

THE STRIPEY BADGER BOOKSHOP

ARMCHAIR TRAVEL BOOK CLUB

BOOKS FROM *asia*

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



1. **BEFORE THE COFFEE GETS COLD**, Toshikazu Kawaguchi, (Japan), 2019. Short-listed for the 2020 Independent Booksellers Awards and the sequel **BEFORE THE COFFEE GETS COLD Tales from the Cafe**

What would you change if you could go back in time? In a small back alley in Tokyo, there is a cafe which has been serving carefully brewed coffee for more than one hundred years. But this coffee shop offers its customers a unique experience: the chance to travel back in time. In *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*, we meet four visitors, each of whom is hoping to make use of the cafe's time-travelling offer, in order to: confront the man who left them, receive a letter from their husband whose memory has been taken by early onset Alzheimer's, to see their sister one last time, and to meet the daughter they never got the chance to know.

But the journey into the past does not come without risks: customers must sit in a particular seat, they cannot leave the cafe, and finally, they must return to the present before the coffee gets cold . . .

Toshikazu Kawaguchi's beautiful, moving story - translated from Japanese by Geoffrey Trousselot - explores the age-old question: what would you change if you could travel back in time? More importantly, who would you want to meet, maybe for one last time.

In the sequel **Tales from the Café** meets more customers and explores how we carry our past with us, and how far we'd go to see – perhaps for one last time – the ones we love.

2. **PACHINKO**, Min Ji Lee (South Korea), 2017

Award-winning best-seller. Min Jin Lee's novel takes us through four generations and each character's search for identity and success. It's a powerful story about resilience and compassion.

Yeongdo, Korea 1911. In a small fishing village on the banks of the East Sea, a club-footed, cleft-lipped man marries a fifteen-year-old girl. The couple have one child, their beloved daughter Sunja. When Sunja falls pregnant by a married yakuza, the family face ruin. But then Isak, a Christian minister, offers her a chance of salvation: a new life in Japan as his wife. Following a man she barely knows to a hostile country in which she has no friends, no home, and whose language she cannot speak, Sunja's salvation is just the beginning of her story.

Through eight decades and four generations, *Pachinko* is an epic tale of family, identity, love, death and survival.

3. **CONVENIENCE STORE WOMAN**, Sayaka Murato (Japan), 2019

Meet Keiko. Keiko is 36 years old. She's never had a boyfriend, and she's been working in the same supermarket for eighteen years.

Keiko's family wishes she'd get a proper job. Her friends wonder why she won't get married. But Keiko knows what makes her happy, and she's not going to let anyone come between her and her convenience store...

4. THE WHITE TIGER, Aravind Adiga (India), 2008.

Winner of the 40th Man Booker Prize. Balram Halwai is the White Tiger - the smartest boy in his village. His family is too poor for him to afford for him to finish school and he has to work in a teashop, breaking coals and wiping tables. But Balram gets his break when a rich man hires him as a chauffeur, and takes him to live in Delhi.

The city is a revelation. As he drives his master to shopping malls and call centres, Balram becomes increasingly aware of immense wealth and opportunity all around him, while knowing that he will never be able to gain access to that world. As Balram broods over his situation, he realizes that there is only one way he can become part of this glamorous new India - by murdering his master.

5. HOW WE DISAPPEARED, Jin-Jing Lee (Singapore), 2020

Singapore, 1942. As Japanese troops sweep down Malaysia and into Singapore, a village is ransacked. Only three survivors remain, one of them a tiny child.

In a neighbouring village, seventeen-year-old Wang Di is bundled into the back of a troop carrier and shipped off to a Japanese military rape camp. In the year 2000, her mind is still haunted by her experiences there, but she has long been silent about her memories of that time. It takes twelve-year-old Kevin, and the mumbled confession he overhears from his ailing grandmother, to set in motion a journey into the unknown to discover the truth.

Weaving together two timelines and two life-changing secrets, *How We Disappeared* is an evocative, profoundly moving and utterly dazzling novel heralding the arrival of a new literary star.

6. THE STATIONERY SHOP OF TEHRAN, Marjan Kamila, Iran, 2019

** If you read *The Little Coffee Shop of Kabul* and enjoyed *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, you will love *The Stationery Shop of Tehran* *** 1953, Tehran. In a small shop in a country on the brink of unrest, two people meet for the very first time. Roya loves nothing better than to while away the hours in the stationery shop run by Mr Fakhri.

The store, stocked with fountain pens, shiny ink bottles, and thick wads of writing paper, also carries translations of literature from all over the world. Bahman, with his burning passion for justice, is like no one else she has ever met. But all around them, as their relationship blossoms, life in Tehran is changing.

Suddenly, shockingly, violence erupts: a coup d'etat that forever changes their country's future, as well as their own. Marjan Kamali's beautiful novel explores themes of love and loss, and delivers an unforgettable ending.

7. SKY BURIAL, Xinran (Tibet), 2005

As a young girl in China Xinran heard a rumour about a soldier in Tibet who had been brutally fed to the vultures in a ritual known as a sky burial: the tale frightened and fascinated her. Several decades later Xinran met Shu Wan, a Chinese woman who had spent years searching for her missing husband who had been serving as a doctor in Tibet; her extraordinary life story would unravel the legend of the sky burial. For thirty years she was lost in the wild and alien landscape of Tibet, in the vast and silent plateaus and the magisterial mountain ranges, living with communities of nomads moving with the seasons and struggling to survive.

In this haunting book, Xinran recreates Shu Wen's remarkable journey in an epic story of love, loss, loyalty and survival. Moving, shocking and, ultimately, uplifting *Sky Burial* paints a unique portrait of a woman and a land, both at the mercy of fate and politics.

8. BIG SISTER LITTLE SISTER RED SISTER, JUNG CHANG, CHINA, 2020

A remarkable story of war, communism and espionage. They were the most famous sisters in China. As the country battled seismic transformations these three women left an indelible mark on history. Big Sister made herself one of the country's richest women. Little Sister became first lady of pre-Communist Nationalist China. Red Sister rose to be Mao's vice-chair.

9. *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* by Cho Nam-joo (Scribner) – A South Korean sensation that has got the whole world talking. The life story of a young woman raises questions about endemic misogyny and institutional oppression that are relevant to us all. Shortlisted for BAMB Awards 2020.

10. **LAST TANG STANDING, Lauren Ho, 2020** – for fans of Bridget Jones' Diary comes a hilarious story of love, friendship and the most intrusive people in the world: family