

Independent

foreign

fiction

prize



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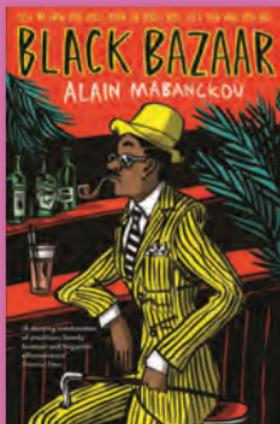
This booklet brings you some of the best fiction in translation from around the globe, entered for this year's Independent Foreign Fiction Prize. With these tales the world will open up before you bringing war-torn cities, African bush and remote countryside into the palm of your hand – whether you're on an iPad or kindle, have borrowed a book from your local library or have treated yourself in the airport bookshop to a new paperback.

Look out for the shortlisted books for this year's Prize, explore our recommendations and also try out suggestions. So, while you explore this booklet ask yourself... where in the world would you like to visit today?

For more information on the authors and translators visit www.booktrust.org.uk/iffp
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A riotous account of a black dandy trying to cut it in modern **Paris** against the odds... will his style be enough to bring his girlfriend and daughter back to him?

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of *Taxi Driver*,
pop culture, Zadie Smith

ALSO TRY

Broken Glass
by Alain Mabanckou

*Looking for
Transwonderland* by
Noo Saro-Wiwa

the author



the translator



Black Bazaar

by Alain Mabanckou

Translated from the French
by Sarah Ardizzone

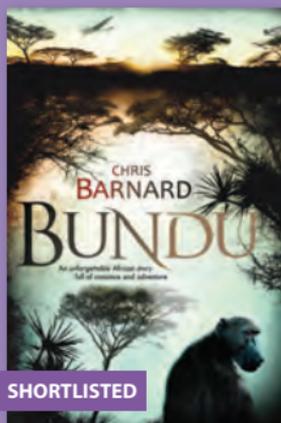
(Serpent's Tail)

Full of wit, innovation and energy, *Black Bazaar* is an entertaining and powerful read not afraid to poke fun at post-colonial cliché. Buttocks Man is down on his luck: his girlfriend, Original Colour, has cleared out of their Paris studio and run off to the Congo with a vertically challenged drummer known as The Mongrel, taking their daughter with her. Meanwhile, his racist neighbour spies on him and even his drinking buddies at Jips, the Afro-Cuban bar in Les Halles, pour scorn on Black Bazaar, the journal he keeps to log his sorrows. At least, he has style – but is flaunting sartorial chic against tough times enough for Buttocks Man to cut it in the City of Light?



In a drought-ridden place near **Mozambique** where no one knows the boundary... can an ecologist save a clinic with no food or supplies but endless refugees?

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of Wilbur Smith and *Out of Africa*

ALSO TRY

The Armies by Evelio Rosero

Mahala by Chris Barnard

the author



the translator



Bundu

by Chris Barnard

Translated from the Afrikaans
by Michiel Heyns

(Alma Books)

Starving people begin to arrive in their hundreds. With no help from the outside world, an ex-nun, a doctor, a scientist, an eccentric with a battered old motorbike and an abandoned Dakota plane that he has never flown form an outrageous plan to save them. This is a novel about human endurance, the capacity to accept and share mystery, hope, and despair; filled with warmth and humour, and no small amount of tragedy, *Bundu* is both a love story and a poetic tale of loneliness and loss. The characters linger long after the book has finished, offering hope and, perhaps, redemption in a landscape that is wild, and cruel, and miraculously beautiful.



Against the backdrop of the **Baltic** coast, mythology and meteorology mix with the inexorable tide of political change, in these beautiful and diverse elegies.

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of *Dubliners*,
Chekhov, Mike Leigh films

ALSO TRY

Mercedes Benz
by Paweł Huelle

East of the West by
Miroslav Penkov

the author



the translator



Cold Sea Stories

by Paweł Huelle

Translated from the Polish
by Antonia Lloyd-Jones

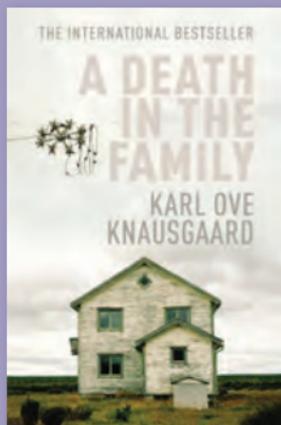
(Comma Press)

Cold Sea Stories is a truly impressive collection, and will entertain and enlighten in equal measure. The eleven complex, atmospheric tales are all set around the Baltic coast, but each story is a world away from the one before, and each story contains an entire world: a shepherd watches a pirate ship; a prisoner scrawls in the sand on his dungeon floor. They combine myth and history with modern Baltic life in constantly unexpected ways, leaving the reader enchanted. Huelle's language – in Lloyd-Jones's clear, flowing translation – is textured, his attention to detail is always on point.



Painfully honest account of childhood and teenage years in **Norway**, featuring rock music, family relationships and bewilderment at his father's death.

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of Proust

ALSO TRY

Hunger by Knut Hamsun

The Summer My Father Died by Yudit Kiss



Harvill
Secker

the author



the translator



A Death in the Family

by Karl Ove Knausgaard

Translated from the Norwegian

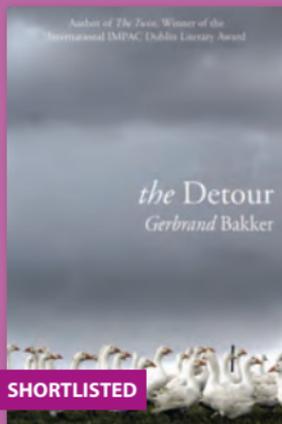
by Don Bartlett

(Harvill Secker)

When Karl Ove becomes a father himself, he must balance the demands of caring for a young family with his determination to write great literature. *A Death in the Family* is a Proustian exploration of his past, in which Knausgaard creates a universal story of the struggles, great and small, that we all face in our lives. His early years are illuminated in lightning-flashes as mesmeric and hair-raising as a summer storm in Kristiansand. Although shadowed by death, this first instalment of an epic quest should restore many readers to life. Don Bartlett deserves the highest praise for a translation with pace, rhythm and wit.

In rural **Wales** a Dutch lecturer rents a remote farm, for an indefinite stay, having fled an unbearable situation of a recently confessed affair with one of her students.

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of J M Coetzee
and Graham Swift

ALSO TRY

I Curse the River of Time
by Per Petterson
Rustic Baroque by
Jiří Hájíček



Harvill
Secker

the author



the translator



The Detour

by Gerbrand Bakker

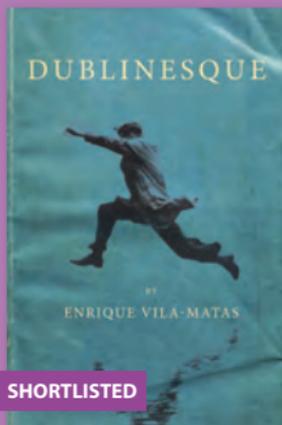
Translated from the Dutch
by David Colmer

(Harvill Secker)

As our known narrator settles into her new life, we are drip-fed details. Her marriage is in tatters and she is plagued by aches and vivid dreams. She begins to unwind and seems little surprised when a stranger wanders in off the hills and establishes himself in her home. The perspective switches. Her husband is soon on her trail, accompanied by a weirdly over-familiar detective. The novel skips back and forth between these strands until they become inevitably knotted. This is an accomplished work written in spare, economic prose, skirting on the surface of the characters whilst hinting at great storms of emotion underneath.

A retired publisher sets off for **Dublin** on the pre-text of honouring James Joyce's Ulysses on Bloomsday... but things are not as they seem.

the book



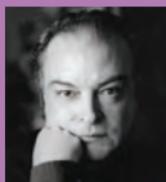
RECOMMENDED

For fans of James Joyce,
Are You Dave Gorman?

ALSO TRY

The Savage Detectives
by Roberto Bolaño
Shadow of the Wind
by Carlos Ruiz Zafón

the author



the translators



Dublinesque

by Enrique Vila-Matas

Translated from the Spanish
by Rosalind Harvey and Anne McLean
(Harvill Secker)

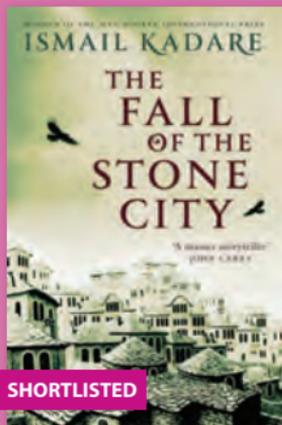
Samuel Riba, until recently a successful Barcelona publisher and drinker of alcohol – now very much an ex-publisher, a teetotaler and an imperfect husband spooked by turning 60 – wants to go to Dublin on Bloomsday and hold a funeral for the printed word. The expedition becomes a reality, yet starts to unravel as Riba catches sight of a mysterious figure lurking in the shadows. *Dublinesque* is crammed full of literary allusions and gossip, brimming with reverence for books and salted with a wry scepticism about the faulty human beings who make them. A comic book that is both serious and profound is rare enough these days to be a cause for celebration.



Harvill
Secker

The thrilling tale of a secret meeting between two rival doctors in war-torn **Albania** that changes the political course of a great city.

the book



RECOMMENDED

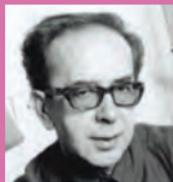
For fans of *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* and Hilary Mantel

ALSO TRY

The Pianist by Władysław Szpilman

The Emperor of Lies by Steve Sem-Sandberg

the author



the translator



The Fall of the Stone City

by Ismail Kadare

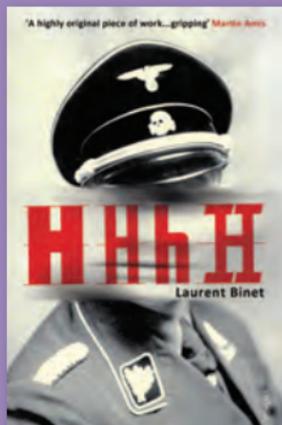
Translated from the Albanian
by John Hodgson

(Canongate)

1943, German soldiers invade Gjirokaštër, taking eighty hostages to the town square. But then something unexpected happens: Instead of bullets, they hear music... from Dr Gurameto's house. It is rare for a novel to successfully combine such keenly observed wit with such foreboding tension. The juxtaposition of superstition, folklore and harsh realism is compelling; it is not a book about one man, or even one city, it is about much more than that. Ismail Kadare tells a story that is timeless despite its ever-present historical dates, that is in turns funny, warmly humane, and deeply terrifying. Everyone should read it – it speaks of our common propensity for love and cruelty.

The true story of the Operation Anthropoid, **Czechoslovakia** 1942 when two parachutists were sent on a mission to assassinate Nazi commander Reinhard Heydrich.

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of *Valkyrie* and *Flaubert's Parrot* crossed with *The Day of The Jackal*

ALSO TRY

Götz and Meyer

by David Albahari

Life and Fate

by Vasily Grossman



Harvill
Secker

the author



the translator



HHhH

by Laurent Binet

Translated from the French

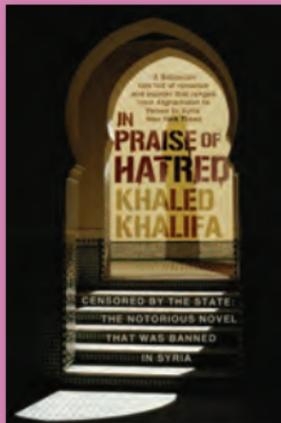
by Sam Taylor

(Harvill Secker)

With skill Binet shines a light onto Reinhard Heydrich, one of the most feared of Hitler's Third Reich lieutenants. He guides us through Heydrich's cruel ascent to power, the Resistance fighters' preparations and the crucial showdown in Prague. But Binet also shows us something less familiar to the historical novel. Interwoven with the narrative of the Nazi monster and the Resistance heroes is the narrator's own story. The strong voice of the narrator, utterly charming and brilliantly translated from the French by Sam Taylor, manages to balance a gripping World War II thriller with meditations on fiction and truth.

Set against the violent upheaval of 1980s **Syria**, a young Muslim girl becomes an extremist out of hatred and frustration in stark contrast to her loving and proper home life.

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of Hisham Matar, Jane Austen, *Girls*

ALSO TRY

A thousand Splendid Suns
by Khaled Hosseini

As Though She were Sleeping by Elias Khoury

the author



the translator



In Praise of Hatred

by Khaled Khalifa

Translated from the Arabic

by Leri Price

(Doubleday)

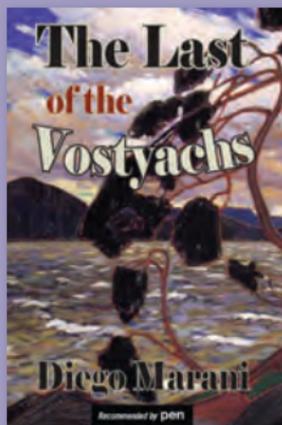
An elegant, layered tale with powerful characters that you really care about. *In Praise of Hatred* explores one young girl's journey to extreme loyalties. Against a backdrop of real-life events that ring chillingly true from 1980s Syria to the recent Arab Spring, our unnamed narrator is raised by her three well-to-do aunts behind high walls, but they cannot protect her from the social and political changes occurring around them. Out of frustration and despair, she launches herself from a life of innocence and sentimentality to a fight for her religion, her country, and ultimately, her own future.



Doubleday

After witnessing his father's murder in a mine in **Siberia**, the last remaining speaker of the imaginary Vostyach language, was struck dumb with startling consequences.

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of Stieg Larsson

ALSO TRY

Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow by Peter Høeg

New Finnish Grammar
by Diego Marani



the author



the translator



The Last of the Vostyachs

by Diego Marani

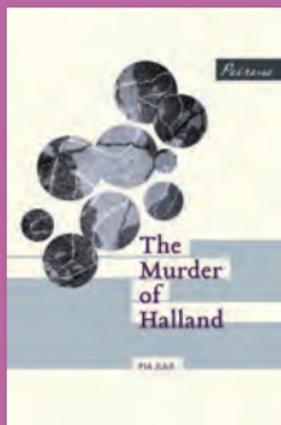
Translated from the Italian
by Judith Landry

(Dedalus)

Twenty years after Ivan's father's death, he escapes the abandoned prison mine and returning home meets a linguist who is amazed to discover Ivan's language. Soon, he is the centre of a complex plot involving sabotage, desperation and violence. This complex and immersive novel will reward a patient reader. There is humour, but this is expertly balanced with a poetic and profound connection with nature and the landscape. This is a short novel, but it packs a real punch: profound, mysterious and thought-provoking. Another accomplished treatise on language from Diego Marani.

When her lover is found murdered in a small town in **Denmark**, Bess's bereavement marks the start of a journey reassessing everything in her life.

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of *Wallander* and *The Killing* TV series

ALSO TRY

The Stranger
by Albert Camus

The Pyramid
by Henning Mankell

Peirene

the author



the translator



The Murder of Halland

by Pia Juul

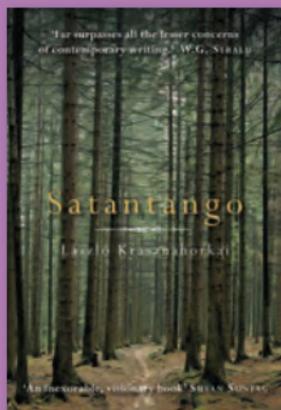
Translated from the Danish
by Martin Aitken

(Peirene)

Let's get one thing straight: *The Murder of Halland* is a Scandinavian crime novel with a difference. Our narrator, Bess, is a writer who left her family to move in with Halland, and is woken one morning by the sound of the shot that kills him. Detectives come and go; the small community where she lives sticks its nose in; fleeting contact is established with her old family. Mostly, Bess grieves for the man and the life she has lost. Juul takes us through that grief with unsparing honesty, in all its messy, human reality – but also in a style so restrained and impassive (in Martin Aitken's sinuous translation) that it crackles with suppressed energy, and a cool, unsettling quality.

In the darkening embers of a communist utopia, life in a desolate town in **Hungary** has come to a standstill. But when Irimiás returns, the Devil has arrived in their midst.

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of *Satantango* the film, Tom McCarthy

ALSO TRY

The Castle by Kafka

The Inferno by Dante



the author



the translator



Satantango

by László Krasznahorkai

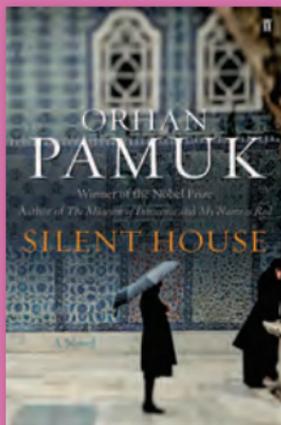
Translated from the Hungarian
by George Szirtes

(Tuskar Rock)

Satantango, first published in Hungary during the dying years of Communism and now newly translated into English by George Szirtes, is a desolate and terrifying vision of a moribund society, shot through with black farce and prophetic satire. The story is this: Irimiás, a mysterious figure until lately believed dead, returns to a dying collective farm whose residents are thinking only of shutting up shop and escaping. Irimiás is part trickster, part devil and part messiah, a charismatic and seemingly unstoppable force who manipulates, swindles and controls the desperate villagers until, between them, they create something that looks very much like hell.

A crumbling Ottoman mansion in a sleepy seaside town in 1980s **Turkey**... a family gather under the looming shadow of an impending military coup.

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of *The Kite Runner* and *Persepolis*

ALSO TRY

The House of Spirits by Isabel Allende

The Mussel Feast by Birgit Vanderbeke

the author



the translator



Silent House

by Orhan Pamuk

Translated from the Turkish
by Robert Finn

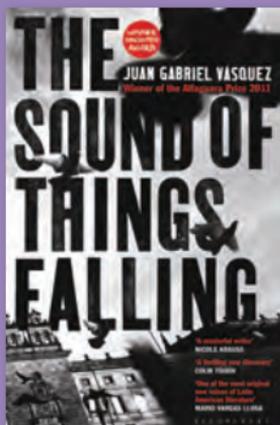
(Faber & Faber)

Fatima's visiting grandchildren, a failed historian, a sensitive leftist and a high school student, her faithful servant Recep and his disaffected right-wing nationalist nephew Hassan set the stage for an explosive series of events. Written from the point of view of alternate characters, with a fine balance of empathy and irony and a rich atmosphere of claustrophobia and foreboding that's lightened by the illicit adventures and fleeting freedom of his characters' youth. Orhan Pamuk draws on the ever-present conflicts in Turkish life: between the religious and the secular, the nationalistic and the cosmopolitan, the provinces and the city.



A hippopotamus escapes the private zoo of a cocaine lord; the news article evokes memories of **Colombia** during the 80s and 90s and an attempted mafia assassination.

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of Graham Greene and John le Carré

ALSO TRY

News of a Kidnapping by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

The Healer by Antti Tuomainen



the author



the translator



The Sound of Things Falling

by Juan Gabriel Vásquez

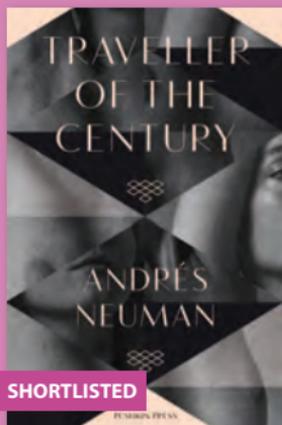
Translated from the Spanish
by Anne McLean

(Bloomsbury)

This taut and kaleidoscopic novel opens up Colombia's secret and not-so-secret histories. Through the voice of his narrator, a disaffected law lecturer scarred, like all his generation, by the pervasive fear and misery of the coca wars, Vásquez tells a long and painful story – one that's as much about youth, love and family as it is about the staggering trauma of the recent Colombian past. *The Sound of Things Falling* is a novel of Conradian poise, penetration and scope, a portrait of a troubled country and a coolly agonised examination of what it takes to live, and stay human, amidst the noise and brutality of history.

A coach delivers a traveller to **Wandernburg**, a mysterious city of unreliable topography, in a science fiction tale featuring philosophy and sex, about the future, set in the past...

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of *Heart of Darkness*, William Faulkner

ALSO TRY

The Magic Mountain by Thomas Mann

If on a Winter's Night, a Traveller by Italo Calvino

the author



the translators



Traveller of the Century

by Andrés Neuman

Translated from the Spanish
by Nick Caistor and Lorenza García

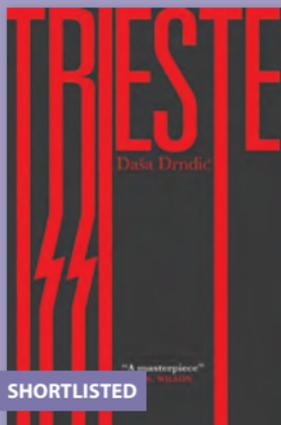
(Pushkin Press)

In a novel that expertly fuses the holy trinity of love, philosophy and waltzes, a professor arrives in Wandernberg, hoping to stop off for the night and break up a long journey with a heavy trunk of books. Instead, the city envelopes him and in a Chaucer-like fashion he is led into a series of encounters with bizarre characters, philosophers, artisans, workers, and Sophie, with whom he begins to fall in love. This is a book that treats its readers with respect and asks the same back. It's a wonderfully fulfilling read, ambitious in its smart rendering of the art of words, and of philosophy and love in a strange place.



An old woman sits alone in north-eastern **Italy**, waiting to be reunited with her son, ruthlessly stolen from her sixty-two years ago during the German occupation.

the book



RECOMMENDED

For fans of *The Hare with the Amber Eyes*, T S Eliot

ALSO TRY

The Rings of Saturn by
W G Sebald

The Reader by
Bernhard Schlink



MacLehose

the author



the translator



Trieste

by Daša Drndić

Translated from the Croatian
by Ellen Elias-Bursać

(MacLehose Press)

Sitting alone Haya Tedeschi awaits the return of her son; fathered by an SS officer, he was abducted by the Nazis as part of their Lebensborn programme for 'racially pure' Europe, and never made it home again. The ensuing narrative largely takes place within Haya's kaleidoscopic memory – stories of loss, resistance and atrocity that speak in a clamour of competing voices. Including photographs, maps, poetry fragments, testimonies from the Nuremberg trials and interviews with second-generation Jews, Drndić and Elias-Bursać together have crafted an immensely powerful, imaginative collage with a profound and lasting resonance.



The Independent Foreign Fiction Prize is awarded annually to the best work of contemporary fiction in translation. The Prize celebrates an exceptional work of fiction by a living author which has been translated into English from any other language and published in the United Kingdom. The Prize uniquely acknowledges both the writer and the translator equally, recognising the importance of the translator in their ability to bridge the gap between languages and cultures. The Independent Foreign Fiction Prize ran previously between 1990 and 1995 and was revived with the support of Arts Council England in 2001.

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives.

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THE SHORTLIST

