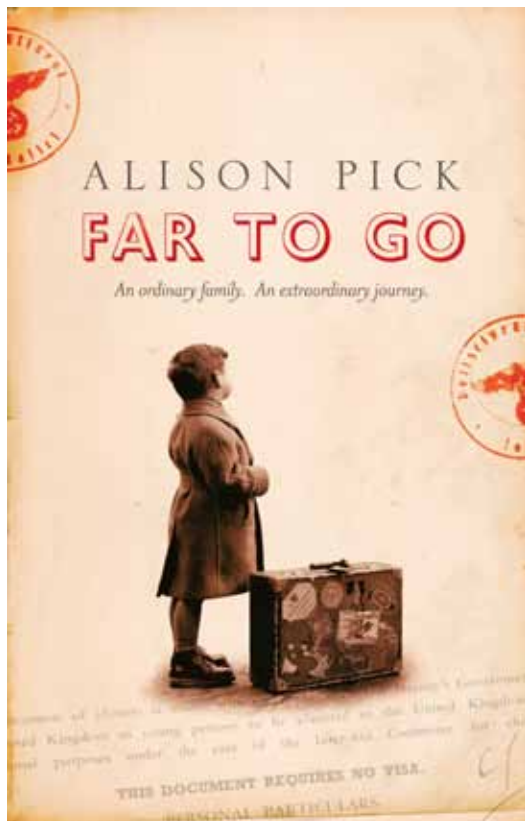




Reader's Guide



Other novels by Alison Pick
The Sweet Edge (2005)

Far to Go Alison Pick

Headline Review
£12.99

www.themanbookerprize.com

About the author

Alison Pick was the winner of the 2002 Bronwen Wallace Award for the most promising writer under thirty-five in Canada: she is the author of two collections of poetry and a novel, *The Sweet Edge*, all of which were published to wide acclaim. In *Far To Go*, she draws upon the journey her own grandparents made from their native Czechoslovakia to Canada during the Second World War.

Far to Go

'I wish this were a happy story. A story to make you doubt, and despair, and then have your hopes redeemed so you could believe again, at the last minute, in the essential goodness of the world around us and the people in it.' So begins the mysterious present-day narrator and the compelling saga that takes us deep inside the world of one Jewish family during the lead-up to the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939. Inspired by the harrowing five-year journey Alison Pick's own grandparents embarked upon from their native Czechoslovakia to Canada during the Second World War, *Far to Go* is an epic historical novel that traces one family's journey through these tumultuous and traumatic events. Set in the former Czechoslovakia, *Far to Go* is the story of the Bauers, an affluent, and largely secular, Jewish family. As Nazi German forces close in on Czech territory, the Bauers' world starts to crumble. Parents Pavel and Anneliese are forced to make a heart-wrenching decision - should they send their only child away on the Kindertransport? The conflicted parents struggle to decide what is best for their six-year-old son, Pepik, in this powerful, deftly rendered tale. It is compelling throughout, but the true magic of the novel lies in Pick's depiction of the events leading up to the Bauers' fateful decision.

Discussion points

Which character do you empathise with most in this novel?

Betrayal is an important theme in the book. Is Marta's betrayal understandable or unforgiveable?

Far to Go is the story of a Jewish family but a large proportion of the novel focuses on the thoughts and feelings of Marta, their non-Jewish nanny. What effect does this have?

Do you think Anneliese is a bad mother? If so, does she redeem herself in the novel?

Were you surprised by the ending? Did it influence your perspective on the novel as a whole?

Themed reading

Wladyslaw Szpilman *The Pianist*
Diane Samuels *Kindertransport*
Thomas Keneally *Schindler's List*

Useful links

Alison Pick's website

<http://www.alisonpick.com>

Publisher's website

<http://www.headline.co.uk>

Interview with Alison Pick

<http://lucypick.com/2010/09/20/an-interview-with-alison-pick>