scientist

Lena Berkowitz, Michael's irreligious wife

Reuven, Lena and Michael's infant son

The Pasternak family

SAM PASTERNAK, born in Czechoslovakia. Kibbutznik, combat officer, later in military procurement and the Mossad

Amos, his son

Ruth, his estranged wife

The Luria family

BENNY LURIA, Sabra, born in Moshe Dayan's moshav. Air force pilot

Irit, his wife

Yael, his sister, later Yossi Nitzan's wife

Daphna, his daughter

Dov, his son

Danny, his son

The Nitzan (Blumenthal) family

YOSSI NITZAN, combat officer, born Joseph Blumenthal in Poland (nickname Don Kishote)

Leopold, his brother (emigrates from Israel to America, changes name to Lee Bloom)

Shayna Matisdorf, Yossi's first love

Aryeh, son of Yossi and Yael (Luria)

The Cunningham family (American)

CHRISTIAN CUNNINGHAM, a CIA officer

Emily, his daughter

Bradford Halliday, army officer, Emily's suitor

To

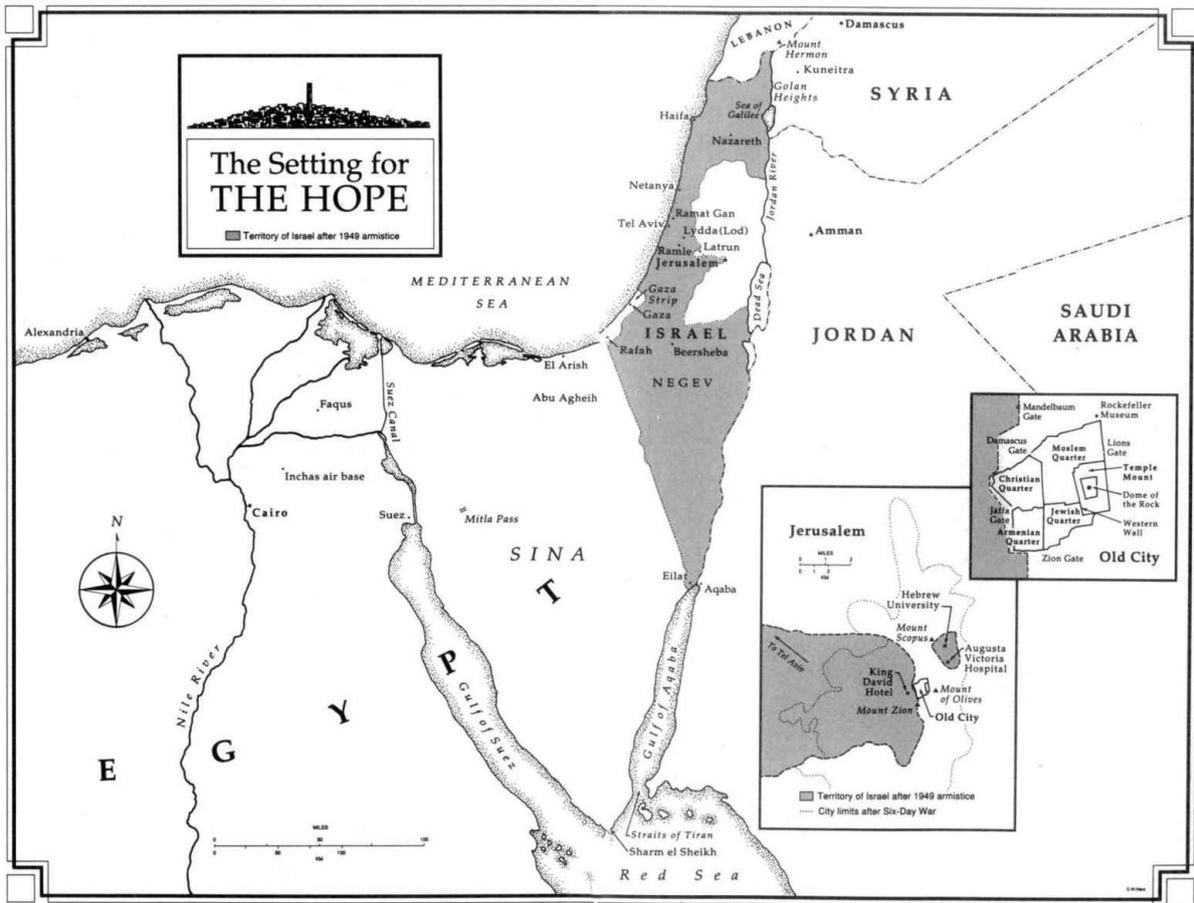
צה"ל

The Israel Defense Force

Above all to those who fell

And to those who survived, to those who now stand guard, and to those who will stand guard until by God's grace Israel dwells in peace with all her neighbors

This tale of Hope is dedicated



Prologue



The Outpost

“Ha’m’faked!”

No response.

“Ha’m’faked! Ha’m’faked!” (“Commander! Commander!”)

The watch sergeant roughly shakes the company commander’s shoulder. Haganah captain Zev Barak, born Wolfgang Berkowitz, rolls over and half opens heavy eyes. “What now?”

“Sir, they’re coming again.”

Barak sits up and glances at his watch. *L’Azazel!* Asleep a mere ten minutes, how can he have dreamed such a long crazy dream, himself and his Moroccan wife Nakhama in the Vienna of his boyhood, rowing on a lake, riding a Ferris wheel, eating pastry in a Ringstrasse café? Around him on the ground the militiamen sprawl asleep. Beyond the sandbags and the earthworks rifle-toting lookouts pace the hilltop, peering down at the narrow moonlit highway from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which here goes snaking through the mountain pass.

Wearily, Zev Barak gets to his feet in a cold night wind. Unshaven, grimy, in a shabby uniform with no insignia of rank, the captain at twenty-four looks barely older than his troops. He follows the sergeant to an outcropping of rock amid scrubby trees, where the sentry, a scrawny boy in a Palmakh wool cap, points down at the road. Barak edges out on the rocks and looks through binoculars at the moving shadows. “All right,” he says, sick at heart, to the sergeant. “Go ahead and wake the men.”

Within minutes they stand in a semicircle around him, some thirty tousle-headed youths, many of them bearded, yawning and rubbing their eyes. “It’s a pretty big gang this time, maybe a hundred or so,” he says in a matter-of-fact voice, though he feels that in this fight against odds, after months of close calls, he may really be about to die. He has been hearing that anxious inner voice more than once lately. Here he is still alive, just very worn out and scared, and he must keep up the spirits of these weary hard-pressed youngsters. “But we have plenty of ammunition, and we’ve beaten them off before. This hill is the key to Kastel, so let’s hold our ground, no matter what! Understood? Then prepare for action.”

In minutes, Barak’s troops, armed and helmeted, surround him once more. No more yawns now; grim youthful faces under variegated headgear, from World War I tin hats to British and German steel casques, and also some ragged wool caps.

“Soldiers, you’re a fine unit. You’ve proven yourselves. Fight the way you did before, and you’ll repulse them again. Remember, the Russians had a motto, ‘*If you have to go, take ten Germans with you.*’ So if any of us have to go, let’s each take twenty of them with us! We’ve got the high ground, and we’re fighting for our lives, our homes, and the future of the Jewish people.”

The captain’s bristly round face, pallid in the moonlight, takes on an angry glare.

“Now, I’m forced to say one more thing. When we lost this position yesterday and had to retreat down the hill, a couple of fakers claimed that mere grazes, just bloody scratches, were real wounds. They even let able-bodied boys carry them down.” Captain Barak’s voice rises and hardens. “So now I’m warning you, if any man falls

down crying he's been hit, I'll look at his wound right away, and if I find he's shamming I'll shoot him. Do you hear me?" A silence. "I said *I'll shoot him!*"

By the appalled boyish glances as they disperse to their battle stations, Barak surmises that they believe him. In the North African desert, when he was serving with the British army in the volunteer Jewish Brigade, a hard-nosed lieutenant from Glasgow once made that threat. It ended the shamming, and the lieutenant did not have to shoot anybody. In his foreboding mood Barak feels quite capable of shooting a faker. For months he has been carrying casualties away from skirmishes, and he himself may all too soon be dead or wounded, and need to be carried off. Dim in the moonlight, the sentry on the rock outcrop signals, *Not coming up yet*. This is a grim part, waiting for the blow; too much time to think of the disagreeable possibilities.

But since the United Nations vote that recommended partitioning Palestine, and the brief rejoicing that ensued in the Yishuv—the network of Jewish settlements—there have been few agreeable possibilities. Division into a Jewish State and an Arab State; a bitter drastic shrinking of the Zionist dream, but all right, Barak has figured, let it be so, and let the bloodshed at least cease! The Jews have accepted the resolution, but the Arabs have scorned it, and for five months now hostilities have sputtered between the local Arabs and the Haganah, the Jewish armed underground.

Yet worse is soon to come. For in three weeks—on May 15, 1948, a long-fixed official date—the British Mandate will end, the British government and army will pull out of Palestine in toto, and a showdown is bound to explode. Five neighboring Arab countries are pledged to march their armies into Palestine on that selfsame day, to wipe out the Zionist entity in a week or two. The British Balfour Declaration, which encouraged Zionism, the Arabs have always considered a monstrous illegality, and this is their chance to reverse it. Can the scattered Yishuv really hold out for long, Barak wonders, against all those mechanized armed forces?

But the Haganah captain has long since learned to live one day at a time, and one fight at a time. The Arabs have closed the highway below. The Jews in the Holy City are besieged. The hilltop outpost he defends has been taken, lost, and retaken by the Haganah in a desperate effort to reopen the road. Since Roman times, this mountain pass has been the chief access from the seacoast to Jerusalem, Barak's hometown. From the fortress of Latrun, where the gorge begins, he has been traversing the ten-mile ascent to Kastel and Jerusalem all his life; but now, once relief convoys enter the defile at Latrun, they are being decimated or destroyed. So the Haganah has launched an operation to lift the siege, with a code name Barak thinks all too apt: NACHSHON, after the prince of Judah who first leaped into the Red Sea, when Moses commanded the waters to part. The Jews badly need another miracle like that to give them hope, but—

Sudden signal from the sentry: *Here they come!* Barak shouts his final orders, and his heart races and pounds as his troops go on the alert, bracing for the assault. The Arabs

ascend in a swarm, blasting machine guns at the sandbags and hurling grenades that throw up flames and showers of earth. Some attackers fall and roll back down the slope. The rest keep climbing. Standing on a high point slightly back of the breastworks, Barak commands the fight, holding some of his best fighters in reserve. Once the action starts he is calm. When the first Arabs overrun the barriers, he sends small squads forward, calling out, "*Chaim, go and back up Roni... Arthur, look sharp, they're coming around Avi's position, hit them hard... Moshe, plug that hole in the center, quick!*" It becomes a head-to-head melee of crisscrossing blazing fusillades, frantic shouts in Hebrew and Arabic, screams of the wounded. Barak's battle anger swells as he sees his own boys fall, yelling in agony. No faking this time, of that he is sure! A brief confused deafening gunfight by moonlight, the flashing of knives, and all at once the enemy is running back down the hill. "After them!" Barak shouts, plunging through his troops down the slope, firing as he goes, and he feels a searing crunching pain in his left arm.

PART ONE



Independence