

# THE STRIPEY BADGER BOOKSHOP

## ARMCHAIR TRAVEL BOOK CLUB

### BOOKS FROM *EUROPE*

(plus qualifying books from our shelves displaying a passport sticker)



#### **1. THE MYSTERY OF HENRI PICK, David Foenkinos (Brittany) – new paperback fiction published May 2020**

In the small town of Crozon in Brittany, a library houses manuscripts that were rejected for publication: the faded dreams of aspiring writers. Visiting while on holiday, young editor Delphine Despero is thrilled to discover a novel so powerful that she feels compelled to bring it back to Paris to publish it. The book is a sensation, prompting fevered interest in the identity of its author - apparently one Henri Pick, a now-deceased pizza chef from Crozon.

Sceptics cry that the whole thing is a hoax: how could this man have written such a masterpiece? An obstinate journalist, Jean-Michel Rouche, heads to Brittany to investigate. By turns farcical and moving, *The Mystery of Henri Pick* is a fast-paced comic mystery enriched by a deep love of books - and of the authors who write them.

#### **2. THE ICE PALACE, Tarjei Vesaas (Norway) – classic fiction published 1963**

Considered a classic in Norwegian literature. The schoolchildren call it the Ice Palace: a frozen waterfall in the Norwegian fjords transformed into a fantastic structure of translucent walls, sparkling towers and secret chambers. It fascinates two young girls, lonely Unn and lively Siss, who strike up an intense friendship. When Unn decides to explore the Ice Palace alone and doesn't return, Siss must try to cope with the loss of her friend without succumbing to a frozen world of her own making.

#### **3. THE SHADOW OF THE WIND, Carlos Ruiz Zafon, (Spain) 2018**

The international bestseller and modern classic - over 20 million copies sold worldwide. *Shadow* is the real deal, a novel full of cheesy splendour and creaking trapdoors, a novel where even the subplots have subplots. *The Shadow of the Wind* is a stunning literary thriller in which the discovery of a forgotten book leads to a hunt for an elusive author who may or may not still be alive... Hidden in the heart of the old city of Barcelona is the 'Cemetery of Lost Books', a labyrinthine library of obscure and forgotten titles that have long gone out of print.

To this library, a man brings his 10-year-old son Daniel one cold morning in 1945. Daniel is allowed to choose one book from the shelves and pulls out 'The Shadow of the Wind' by Julian Carax. But as he grows up, several people seem inordinately interested in his find.

Then, one night, as he is wandering the old streets once more, Daniel is approached by a figure who reminds him of a character from the book, a character who turns out to be the devil. This man is tracking down every last copy of Carax's work in order to burn them. What begins as a case of literary curiosity turns into a race to find out the truth behind the life and death of Julian Carax and to save those he left behind...

#### **4. 10 MINUTES 38 SECONDS IN THIS STRANGE WORLD, Elif Shafak (Turkey), August 2020**

SHORTLISTED FOR THE BOOKER PRIZE 2019 'Haunting, moving, beautifully written - and based by an extraordinary cast of characters who capture the diversity of modern Turkey. A masterpiece'. For Leila, each minute after her death recalls a sensuous memory: spiced goat stew, sacrificed by her father to celebrate the birth of a yearned-for son; bubbling vats of lemon and sugar to wax women's legs while men are at prayer; the cardamom coffee she shares with a handsome student in the brothel where she works. Each fading memory brings back the friends she made in her bittersweet life - friends who are now desperately trying to find her .

#### **5. BORDER: A JOURNEY TO THE EDGE OF EUROPE, Kapka Kassabova, 2018**

Award-winning book. When Kapka Kassabova was a child, the borderzone between Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece was rumoured to be an easier crossing point into the West than the Berlin Wall so it swarmed with soldiers, spies and fugitives. On holidays close to the border on the Black Sea coast, she remembers playing on the beach, only miles from where an electrified fence bristled, its barbs pointing inwards toward the enemy: the holiday-makers, the potential escapees. Today, this densely forested landscape is no longer heavily militarised, but it is scarred by its past.

In *Border*, Kapka Kassabova sets out on a journey to meet the people of this triple border - Bulgarians, Turks, Greeks, and the latest wave of refugees fleeing conflict further afield. She discovers a region that has been shaped by the successive forces of history: by its own past migration crises, by communism, by two World wars, by the Ottoman Empire, and - older still - by the ancient legacy of myths and legends. As Kapka Kassabova explores this enigmatic region in the company of border guards and treasure hunters, entrepreneurs and botanists, psychic healers and ritual fire-walkers, refugees and smugglers, she traces the physical and psychological borders that criss-cross its villages and mountains, and goes in search of the stories that will unlock its secrets.

*Border* is a sharply observed portrait of a little-known corner of Europe, and a fascinating meditation on the borderlines that exist between countries, between cultures, between people, and within each of us.

#### **6. SMILE OF A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT: A PICTURE OF SWEDEN, Lars Gustafsson, 2015**

Lars Gustafsson and Agneta Blomqvist have written a personal guide to their Swedish homeland. Setting off from the south their journey leads them all the way up to Norrland, from the farms of Scania to the Laponian area, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. But it is the idyllic fjord in Bohuslan, in the Vastmanland region, as well as Lake Malar and Stockholm that they call home.

Alive with their varied interests and entertaining suggestions for excursions - from journeys across the forests and moors to collect berries and mushrooms, encountering the odd elk or wolf along the way, to visits to the graves of Kurt Tucholsky and Strindberg, *Smile of a Midsummer Night* is knowledgeable, loving and poetic. A must-have for all fans of Sweden.

#### **7. THE READERS' ROOM, Antoine Laurain, 2020 (Paris)**

A dazzling tale of mystery, love and the power of books from the bestselling author of *The Red Notebook*.

**8. THE BELL IN THE LAKE, Lars Mytting, 2020 (Norway, 1880)**

Love, suspense, nature and superstition are woven together in this powerful novel. Winter is hard in Butangen in Norway 1880. The lake is frozen and the ground is too hard to bury the dead. Astrid Hekne dreams of a life beyond marriage and children, and working the land to the end of her days. Then Pastor Kai Schweigaard takes over the small parish with its 700 year old stave church. The two bells are said to hold supernatural powers.

**9. THE LYING LIFE OF ADULTS, Elena Ferrante, Naples, 2020**

The new novel from Elena Ferrante. Giovanna's pretty face has changed; it's turning into the face of an ugly, spiteful adolescent. But is she seeing things as they really are? Where must she look to find her true reflection and a life she can claim as her own?

**10. DRIVE YOUR PLOW OVER THE BONES OF THE DEAD, Olga Tokarczuk, Poland.**

This book, from the author awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2019, caused a genuine political uproar in Poland. In a remote Polish village, Janina Duszejko, an eccentric woman in her sixties, recounts the events surrounding the disappearance of her two dogs. When members of a local hunting club are found murdered, Duszejko becomes involved in the investigation.

**11. THE DISCOMFORT OF EVENING, Marieke Lucas Rijneveld, Winner of the 2020 International Booker Prize**

A bestselling sensation in the Netherlands, this radical debut novel is studded with images of wild, violent beauty in a world of language unlike any other.