

Beautiful Souls Eyal Press

READ BY SEAN RUNNETTE

"This is an important and inspiring book."

—ADAM HOCHSCHILD, *New York Times* bestselling author of *To End All Wars*

On the Swiss border with Austria in 1938, a police captain refuses to enforce a law barring Jewish refugees from entering his country. In the Balkans half a century later, a Serb from the war-blasted city of Vukovar defies his superiors in order to save the lives of Croats. At the height of the Second Intifada, a member of Israel's most elite military unit informs his commander he doesn't want to serve in the occupied territories.

Fifty years after Hannah Arendt examined the dynamics of conformity in her seminal account of the Eichmann trial, *Beautiful Souls* explores the flipside of the banality of evil, mapping out what impels ordinary people to defy the sway of authority and convention. Through dramatic stories of unlikely resisters, Eyal Press shows that the boldest acts of dissent are often carried out not by radicals seeking to overthrow the system but by true believers who cling with unusual fierceness to their convictions. Drawing on groundbreaking research by moral psychologists and neuroscientists, this work of narrative journalism examines the choices and dilemmas we all face when our principles collide with the loyalties we harbor and the duties we are expected to fulfill.

"[*Beautiful Souls* is] an important book for our time . . . and a beautifully crafted one that never falls prey to simple answers about conscience."

—REBECCA SOLNIT, author of *A Paradise Built in Hell*

Eyal Press is an author and journalist based in New York. His work has appeared in the *New York Review of Books*, the *New York Times* magazine, the *Nation*, and numerous other publications. The author of *Absolute Convictions*, he is a 2011 Schwartz Fellow at the New America Foundation and a recipient of the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism.

Sean Runnette has earned multiple *AudioFile* Earphones Awards, including for *The Courage to Be Free* by Guy Finley, and has produced several Audie Award-winning audiobooks. His recordings include *A History of the World in 6 Glasses* by Tom Standage and the *New York Times* bestseller *The Disappearing Spoon* by Sam Kean.



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