

On Hurricane Island

A Novel by Ellen Meeropol
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Size: 5.5 x 8.5; Pages: 272
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Ellen Meeropol



For more information contact:

Alisa Trager
Marketing Associate
marketing@redhen.org

Keaton Maddox
Publicist
publicity@redhen.org

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Chicago Distribution Center
(800) 621-2736
orders@press.uchicago.edu
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Math professor Gandalf Cohen is kidnapped by federal agents, taken to a civilian detention center off the coast of Maine, and brutally interrogated. She must have done something wrong. Right?

As a major hurricane threatens the northeast, math professor Gandalf Cohen is abducted by federal agents and flown to a secret interrogation center off the coast of Maine. Austin Coombs, a young local resident, is a newly hired civilian guard assigned to the detention center. Henry Ames, a man of personal secrets, is the FBI special agent in charge of Gandalf's case and doubts the professor's terrorist involvement; Tobias, his second-in-command, disagrees, preferring violent interrogation. As the hurricane slams the shore, conflict detonates and each character must choose a side if they're to survive the storm.

Told over the five days approaching the anniversary of 9/11, by varying voices on both extremes of the political divide, *On Hurricane Island* is both a fast-paced political thriller and a literary examination of the sociopolitical storm facing our society. How far should government go in the name of protecting our national security? What happens when governmental powers of surveillance and extra-legal interrogation are expanded? How free are we?

Praise for *On Hurricane Island*

"On Hurricane Island is unflinchingly political, unashamedly suspenseful, and, above all, deeply human. Here is a writer who knows how to ramp up the tension while never sacrificing the spirit of her conviction, the sense of grounding in the natural world, or the heartbreaking complexity of her characters."

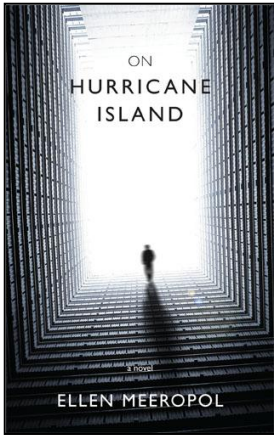
—Naomi Benaron, Bellwether Prize winner for *Running the Rift*

"On Hurricane Island is a chilling, Kafkaesque story about what happens when the United States does to citizens at home what it has done to others abroad. Meeropol puts the reader right into the middle of these practices through characters about whom you really care and a story you can't put down; a really good book."

—Michael Ratner, Center for Constitutional Rights

Biographical Note

A former nurse practitioner and part-time bookseller, Ellen Meeropol is the author of one previous novel, *House Arrest* (Red Hen Press, 2011). She lives in Western Massachusetts.



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More Praise for *On Hurricane Island*

“*On Hurricane Island* takes us into the world of an imprisoned math professor who is clueless as to why she’s being interrogated. We enter the reality of federal agents facing terrifying expectations, and of a rookie civilian employee horrified by secret tasks thrust on her. Ellen Meeropol’s masterful novel rings of truth—a petrifying truth that had me whipping pages, covering my eyes, and questioning how much I really know about the growing cost of the War on Terror.”

—Randy Susan Meyers, author of *The Comfort of Lies*

“In *On Hurricane Island*, Ellen Meeropol takes on the complexities and dangers of contemporary life in a novel that starts fast and ratchets up the tension all the way to the end. She brings to her writing a sharp, observant eye, great skill in characterization, and, best of all, a talent for taut, suspenseful narrative in the style of Graham Greene.”

—W. D. Wetherell, author of *A Century of November*

“Ellen Meeropol can be counted on to write with intelligence and heart. In *On Hurricane Island*, she also manages to give us characters who we care deeply about, perfect pitch dialogue and a gripping story about civilian detention centers designed for the likes of you and me. Thoughtful and compelling.”

—Jacqueline Sheehan, author of *Picture This*

From *On Hurricane Island*

The back door snaps open and two soldiers enter in full battle gear, guns and masks. Before she fully registers the threat, one soldier grabs both of her wrists. He holds them together behind her back, binding them tight enough to hurt. It does not feel like metal handcuffs, something plastic. The second soldier faces her, his cornflower blue eyes lock with hers for a moment. She opens her mouth to call for help, but he covers her mouth with a gloved hand.

“Don’t,” the soldier behind her commands in a gravelly voice. When she nods, the blue-eyed man removes his hand.

She twists her shoulders side to side, pulling against the wrist restraints, but the only effect is that her fingers tingle. When she stops, the circulation returns. The soldier behind her still grips her shoulders. She kicks backwards, feeling her heel connect with his shin. He grunts.

The soldier in front places his boot across her feet, pinning her bare toes. Now she cannot move any limbs. He holds a black cloth in both hands. In the moment before he pulls it over her head, she stares again into his eyes, promising herself that she will never again tolerate that shade of blue. Then everything is dark. Her feet throb even after he removes his boot, but the pain bothers her less than the hood snugged taut around her neck. She breathes fast, deep, sucking air into her lungs and her heart races. Will she be able to get enough oxygen through the fabric?

The soldier behind her places a hand firmly against Gandalf’s back. “Move.”