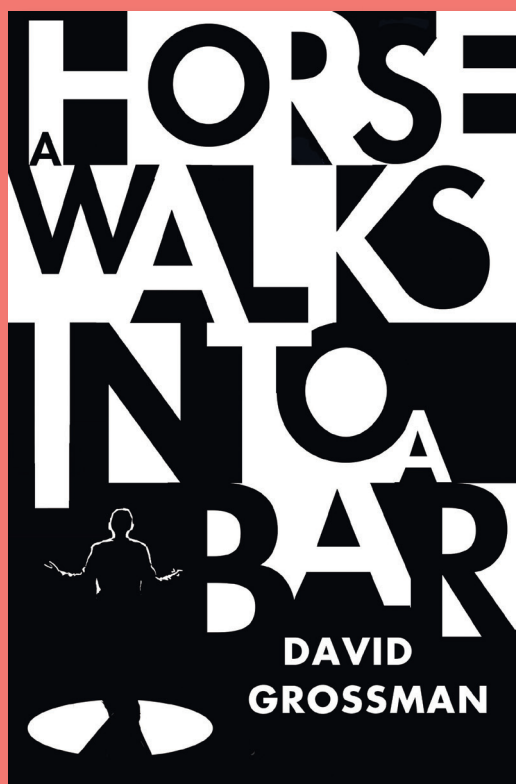




# Reader's Guide



Other novels by David Grossman  
*To the End of the Land* (2008)

## A Horse Walks into a Bar David Grossman

Translated by Jessica Cohen

Jonathan Cape

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### About the author

David Grossman is the bestselling author of numerous works, which have been translated into 36 languages. His most recent novels are *To the End of the Land*, described by British academic Jacqueline Rose as 'without question one of the most powerful and moving novels I have ever read', and *Falling Out of Time*. He is the recipient of the French Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and the 2010 Frankfurt Peace Prize. He was born in Jerusalem, where he currently resides, in 1954.

### About the translator

Jessica Cohen is a freelance translator born in England in 1973, raised in Israel, and living in Denver. Her translations include David Grossman's critically acclaimed *To the End of the Land*, and works by major Israeli writers including Etgar Keret, Rutu Modan, Dorit Rabinyan, Ronit Matalon, Amir Gutfreund and Tom Segev, as well as Golden Globe-winning director Ari Folman. She is a past board member of the American Literary Translators Association and has served as a judge for the National Translation Award.

### About the book

The setting is a comedy club in a small Israeli town. An audience that has come expecting an evening of amusement instead sees a comedian falling apart on stage; an act of disintegration, a man crumbling before their eyes as a matter of choice. They could get up and leave, or boo and whistle and drive him from the stage, if they were not so drawn to glimpse his personal hell.

Dovale Gee, a veteran stand-up comic – charming, erratic, repellent – exposes a wound he has been living with for years: a fateful and gruesome choice he had to make between the two people who were dearest to him.

### Discussion points

*A Horse Walks into a Bar* is set over a single evening in a small nightclub. How does the claustrophobic setting of the novel contribute to its overall affect?

The novel revolves around the high-octane monologue of a stand-up comedian that becomes increasingly darker and more digressive as the novel progresses. How does the author achieve the shifts in tone throughout the novel?

The novel is narrated by a high court judge and former childhood friend of the comedian, who has been invited specially to the performance – how does the author use the narrator to create a sense of tension in the novel?

How would you characterise the balance between comedy and tragedy in the novel?

### Themed reading

Michael Chabon *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*