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The Sojourn

By Andrew Krivak



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The Sojourn, finalist for the National Book Award and winner of both the Dayton Literary Peace Prize and inaugural Chautauqua Prize, is the story of Jozef Vinich, who was uprooted from a 19th-century mining town in Colorado by a family tragedy and returns with his father to an impoverished shepherd's life in rural Austria-Hungary. When World War One comes, Jozef joins his adopted brother as a sharpshooter in the Kaiser's army, surviving a perilous trek across the frozen Italian Alps and capture by a victorious enemy.

A stirring tale of brotherhood, coming-of-age, and survival, that was inspired by the author's own family history, this novel evokes a time when Czechs, Slovaks, Austrians, and Germans fought on the same side while divided by language, ethnicity, and social class in the most brutal war to date. It is also a poignant tale of fathers and sons, addressing the great immigration to America and the desire to live the American dream amidst the unfolding tragedy in Europe.

The Sojourn is **Andrew Krivak's** first novel. Krivak is also the author of *A Long Retreat: In Search of a Religious Life*, a memoir about his eight years in the Jesuit Order, and editor of *The Letters of William Carlos Williams to Edgar Irving Williams, 1902-1912*, which received the Louis L. Martz Prize. The grandson of Slovak immigrants, Krivak grew up in Pennsylvania, has lived in London, and now lives with his wife and three children in Massachusetts where he teaches in the Honors Program at Boston College.



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The Sojourn By Andrew Krivak Bibliography

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- 192 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Krivak follows his revelatory memoir (*A Long Retreat*) with this lush, accomplished novel. After Jozef Vinich's mother dies while saving his life as an infant, Jozef and his widowed father relocate from a small Colorado mining town back to their Austrian homeland. Though Jozef's boyhood is marred by lingering feelings of abandonment, resentment, ingrained sadness, and two bullying stepbrothers, his life is enhanced by frequent dreams of his mother and a close friendship with troubled distant cousin Zlee. Both boys revel in the family hunting trips, which hone their sharpshooting abilities, expertise put to use when both go off to fight in WWI as marksmen, over Jozef's father's objections. Krivak dexterously exposes the stark, brutal realities of trench warfare, the horror of a POW camp, and the months of violent bloodshed that stole the boys' innocence. Once home from war, the author's depiction of Jozef's arduous return to life, love, and family is charged with emotion and longing, revealing this lean, resonant debut as an undeniably powerful accomplishment. (May)

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Review

DAYTON LITERARY PEACE PRIZE WINNER

CHAUTAUQUA PRIZE WINNER

NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST

WASHINGTON POST Notable Book of the Year

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO Top 5 Book Club Pick

“Splendid . . . a novel for anyone who has a sharp eye and ear for life.” —**NPR *All Things Considered***

“[A] powerful, assured first novel . . . Packed with violence and death, yet wonderfully serene in its tone, Andrew Krivak’s *The Sojourn*—shortlisted for this year’s National Book Award—reminds us that one never knows from where the blow will fall and that, always, in the midst of life we are in death. . . . If the early pages of *The Sojourn* sometimes recall Cormac McCarthy (especially *The Crossing*), the heart of the book is a harrowing portrait of men at war, as powerful as Ernst Junger’s classic *Storm of Steel* and Isaac Babel’s brutally poetic Red Cavalry stories.” —***Washington Post***

“Surging in pace and momentum, *The Sojourn* is a deeply affecting narrative conjured by the rhythms of Krivak’s superb and sinuous prose. Intimate and keenly observed, it is a war story, love story, and coming of age novel all rolled into one. I thought of Lermontov and Stendhal, Joseph Roth, and Cormac McCarthy as I read. But make no mistake. Krivak’s voice and sense of drama are entirely his own.” —**Sebastian Smee of the *Boston Globe***

“Novels set during World War I (think of *The English Patient* or *A Long Long Way*) possess a desolation, violence and a desperate longing to go back, to return to life as it was lived before the war. . . . [*The Sojourn*] is an ever-hopeful series of fresh starts and dashed hopes, a beautiful tale of persistence and dogged survival, set in the mountains, villages and battlefields of a Europe that exists only in memories and stories.” —***Los Angeles Times***

“A captivating, thoughtful narrative . . . and poignant reminder of how humanity was so greatly affected by

what was once called the war to end all wars.” —Minneapolis *Star Tribune*

“[*The Sojourn*] can be read as a classic of war. It is beautifully plotted, as rapt and understated as a hymn. . . . [Krivak] writes hunting scenes as evocative as those in *The Deer Hunter*. Then he outstrips that film in rendering the harrowing and seductive elements of war.” —Cleveland *Plain Dealer*

“[*The Sojourn*] deserves to be placed on the same shelf as Remarque, Hemingway and Heller . . . Krivak has written an anti-war novel with all the heat of a just-fired artillery gun.” —*Barnes and Noble Review/Christian Science Monitor*

“Hope for the future, the conversion of tragedy into meaning—lurks throughout *The Sojourn*’s lush and lyrical prose.” —*IMAGE: Art, Faith, Mystery*

“An engrossing narrative that goes beyond a war novel into a character study of loss and redemption.” —*Rain Taxi Review of Books*

“Krivak writes of war with the skill of a mature novelist/observer. Death, dysentery, starvation, chaos, amputation, prison. All are here in elegant prose—plus touches of rare beauty and tenderness as Jozef comes full circle with his past, his father, his country—even the idea of his father’s reverse migration. All of this in less than two hundred pages.” —*CounterPunch*

“Unsentimental yet elegant . . . with ease, [*The Sojourn*] joins the ranks of other significant works of fiction portraying World War I—Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* or Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*.” —*Library Journal* (starred review)

“The ghost of Hemingway informs some of Krivak’s notes from the front lines, while several other literary influences seem to be evident in his slender book, including the Italian novelist and memoirist Primo Levi, himself the veteran of a very long walk through Europe, and, for obvious reasons, the Charles Frazier of *Cold Mountain*. Yet Krivak has his own voice, given to lyrical observations on the nature of human existence.” —*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

“Deftly wrought, quietly told . . . Krivak studied all the Great War novels before writing, and the result is a debut novel at home amongst those classics. Highly recommended.” —*Historical Novels Review* (Editor’s Choice)

“Rendered in spare, elegant prose, yet rich in authentic detail, *The Sojourn* . . . stands with the most memorable stories about World War I. Krivak’s tale has an archetypal quality; it is a retelling of the hero’s inner and outer journey through impossibly rugged landscapes, toward survival and wholeness.” —*ForeWord Reviews*

“Inspired by oral histories of the “ol’ kawntree” passed on by his Slovakian grandmother, Krivak, who once dreamed of a career in music and spent eight years in a Jesuit order, has crafted a novel of uncommon lyricism and moral ambiguity that balances the spare with the expansive. He juxtaposes the brutality of Jozef’s environment, both natural and human, during his childhood in the Carpathians and his military service on the Italian front and after with the beauty of mountain vistas and moments of love, sacrifice, and compassion between his finely drawn characters.” —*The Chautauqua Prize committee*

“*The Sojourn* is a work of uncommon strength by a writer of rare and powerful elegance about a war, now lost to living memory, that echoes in headlines of international strife to this day.” —*Mary Doria Russell*, author of *Doc* and *The Sparrow*

“*The Sojourn* is a fiercely wrought novel, populated by characters who lead harsh, even brutal lives, which Krivak renders with impressive restraint, devoid of embellishment or sentimentality. And yet—almost despite such a stoic prose style—his sentences accrue and swell and ultimately break over a reader like water: they are that supple and bracing and shining.” —**Leah Hager Cohen**, author of *House Lights*

About the Author

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Beverly Brown:

Spent a free time to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their down time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, planning to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Can be reading a book is usually option to fill your totally free time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of guide that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the book untitled *The Sojourn* can be excellent book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

Patricia Mattox:

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them family members or their friend. Are you aware? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, or playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity that is look different you can read a new book. It is really fun for you. If you enjoy the book that you simply read you can spent the entire day to reading a reserve. The book *The Sojourn* it is very good to read. There are a lot of individuals who recommended this book. They were enjoying reading this book. In case you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy the e-book. You can m0ore simply to read this book through your smart phone. The price is not too expensive but this book features high quality.

Wanda Crane:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the water world or hanging out with buddies is thing that usually you will have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try point that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not sensation tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition details. Even you love *The Sojourn*, you are able to enjoy both. It is

great combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout guys. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its called reading friends.

Deborah Browning:

Is it a person who having spare time in that case spend it whole day by watching television programs or just resting on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This The Sojourn can be the reply, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are thus out of date, spending your free time by reading in this completely new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these publications have than the others?

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