

## **New Books July 2010**

---

### **Non-Fiction**

#### *The Music Instinct; How Music Works and Why We Can't Do Without It* by Philip Ball

All human cultures seem to make music - today and through history. But why they do so, why music can excite deep passions, and how we make sense of musical sound at all are questions that have, until recently, remained profoundly mysterious. This book provides the first comprehensive, accessible survey of what is known - and what is still unknown - about how music works its magic, and why, as much as eating and sleeping, it seems indispensable to humanity. Even with what appear to be the simplest of tunes, the brain is performing some astonishing gymnastics: finding patterns and regularities, forming interpretations and expectations that create a sense of aesthetic pleasure. Without requiring any specialist knowledge of music or science, this book explores how the latest research in music psychology and brain science is piecing together the puzzle of how our minds understand and respond to music. Ranging from Bach fugues to Javanese gamelan, from nursery rhymes to heavy rock, the author interweaves philosophy, mathematics, history and neurology to reveal why music moves us in so many ways. This book will not only deepen your appreciation of the music you love, but will also guide you into pastures new, opening a window on music that once seemed alien, dull or daunting. And it offers a passionate plea for the importance of music in education and in everyday life, arguing that, whether we know it or not, we can all claim to be musical experts.

#### *D-Day* by Anthony Beevor\*

The Normandy Landings that took place on D-Day involved by far the largest invasion fleet ever known. The scale of the undertaking was simply awesome. What followed them was some of the most cunning and ferocious fighting of the war, at times as savage as anything seen on the Eastern Front. As casualties mounted, so too did the tensions between the principal commanders on both sides. Meanwhile, French civilians caught in the middle of these battlefields or under allied bombing endured terrible suffering. Even the joys of Liberation had their darker side. The war in northern France marked not just a generation but the whole of the post-war world, profoundly influencing relations between America and Europe. Making use of overlooked and new material from over thirty archives in half a dozen countries, this book is a vivid and well-researched account of the battle of Normandy.

## *The Last Spike: The Great Railway 1881 – 1885* by Pierre Berton

In the four years between 1881 and 1885, Canada was forged into one nation by the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. This book constructs the incredible story of how some 2,000 miles of steel crossed the continent in just five years, exactly half the time stipulated in the contract. The author recreates the adventures that were part of this vast undertaking: the railway on the brink of bankruptcy, with one hour between it and ruin; the extraordinary land boom of Winnipeg in 1881 and the epic tale of how William Van Horne rushed 3,000 soldiers over a half-finished railway to quell the Riel Rebellion. Dominating the whole saga are the men who made it all possible a host of astonishing characters: Van Horne, the powerhouse behind the vision of a transcontinental railroad; Rogers, the eccentric surveyor; Onderdonk, the cool New Yorker; Stephen, the most emotional of businessmen; Father Lacombe, the black-robed voyageur; Sam Steele, of the North West Mounted Police; Gabriel Dumont, the Prince of the Prairies; more than 7,000 Chinese workers, toiling and dying in the canyons of the Fraser Valley; and many more land sharks, construction geniuses, politicians, and entrepreneurs all of whom played a role in the founding of the new Canada west of Ontario.

## *The New British Constitution* by Vernon Bogdanor

The last decade has seen radical changes in the way we are governed. Reforms such as the Human Rights Act and devolution have led to the replacement of one constitutional order by another. This book is the first to describe and analyse Britain's new constitution, asking why it was that the old system, seemingly hallowed by time, came under challenge, and why it is being replaced. The Human Rights Act and the devolution legislation have the character of fundamental law. They in practice limit the rights of Westminster as a sovereign parliament, and establish a constitution which is quasi-federal in nature. The old constitution emphasised the sovereignty of Parliament. The new constitution, by contrast, emphasises the separation of powers, both territorially and at the centre of government. The aim of constitutional reformers has been to improve the quality of government. But the main weakness of the new constitution is that it does little to secure more popular involvement in politics. We are in the process of becoming a constitutional state, but not a popular constitutional state. The next phase of constitutional reform, therefore, is likely to involve the creation of new forms of democratic engagement, so that our constitutional forms come to be more congruent with the social and political forces of the age. The end-point of this piecemeal process might well be a fully codified or written constitution which declares that power stems not from the Queen-in-Parliament, but, instead, as in so many constitutions, from 'We, the People'. The old British constitution was analysed by Bagehot and Dicey. This book charts the significance of what is coming to replace it. The expenses scandal shows up grave defects in the British constitution. The author shows how the constitution can be reformed and the political system opened up.

## *At Home - A Short History of Private Life* by Bill Bryson

The author applies the same irrepressible curiosity, irresistible wit, stylish prose and masterful storytelling that made "A Short History of Nearly Everything" one of the most lauded books of the last decade, and delivers one of the most entertaining and illuminating books ever written about the history of the way we live. Bill Bryson was struck one day by the thought that we devote a lot more time to studying the battles and wars of history than to considering what history really consists of: centuries of people quietly going about their daily business - eating, sleeping and merely endeavouring to get more comfortable. And that most of the key discoveries for humankind can be found in the very fabric of the houses in which we live. This inspired him to start a journey around his own house, an old rectory in Norfolk, wandering from room to room considering how the ordinary things in life came to be. Along the way he did a prodigious amount of research on the history of anything and everything, from architecture to electricity, from food preservation to epidemics, from the spice trade to the Eiffel Tower, from crinolines to toilets; and on the brilliant, creative and often eccentric minds behind them. And he discovered that, although there may seem to be nothing as unremarkable as our domestic lives, there is a huge amount of history, interest and excitement - and even a little danger - lurking in the corners of every home.

## *The Ascent of Money – A Financial History of the World* by Niall Ferguson\*

Bread, cash, dosh, dough, loot: call it what you like, it matters. To Christians, love of it is the root of all evil. To generals, it's the sinews of war. To revolutionaries, it's the chains of labour. But in this book the author shows that finance is in fact the foundation of human progress. What's more, he reveals financial history as the essential back-story behind all history. The evolution of credit and debt was as important as any technological innovation in the rise of civilization, from ancient Babylon to the silver mines of Bolivia. Banks provided the material basis for the splendours of the Italian Renaissance, while the bond market was the decisive factor in conflicts from the Seven Years' War to the American Civil War. The author explains why the origins of the French Revolution lie in a stock market bubble caused by a convicted Scots murderer. He shows how financial failure turned Argentina from the world's sixth richest country into an inflation-ridden basket case - and how a financial revolution is propelling the world's most populous country from poverty to power in a single generation. Yet the most important lesson of the financial history is that sooner or later every bubble bursts - sooner or later the bearish sellers outnumber the bullish buyers - sooner or later greed flips into fear. And that's why, whether you're scraping by or rolling in it, there's never been a better time to understand the ascent of money.

## *A Million Bullets* by James Fergusson\*

In April 2006 a small British peace-keeping force was sent to Helmand province in southern Afghanistan. Within weeks they were cut off and besieged by some of the world's toughest fighters: the infamous Taliban, who were determined to send the foreigners home again. Defence Secretary John Reid had hoped that Operation Herrick 4 could be accomplished without a shot being fired; instead, the Army was drawn into the fiercest fighting it had seen for fifty years. Millions of bullets and thousands of lives have been expended since then in an under-publicized but bitter conflict whose end is still not in sight. Some people consider it the fourth Anglo-Afghan War since Victorian times. How on earth did this happen? And what is it like for the troops on the front line of the 'War on Terror'? James Fergusson takes us to the dark heart of the battle zone. Here, in their own words and for the first time, are the young veterans of Herrick 4. Here, unmasked, are the civilian and military officials responsible for planning and executing the operation. Here, too, are the Taliban themselves, to whom Fergusson gained unique and extraordinary access. Controversial, fascinating and occasionally downright terrifying, this book analyses the sorry slide into war in Helmand and asks this most troubling question: could Britain perhaps have avoided the violence altogether?

## *The Longest Winter - Scott's Other Heroes* by Meredith Hooper

Their tents were torn, their food was nearly finished, and the ship had failed to pick them up as planned. Gale-force winds blew, bitter with the cold of approaching winter. Stranded and desperate, the six men of the Northern Party faced disaster. Searching out a snow drift, they burrowed inside. Lieutenant Victor Campbell drew a line across the floor in the gloom to establish naval order: three officers on one side, the three seamen on the other. A birthday was celebrated with a carefully hoarded biscuit and they sang hymns every Sunday, so what kept these men going? Circumstances forced them closer together, their roles blurred and a shared sense of reality emerged. This mutual suffering made them indivisible and somehow they made it through the longest winter. To the south, the men waiting at headquarters knew that the Polar Party must be dead and hoped that another six men would not be added to the death toll. Working from expedition diaries, journals, and letters written by expedition members, these books tells the intensely human story of Scott's other expedition.

## *At the Loch of the Green Corrie* by Andrew Greig

'I should like you to fish for me at the Loch of the Green Corrie,' MacCaig commanded months before his death. 'Go to Lochinver and ask for a man named Norman MacAskill - if he likes you he may tell you where it is. If you catch a fish, I shall be delighted. If you fail, then looking down from a place in which I do not believe, I shall be most amused.' The quest sounds simple and irresistible, but the loch is as demanding as it is beautiful. In the course of days of outdoor living, meetings, and fishing with friends in the remote hill lochs of far North-West Scotland, the search broadens. The waters of the Green Corrie finally reflect personal memoir, joy and loss, poetry, geology, land ownership in the Highlands, the ambiguous roles of whisky, love and friendship. The book is a richly atmospheric narrative, a celebration of losing and recovering oneself in a unique landscape, the consideration of a particular culture, and a homage to a remarkable poet and his world.

## *Extreme Risk - A Life Fighting the Bomb Makers* by Chris Hunter

This is a fast-paced account of the author's career working as a counter-terrorist bomb disposal operator in numerous operational theatres, including the Balkans, Northern Ireland, Colombia and Afghanistan.

## *The Last Stand - Custer, Sitting Bull and the Battle of the Little Bighorn* by Nathaniel Philbrick

This is the archetypal story of the American West. Whether it is cast as a tale of unmatched bravery in the face of impossible odds or of insane arrogance receiving its rightful comeuppance, Custer's Last Stand continues to captivate the imagination. The author reconstructs the build-up to the Battle of the Little Big Horn through to the final eruption of violence. Two legendary figures dominate the events: George Armstrong Custer and Sitting Bull. No longer the fresh-faced 'Boy-General' of the Civil War, Custer was now mired in financial, professional and political problems. A clear and just cause had been replaced by ambiguity and frustration - by ill-fated efforts at peace treaties, treachery and compromises on both sides. Forced to take to the plains to feed themselves, and increasingly outraged by the government's policies towards them, the Sioux and Cheyenne became infused with a new sense of collective identity and purpose. Between six and eight thousand people came together in the largest ever gathering of Native Americans. If the government should be foolish enough to pursue them, they would stand and fight. Sitting Bull was in his mid-forties, his charisma and political savvy had enabled him to emerge as their leader. A vision he received during a Sun Dance - of soldiers falling from the sky - was widely understood to presage a great victory. This book brings vividly to life all those involved - from the Oglala Sioux warrior Crazy Horse and Major Marcus Reno who led the first attack, to Libby Custer waiting with the other army wives at Fort Lincoln. He evokes too the history, geography and haunting beauty of the Great Plains and provides the finest account to date of what happened there - and why - at the end of June 1876.

## *Molotov's Magic Lantern* by Rachel Polonsky

When the author went to live in Moscow, she found an apartment block in Romanov Street, once a residence of the Soviet elite. One of those ghostly neighbours was Stalin's henchman Vyacheslav Molotov. In Molotov's former apartment, she discovered his library and an old magic lantern. Molotov - ruthless apparatchik, participant in the collectivisations and the Great Purge - was also an ardent bibliophile. Molotov's library and his magic lantern became the prisms through which the author renewed her vision of Russia. She visited cities and landscapes associated with the books in the library - works by Chekhov, Dostoevsky, Pushkin, Akhmatova and many less well-known figures. Some were sent to the Gulag by the man who collected their books. She writes about the longings and aspirations of Russian writers in the course of a journey that takes her to the Arctic and Siberia, the Crimean summer and Lake Baikal, from the forests around Moscow to the vast steppes. In each place she encountered the spirit of great artists and the terrible past of a country ravaged by war, famine, and totalitarianism.

## *Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare?* by James Shapiro

For two hundred years after Shakespeare's death, no one thought to argue that somebody else had written his plays. Since then dozens of rival candidates - including Sir Francis Bacon and the Earl of Oxford - have been proposed as their true author. This book unravels the mystery of when and why so many people began to question whether Shakespeare wrote the plays (among them such leading writers and artists as Sigmund Freud, Henry James, Mark Twain, Helen Keller, Orson Welles, and Sir Derek Jacobi). Shakespeare scholar James Shapiro's search for the source of this controversy retraces a path strewn with fabricated documents, calls for trials, false claimants, concealed identity, bald-faced deception and a failure to grasp what could not be imagined. If this book does not end the authorship question once and for all, it will nonetheless irrevocably change the nature of the debate by confronting what's really contested: are the plays and poems of Shakespeare autobiographical, and if so, do they hold the key to the question of who wrote them?

## *The Temptress - The Scandalous Life of Alice, Countess de Janze* by Paul Spicer

In Kenya's 'Happy Valley' in the years spanning the 1920s to the 1940s no one paid too much attention to the privileged colonial set as they farmed their estates, partied until dawn and indulged in extra-marital affairs. Not until Josslyn Hay, Earl of Erroll, was shot dead at the wheel of his Buick in the early hours of 24 January 1941. Some said the good-looking womaniser had it coming. He was a philanderer who could have had any number of enemies among cuckolded husbands who wanted revenge. Ageing Jock Delves Broughton stood trial for Erroll's murder but was acquitted and the mystery remained unsolved - until now. American heiress Alice de Janze had been conducting a clandestine affair with Joss for years. Married into French aristocracy, her stunning beauty was to prove a fatal lure to men of adventure. Previously tried by a French court for shooting one of her lovers, scandal followed her wherever she went. She arrived in Kenya as a newly married Countess in the 1920s, but by 1941 she had turned forty and the years of partying had taken their toll. Pushed aside by Erroll for younger lovers, and increasingly isolated, Alice threw herself into an act of desperation, resulting in his murder and her own tragic demise. *The Temptress* not only solves the mystery of Josslyn Hay's murder - it paints a portrait of a volatile, captivating woman.

## *The Hare with Amber Eyes - A Hidden Inheritance* by Edmund de Waal

264 wood and ivory carvings, none of them larger than a matchbox: potter Edmund de Waal was entranced when he first encountered the collection in the Tokyo apartment of his great uncle Iggy. Later, when Edmund inherited the 'netsuke', they unlocked a story far larger than he could ever have imagined...The Ephrussi came from Odessa, and at one time were the largest grain exporters in the world; in the 1870s, Charles Ephrussi was part of a wealthy new generation settling in Paris. Marcel Proust was briefly his secretary and used Charles as the model for the aesthete Swann in *Remembrance of Things Past*. Charles' passion was collecting; the netsuke, bought when Japanese objects were all the rage in the salons, were sent as a wedding present to his banker cousin in Vienna. Later, three children - including a young Ignace - would play with the netsuke as history reverberated around them. The Anschluss and Second World War swept the Ephrussi to the brink of oblivion. Almost all that remained of their vast empire was the netsuke collection, smuggled out of the huge Viennese palace (then occupied by Hitler's theorist on the 'Jewish Question'), one piece at a time, in the pocket of a loyal maid - and hidden in a straw mattress. In this memoir, Edmund de Waal travels the world to stand in the great buildings his forebears once inhabited. He traces the network of a remarkable family against the backdrop of a tumultuous century. And, in prose as elegant and precise as the netsuke themselves, he tells the story of a unique collection which passed from hand to hand - and which, in a twist of fate, found its way home to Japan.

## *No Worry, Chicken Curry* by Geoff and Cherie Whittle\*\*

When the going got tough, the Whittles got going ... to India. Knocked sideways by recession, business on its knees, property in negative equity and creditors gnawing at every extremity, Geoff and Cherie Whittle decide on a radical change of direction and set off for India with their two children to save the tiger! This is a collection of anecdotal incidents and events that chart the family's time in the sub-continent; from encounters with tribals to run-ins with tigers, and the upset, upheaval, laughs and triumphs of their years of conservation work in India. This is a story of today with insights for all times including the trials and tribulations of dealing with bureaucracy, climate, survival and two adolescent kids in a story of strength through adversity that shows what can be achieved if you put your mind, body and soul into it.

## **Fiction**

### *August Heat* by Andrea Camilleri

Montalbano quickly slammed the trunk shut and sat down on top of it. When the beam from Livia's torch shone on his face, he automatically smiled. 'What's in the trunk?' Livia asked. 'Nothing. It's empty.' How could he possibly have told her there was a corpse inside? The lazy, slow month of August at the height of the Sicilian summer is, Montalbano assures his girlfriend Livia as they prepare for a relaxing holiday in a villa he has found for them, far too hot for any murders to be committed. But when Livia's friends' young son goes missing, a chain of events is sparked which will certainly ruin the Chief Inspector's pleasant interlude. A secret apartment and a grisly find in an old trunk are just the beginning, as Montalbano navigates his way through the case, as well as coping with the sweltering heat, the suspicious death of an Arab labourer and the tempting lure of a beautiful girl...

### *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins

The Moonstone, a yellow diamond looted from an Indian temple and believed to bring bad luck to its owner, is bequeathed to Rachel Verinder on her eighteenth birthday. That very night the priceless stone is stolen again and when Sergeant Cuff is brought in to investigate the crime, he soon realizes that no one in Rachel's household is above suspicion. Hailed by T. S. Eliot as 'the first, the longest, and the best of modern English detective novels', this is a marvellously taut and intricate tale of mystery, in which facts and memory can prove treacherous and not everyone is as they first appear.

### *Troubles* by J G Farrell

Major Brendan Archer travels to Ireland - to the Majestic Hotel and to the fiancée he acquired on a rash afternoon's leave three years ago. Despite her many letters, the lady herself proves elusive, and the Major's engagement is short-lived. But he is unable to detach himself from the alluring discomforts of the crumbling hotel. Enconced in the dim and shabby splendour of the Palm Court, surrounded by gently decaying old ladies and proliferating cats, the Major passes the summer. So hypnotic are the faded charms of the Majestic, the Major is almost unaware of the gathering storm. But this is Ireland in 1919 - and the struggle for independence is about to explode with brutal force. This book is the winner of the Lost Man Booker Prize awarded earlier this year.

### *The Shadows in the Street* by Susan Hill

Simon Serrailer has just wrapped up a particularly exhausting and difficult case for SIFT - Special Incident Flying Taskforce - and is on a sabbatical on a far flung Scottish island when he is called back to Lafferton by the Chief Constable. Two local prostitutes have gone missing and are subsequently found strangled. By the time he gets back, another girl has disappeared. Is this a vendetta against prostitutes by someone with a warped mind? Or a series of killings by an angry punter? But then one of the Cathedral wives goes missing, followed by another young married woman, on her way to work. Serrailer follows lead after lead, all of which become dead-ends. The fear is that more women will be killed, and that the murderer is right under their noses; meanwhile the public grow more angry and afraid. It is only through a piece of luck, a chance meeting and a life put in grave danger that he finally gets a result.

### *The Headhunters* by Peter Lovesey

Jo and Gemma are friends who meet for coffee every Saturday to gossip and discuss the state of the world. At one such meeting, Gemma mentions killing her boss and Jo goes along with the joke. But Jo is not amused when she finds a real body on the beach at Selsey soon afterwards - an unidentified nearly-naked woman, who has been drowned. It takes DCI Hen Mallin and her team some time to discover who the woman is, and as they are investigating, Jo and Gemma are getting into more trouble - they keep coming across dead bodies this book explores one of the author's favourite themes - the innocent caught up in sinister events.

## *Kennedy's Brain* by Henning Mankell\*

When archaeologist Louise Cantor's son Henrik is found dead in his flat, she refuses to believe it was suicide. Clues that only a mother could detect lead her to believe something more sinister took place. Henrik had kept many things back from her and she is shocked to learn he had contracted HIV. While looking through his bundles of papers, she discovers he was obsessed with the conspiracy theory that JFK's brain disappeared prior to the autopsy - along with the vital evidence regarding bullet exit wounds. The only lead is a letter and photograph from Henrik's girlfriend in Mozambique. Louise's quest to unravel the mystery surrounding her son's death takes her to Africa; a continent rife with disease, poverty and corruption. Struggling to cope with sickness and the oppressive heat, Louise sees fear in every face, even unexpectedly in the patients at the clinics set up by an American businessman.

## *In the Country of Men* by Hisham Matar

On a white-hot day in Tripoli, Libya, in the summer of 1979, nine-year-old Suleiman is shopping in the market square with his mother. His father is away on business - but Suleiman is sure he has just seen him, standing across the street...This novel is novel told from the point of view of a young boy growing up in a terrifying and bewildering world where his best friend's father disappears and is next seen on state television at a public execution; where a mysterious man sits outside the house all day and asks strange questions; and where it seems his father has finally disappeared for good. Soon the whispers and fears, secrets and lies will become so intense that Suleiman can bear them no longer and in his terrified efforts to save his family may end up betraying his friends, his parents and ultimately himself.

## *The Unbearable Lightness of Scones* by Alexander McCall Smith

To the casual observer, the great enlightened city of Edinburgh, home of no-nonsense philosophers and cream teas, might appear immune to the rollercoaster of strong emotions. But at 44 Scotland Street, as Matthew and Elspeth embark on the risky enterprise of married love, the raffish portrait painter Angus Lordie has a premonition of disaster. And soon enough Irene Pollock is shocked to learn that her small son Bertie harbours a highly unsuitable ambition; the gloriously vain Bruce discovers a wrinkle and confronts rejection; and Angus finds himself facing the grave consequences of unbridled bliss, not to mention a large Glaswegian gangster bearing gifts.

## *The Rector's Daughter* by F M Major

Dedmayne Rectory is quietly decaying, its striped chintz and darkened rooms are a bastion of outmoded Victorian values. Here Mary has spent thirty-five years, devoting herself to her sister, now dead, and to her father, Canon Jocelyn. Although she is pitied by her neighbours for this muted existence, Mary is content. But when she meets Robert Herbert, Mary's ease is destroyed and years of suppressed emotion surface through her desire for him. First published in 1924 this novel is an exploration of Mary's relationship with her father, of her need for Robert and the way in which, through each, she comes to a clearer understanding of love.

## *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ* by Philip Pullman

This is a story. In this retelling of the life of Jesus, the author revisits the most influential story ever told. Charged with mystery, compassion and enormous power, this book throws fresh light on who Jesus was and asks the reader questions that will continue to resonate long after the final page is turned. For, above all, this book is about how stories become stories.

## *Burnt Shadows* by Camilla Shamsie

In a prison cell in the US, a man stands trembling, naked, fearfully waiting to be shipped to Guantanamo Bay. How did it come to this? he wonders. August 9th, 1945, Nagasaki. Hiroko Tanaka steps out onto her veranda, taking in the view of the terraced slopes leading up to the sky. Wrapped in a kimono with three black cranes swooping across the back, she is twenty-one, in love with the man she is to marry, Konrad Weiss. In a split second, the world turns white. In the next, it explodes with the sound of fire and the horror of realisation. In the numbing aftermath of a bomb that obliterates everything she has known, all that remains are the bird-shaped burns on her back, an indelible reminder of the world she has lost. In search of new beginnings, she travels to Delhi two years later. There she walks into the lives of Konrad's half-sister, Elizabeth, her husband James Burton, and their employee Sajjad Ashraf, from whom she starts to learn Urdu. As the years unravel, new homes replace those left behind and old wars are seamlessly usurped by new conflicts. But the shadows of history - personal, political - are cast over the entwined worlds of the Burtons, Ashrafs and the Tanakas as they are transported from Pakistan to New York, and in the novel's astonishing climax, to Afghanistan in the immediate wake of 9/11. The ties that have bound them together over decades and generations are tested to the extreme, with unforeseeable consequences.

## *Hopjoy Was Here* by Colin Watson\*

Within the quiet respectable market town of Flaxborough lurks a dangerous criminal; someone who has no compunction in committing horrific crimes. A secret agent has been murdered in unsavoury circumstances connected to an acid bath and it is up to Inspector Purbright to investigate, but it does not take long for two more operatives to arrive in Flaxborough looking for the same answers. How can one of their colleagues have been murdered in such a bland, provincial town? As ever Purbright must use all his skills as an investigator to get to the truth. This is the third in the Flaxborough series, which was first published in 1962.

## *The Seventh Gate* by Richard Zimler

This is a novel of Berlin, prophesy, and unfinished portraits. In the Author's Note to his novel, "The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon", Richard Zimler described how he discovered a long-lost 16th-century manuscript in an Istanbul cellar written by a Portuguese kabbalist named Berekiyah Zarco. More than 400 years later, Isaac Zarco becomes convinced by the pact between Hitler and Stalin - and other 'signs' - that an apocalyptic prophesy made by his ancestor is about to come terribly true. Is he mad to believe that by decoding these ancient kabbalistic texts he might be the one to save the world? Set in 1930s Berlin, during the Nazis' rise to power, this book brings together Sophie Riedesel, an intelligent, artistic, and sexually adventurous fourteen-year old with Isaac Zarco and his friends, most of whom are Jews, ex-circus performers and underground activists. When a series of forced sterilizations, brutal murders and 'disappearings' to concentration camps decimates the group, Sophie must fight with all her ingenuity and guile to save all that she loves about Germany - at any cost. In its portraits and in its chilling but sensuous evocation of Berlin in the 1930s, this book is at one and the same time a love story and tragedy - and a tale of ferocious heroism.

\*Donations to the Library

\*\*Donated by the Authors