

Ignorance Milan Kundera

Milan Kundera has established himself as one of the great novelists of our time with such books as *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, *Immortality* and *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. In *Testaments Betrayed*, he proves himself a brilliant defender of the moral rights of the artist and the respect due to a work of art and its creator's wishes. The betrayal of both—often by their most passionate proponents—is the principal theme of this extraordinary work. Readers will be particularly intrigued by Kundera's impassioned attack on society's shifting moral judgments and persecutions of art and artists, from Mayakovsky to Rushdie. A new collection of poems by Michael Hofmann—his first in twenty years Michael Hofmann, renowned as one of our most brilliant critics and translators, is also regarded as among our most respected poets. Hofmann's status—he is the author of "one of the definitive bodies of work of the last half-century" (*The Times Literary Supplement*)—is all the more impressive for his relatively concentrated output. *One Lark, One Horse* is his fifth collection of poems since his debut in 1983, and his first since *Approximately Nowhere* in 1999. It is also one of the most anticipated gatherings of new work in years. In style, his voice is as unmistakable as ever—sometimes funny, sometimes caustic; world-facing and yet intimate—and this collection shows a bright mind burning fiercely over the European and American imaginations. The poet explores where he finds himself, geographically and in life, treating with wit and compassion such universal themes as aging and memory, place, and the difficult existence of the individual in an ever-bigger and more bestial world. *One Lark, One Horse* is a remarkable assemblage of work that will delight loyal readers and enchant new ones with Hofmann's approachable, companionable voice.

"[A] vivid . . . quest for roots. . . . Splendid." —*The New York Times Book Review*

Growing up in the small river town of Moline, Illinois, Diane Johnson always dreamed of venturing off to see the world—and did. Now having traveled widely and lived part-time in Paris for many years, she is stung when a French friend teases her about Americans' indifference to history. Could it be true? The *j'accuse* haunts Diane and inspires her to dig into her family's past, working back from the Friday night football of her youth to the adventures illuminated in the letters and memoirs of her stalwart pioneer ancestors—beginning with a lonely young soldier who came to America from France in 1711. As enchanting as her bestselling novels, *Flyover Lives* is a moving examination of identity and the "wispy but material" family ghosts who shape us. As Johnson pays tribute to her deep Midwestern roots, she captures the perpetual tug-of-war between the magnetic pull of home and our lust for escape and self-invention.

From the brains behind the *New York Times*' bestseller, *The Book of General Ignorance* comes another wonderful collection of the most outrageous, fascinating, and mind-bending facts, taking on the hugely popular form of the first book in the internationally bestselling series. Just when you thought that it was

safe to start showing off again, John Lloyd and John Mitchinson are back with another busload of mistakes and misunderstandings. Here is a new collection of simple, perfectly obvious questions you'll be quite certain you know the answers to. Whether it's history, science, sports, geography, literature, language, medicine, the classics, or common wisdom, you'll be astonished to discover that everything you thought you knew is still hopelessly wrong. For example, do you know who made the first airplane flight? How many legs does an octopus have? How much water should you drink every day? What is the chance of tossing a coin and it landing on heads? What happens if you leave a tooth in a glass of Coke overnight? What is house dust mostly made from? What was the first dishwasher built to do? What color are oranges? Who in the world is most likely to kill you? Whatever your answers to the questions above, you can be sure that everything you think you know is wrong. The Second Book of General Ignorance is the essential text for everyone who knows they don't know everything, and an ideal stick with which to beat people who think they do.

Milan Kundera's sixth novel springs from a casual gesture of a woman to her swimming instructor, a gesture that creates a character in the mind of a writer named Kundera. Like Flaubert's Emma or Tolstoy's Anna, Kundera's Agnes becomes an object of fascination, of indefinable longing. From that character springs a novel, a gesture of the imagination that both embodies and articulates Milan Kundera's supreme mastery of the novel and its purpose; to explore thoroughly the great, themes of existence.

Published simultaneously with Identity, his new novel, here is a masterful new translation of Milan Kundera's most brilliantly plotted and sheerly entertaining novel -- a dark farce of sex, murder, and motherhood. Set in an Old-Fashioned Central European Spa Town, Farewell Waltz follows the lives of eight characters: a pretty nurse and her repairman boyfriend; an oddball gynecologist; a rich American who is at once a saint and a Don Juan; a popular trumpeter and his beautiful obsessively jealous wife; a disillusioned former political prisoner about to leave his country and his young female ward. Perhaps the most accessible of Milan Kundera's novels, Farewell Waltz poses the most serious questions with a blasphemous lightness that makes us see that the modern world has deprived us even of the right to tragedy. Translated from the French text prepared by the author himself a quarter century after the novel was originally written, Farewell Waltz sparkles anew with wit, humor, and irony. A valuable addition to HarperFlamingo's impressive Kundera backlist, it offers readers a chance to discover, or rediscover, one of the very best works of a legendary writer. "It is hard to imagine anything more chilling and profound than Kundera's apparent lightheartedness". -- Elizabeth Pochoda "Kundera ... remains faithful to this subtle, wily, devious talent for a fiction of 'erotic possibilities". -- New York Times Book Review

"A magic curtain, woven of legends, hung before the world. Cervantes sent Don Quixote journeying and tore through the curtain. The world opened before the

knight-errant in all the comical nakedness of its prose." In this thought-provoking, endlessly enlightening, and entertaining essay on the art of the novel, renowned author Milan Kundera suggests that "the curtain" represents a ready-made perception of the world that each of us has—a pre-interpreted world. The job of the novelist, he argues, is to rip through the curtain and reveal what it hides. Here an incomparable literary artist cleverly sketches out his personal view of the history and value of the novel in Western civilization. In doing so, he celebrates a prose form that possesses the unique ability to transcend national and language boundaries in order to reveal some previously unknown aspect of human existence.

The author initially intended to call this novel, "The Lyrical Age." The lyrical age, according to Kundera, is youth, and this novel, above all, is an epic of adolescence; an ironic epic that tenderly erodes sacrosanct values: childhood, motherhood, revolution, and even poetry. Jaromil is in fact a poet. His mother made him a poet and accompanies him (figuratively) to his love bed and (literally) to his deathbed. A ridiculous and touching character, horrifying and totally innocent ("innocence with its bloody smile"), Jaromil is at the same time a true poet. He's no creep, he's Rimbaud. Rimbaud entrapped by the communist revolution, entrapped in a somber farce.

For fans of Alice Munro and Lorrie Moore. A young girl, renamed Amerika in honour of the US role in the liberation of Kuwait, finds her name has become a barometer of her country's growing hostility towards the West. A middle-aged man dying from cancer looks back on his extramarital affairs and the abiding forgiveness of his wife. The headlines tell of war, unrest and religious clashes. But if you look beyond them you will see life in the Middle East as it is really lived – adolescent love, the fragility of marriage, pain of the most quotidian kind. Mai Al-Nakib's luminous stories unveil the lives of ordinary people – and the power of objects to hold extraordinary memories.

When *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* was first published in English, it was hailed as "a work of the boldest mastery, originality, and richness" by critic Elizabeth Hardwick and named one of the best books of 1984 by the *New York Times Book Review*. It went on to win the *Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction* and quickly became an international bestseller. Twenty years later, the novel has established itself as a modern classic. To commemorate the anniversary of its first English-language publication, HarperCollins is proud to offer a special hardcover edition. A young woman in love with a man torn between his love for her and his incorrigible womanizing; one of his mistresses and her humbly faithful lover -- these are the two couples whose story is told in this masterful novel. Controlled by day, Tereza's jealousy awakens by night, transformed into ineffably sad death-dreams, while Tomas, a successful surgeon, alternates loving devotion to the dependent Tereza with the ardent pursuit of other women. Sabina, an independent, free-spirited artist, lives her life as a series of betrayals -- of parents, husband, country, love itself -- whereas her lover, the intellectual Franz, loses all because of his earnest goodness and fidelity. In a world in which lives are shaped by irrevocable choices and by fortuitous events, a world in which everything occurs but once, existence seems to lose its substance, its weight. Hence we feel, says the novelist, "the unbearable lightness of being" -- not only as the consequence of our private acts but also in the public sphere, and the two inevitably intertwine. This

magnificent novel encompasses the extremes of comedy and tragedy, and embraces, it seems, all aspects of human existence. It juxtaposes geographically distant places (Prague, Geneva, Paris, Thailand, the United States, a forlorn Bohemian village); brilliant and playful reflections (on "eternal return," on kitsch, on man and animals -- Tomas and Tereza have a beloved dog named Karenin); and a variety of styles (from the farcical to the elegiac) to take its place as perhaps the major achievement of one of the world's truly great writers.

Milan Kundera's lightest novel, a divertimento, an opera buffa, *Slowness* is also the first of this author's fictional works to have been written in French. Disconcerted and enchanted, the reader follows the narrator of *Slowness* through a midsummer's night in which two tales of seduction, separated by more than two hundred years, interweave and oscillate between the sublime and the comic. Underlying this libertine fantasy is a profound meditation on contemporary life: about the secret bond between slowness and memory, about the connection between our era's desire to forget and the way we have given ourselves over to the demon of speed. And about "dancers" possessed by the passion to be seen, for whom life is merely a perpetual show emptied of every intimacy and every joy.

Casting light on the most serious of problems and at the same time saying not one serious sentence; being fascinated by the reality of the contemporary world and at the same time completely avoiding realism--that's *The Festival of Insignificance*. Readers who know Kundera's earlier books know that the wish to incorporate an element of the "unserious" in a novel is not at all unexpected of him. In *Immortality*, Goethe and Hemingway stroll through several chapters together talking and laughing. And in *Slowness*, Vera, the author's wife, says to her husband: "you've often told me you meant to write a book one day that would have not a single serious word in it... I warn you: watch out. Your enemies are lying in wait." Now, far from watching out, Kundera is finally and fully realizing his old aesthetic dream in this novel that we could easily view as a summation of his whole work. A strange sort of summation. Strange sort of epilogue. Strange sort of laughter, inspired by our time, which is comical because it has lost all sense of humor. What more can we say? Nothing. Just read.

Everyone has wanted their favorite book to be real, if only for a moment. Everyone has wished to meet their favorite characters, if only for a day. But be careful in that wish, for even a history laid in ink can be repaid in flesh and blood, and reality is far deadlier than fiction . . . especially on Addington Isle. *Winterset Hollow* follows a group of friends to the place that inspired their favorite book--a timeless tale about a tribe of animals preparing for their yearly end-of-summer festival. But after a series of shocking discoveries, they find that much of what the world believes to be fiction is actually fact, and that the truth behind their beloved story is darker and more dangerous than they ever imagined. It's Barley Day . . . and you're invited to the hunt. *Winterset Hollow* is as thrilling as it is terrifying and as smart as it is surprising. A uniquely original story filled with properly unexpected twists and turns, *Winterset Hollow* delivers complex, indelible characters and pulse-pounding action as it storms toward an unforgettable climax that will leave you reeling. How do you celebrate Barley Day? You run, friend. You run. Jonathan Edward Durham was born near Philadelphia in one of many rust-belt communities where he read voraciously throughout his youth. After attending the College of William & Mary, where he received a degree in neuroscience, Jonathan

waded into the professional world before deciding he was better suited for more artistic pursuits. He now lives in California where he writes to bring a unique voice to the space between the timeless wonder of his favorite childhood stories and the pop sensibilities of his adolescent literary indulgences.

Rich in its stories, characters, and imaginative range, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* is the novel that brought Milan Kundera his first big international success in the late 1970s. Like all his work, it is valuable for far more than its historical implications. In seven wonderfully integrated parts, different aspects of human existence are magnified and reduced, reordered and emphasized, newly examined, analyzed, and experienced.

In this dark farce of a novel, set in an old-fashioned Central European spa town, eight characters are swept up in an accelerating dance: a pretty nurse and her repairman boyfriend; an oddball gynecologist; a rich American (at once saint and Don Juan); a popular trumpeter and his beautiful, obsessively jealous wife; an disillusioned former political prisoner about to leave his country and his young woman ward. Perhaps the most brilliantly plotted and sheer entertaining of Milan Kundera's novels, *Farewell Waltz* poses the most serious questions with a blasphemous lightness that makes us see that the modern world has deprived us even of the right to tragedy. Written in Bohemia in 1969-70, this book was first published (in 1976) in France under the title *La valse aux adieux* (*Farewell Waltz*), and later in thirty-four other countries. This beautiful new translation, made from the French text prepared by the novelist himself, fully reflects his own tone and intentions. As such it offers an opportunity for both the discovery and the rediscovery of one of the very best of a great writer's works.

This collection of essays from the Franco-Czech novelist provides a defense for art during an era that he says no longer puts value on art or beauty and discusses works and artists that are important to him. 25,000 first printing.

A chance encounter leads a man to spend the afternoon with an older woman, now a widow, who escaped him fifteen years earlier. Neither of them doubts that the day will end in disgust, but for one intimate moment each finds a way to overcome mortality. Written in 1969, before Milan Kundera was known to English-speaking readers, this story renders male and female characters painful equals, and prompted Philip Roth to admire its 'detached Chekhovian tenderness'.

All too often, this brilliant novel of thwarted love and revenge miscarried has been read for its political implications. Now, a quarter century after *The Joke* was first published and several years after the collapse of the Soviet-imposed Czechoslovak regime, it becomes easier to put such implications into perspective in favor of valuing the book (and all Kundera's work) as what it truly is: great, stirring literature that sheds new light on the eternal themes of human existence. The present edition provides English-language readers an important further means toward reevaluation of *The Joke*. For reasons he describes in his Author's Note, Milan Kundera devoted much time to creating (with the assistance of his American publisher-editor) a completely revised translation that reflects his original as closely as any translation possibly can: reflects it in its fidelity not only to the words and syntax but also to the characteristic dictions and tonalities of the novel's narrators. The result is nothing less than the restoration of a classic.

This is the first unexpurgated English edition of Curzio Malaparte's legendary work *The*

Skin. The book begins in 1943, with Allied forces cementing their grip on the devastated city of Naples. The sometime Fascist and ever-resourceful Curzio Malaparte is working with the Americans as a liaison officer. He looks after Colonel Jack Hamilton, "a Christian gentleman . . . an American in the noblest sense of the word," who speaks French and cites the classics and holds his nose as the two men tour the squalid streets of a city in ruins where liberation is only another word for desperation. Veterans of the disbanded Italian army beg for work. A rare specimen from the city's famous aquarium is served up at a ceremonial dinner for high Allied officers. Prostitution is rampant. The smell of death is everywhere. Subtle, cynical, evasive, manipulative, unnerving, always astonishing, Malaparte is a supreme artist of the unreliable, both the product and the prophet of a world gone rotten to the core.

Told in reverse, the love story of ne'er-do-well horse trainer Cole and wealthy southern belle Hannah follows the dissolution of their relationship, the secret passions that drive them apart, the fateful influence of a hired debutante, the childhood of their beloved daughter, and their unexpected courtship. Reprint. 25,000 first printing.

A holiday novella by the author of *Crown Jewel* continues the story of matriarch Loretta Cisco and her three newlywed grandchildren, who in the aftermath of a freak tornado experience a range of marital problems, including an unwanted pregnancy and fears of infidelity. Reprint.

A man and a woman meet by chance while returning to their homeland, which they had abandoned twenty years earlier when they chose to become exiles. Will they manage to pick up the thread of their strange love story, interrupted almost as soon as it began and then lost in the tides of history? The truth is that after such a long absence 'their memories no longer match'. We always believe that our memories coincide with those of the person we loved, that we experienced the same thing. But this is just an illusion. Then again, what can we expect of our weak memory? It records only 'an insignificant, minuscule particle' of the past, 'and no-one knows why it's this bit and not any other bit'. We live our lives sunk in a vast forgetting, a fact we refuse to recognise. Only those who return after twenty years, like Odysseus returning to his native Ithaca, can be dazzled and astounded by observing the goddess of ignorance first-hand. Milan Kundera is the only author today who can take such dizzying concepts as absence, memory, forgetting, and ignorance, and transform them into material for a novel, masterfully orchestrating them into a polyphonic and moving work.

Kundera brilliantly examines the work of such important and diverse figures as Rabelais, Cervantes, Sterne, Diderot, Flaubert, Tolstoy, and Musil. He is especially penetrating on Hermann Broch, and his exploration of the world of Kafka's novels vividly reveals the comic terror of Kafka's bureaucratized universe. Kundera's discussion of his own work includes his views on the role of historical events in fiction, the meaning of action, and the creation of character in the post-psychological novel. This is the first comparative study of literature written by writers who fled from East-Central Europe during the twentieth century. It includes not only interpretations of individual lives and literary works, but also studies of the most important literary journals, publishers, radio programs, and other aspects of exile literary cultures. The theoretical part of introduction distinguishes between exiles, émigrés, and expatriates, while the historical part surveys the pre-twentieth-century exile traditions and provides an overview of the exilic events between 1919 and 1995; one section is devoted to exile

cultures in Paris, London, and New York, as well as in Moscow, Madrid, Toronto, Buenos Aires and other cities. The studies focus on the factional divisions within each national exile culture and on the relationship between the various exiled national cultures among each other. They also investigate the relation of each exile national culture to the culture of its host country. Individual essays are devoted to Witold Gombrowicz, Paul Goma, Milan Kundera, Monica Lovinescu, Miloš Crnjanski, Herta Müller, and to the "internal exile" of Imre Kertész. Special attention is devoted to the new forms of exile that emerged during the ex-Yugoslav wars, and to the problems of "homecoming" of exiled texts and writers

A story of secret wars as only a child can detect them. Britain, rebuilding after the war is on the surface optimistic. But beneath the veneer lurks snobbery and uncertainty. When Linka and her mother both fall in love with a Polish refugee, passion and propriety viciously collide.

Migration and Literature offers a thought-provoking analysis of the thematic and formal role of migration in four contemporary and canonized novelists.

" Sur l'avenir tout le monde se trompe. L'homme ne peut être sûr que du moment présent. Mais est-ce bien vrai ? Peut-il vraiment le connaître, le présent ? Est-il capable de le juger ? Bien sûr que non. Car comment celui qui ne connaît pas l'avenir pourrait-il comprendre le sens du présent ? Et si nous ne savons vers quel avenir le présent nous mène, comment pourrions-nous dire que ce présent est bon ou mauvais, qu'il mérite notre adhésion, notre méfiance ou notre haine ? "

A New York Times Notable Book Irena and Josef meet by chance while returning to their homeland, which they had abandoned twenty years earlier. Will they manage to pick up the thread of their strange love story, interrupted almost as soon as it began and then lost in the tides of history? The truth is that after such a long absence "their memories no longer match."

There are situations in which we fail for a moment to recognize the person we are with, in which the identity of the other is erased while we simultaneously doubt our own. This also happens with couples--indeed, above all with couples, because lovers fear more than anything else "losing sight" of the loved one. With stunning artfulness in expanding and playing variations on the meaningful moment, Milan Kundera has made this situation--and the vague sense of panic it inspires--the very fabric of his new novel. Here brevity goes hand in hand with intensity, and a moment of bewilderment marks the start of a labyrinthine journey during which the reader repeatedly crosses the border between the real and the unreal, between what occurs in the world outside and what the mind creates in its solitude. Of all contemporary writers, only Kundera can transform such a hidden and disconcerting perception into the material for a novel, one of his finest, most painful, and most enlightening. Which, surprisingly, turns out to be a love story.

From distorted self-images to brutal portrayals of friends and fellow artists, the portraits of Francis Bacon account for one of the most remarkable aspects of the work of the British painter. This work looks at his stylistic distortions of classicism and his famous deformations. Milan Kundera provides an introduction explaining his personal response to Bacon's work, exploring the paradox that lies in the faithfulness of the distorted images, and linking Bacon's genius with that of Samuel Beckett, both working at the outer limits of their art. France Borel's essay sets Bacon's works in the context of his life and influences and explains his approach to portraiture.

Discover the daring faith you are called to live out. Randy Harris and Greg Taylor lead you through the pages of the Gospel of John to inspire daring faith in Jesus. The Gospel of John

was written so people would believe the unbelievable. This unbelievable story John tells is that God became man and lived among us. These claims got Jesus killed. And ever since, people who believe the claim still lose their lives. If you believe that Jesus is truly God, you believe the most daring idea of all time. Daring faith will cost your life. But along with the risk comes the great reward of becoming children of God. Are you ready for daring faith?

Jacques and His Master is a deliciously witty and entertaining "variation" on Diderot's novel Jacques le Fatalist, written for Milan Kundera's "private pleasure" in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. When the "heavy Russian irrationality" fell on Czechoslovakia, Milan Kundera explains, he felt drawn to the spirit of the eighteenth century—"And it seemed to me that nowhere was it to be found more densely concentrated than in that banquet of intelligence, humor, and fantasy, Jacques le Fataliste." The upshot was this "Homage to Diderot," which has now been performed throughout the United States and Europe. Here, Jacques and His Master, newly translated by Simon Callow, is a text that will delight Kundera's admirers throughout the English-speaking world.

The author shows how stupidity manifests itself in all areas, in everyone, at all times: stupidity is the foundation of our civilization. He posits that stupidity is a condition for intelligence, that blunders stimulate progress and that failure is the basis for success.

A Study Guide for Milan Kundera's "Hitchhiking Game," excerpted from Gale's acclaimed Short Stories for Students. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust Short Stories for Students for all of your research needs.

"So entertaining that it would be dangerous to read it without laughing aloud."—Los Angeles Times Book Review

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