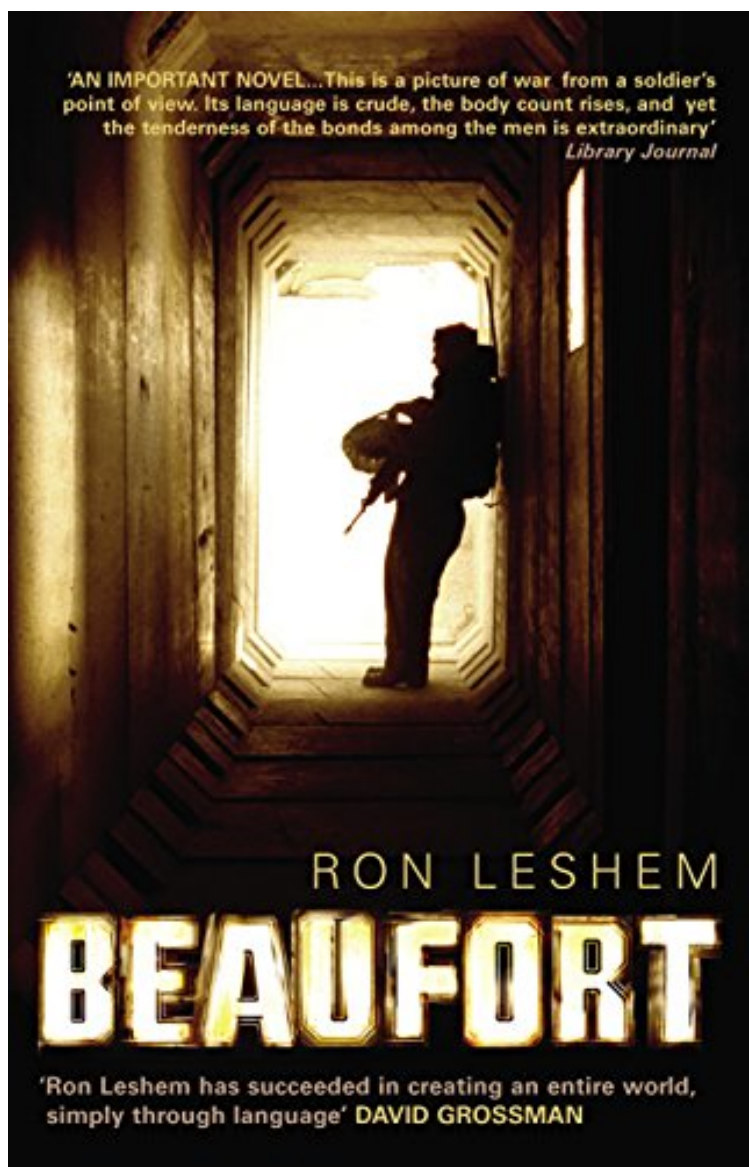


(Mobile book) File size: 43.Mb

Beaufort



Par Ron Leshem
ebooks | [Download PDF](#) | *ePub |
[DOC](#) | audiobook

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #742087 dans eBooksPubli
le: 2009-10-06Sorti le: 2009-10-06Format: Ebook Kindle

(Mobile book) Beaufort

Par Ron Leshem : Beaufort before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beaufort:

[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurBeaufort, a remote and beautiful fort in southern Lebanon dating back to the Crusades, has been an outpost of the Israeli Defence Force for nearly twenty years, and now, for the teenage soldiers who live there presiding over the last moments of Israel's presence in Lebanon, it has become a world of its own, an enclave in the heart of enemy territory where boy soldiers create a state with its own rules and its own unique, outrageous, brutal language. With a critical eye and an empathetic heart, Ron Leshem dishes up a wholly human story that takes place in conditions that are anything but. Fast-paced and brutally honest, unflinching and uproariously funny, Beaufort has been hailed - not only by critics but by the generation of soldiers who served in Lebanon during Israeli occupation - as the true voice of that sobering period. Written

as the diary of Liraz (Erez) Liberti, the head of a commando team stationed at Beaufort during the last winter of Israeli occupation, Beaufort is a revolutionary and potent look at the futility of war and death, and the courage it takes to put an end to it. This is not a story of war, but of retreat. This is a story with no enemy, only an amorphous entity that fires missiles from the surrounding mountains. And while thirteen young men propel the novel and give it life and colour, the real hero of Beaufort is fear: contagious, intoxicating, palpable fear, a word they forbid themselves from uttering. Beaufort is a devastating portrayal of a generation finding that the values and principles bestowed on them by their parents have betrayed them, and the terrifying nihilistic reality of Middle Eastern conflict.

Chapter One

A lot of people have lost a lot of people since we lost Yonatan. We've lost others since then, too, because another war broke out and everything got more savage. But more indifferent, too. And who's got enough time on his hands to deal with what happened back then? When it broke out we lost Barnoy. Then another eleven guys. And when the numbers stabilized at nine hundred and twenty and it looked like it was over, we lost Kokas brother, who followed in his footsteps and enlisted with us. We've made love a thousand times since then, it's not like we haven't, and we've laughed a thousand times. We went on to other places, we escaped and came back, we remembered. But quietly. We imagined how well we'd return to the fortress, to our mountain. There'll be a hotel there, maybe. Or a place for lovers to park. Or maybe it will be deserted. There'll be peace. And I will lead her along the paths, we'll walk hand in hand. Here, baby, this is exactly where it happened. And stone by stone I'll show her. She might even ask if that's the whole story. How can that be the whole story? What made you cry so much, it's actually really beautiful and peaceful here, everything's green with trees, and quiet. This is the place where you broke down? Try to imagine that they stick you high up on a mountain cliff, higher than the roof of the Azrieli Building. How could you not have a breathtaking view? Here it's wide expanses of green countryside checkered with patches of brown and red, snowy mountains, frothing rivers, narrow, winding, deserted European roads, and the sweetest wind there is. Zitlawi used to say that air like this should be bottled and sold to rich people on the north side of Tel Aviv. Christ, what quality. So fucking pastoral you could cut the calm with a knife. Our sunsets, too, they're the most beautiful on the planet, and the sunrises are even more beautiful, glimmering serenity from the roof of the world. Bring a girl or two here when the sky is orange and you've got it made. And dawn, an amazing cocktail of deep blue and turquoise and wine red and thin strips of pink, like an oil painting on canvas. And the deep wadi that twists away from the big rock were sitting on. Try to explain how this could be the place where you broke down. But from that night I remember the lights of Kiryat Shmona, on the Israeli side of the border, as they recede on the horizon, and everyone's beating hearts. I swear it, I can hear them as we make our way up to the top that very first time. And from minute to minute it's getting colder. There's not a living soul around except for us, practically not a single village in our zone, either. The convoy crawls along, gets swallowed up in a thick fog, there's no seeing more than a hundred yards ahead. Tanks are spread along the road to provide cover for us. From a slit near the roof of the Safari I try to figure out how far along we've come, silently poring over the map of danger spots and racing through an abbreviated battle history, muttering because no talking is allowed. Where will the evil flare out from? I suddenly have the urge to shout to the commanding officer that we've gone too far, but I bite my lip and remain silent. From this moment on nobody can tell me anymore. You haven't got a clue what Lebanon is, wait till you get there. I'm there, finally, that's what's important. A long line, heavy traffic: a supply Safari, a GI Safari, a diesel Safari, behind these an ordnance truck with a big crane, an Abir truck carrying a doctor and a medic, another GI Safari, the commanders Hummer, the lieutenants Hummer, and an Electronic Warfare Hummer. Oshri asks if I've brought my lucky underwear with me. I gesture to him that I'm wearing them. After all, our good fortune depends on my lucky underwear. I'm wearing them, even if that means thirty-two days without washing them. And I remember how the gate of the outpost opens to let us in, how the Safari comes to a halt inside a cloud. Everyone grabs hold of whatever's lying around—bags, equipment, your own or someone else's—and runs like hell inside. The commanders curse under their breath. Out of the vehicles, run, get a move on! and people go down, people come up, you're not allowed to stand in place, you have to grab some shelter. When the parking area fills up with dozens of soldiers the enemy fires salvos of mortar shells. And I try, but I can't see anything, I don't recognize anyone around me, grab hold of the shirt of some soldier I don't know and get pulled along after him. I'm thrown into a crowded maze, surrounded by thick concrete on all sides, long passageways with no entrance or exit, rooms leading to steep dead-end stairways, cul-de-sacs, and a collection of larger rooms lit up in red, with low ceilings and stretchers. Thirty seconds later I'm already in one of the bomb shelters, a long and narrow alcove, a kind of underground cavern with concave walls covered in rusting metal and cramped three-layer bunk beds hanging

by heavy iron chains from the ceiling. Welcome to downtown someone has carved over the doorway, and inside the air is stuffy, suffocating, a stench of sweat overwhelms you again and again, in waves. This pit, called the submarine, is where my entire life will be taking place from now on. I consider a quick trip to the toilet. A seasoned sergeant tells me to follow the blue light to the end of the hall and take a right, but he informs me I'll need a battle vest and a helmet. I decide to hold it in. What's the matter, is there a war on or something? I'm really not in the mood to go up in smoke here right now. Back then it seemed like it was light-years away when all it was was thirty, forty feet, three green toilets with a graffiti welcome. I came, I saw, I conquered. Julius Caesar and an official military sign commanding users do not leave pieces of shit on the toilet seat so there is never any chance of forgetting where you are living. And in the morning, with the first sunrise, as the view of Lebanon spreads out before us like an endless green ocean, our commanding officer makes his opening statement, which he has undoubtedly been rehearsing for weeks, maybe months, or maybe it has been handed down through the generations: Welcome. If there is a heaven, this is what it looks like, and if there is a hell, this is how it feels. The Beaufort outpost. Once, Lila asked me what exactly Beaufort is and I thought how difficult it is to explain in words. You have to be there to understand, and even that's not enough. Because Beaufort is a lot of things. Like any military outpost, Beaufort is backgammon, Turkish coffee, and cheese toasts. You play backgammon for cheese toasts, whoever loses makes them for everyone. Killer cheese toasts with pesto. When things are really boring, you play poker for cigarettes. Beaufort is living without a single second of privacy, long weeks with the squad, one bed pushed up against the next, the ability to pick out the smell from every guy's boots in your sleep. With your eyes closed and at any given moment being able to name the guy who farted by the smell alone. This is how true friendship is measured. Beaufort is lying to your mother on the phone so she won't worry. You always say, Everything's great, I just finished showering and I'm off to bed, when in fact you haven't showered for twenty-one days, the water in the tanks has been used up, and in another minute you're going up for guard duty. And not just any guard duty but the scariest position there is. When she asks when you're coming home you answer in code. Mom, you know the name of the neighbor's dog? I'm out of here on the day that begins with the same letter. What's most important is to keep Hezbollah from listening in and figuring out when to bomb your convoy. You really want to tell her you love her, that you miss her, but you can't, because your entire squad is there. If you say it you'll be giving them ammunition for months, they'll tear you apart with humiliation. And then there's the worst situation of all: in the middle of a conversation with your mother the mortar shells start blowing up around you. She hears an explosion and then the line goes dead. She's over there shaking, certain her kids been killed, waiting on the balcony for a visit from the army bereavement team. You can't stop thinking about her, feeling sorry for her, but it might be days before the phone line to the command post can be reconnected. Worry. That's the reason I preferred not to call at all. I told my mother I'd been transferred to a base right on the border, near the fence, Lebanon lite, not at all deep in the way deep in Lebanon so that she'd sleep at night. Gut feeling, you ask? She knew the truth the whole time, even if she won't admit it to this day. Beaufort is the Southern Lebanese Army, local Christians, a crazy bunch of Phalangists. Cigarettes in their mouths all day long. Smelly, wild, funny. They come in every morning at eight o'clock and we put a guard on them. They build, renovate whatever's been destroyed by the air raids, do what they're told. They're not allowed inside the secure area, not even permitted near the dining room. Beaufort is guard duty. Sixteen hours a day. How do you stay sane after thousands of dead hours? We're all fucked up in different ways, just do me a favor and don't choke it during guard duty. Choke it is our way of saying jack off. It's not that there aren't guys who choke it; they choke it big time. You won't believe this but a lot of people get super horny from our green jungle atmosphere. I'm not kidding. Nature is totally romantic, sensual. You would lose control, too. And it's not only nature that makes us horny. The Sayas network at 67 MHz, used for open transmissions between the outposts, can also give you a hard-on sometimes. It's not an official network it got its underground nickname from a radio broadcaster who specializes in melancholy late-night chats but everyone knows it because everyone, at one stage of boredom or another, tunes the dial to Sayas, the guys' favorite, where they can talk bullshit all night long and melt from the female voices. That's because girls from the command post are on the other end, in the war room, hot as fire, no AC, no boys, no reason not to unbutton their shirts a little, let off some steam. They sprawl across their chairs I'll bet on it stretching their muscles, spreading their legs, dripping hormones, dying for someone to make them laugh and slowly flirt with them and in the end make a little date with them back in Israel. Why not? Give them what they really need. Sure, baby, I got lots of weapons. I got my short-barrel M16 flat top, a real beauty. And my Glock, a fantastic pistol. And I also have . . . my personal weapon.

Measure it? You want me to? No problem, sure, Im happy to measure it for you, actually forgot how long it is, apologies, baby. Thats the way you talk, making it up as you go along, turning yourself on, and they giggle, toying and teasing on that very thin border, one step over the line, one step back, and youre dying to believe that maybe at the end of the night, when all the other guys drop out, the girls are left alone, poor things, to satisfy one another. What, you dont think so? A few strokes, great stuff, nobodys ever died of it. Just dont build any major expectations: the nicer her voice is over the airwaves, the more of a dog she is. I take full responsibility for that statement, Ive been disappointed often enough in my life. A high squeaky voice, on the other hand, means you might want to invest a little time, because shes got mile-long tits. Its a fact, Im not jerking you around. Beaufort is going out on seventy-two-hour ambushes with a huge supply of beef jerky in your knapsack. You cant believe how much of that stuff you can eat in three days. Beef jerky with chocolate and beef jerky with strawberry jam. And how much you can talk and talk without really saying anything. Pretty soon you reach the stage where you know everything about everyone. Who did what, when, with who, why, in what position, and what he was thinking about while he was doing it. I can tell you about their parents, their brothers and sisters, their not-so-close friends, their darkest perversions. Theres a lot of alone time, too, when youre fed up with all that talking. You think about yourself, your home. You wonder if your mother is hanging laundry just now, or maybe shes watching Dudu Topaz on television. Lilas probably showering now, too. Or maybe shes cheating on me. Freezing cold we call it cold enough for foxes up here, ice-cube cold, the nose is frozen and the extremities neutralized. The feet have been numb for ages.

Fingers, too. Thats Beaufort. You have cold burns all over but your belly is burning hot, dripping sweat even. At these times everyone starts thinking about some asshole drinking coffee on Sheinkin Street in Tel Aviv. And heres fucking me, smelling like diesel oil, sweating from fear, lying in the middle of nowhere and nobodys going to help me if I die. Not the guy in that caf on Sheinkin Street, thats for sure. When Im blown to pieces a few minutes from now hell keep drinking from his mug, probably at the very moment it happens hell tell some joke and everyone will fake a laugh and then hell go screw his girlfriend, he wont even turn on the news, and as far as he is concerned, nothing will have happened this evening. Because its business as usual for him. He drives to his desk job at army headquarters every morning in the car that Daddy bought him, finishes the army every afternoon at four oclock, and drinks coffee with whipped cream all the time. Blond hair, five oclock shadow, sort of ugly. Hate him? You bet, it helps sometimes. Hatred is an excellent solution to boredom. Beaufort is Oshri. He rolls over in my direction, lies next to me, chews my ear off in whispers. Every time. Tell me, Erez, please, man: how did I wind up here? he asks. What am I doing here dressed up like a bush? Why do I paint my face? What am I, a kid? What am I, in some Crusader fortress, you fucking little prick? What is this, are we living in the Bible? Am I some sort of retard, pissing in bottles?

What am I doing here in subzero weather, in the snow, waiting to take down some Arab who decides to climb out of bed at three oclock in the morning? Does this make sense to you? And then going back to that stinking trash can I sleep in up at the outpost? Does that seem logical? Tell me, have you seen where I sleep?

It isnt good for me here, really not good. Grown-ups shouldnt have to live like this, sinking in black mud mixed with snow at night. Its a bad fucking trip is what it is. Open your eyes. People have been dying on this mountain for a thousand years, isnt it about time to close shop? I swear, it doesnt make sense that theres such a place as Beaufort. Im telling you, theres no such place and were all stuck in this nightmare for no good reason. Its a mistake. He goads me, tries every time to shoot the matter to new heights on the scale of absurdity, astonishing himself, while I bust up laughing, out of control, but its all inside so they wont see. I take care to hold it in. I know in a minute or two the guy will sober up. I know him. Everything will look normal again, logical. He chose to be here, and he has a good reason for it, the best, and hell remember it. He loves the mountain, its good for him. And Im good for him, too. Hes my soul mate, my good luck charm, my best friend since the first cigarette at the induction center. Friend? No way: brother! My brother, who knows whats best for me better than I ever will. He says, Erez, draw a black sheep for me, and I draw him a whole flock. He says, Erez, give me a hug, you pussy, and I climb into bed with him, squash his little body into the wall, fall asleep holding him. He says, Erez, and I know its for life. And sometimes Beaufort is a one-night ambush. Even then we bring the beef jerky. Of course we do! One night, simple, like the one in December 97. Im the squad sergeant, lying in a thorny bush just as dawn is breaking, lost in thought. Calm. Like Im drugged. That calm. And my whole being is dying to run down that steep, rocky slope covered with undergrowth, run to the edge of the cliff and leap off. An incredible dive from the peak of the mountain to the sweetwater runoff in the deep valley below, a long, whistling plunge that thunders in my ears. I am dying to dip into those waters, to float on my back, get swept away by the current into the blue streams, lie in the

shade of the soft, bold, wild vegetation that crowds around the water and snakes after it like a dream jungle. To warm up lying like barefoot nature children on rocks: naked, horny, carefree. Dying to smoke a joint, get high, laze around, snuggle. Oshri says you can hear the splash of the water from below if you really try, but the closer you are the more forbidden and dangerous it is. Beaufort is a cage of ugliness right at the center of heaven. You hardly move one hesitant camouflaged foot to the outskirts of our iron gate, groping, sniffing, then you come back and close yourself inside our little enclave again. If only I could fly along the rivers and by way of the mountains I would be home already. Cheetah to Deputy One. Testing transmission. Roger, affirmative, I respond into the two-way radio. Functioning. I return to my long silence. Bleary eyes, mountain air, a brown and green desert, orchards and gardens, small stone buildings in turquoise and orange, olive groves. Everything is spread out before us. Are you dozing off? Dozing off? No way! Hey, you see that? You catch that? Is it what I think it is? Yeah, yeah. Are they armed? Yes, absolutely. Armed. Cheetah, this is Deputy One, I report. We've got three scumbags north of the Virlist road. Oshris got one in his sights, Chaki another, and Bendori the third. They've entered killing range, they've got packs on their backs, it can't be anything else. Deputy One to Cheetah, marksmen on targets. Do I have confirmation? I wait. Deputy One this is Cheetah. Negative, repeat: negative. No confirmation, Deputy One. Cheetah, this is Deputy One, we've got them covered. Scumbags. Awaiting confirmation. No confirmation, Deputy One. Negative, repeat: no confirmation for action. But they're moving forward. Fast. We shouldn't lose them. We've got them in our sights. Negative, Deputy One. Negative? Why negative, you fucking assholes! Does it make sense to you that I should lie here like some goddamn faggot missing an opportunity like this? Does it really? No way. Squad, on my count. Four, three, two, one, fire. Twenty-one, twenty-two, fire. Prepare to attack. Commander Cheetah to Deputy One, do not fire your weapons! No confirmation, stay in position. Squad, prepare to attack. Erez, you psycho! Stay where you are. That's an order! Erez, you're in violation of an order! Squad, attack! From the Hardcover edition. From Publishers Weekly In this gritty war novel, Leshem chronicles the tumultuous year leading up to Israel's 2000 withdrawal from Southern Lebanon. The story is told through the eyes of 21-year-old squadron leader, Liraz Liberti (aka Erez), who is tasked with shepherding a motley group of 13 "kids" through their military tours at the historic Israeli outpost, Beaufort. As the violence at Beaufort increases and the day of the withdrawal approaches, those stationed at the outpost try to ward off "eatenness" (fear) and a nagging sense of the futility of manning an outpost about to be closed down. Rather than dwell on the politics behind Israel's conflict with Hezbollah, Leshem focuses on the soldiers' slang-heavy language (those who are scared are "strawberry pissers"; a dumb soldier is a "hummus") and the thickening camaraderie to give readers remarkably visceral access to the isolated outpost. The anxiety and fear are palpable throughout Leshem's vivid novel—you can practically feel the shells explode. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.