

A Song Of Stone Iain Banks

Scores Arcadia The Steep Approach To Garbadale Use of Weapons The Bridge Transition Against a Dark Background Surface Detail The Portrait AN Instance of the Fingerpost A Song of Stone Consider Phlebas The State Of The Art The Castaways The Hydrogen Sonata The Wasp Factory Feersum Endjinn I'm Thinking of Ending Things The Dream of Scipio The Player of Games West of Eden A Song of Stone The Crow Road The Bridgelain M Banks Scifi Mixed B S/Wx12 Excession Dead Air Espedair Street The Quarry Look to Windward Inversions Sunset Song A Song Of Stone Stonemouth Iain M. Banks Raw Spirit Walking on Glass Complicity Stone's Fall The Algebraist

Scores

For more than 50 years John Clute has been reviewing science fiction and fantasy. As Scores demonstrates, his devotion to the task of understanding the central literatures of our era has not slackened. There are jokes in Scores, and curses, and tirades, and apologies, and riffs; but every word of every review, in the end, is about how we understand the stories we tell about the world. Following on from his two previous books of collected reviews (Strokes and Look at the Evidence) this book collects reviews from a wide variety of sources, but mostly from Interzone, the New York Review of Science Fiction, and Science Fiction Weekly. Where it has seemed possible to do so without distorting contemporary responses to books, these reviews have been revised, sometimes

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extensively. 125 review articles, over 200 books reviewed in more than 214,000 words.

Arcadia

'His masterpiece' Jay Rayner 'One of the best opening lines of any novel a warm, witty and ultimately very poignant book' Guardian An outstanding contemporary novel, about which readers say: 'Banks' masterpiece' 'Iain Banks at his best' 'Read this immediately' 'A story full of wonderful characters' 'It was the day my grandmother exploded. I sat in the crematorium, listening to my Uncle Hamish quietly snoring in harmony to Bach's Mass in B Minor, and I reflected that it always seemed to be death that drew me back to Gallanach.' Prentice McHoan has returned to the bosom of his complex but enduring Scottish family. Full of questions about the McHoan past, present and future, he is also deeply preoccupied: mainly with death, sex, drink, God and illegal substances

The Steep Approach To Garbadale

The first book in Iain M. Banks's seminal science fiction series, *The Culture*. Consider Phlebas introduces readers to the utopian conglomeration of human and alien races that explores the nature of war, morality, and the limitless bounds of mankind's imagination. The war raged across the galaxy. Billions had died, billions more were doomed. Moons, planets, the very stars themselves, faced destruction, cold-blooded, brutal, and worse, random. The Idirans

fought for their Faith; the Culture for its moral right to exist. Principles were at stake. There could be no surrender. Within the cosmic conflict, an individual crusade. Deep within a fabled labyrinth on a barren world, a Planet of the Dead proscribed to mortals, lay a fugitive Mind. Both the Culture and the Idirans sought it. It was the fate of Horza, the Changer, and his motley crew of unpredictable mercenaries, human and machine, actually to find it, and with it their own destruction.

Use of Weapons

Sharrow was once the leader of a personality-attuned combat team in one of the sporadic little commercial wars in the civilization based around the planet Golter. Now she is hunted by the Huhsz, a religious cult which believes that she is the last obstacle before the faith's apotheosis, and her only hope of escape is to find the last of the apocalyptically powerful Lazy Guns before the Huhsz find her. Her journey through the exotic Golterian system is a destructive and savage odyssey into her past, and that of her family and of the system itself.

The Bridge

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY ALI SMITH Young Chris Guthrie lives a brutal life in the harsh landscape of northern Scotland, torn between her passion for the land, duty to her family and her love of books. When her mother, broken by repeated childbirths, takes her own life and poisons her two youngest children, Chris

is left with her father to run the farm on her own. Soon she is alone, and for the first time can choose how to spend her life. But as the First World War begins, everything changes, and the young men leave Scotland for battle. The first in Gibbon's classic trilogy *A Scot's Quair*, *Sunset Song* is infused with local vernacular, and innovatively blends Scots and English in an intense description of Scottish life in the early twentieth century.

Transition

A desperate young man becomes entangled with a Scottish crime family in this “brilliant, irresistible” novel from the author of *The Wasp Factory* (*The New York Times*). Stewart Gilmour is back in Stonemouth, Scotland. An estuary town north of Aberdeen, Stonemouth has a beach that can be beautiful on a sunny day. But on a bleak day, Stonemouth seems to have nothing to offer but fog, cheap drugs, and gangsters—and a suspension bridge that promises a permanent way out. Stewart got out five years ago. He didn't jump, he just ran—escaping the Murstons, a local family of mobsters. But now their patriarch has died, and in an uneasy truce, Stewart has returned home for the funeral. His long exile has also kept him away from Ellie Murston, and if he knows what's good for him, he'll avoid a reunion—and the topic of his old classmate Callum Murston's untimely death. But once he's back, Stewart steps squarely into the minefield of his past, and as he wrestles with feelings of guilt and loss, he makes some dark discoveries and his homecoming takes a lethal turn. A quick drop into the

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cold, gray Stoun is starting to look like an option worth considering. The basis for a BBC series, Stonemouth is a darkly witty, “beguiling” tale of warring clans, broken hearts, brotherhood, and the long, hard process of growing up—if you can stay alive long enough to try (The Guardian).

Against a Dark Background

The war is ending, perhaps ended. For the castle and its occupants the troubles are just beginning. Armed gangs roam a lawless land where each farm and house supports a column of dark smoke. Taking to the roads with the other refugees, anonymous in their raggedness, seems safer than remaining in the ancient keep. However, the lieutenant of an outlaw band has other ideas and the castle becomes the focus for a dangerous game of desire, deceit and death. Iain Banks' masterly novel reveals his unique ability to combine gripping narrative with a relentlessly voyaging imagination. The narrative technique and sheer brio of A SONG OF STONE reveal a great novelist at the height of his powers.

Surface Detail

The Portrait

AN Instance of the Fingerpost

Three narratives, set in the fifth, fourteenth, and

twentieth centuries, all revolving around an ancient text and each with a love story at its centre, are the elements of this brilliantly ingenious novel, a follow-up to the international bestseller *An Instance of the Fingerpost*. Now Ian Pears returns with a greatly anticipated novel, so expertly imagined and perfectly constructed the author himself describes it as “a complexity.” The centuries are the 5th (the final days of the Roman Empire); the 14th (the years of the Plague — the Black Death); and the 20th (World War II). The setting for each is the same — Provence — and each has at its heart a love story. The narratives intertwine seamlessly, and what joins them thematically is an ancient text — “The Dream of Scipio” — a work of neo-Platonism that poses timeless philosophical questions. What is the obligation of the individual in a society under siege? What is the role of learning when civilization itself is threatened, whether by acts of man or nature? Does virtue lie more in engagement or in neutrality? “Power without wisdom is tyranny; wisdom without power is pointless,” warns one of Pears’s characters. The Dream of Scipio is a bona fide novel of ideas, a dazzling feat of storytelling, fiction for our times.

A Song of Stone

In 1663 Oxford, a servant girl confesses to a murder. But four witnesses--a medical student, the son of a traitor, a cryptographer, and an archivist--each finger a different culprit

Consider Phlebas

A tour de force in the tradition of Iain Pears' international bestseller, *An Instance of the Fingerpost*, Stone's Fall weaves a story of love and high finance into the fabric of a page-turning thriller. A novel to stand alongside *Atonement* and *The Remains of the Day*. A panoramic novel with a riveting mystery at its heart, *Stone's Fall* is a quest, a love story, and a tale of murder – richly satisfying and completely engaging on many levels. It centres on the career of a very wealthy financier and the mysterious circumstances of his death, cast against the backdrop of WWI and Europe's first great age of espionage, the evolution of high-stakes international finance and the beginning of the twentieth century's arms race. *Stone's Fall* is a major return to the thriller form that first launched Iain Pears onto bestseller lists around the world and that earned him acclaim as a mesmerizing storyteller. From the Hardcover edition.

The State Of The Art

The fifth Culture book from the awesome imagination of Iain M. Banks, a modern master of science fiction. Two and a half millennia ago, the artifact appeared in a remote corner of space, beside a trillion-year-old dying sun from a different universe. It was a perfect black-body sphere, and it did nothing. Then it disappeared. Now it is back. Praise for the Culture series: 'Epic in scope, ambitious in its ideas and absorbing in its execution' *Independent on Sunday* 'Banks has created one of the most enduring and endearing visions of the future' *Guardian* 'Jam-packed with extraordinary invention' *Scotsman* 'Compulsive

reading' Sunday Telegraph The Culture series:
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The Castaways

The New York Times bestselling Culture novel The Scavenger species are circling. It is, truly, provably, the End Days for the Gzilt civilization. An ancient people, organized on military principles and yet almost perversely peaceful, the Gzilt helped set up the Culture ten thousand years earlier and were very nearly one of its founding societies, deciding not to join only at the last moment. Now they've made the collective decision to follow the well-trodden path of millions of other civilizations; they are going to Sublime, elevating themselves to a new and almost infinitely more rich and complex existence. Amid preparations though, the Regimental High Command is destroyed. Lieutenant Commander (reserve) Vyr Cossont appears to have been involved, and she is now wanted - dead, not alive. Aided only by an ancient, reconditioned android and a suspicious Culture avatar, Cossont must complete her last mission given to her by the High Command. She must find the oldest person in the Culture, a man over nine thousand years old, who might have some idea what really happened all that time ago. It seems that the final days of the Gzilt civilization are likely to prove its most perilous.

The Hydrogen Sonata

From the author of the international best seller *An Instance of the Fingerpost*, *Arcadia* is an astonishing work of imagination. In Cold War England, Professor Henry Lytten, having renounced a career in espionage, is writing a fantasy novel that dares to imagine a world less fraught than his own. He finds an unlikely confidante in Rosie, an inquisitive young neighbor who, while chasing after Lytten's cat one day, stumbles through a doorway in his cellar and into a stunning and unfamiliar bucolic landscape—remarkably like the fantasy world Lytten is writing about. There she meets a young boy named Jay who is about to embark on a journey that will change both their lives. Elsewhere, in a dystopian society where progress is controlled by a corrupt ruling elite, the brilliant scientist Angela Meerson has discovered the potential of a powerful new machine. When the authorities come knocking, she will make an important decision—one that will reverberate through all these different lives and worlds.

The Wasp Factory

In Scotland, a self-appointed executioner dispenses justice to fit the crime. Thus the lenient judge who let a rapist go is punished by being raped, while a man who killed is killed in turn.

Feersum Endjinn

In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, a large portion

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of the population had become disenchanted with the American way of life that they did not feel they belonged to. While some openly revolted in the streets, others took to turning away from the mainstream and headed toward a new world. Utopian visions, manifesting themselves in the form of communes, were aimed at breaking the bonds of capitalism, big business, and the reigning oligarchy and were popping up throughout the country. The San Francisco Bay Area was the hotbed of these communes, and from the Height-Ashbury in San Francisco, east to Berkeley's protest hub at Sproul Plaza, and south to Oakland's Black Panther's communal households, this is an exploration of this unique cultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. The history and vision of communal living is investigated in a series of essays aimed at explaining just what these communes were, how lives were lived within them, and what their goals entailed.

I'm Thinking of Ending Things

A superb standalone novel from the awesome imagination of Iain M. Banks, a master of modern science fiction. It is 4034 AD. Humanity has made it to the stars. Fassin Taak, a Slow Seer at the Court of the Nasqueron Dwellers, will be fortunate if he makes it to the end of the year. The Nasqueron Dwellers inhabit a gas giant on the outskirts of the galaxy, in a system awaiting its wormhole connection to the rest of civilisation. In the meantime, they are dismissed as decadents living in a state of highly developed barbarism, hoarding data without order, hunting their

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own young and fighting pointless formal wars. Seconded to a military-religious order he's barely heard of - part of the baroque hierarchy of the Mercatoria, the latest galactic hegemony - Fassin Taak has to travel again amongst the Dwellers. He is in search of a secret hidden for half a billion years. But with each day that passes a war draws closer - a war that threatens to overwhelm everything and everyone he's ever known. As complex, turbulent and spectacular as the gas giant on which it is set, this novel from Iain M. Banks is space opera on a truly epic scale. Praise for Iain M. Banks: 'Epic in scope, ambitious in its ideas and absorbing in its execution' Independent on Sunday 'Banks has created one of the most enduring and endearing visions of the future' Guardian 'Jam-packed with extraordinary invention' Scotsman 'Compulsive reading' Sunday Telegraph The Culture series: Consider Phlebas The Player of Games Use of Weapons The State of the Art Excession Inversions Look to Windward Matter Surface Detail The Hydrogen Sonata Other books by Iain M. Banks: Against a Dark Background Feersum Endjinn The Algebraist

The Dream of Scipio

Science fiction-novel.

The Player of Games

Now a Netflix original movie, this deeply scary and intensely unnerving novel follows a couple in the midst of a twisted unraveling of the darkest unease.

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You will be scared. But you won't know why... I'm thinking of ending things. Once this thought arrives, it stays. It sticks. It lingers. It's always there. Always. Jake once said, "Sometimes a thought is closer to truth, to reality, than an action. You can say anything, you can do anything, but you can't fake a thought." And here's what I'm thinking: I don't want to be here. In this smart and intense literary suspense novel, Iain Reid explores the depths of the human psyche, questioning consciousness, free will, the value of relationships, fear, and the limitations of solitude. Reminiscent of Jose Saramago's early work, Michel Faber's cult classic *Under the Skin*, and Lionel Shriver's *We Need to Talk about Kevin*, "your dread and unease will mount with every passing page" (*Entertainment Weekly*) of this edgy, haunting debut. Tense, gripping, and atmospheric, *I'm Thinking of Ending Things* pulls you in from the very first page...and never lets you go.

West of Eden

Daniel Weir used to be a famous - not to say infamous - rock star. Maybe still is. At thirty-one he has been both a brilliant failure and a dull success. He's made a lot of mistakes that have paid off and a lot of smart moves he'll regret forever (however long that turns out to be). Daniel Weir has gone from rags to riches and back, and managed to hold onto them both, though not much else. His friends all seem to be dead, fed up with him or just disgusted - and who can blame them? And now Daniel Weir is all alone. As he contemplates his life, Daniel realises he only has two

problems: the past and the future. He knows how bad the past has been. But the future - well, the future is something else.

A Song of Stone

Portrays a band of guerrillas who force themselves on the aristocratic couple living in a rural castle, and subtly weaves sexual, physical, and political tension into an intricate literary web

The Crow Road

Eighteen-year-old Kit is weird: big, strange, odd, socially disabled, on a spectrum that stretches from "highly gifted" at one end, to "nutter" at the other. At least Kit knows who his father is; he and Guy live together in a decaying country house on the unstable brink of a vast quarry. His mother's identity is another matter. Now, though, his father's dying, and old friends are gathering for one last time. "Uncle" Paul's a media lawyer now; Rob and Ali are upwardly mobile corporate bunnies; pretty, hopeful Pris is a single mother; Haze is still living up to his drug-inspired name twenty years on; and fierce, protective Hol is a gifted if acerbic critic. As young film students they lived at Willoughtree House with Guy, and they've all come back because they want something. Kit, too, has his own ulterior motives. Before his father dies he wants to know who his mother is, and what's on the mysterious tape they're all looking for. But most of all he wants to stop time and keep his father alive. Fast-paced, gripping and savagely funny, *The Quarry* is a

virtuoso performance whose soaring riffs on the inexhaustible marvel of human perception and rage against the dying of the light will stand among Iain Banks' greatest work.

The Bridge

The man who wakes up in the extraordinary world of a bridge has amnesia, and his doctor doesn't seem to want to cure him. Does it matter? Exploring the bridge occupies most of his days. But at night there are his dreams. Dreams in which desperate men drive sealed carriages across barren mountains to a bizarre rendezvous; an illiterate barbarian storms an enchanted tower under a stream of verbal abuse; and broken men walk forever over bridges without end, taunted by visions of a doomed sexuality. Lying in bed unconscious after an accident wouldn't be much fun, you'd think. Oh yes? It depends who and what you've left behind. Which is the stranger reality, day or night? Frequently hilarious and consistently disturbing, *THE BRIDGE* is a novel of outrageous contrasts, constructed chaos and elegant absurdities. Why customers are loving *The Bridge*: "Banks' *Wasp Factory* is frequently called 'One of the 20th century's 100 greatest novels'. It pales in comparison to *The Bridge*!" - Amazon Reviewer, 5 stars "Mindblowing! This is the first Iain Banks novel I have read and needless to say I'll be back for more." - Amazon Reviewer, 5 stars

Iain M Banks Scifi Mixed B S/Wx12

The polarizing literary debut by Scottish author Ian Banks, *The Wasp Factory* is the bizarre, imaginative, disturbing, and darkly comic look into the mind of a child psychopath. Meet Frank Cauldhame. Just sixteen, and unconventional to say the least: Two years after I killed Blyth I murdered my young brother Paul, for quite different and more fundamental reasons than I'd disposed of Blyth, and then a year after that I did for my young cousin Esmerelda, more or less on a whim. That's my score to date. Three. I haven't killed anybody for years, and don't intend to ever again. It was just a stage I was going through.

Excession

After the dazzling achievement of his bestsellers *An Instance of the Fingerpost* (“May well be the best historical mystery ever written.” —*The Boston Globe*) and *The Dream of Scipio* (“A virtuoso display of craftsmanship.” —*Maclean's*), Iain Pears returns with a stunning novel of suspense and revenge. An influential art critic in the early years of the twentieth century journeys from London to the remote island of Houat, off France's northwest coast, to sit for a portrait painted by an old friend, a gifted, once acclaimed artist living in self-imposed exile. Over the course of the sitting, the painter recalls their years of friendship, the double-edged gift of the critic's patronage, the power he wielded over aspiring artists, and his apparent callousness in anointing the careers of some and devastating the lives of others. The balance of power between the two men shifts dramatically — and ominously — as the critic

becomes a passive subject; and as the painter slowly captures the character of the man on canvas, we discover why he left London suddenly and mysteriously at the height of his success and why now, with dark determination, he has taken on this unusual commission. Set against the dramatic, untamed landscape of Brittany, during one of the most explosive periods in art history, *The Portrait* is rich with atmosphere and suggestion, and psychological complexity. With the marvellous detail of a miniature, it brings to the fore the great artistic figures of the late nineteenth century, and their ambitions and desires. And it is a novel you will want to begin again immediately after turning the last chilling page, to read once more with a watchful eye and appreciate the hand of an ingenious storyteller at work. From the Hardcover edition.

Dead Air

There is a world that hangs suspended between triumph and catastrophe, between the dismantling of the Wall and the fall of the Twin Towers, frozen in the shadow of suicide terrorism and global financial collapse. Such a world requires a firm hand and a guiding light. But does it need the Concern: an all-powerful organization with a malevolent presiding genius, pervasive influence and numberless invisible operatives in possession of extraordinary powers? Among those operatives are Temudjin Oh, of mysterious Mongolian origins, an un-killable assassin who journeys between the peaks of Nepal, a version of Victorian London and the dark palaces of Venice

under snow; Adrian Cubbish, a restlessly greedy City trader; and a nameless, faceless state-sponsored torturer known only as the Philosopher, who moves between time zones with sinister ease. Then there are those who question the Concern: the bandit queen Mrs. Mulverhill, roaming the worlds recruiting rebels to her side; and Patient 8262, under sedation and feigning madness in a forgotten hospital ward, in hiding from a dirty past. There is a world that needs help; but whether it needs the Concern is a different matter.

Espedair Street

Originally published: London: Orbit, 1998.

The Quarry

ADRIFT AT SEA, Tom Tin and his four convict companions are only too glad when they come upon a deserted ship. The boys clamber aboard, not knowing whether they've been saved or set on a course toward doom. But after rescuing two men stranded on a melting iceberg, Tom begins to suspect that these unsavory sailors are dangerous castaways from this very vessel. The more Tom questions the men, the more they dislike him. So, when Tom overhears them plotting to get rid of him, he knows they mean it. But the other boys don't feel threatened - at least not until the sailors attempt to sell them as slaves, a decision that ends with death for some . . . and with Tom sailing the ship home to England. Soon Tom discovers that he has to cast away every ill-

intentioned companion from his voyage home before he can truly be free. From the Hardcover edition.

Look to Windward

A Chelgrian emissary is sent to the Mashaq' Orbital to bring Ziller, a famous but reclusive Chelgrian composer, home, on a mission that also has a top-secret purpose that will take him on a haunting odyssey into his own past and into memories of terrible war that cost billions of lives and whose legacy threatens the present. Reprint.

Inversions

The man known as Cheradenine Zakalwe was one of Special Circumstances' foremost agents, changing the destiny of planets to suit the Culture through intrigue, dirty tricks and military action. The woman known as Diziet Sma had plucked him from obscurity and pushed him towards his present eminence, but despite all their dealings she did not know him as well as she thought. The drone known as Skaffen-Amtiskaw knew both of these people. It had once saved the woman's life by massacring her attackers in a particularly bloody manner. It believed the man to be a lost cause. But not even its machine could see the horrors in his past. Ferociously intelligent, both witty and horrific, *USE OF WEAPONS* is a masterpiece of science fiction.

Sunset Song

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It begins in the realm of the Real, where matter still matters. It begins with a murder. And it will not end until the Culture has gone to war with death itself. Lededje Y'breq is one of the Intagliated, her marked body bearing witness to a family shame, her life belonging to a man whose lust for power is without limit. Prepared to risk everything for her freedom, her release - when it comes - is at a price, and to put things right she will need the help of the Culture. Benevolent, enlightened and almost infinitely resourceful though it may be, the Culture can only do so much for any individual. With the assistance of one of its most powerful - and arguably deranged - warships, Lededje finds herself heading into a combat zone not even sure which side the Culture is really on. A war - brutal, far-reaching - is already raging within the digital realms that store the souls of the dead, and it's about to erupt into reality. It started in the realm of the Real and that is where it will end. It will touch countless lives and affect entire civilizations, but at the center of it all is a young woman whose need for revenge masks another motive altogether.

A Song Of Stone

A fascinating journey through Scotland's famous distilleries with legendary author Iain Banks No true Scotsman can resist the allure of the nation's whisky distilleries. In an absorbing voyage as interesting to non-drinkers as to true whisky connoisseurs, sci-fi and literary author Iain Banks explores the rich heritage of Scottish whisky, from the largest and most famous distilleries to the smallest, most obscure operations.

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Whisky is more than a drink: it's a culture, a binder that joins together people, places and products far across Scotland's rugged terrain. Switching from cars to ferries to bicycles, Banks crisscrosses his homeland, weaving an engrossing narrative from the strange people, fascinating traditions, and downright bizarre places he encounters on his journey down Scotland's great golden road.

Stonemouth

The war is ending, perhaps ended. For the castle and its occupants the troubles are just beginning. Armed gangs roam a lawless land where each farm and house supports a column of dark smoke. Taking to the roads with the other refugees, anonymous in their raggedness, seems safer than remaining in the ancient keep. However, the lieutenant of an outlaw band has other ideas and the castle becomes the focus for a dangerous game of desire, deceit and death. Iain Banks' masterly novel reveals his unique ability to combine gripping narrative with a relentlessly voyaging imagination. The narrative technique and sheer brio of A SONG OF STONE reveal a great novelist at the height of his powers.

Iain M. Banks

Dark family secrets and a long-lost love affair lie at the heart of Iain Banks's fabulous new novel. The Wopuld family built its fortune on a board game called Empire! - now a hugely successful computer game. So successful, the American Spraint Corp wants to buy

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the firm out. Young renegade Alban, who has been evading the family clutches for years, is run to ground and persuaded to attend the forthcoming family gathering - part birthday party, part Extraordinary General Meeting - convened by Win, Wopuld matriarch and most powerful member of the board, at Garbadale, the family's highland castle. Being drawn back into the bosom of the clan brings a disconcerting confrontation with Alban's past. What drove his mother to take her own life? And is he ready to see Sophie, his beautiful cousin and teenage love? Grandmother Win's revelations will radically alter Alban's perspective for ever.

Raw Spirit

The 1987 publication of Iain M. Banks's *Consider Phlebas* helped trigger the British renaissance of radical hard science fiction and influenced a generation of New Space Opera masters. The thirteen SF novels that followed inspired an avid fandom and intense intellectual engagement while Banks's mainstream books vaulted him to the top of the Scottish literary scene. Paul Kincaid has written the first study of Iain M. Banks to explore the confluence of his SF and literary techniques and sensibilities. As Kincaid shows, the two powerful aspects of Banks's work flowed into each other, blurring a line that critics too often treat as clear-cut. Banks's gift for black humor and a honed skepticism regarding politics and religion found expression even as he orchestrated the vast, galaxy-spanning vistas in his novels of the Culture. In examining Banks's entire SF oeuvre,

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Kincaid unlocks the set of ideas Banks drew upon, ideas that spoke to an unusually varied readership that praised him as a visionary and reveled in the distinctive character of his works. Entertaining and broad in scope, Iain M. Banks offers new insights on one of the most admired figures in contemporary science fiction.

Walking on Glass

Her eyes were black, wide as though with some sustained surprise, the skin from their outer corners to her small ears taut. Her lips were pale, and nearly too full for her small mouth, like something bled but bruised. He had never seen anyone or anything quite so beautiful in his life.' Graham Park is in love. But Sara Fitch is an enigma to him, a creature of almost perverse mystery. Steven Grout is paranoid - and with justice. He knows that They are out to get him. They are. Quiss, insecure in his fabulous if ramshackle castle, is forced to play interminable impossible games. The solution to the oldest of all paradoxical riddles will release him. But he must find an answer before he knows the question. Park, Grout, Quiss - no trio could be further apart. But their separate courses are set for collision.

Complicity

Iain Banks' daring new novel opens in a loft apartment in the East End, in a former factory due to be knocked down in a few days. Ken Nott is a devoutly contrarian vaguely left wing radio shock-jock

living in London. After a wedding breakfast people start dropping fruits from a balcony on to a deserted carpark ten storeys below, then they start dropping other things; an old TV that doesn't work, a blown loudspeaker, beanbags, other unwanted furniture. Then they get carried away and start dropping things that are still working, while wrecking the rest of the apartment. But mobile phones start ringing and they're told to turn on a TV, because a plane has just crashed into the World Trade Centre. At ease with the volatility of modernity, Iain Banks is also our most accomplished literary writer of narrative-driven adventure stories that never ignore the injustices and moral conundrums of the real world. His new novel, displays his trademark dark wit, buoyancy and momentum.

Stone's Fall

The first ever collection of Iain M. Banks's short fiction, this volume includes the acclaimed novella, *The State of the Art*. This is a striking addition to the growing body of Culture lore, and adds definition and scale to the previous works by using the Earth of 1977 as contrast. The other stories in the collection range from science fiction to horror, dark-coated fantasy to morality tale. All bear the indefinable stamp of Iain Banks's staggering talent. Praise for the Culture series: 'Epic in scope, ambitious in its ideas and absorbing in its execution' *Independent on Sunday* 'Banks has created one of the most enduring and endearing visions of the future' *Guardian* 'Jam-packed with extraordinary invention' *Scotsman* 'Compulsive

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The Algebraist

A superb standalone novel from the awesome imagination of Iain M. Banks, a master of modern science fiction. Count Sessine is about to die for the very last time Chief Scientist Gadfium is about to receive the mysterious message she has been waiting for from the Plain of Sliding Stones And Bascule the Teller, in search of an ant, is about to enter the chaos of the crypt And everything is about to change For this is the time of the encroachment and, although the dimming sun still shines on the vast, towering walls of Serehfa Fastness, the end is close at hand. The King knows it, his closest advisers know it, yet still they prosecute the war against the clan Engineers with increasing savagery. The crypt knows it too; so an emissary has been sent, an emissary who holds the key to all their futures. Praise for Iain M. Banks: 'Epic in scope, ambitious in its ideas and absorbing in its execution' Independent on Sunday 'Banks has created one of the most enduring and endearing visions of the future' Guardian 'Jam-packed with extraordinary invention' Scotsman 'Compulsive reading' Sunday Telegraph The Culture series:
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Access Free A Song Of Stone Iain Banks

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