

Jarno Mällinen: *The Home Front*

Original title: Kotirintama

Publisher: Like, 2017

A novel set in 1941, wartime, about a father and son's new life in the backwoods

Mom died in the winter. Now Joonas is riding in his father's truck, leaving for the North, for a new home. Why isn't Dad on the front like the other men? What killed Mom? What do the wicked boys next door know about it? The hints draw an ugly picture. Joonas has to uncover the truth and find a way to survive – to protect himself from the boys and his father.

The Home Front is an intense novel about silent men, inadequacies, and questions that demand to be answered. It is a rich depiction of an era and a sharp-eyed portrayal of the effects of loss and absence at the level of both individuals and society.

Book review quotes:

“A bold portrayal of the end of a young boy's childhood, a father's threat of violence, and a family's silenced history. Mällinen's novel brings to mind the decadent and sacral horror prose of his fellow musician-author Nick Cave. Mällinen skillfully combines the weird and frightening with the familiar and nostalgic.”

—*Savon Sanomat* (Kuopio)

“An extremely controlled work, which finds its way under the reader's skin even without any particular knowledge of the history of the time. Though *The Home Front* takes places during wartime, it is above all a description of a family mangled by fate and the little boy in the midst of it all.”

—*Etelä-Saimaa* (Lappeenranta)

“This intense novel puts its faith in visual language, as if Mällinen were painting surreal and grotesque visions, odors and tastes. The contrasts are strong: the beauty of northern nature and the immersive darkness of human nature.”

—*Keskisuomalainen* (Jyväskylä)

“The beauty of *The Home Front* actually lies in what a big story Mällinen tells in such little space.”

—*Aamuset* (Turku)

Synopsis translated by Christina Saarinen.