



# How Many Miles to Babylon?: A Novel

*Jennifer Johnston*

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**How Many Miles to Babylon?: A Novel** Jennifer Johnston

**Whitbread Literary Award–winning novelist Jennifer Johnston’s story of two young Irish men, whose defiant friendship spans class and, later, rank at the onset of World War I**

Born to an aristocratic family on an estate outside of Dublin, Alexander Moore feels the constraints of his position most acutely in his friendship with Jerry Crowe, a Catholic laborer in town. Jerry is one of the few bright spots in Alec’s otherwise troubled life. The boys bond over their love of swimming and horses, despite the admonitions of Alec’s cold and overbearing mother, who scolds her son for venturing outside of his class. When the Great War begins, he seizes the opportunity to escape his overbearing mother and taciturn father, and enlists in the British army. Jerry, too, enlists—not out of loyalty to Britain, but to prepare himself for the Republican cause. Stationed in Flanders, the young men are reunited and find that, while encamped in the trenches, their commonalities are what help them survive. Now a lieutenant and an officer, Alec and Jerry again find their friendship under assault, this time from the rigid Major Glendinning, whose unyielding adherence to rank leads the two men toward a harrowing impasse that will change their lives forever.

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