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The Mechanical

These are the Faroe Islands as they were some fifty years ago: sea-washed and remote, with one generation still tied to the sea for sustenance, and a younger generation turning towards commerce and clerical work in the towns. At the post-hunt whale-meat auction, the normally cautious Ketil enthusiastically bids for more meat than he can afford. Thus in his seventieth year, Ketil and his wife, along with their youngest son, struggle to repay their debt. They scavenge for driftwood and stranded seals, and knit up a storm of jumpers to sell in town. A touching novel that deftly captures a vanishing way of life. 'The Faroese voted this their book of the 20th century; by any nation's standards it's a classic.' Financial Times

The Taqwacores

What drives so many to leave everything behind and journey alone to a mysterious country, a place without family or friends, where everything is nameless and the future is unknown. This silent graphic novel is the story of every migrant, every refugee, every displaced person, and a tribute to all those who have made the journey.

Shumaisi

On his way to a linguists' conference in Helsinki, Budai finds himself in a strange city where he can't understand a word anyone says. One claustrophobic day blurs into another as he desperately struggles to survive in this vastly overpopulated metropolis where there are as many languages as there are people. Fearing that his wife will have given him up for dead, he finds comfort in an unconventional relationship with the elevator-operator in the hotel. A suspenseful and haunting Hungarian classic, and a vision of hell unlike any other imagined. 'With time, Metropole will find its due place in the twentieth-century library, on the same shelf as The Trial and 1984.' G.O. Châteaureynaud 'In the same way that Kafka becomes relevant again every time you renew your driver's license, Karinthy captures that enduring, horrifying and exhilarating state of being at the mercy of an unfamiliar land.' NPR

Nobody's Home

This outstanding Haitian novel tells of Manuel's struggle to keep his little community from starvation during drought.

Istanbul Istanbul

“Istanbul, Istanbul turns on the tension between the confines of a prison cell and the vastness of the imagination; between the vulnerable borders of the body and the unassailable depths of the mind. This is a harrowing, riveting novel, as unforgettable as it is inescapable.” —Dale Peck, author of *Visions and Revisions* “A wrenching love poem to Istanbul told between torture sessions by four prisoners in their cell beneath the city. An ode to pain in which Dostoevsky meets *The Decameron*.” —John Ralston Saul, author of *On Equilibrium*; former president, PEN International “Istanbul is a city of a million cells, and every cell is an Istanbul unto itself.” Below the ancient streets of Istanbul, four prisoners—Demirtay the student, the doctor, Kamo the barber, and Uncle Küheylan—sit, awaiting their turn at the hands of their wardens. When they are not subject to unimaginable violence, the condemned tell one another stories about the city, shaded with love and humor, to pass the time. Quiet laughter is the prisoners’ balm, delivered through parables and riddles. Gradually, the underground narrative turns into a narrative of the above-ground. Initially centered around people, the book comes to focus on the city itself. And we discover there is as much suffering and hope in the Istanbul above ground as there is in the cells underground. Despite its apparently bleak setting, this novel—translated into seventeen languages—is about creation, compassion, and the ultimate triumph of the imagination.

A Grain of Wheat

The distinguished Hungarian author Frigyes Karinthy was sitting in a Budapest café, wondering whether to write a long-planned monograph on modern man or a new play, when he was disturbed by the roaring—so loud as to drown out all other noises—of a passing train. Soon it was gone, only to be succeeded by another. And another. Strange, Karinthy thought, it had been years since Budapest had streetcars. Only then did he realize he was suffering from an auditory hallucination of extraordinary intensity. What in fact Karinthy was suffering from was a brain tumor, not cancerous but hardly benign, though it was only much later—after spells of giddiness, fainting fits, friends remarking that his handwriting had altered, and books going blank before his eyes—that he consulted a doctor and embarked on a series of examinations that would lead to brain surgery. Karinthy’s description of his descent into illness and his observations of his symptoms, thoughts, and feelings, as well as of his friends’ and doctors’ varied responses to his predicament, are exact and engrossing and entirely free of self-pity. *A Journey Round My Skull* is not only an extraordinary piece of medical testimony, but a powerful work of literature—one that dances brilliantly on the edge of extinction.

My End Is My Beginning

"A More Obedient Wife blends fact and fiction to tell the story of two women--married to Supreme Court Justices James Iredell and James Wilson--who find themselves swept up in the events of the federal government's turbulent first

decade"--P. [4] of cover.

Metropole

A Rainmaker Translation Grant Winner from the Black Mountain Institute: Senselessness, acclaimed Salvadoran author Horacio Castellanos Moya's astounding debut in English, explores horror with hilarity and electrifying panache. A boozing, sex-obsessed writer finds himself employed by the Catholic Church (an institution he loathes) to proofread a 1,100 page report on the army's massacre and torture of thousands of indigenous villagers a decade earlier, including the testimonies of the survivors. The writer's job is to tidy it up: he rants, "that was what my work was all about, cleaning up and giving a manicure to the Catholic hands that were piously getting ready to squeeze the balls of the military tiger." Mesmerized by the strange Vallejo-like poetry of the Indians' phrases ("the houses they were sad because no people were inside them"), the increasingly agitated and frightened writer is endangered twice over: by the spell the strangely beautiful heart-rending voices exert over his tenuous sanity, and by real danger—after all, the murderers are the very generals who still run this unnamed Latin American country.

A More Obedient Wife

Faced with the difficulties of growing up and choosing a religion, a 12-year-old girl talks over her problems with her own private God. Reissued with a fresh new look and cover art. Simultaneous.

The Old Man and His Sons

Every day and age has its rules. Currently, good behavior dictates political correctness, evade conflicts, espouse tolerance, and make no hasty judgments. To be judgmental is viewed as one of the most reprehensible human traits. This book breaks the rules of good behavior, because it bickers. This series of thought-provoking and incisive essays from Dubravka Ugresic explores the full spectrum of human existence. From life in exile to life in prison, from bottled-water drinking tourists to Eurovision, what was hidden in plain sight is here exposed.

The Ministry of Pain

"Tawada's slender accounts of alienation achieve a remarkable potency."—Michael Porter, *The New York Times* A precocious Vietnamese high school student — known as the pupil with "the iron blouse"—in Ho Chi Minh City is invited to an International Youth Conference in East Berlin. But, in East Berlin, as she is preparing to present her paper in Russian on "Vietnam as a Victim of American Imperialism," she is abruptly kidnapped and taken to a small town in West Germany. After a strange spell of domestic-sexual boredom with her lover-abductor—and though "the Berlin Wall was said to be more difficult to break through than the Great Wall of China" — she escapes on a train to Moscow . . . but mistakenly arrives in Paris. Alone, broke, and in a completely foreign land, Anh (her false name) loses herself in the films of Catherine Deneuve as her real adventures

begin. Dreamy, meditative, and filled with the gritty everyday perils of a person living somewhere without papers (at one point Anh is subjected to some vampire-like skin experiments), *The Naked Eye* is a novel that is as surprising as it is delightful—each of the thirteen chapters titled after and framed by one of Deneuve’s films. “As far as I was concerned,” the narrator says while watching Deneuve on the screen, “the only woman in the world was you, and so I did not exist.” By the time 1989 comes along and the Iron Curtain falls, story and viewer have morphed into the dislocating beauty of both dancer and dance.

Adama

From the universally acclaimed author of *The Remains of the Day* comes a mesmerizing novel of completely unexpected mood and matter--a seamless, fictional universe, both wholly unrecognizable and familiar. When the public, day-to-day reality of a renowned pianist takes on a life of its own, he finds himself traversing landscapes that are by turns eerie, comical, and strangely malleable. From the Hardcover edition.

Criminals

The course of a century is rewritten in this fabulously warped odyssey, named a best book of the year by the *New York Times*. *Tours of the Black Clock* is a wild dream of the twentieth century as told by the ghost of Banning Jainlight. After a disturbing family secret is unearthed, Jainlight throws his father out of a window and burns down the Pennsylvania ranch where he grew up. He escapes to Vienna where he is commissioned to write pornography for a single customer identified as “Client X,” which alters the trajectory of World War II. Eventually Jainlight is accompanied by an aged and senile Adolf Hitler back to America, where both men pursue the same lover. *Tours of the Black Clock* is a story in which history and the laws of space and time are unforgettably transformed.

Familiar

Michael Frayn's classic novel is set in the crossword and nature notes department of an obscure national newspaper during the declining years of Fleet Street. John Dyson, a mid-level editor, dreams wistfully of fame and the gentlemanly life -- until one day his great chance of glory arrives. But does he have what it takes to succeed in the exciting world of television?

The Magic Wagon

You may wonder why the Middle East gets so much airtime. Regions of the world were competing to host the apocalypse and the Middle East won. I disagreed with the idea that reality has become too strange to satirise. Then I read that bin Laden was radicalised by Shakespeare. Meanwhile, Iraq seems to be invading itself for the oil. Bringing together the wildly wry observations and sketches of online sensation Karl reMarks, this hilarious collection proudly presents views you’re guaranteed not to hear on the news.

Towards the End of the Morning

The Arrival

Sometimes a monster can hide behind a mask of civilized, urbane intelligence. Sometimes the most terrible of crimes can go undetected and unpunished. Sometimes Death has a wicked sense of humor

Senselessness

Jean Serjeant, the heroine of Julian Barnes's wonderfully provocative novel, seems ordinary, but has an extraordinary disdain for wisdom. And as Barnes—winner of the Man Booker Prize for *The Sense of an Ending*—follows her from her childhood in the 1920s to her flight into the sun in the year 2021, he confronts readers with the fruits of her relentless curiosity: pilgrimages to China and the Grand Canyon; a catalog of 1940s sexual euphemisms; and a glimpse of technology in the twenty-first century (when *The Absolute Truth* can be universally accessed). Elegant, funny and intellectually subversive, *Staring at the Sun* is Julian Barnes at his most dazzlingly original. "Brilliant. . . . A marvelous literary epiphany." —Carlos Fuentes, *The New York Times Book Review* "Barnes's literary energy and daring are nearly unparalleled." —*New Republic*

Kornel Esti

A psychological novel about the memory of things in Europe's recent past interweaves the first-person narratives of a young Hungarian writer, his literary creation--an egomaniacal Marxist and aesthete--and his childhood friend. Reprint. 10,000 first printing.

Portrait with Keys

"*The Strange* follows an unnamed, undocumented immigrant who tries to forge a new life in a Western country where he doesn't speak the language. Jerome Ruillier's story is deftly told through myriad viewpoints, as each narrator recounts a situation in which they crossed paths with the newly-arrived foreigner. Many of the people he meets are suspicious of his unfamiliar background, or of the unusual language they do not understand. By employing this third-person narrative structure, Ruillier masterfully portrays the complex plight of immigrants and the vulnerability of being undocumented. *The Strange* shows one person's struggle to adapt while dealing with the often brutal and unforgiving attitudes of the employers, neighbors, and strangers who populate this new land."--

Death's Jest-Book

When the Magic Wagon comes to town, folks get a genuine medicine show, including a wrestling ape, fancy shooting, and a peek at the petrified body of Wild Bill Hickok. But then the Magic Wagon rolls into Mud Creek, Texas, where fate and violence loom in the shadows.

Five by Endo

From "a major new talent" (George R. R. Martin) comes an epic speculative novel of revolution, adventure, and the struggle for free will set in a world that might have been, of mechanical men and alchemical dreams. My name is Jax. That is the name granted to me by my human masters. I am a slave. But I shall be free.

Masters of the Dew

A Muslim punk house in Buffalo, New York, inhabited by burqa-wearing riot girls, mohawked Sufis, straightedge Sunnis, Shi'a skinheads, Indonesian skaters, Sudanese rude boys, gay Muslims, drunk Muslims, and feminists. Their living room hosts parties and prayers, with a hole smashed in the wall to indicate the direction of Mecca. Their life together mixes sex, dope, and religion in roughly equal amounts, expressed in devotion to an Islamo-punk subculture, "taqwacore," named for taqwa, an Arabic term for consciousness of the divine. Originally self-published on photocopiers and spiralbound by hand, The Taqwacores has now come to be read as a manifesto for Muslim punk rockers and a "Catcher in the Rye for young Muslims." There are three different cover colors; red, white, and blue.

Staring At The Sun

dit Kiss grew up a communist in Budapest, soaking up her father's ideology unquestioningly. As a child she is puzzled when others refer to her as Jewish; she only knows that her family doesn't believe in God. How can they? As her father lies dying, dit tries to understand the enigma surrounding his life. Where does his unshakeable communist conviction come from? Why doesn't he have relatives? As she digs deeper into his tragic history, dit is forced to confront the contradictions and lies woven into the life of her family - and her country - through the dramatic twists of twentieth century Hungary. 'Lyrical and poetic The Summer My Father Died is a powerful memoir. In this remarkable memoir, dit Kiss uncovers the paternal history that shaped her own, even while she was unaware of it the journey is riveting.' Lisa Appignanesi 'It shook me profoundly not only the richness of the relationship between father and daughter, but the internal development of the narrator also had a deep impact on me.' István Szabó, director of Mephisto and Being Julia.

And Then God Created the Middle East and Said 'Let There Be Breaking News'

FINALIST FOR THE 2017 PEN TRANSLATION PRIZE From the author of The Door, selected as one of the New York Times "10 Best Books of 2015," this is a heartwrenching tale about a group of friends and lovers torn apart by the German occupation of Budapest during World War II. In prewar Budapest three families live side by side on gracious Katalin Street, their lives closely intertwined. A game is played by the four children in which Bálint, the promising son of the Major, invariably chooses Irén Elekes, the headmaster's dutiful elder daughter, over her younger sister, the scatterbrained Blanka, and little Henriette Held, the daughter of the Jewish dentist. Their lives are torn apart in 1944 by the German occupation,

which only the Elekes family survives intact. The postwar regime relocates them to a cramped Soviet-style apartment and they struggle to come to terms with social and political change, personal loss, and unstated feelings of guilt over the deportation of the Held parents and the death of little Henriette, who had been left in their protection. But the girl survives in a miasmal afterlife, and reappears at key moments as a mute witness to the inescapable power of past events. As in *The Door* and *Iza's Ballad*, Magda Szabó conducts a clear-eyed investigation into the ways in which we inflict suffering on those we love. *Katalin Street*, which won the 2007 Prix Cévennes for Best European novel, is a poignant, somber, at times harrowing book, but beautifully conceived and truly unforgettable.

A Book of Memories

Mohamed Choukri's recollections of encounters with Paul Bowles, Tennessee Williams, and Jean Genet offer a unique insight into three cult figures of twentieth-century literature.

Ghost in the Bone

Civilisation is on the brink of collapse. The people are controlled with Big Lies, mass surveillance and brutal suppression. What price would you pay for freedom? Oric and his lover Belkis are part of a rebel band devoted to liberating people all over the world from totalitarian oppression. When Belkis is brutally murdered, Oric's world is torn apart. Haunted by the thought that he could have done more to save her, he continues the fight for freedom that they began together. But Oric knows he doesn't have long left before his nemeses, the self-professed Saviours, return for him too. As the Saviours forge new alliances and grow ever stronger, Oric must stay one step ahead to complete the mission he was born to fulfill. Here, in the darkest hour, Oric will discover that even the smallest of gestures can bring the greatest gift to humankind - hope.

The Childhood of Jesus

As a newborn, Penny Bunton spent only five weeks with her biological mother before being put up for adoption. In this moving and humorous memoir about growing up as an adopted child, Bunton recounts the struggles of living in a dysfunctional family, of feeling like the odd one out, and the endless desire to "belong." Bunton's middle-class English parents, already in their forties when they adopted her, were in a strained marriage plagued by secrets and betrayal. With humour and compassion, Bunton examines the domestic civil wars that ultimately led to their divorce, exploring the journeys and motivations of the most important people in her life. Along the way, she explores the ways in which her own character traits or coping mechanisms may have contributed to her sense of estrangement. Penny's ultimate desire was to feel a firm sense of her own identity-and as she searched for her biological mother, immersing herself in the past, the answers she found transformed her life. "Intimate and wonderfully written. Wept with joy and sadness while on this emotional roller-coaster."-Laura Wilder "I didn't want the story to end. The book left me on that Canadian island, meditating on my own family history, about not having talked to any of my cousins, uncles, or aunts for

more than twenty-five years and thinking, how has my family history shaped me?"-Angel Garcia

Voyage to Kazohinia

A great masterpiece never before available in English, Kornél Esti is the wild final book by a Hungarian genius. Crazy, funny and gorgeously dark, Kornél Esti sets into rollicking action a series of adventures about a man and his wicked doppelgänger, who breathes every forbidden idea of his childhood into his ear, and then reappears decades later. Part Gogol, part Chekhov, and all brilliance, Kosztolányi in his final book serves up his most magical, radical, and intoxicating work. Here is a novel which inquires: What if your id (loyally keeping your name) decides to strike out on its own, cuts a disreputable swath through the world, and then sends home to you all its unpaid bills and ruined maidens? And then: What if you and your alter ego decide to write a book together?

The Prediction

Forced into exile by the breakup of Yugoslavia, Tanja Lucic seeks sanctuary in the Department of Slavonic Language at the University of Amsterdam, where she and her fellow displaced students struggle to confront memories of their homeland.

The Summer My Father Died

A haunting, enigmatic novel about a woman who is given a second chance—and isn't sure whether she really wants it * A Publishers Weekly "Indie Sleeper" * A Powell's Indiespensable Pick * The Nervous Breakdown's October Book Club Pick * Elisa Brown is driving back from her annual, somber visit to her son Silas's grave when something changes. Actually, everything changes: her body is more voluptuous; she's wearing different clothes and driving a new car. When she arrives home, her life is familiar—but different. There is her house, her husband. But in the world she now inhabits, Silas is no longer dead, and his brother is disturbingly changed. Elisa has a new job, and her marriage seems sturdier, and stranger, than she remembers. She finds herself faking her way through a life she is convinced is not her own. Has she had a psychotic break? Or has she entered a parallel universe? Elisa believed that Silas was doomed from the start, but now that he is alive, what can she do to repair her strained relations with her children? She soon discovers that these questions hinge on being able to see herself as she really is—something that might be impossible for Elisa, or for anyone. In Familiar, J. Robert Lennon continues his profound and exhilarating exploration of the surreal undercurrents of contemporary American life.

Reading the World

In 2012, the world arrived in London for the Olympics and Ann Morgan went out to meet it. She read her way around all the globe's 196 independent countries (plus one extra), sampling one book from every nation. It wasn't easy. Many languages have next to nothing translated into English; there are tiny, tucked-away places where very little is written down at all; some governments don't like to let works of

art leak out to corrupt Westerners. Her literary adventures shed light on the issues that affect us all: personal, political, national and global. Using her quest as a starting point, this book explores questions such as: What is cultural heritage? How do we define national identity? Is it possible to overcome censorship and propaganda? And how can we celebrate, challenge and change our remarkable world?

Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret.

This is a book about Johannesburg and one man's place in it: a provocative, teasing, revealing, analytical and poetic text on the city and the life rooted in its concrete streets. A high-water mark in Ivan Vladislavić's writing, *Portrait with Keys* is a sprawling yet comprehensive portrait of his Joburg. His gaze roams freely across the decades, but the focus falls on the eve of the millennium. Neither a novel in any conventional sense nor a collection of short stories, this chain of lyrical texts brings together memoir, history, snapshots, meditations, asides on arts and – not least – observations on that essential urban accessory, the Gorilla steering lock. Home, habit, change, memory, mortality, friendship, ghosts, gardens, walking, falling, selling and stealing are all part of this unique dossier of city life. *Portrait with Keys* is an extraordinary work, both an oblique self-portrait of the author and a vivid recovery of where we have been all along.

A Journey Round My Skull

Nobody knows the day they'll die until now. Mathematical genius Daniel Geller has developed a formula to predict a person's date of death only to have it rejected by the faculty at Trinity College. Totally devastated he turns his back on the world he once loved. Twelve years on, Daniel's old professor John Redmond and his wife are coming to terms with the death of their ten-year-old son. Could Daniel's formula have predicated his death? Revisiting the thesis, the professor makes an astonishing discovery: out of the five fellow students whom Daniel used the formula on, one of them died on the exact date predicted by Daniel. One more is due to die in six days: Daniel's ex-lover Grace. The professor draws Daniel back into the world of mathematics where he is suddenly faced with the dilemma of allowing someone he once loved to die to be one step closer to proving his thesis and enjoying a prestige he once dreamed of. Set in the vibrant cities of Dublin and Amsterdam, *The Prediction* is a powerful story about coping with shattered dreams, the loss of a loved one, and an illustration of just how unpredictable the human heart can be. <http://www.darrensugrue.com/>

Tours of the Black Clock

A page-turning dystopian classic that stands alongside *Brave New World* and *Gulliver's Travels*. *Voyage to Kazohinia* is a tour de force of twentieth-century literature--and it is here published in English for the first time outside of Hungary. Sándor Szathmári's comical novel chronicles the travels of a modern Gulliver on the eve of World War II. A shipwrecked English ship's surgeon finds himself on an unknown island whose inhabitants, the Hins, live a technologically advanced existence without emotions, desires, arts, money, or politics. Soon unhappy amid

this bleak perfection, Gulliver asks to be admitted to the closed settlement of the Behins, beings with souls and atavistic human traits. He has seen nothing yet. A massively entertaining mix of satire and science fiction, *Voyage to Kazohinia* has seen half a dozen editions in Hungary in the seventy years since its original publication and remains the country's most popular cult classic. From the Trade Paperback edition.

Katalin Street

Five wonderful stories by the Japanese master. Winner of every major Japanese literary prize, his work translated around the globe, Shusaku Endo (1923-1996) is a great and unique figure in the literature of the twentieth century. "Irrevocably enmeshed in Japanese culture, he is by virtue of his religion [Endo was Roman Catholic] irrevocably alienated from it" (Geoffrey O'Brian, *Village Voice*). It is this aspect that has made Endo so particularly intriguing to his readership at home and abroad. Now gathered in a New Directions Bibelot edition are five of Endo's supreme short stories exemplifying his style and his interests, presenting, as it were, Endo in a nutshell. "Unzen," the opening story, touches on the subject of Silence Endo's most famous novel -- that is the torture and martyrdom of Christians in seventeenth-century Japan. Next comes "A Fifty-year-old Man" in which Mr. Chiba takes up ballroom dancing and faces the imminent death of his brother and his dog Whitey. In "Japanese in Warsaw" a business man has a strange encounter; in "The Box," an old photo album and a few postcards have a tale to reveal. Finally included is "The Case of Isobe," the opening chapter of Endo's novel *Deep River* in which Isobe, a member of a tour group, hopes to find in India the reincarnation of the wife he took so much for granted.

The Naked Eye

Each of the fifteen stories asks two defining questions: What kind of love story is this? as well as, Who here is exactly what kind of criminal? In "His Rank," an armed man enters a bar to claim the girl he understands to be his destiny only to be told she has, the weekend before, married someone else. In "Skylab," in which lovers have run away together to work medical relief in Malaysia, the young woman is reading the Koran to learn what it says about adulterers even as she waits for satellite debris to rain down on her. She'll be punished, won't she, for the crime of happiness? And in "The Bride of the Black Duck" a new widow falls in love with an entire complicated family in her neighborhood, with whom she's suddenly, irrevocably plighted her troth: she is theirs, just as they are hers. In *Criminals* the stories are linked by theme, the characters often tender, movingly, but flawed.

The Unconsoled

The year is 1970, a period of crisis in the Arab world. Twenty-year-old Hisham has left home for the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh, where he's enrolled at university to study politics and economics. But this city has more than academic qualifications to offer a man of Hisham's mettle, and he soon discovers a strange underworld of alcohol and prostitution where fear, pleasure and politics merge. Here hospitals prove the richest cruising grounds; the desert is the place for illicit couplings; and

now Hisham is spying on the bedroom activities of his next-door neighbour's wife, who has taken to leaving her door ajar. Meanwhile, Hisham's disillusioned childhood friend Adnan abandons his artistic ambitions in favour of a loftier cause - Islam. The two friends - who rapidly grow estranged - come to symbolise the opposite extremes of life in a repressive closed society. But their shared past soon conspires to reunite them in a new and terrifying way. 'Just to experience the world in the person of a young Saudi man in the wake of the June war is a privilege.' James Buchan, Guardian 'Shumaisi articulates the bathos and tragedy of the individual's struggle against an absolutist system.' Alev Adil, Independent

In Tangier

Turki al-Hamad's explosive novel *Adama* became an unlikely bestseller in the Middle East, selling more than 20,000 copies despite being officially banned in several countries, including the author's native Saudi Arabia. A compelling coming-of-age story, it also offers a rare and stunning inside look at the hidden roots of dissent in the modern Arab world. In his tranquil middle-class neighbourhood, eighteen-year-old Hisham doesn't quite fit in. He's a budding philosopher who spends his days reading banned books and developing his political ideals. His Saudi Arabia is a nation embroiled in internal conflict, torn between ancient tradition and newfound prosperity. Hisham finds himself caught up in the struggle for change, devoting more and more of his time to a shadowy group of dissenters even as he questions both their motives and methods. The result is an intense showdown between Hisham's love for his family, his firmly held philosophies, and his yearning for social justice. He awakens to passions both private and political, coming to grips with the paradoxes of a conservative land where illicit pleasures co-exist with the apparatus of a merciless state. 'I loved this book, which exposes the secrets of the inner and the outer life of the people of Saudi Arabia and made them vividly real to me; writing this book was a great act of courage.' Maggie Gee 'Adama is not only a warm, funny and fascinating book, it is also a very brave one. It deserves to be read.' The Times 'Al-Hamad has written a charming and involving coming-of-age tale. Always humane and often humorous, *Adama* has much to say about the foibles of the adolescent mind.' Boyd Tonkin, Independent

The Strange

After crossing oceans, a man and a boy arrive in a new land. Here they are each assigned a name and an age, and held in a camp in the desert while they learn Spanish, the language of their new country. As Simón and David they make their way to the relocation centre in the city of Novilla, where officialdom treats them politely but not necessarily helpfully. Simón finds a job in a grain wharf. The work is unfamiliar and backbreaking, but he soon warms to his stevedore comrades, who during breaks conduct philosophical dialogues on the dignity of labour, and generally take him to their hearts. Now he must set about his task of locating the boy's mother. Though like everyone else who arrives in this new country he seems to be washed clean of all traces of memory, he is convinced he will know her when he sees her. And indeed, while walking with the boy in the countryside Simón catches sight of a woman he is certain is the mother, and persuades her to assume the role. David's new mother comes to realise that he is an exceptional child, a bright, dreamy boy with highly unusual ideas about the world. But the

school authorities detect a rebellious streak in him and insist he be sent to a special school far away. His mother refuses to yield him up, and it is SimÃ3n who must drive the car as the trio flees across the mountains. THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS is a profound, beautiful and continually surprising novel from a very great writer.

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