

Against Nature A Rebours Joris Karl Huysmans

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Saint Lydwine of Schiedam

Against the Grain

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The novel that Huysmans wrote between his two most famous works 'Against Nature' and 'Down There'. A welcome addition to the canon of 19th century French literature in Britain, and one which those of Freudian disposition will relish.' - Times Literary Supplement'

Parisian Sketches

The Des Esseintes line - a once powerful, proud, and noble family lineage - has arrived at a remarkable end in the person of Jean des Esseintes. Having heretofore pursued a life brimming with robust decadence in Paris, Jean finds himself repulsed by society as a collective whole. As such, he makes a concerted choice to quietly retreat to his countryside home, with the intention of spending his remaining years in pursuit of aesthetic and intellectual contemplation, far away from the displeasing humanity which has become so repugnant to his sensibilities. Surrounded by fine art and classic literature, Des Esseintes endeavors to develop a most curious garden, to prepare his own novel perfumes, and to wend his way down numerous other rabbit-holes of intellectualism. Along the way he purchases a tortoise - which he subsequently gilds with gold, and has encrusted with jewels - to its fatal detriment. Throughout the work, Des Esseintes recalls unique, odd, and debauched moments of his life, as his idiosyncratic diet and odd sleeping habits exact their inevitable retribution upon his health. In the end, he is faced with a brutal choice: to return to Paris to receive the ministrations of professionals or to -

inevitably - perish prematurely. In the final moments of the work, he deigns to parallel his return to society with that of an atheist attempting to embrace a religion which he simply cannot abide.

Modern Art

One evening some friends were gathered at the home of one of our most celebrated writers. Having dined sumptuously, they were discussing murder—apropos of what, I no longer remember probably apropos of nothing. Only men were present: moralists, poets, philosophers and doctors—thus everyone could speak freely, according to his whim, his hobby or his idiosyncrasies, without fear of suddenly seeing that expression of horror and fear which the least startling idea traces upon the horrified face of a notary. I—say notary, much as I might have said lawyer or porter, not disdainfully, of course, but in order to define the average French mind. With a calmness of spirit as perfect as though he were expressing an opinion upon the merits of the cigar he was smoking, a member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences said: “Really—I honestly believe that murder is the greatest human preoccupation, and that all our acts stem from it “ We awaited the pronouncement of an involved theory, but he remained silent. “Absolutely!” said a Darwinian scientist, “and, my friend, you are voicing one of those eternal truths such as the legendary Monsieur de La Palisse discovered every day: since murder is the very bedrock of our social institutions, and consequently the most imperious

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necessity of civilized life. If it no longer existed, there would be no governments of any kind, by virtue of the admirable fact that crime in general and murder in particular are not only their excuse, but their only reason for being. We should then live in complete anarchy, which is inconceivable. So, instead of seeking to eliminate murder, it is imperative that it be cultivated with intelligence and perseverance. I know no better culture medium than law." Someone protested. "Here, here!" asked the savant, "aren't we alone, and speaking frankly?" "Please!" said the host, "let us profit thoroughly by the only occasion when we are free to express our personal ideas, for both I, in my books, and you in your turn, may present only lies to the public." The scientist settled himself once more among the cushions of his armchair, stretched his legs, which were numb from being crossed too long and, his head thrown back, his arms hanging and his stomach soothed by good digestion, puffed smoke—rings at the ceiling: "Besides," he continued, "murder is largely self—propagating. Actually, it is not the result of this or that passion, nor is it a pathological form of degeneracy. It is a vital instinct which is in us all—which is in all organized beings and dominates them, just as the genetic instinct. And most of the time it is especially true that these two instincts fuse so well, and are so totally interchangeable, that in some way or other they form a single and identical instinct, so that we no longer may tell which of the two urges us to give life, and which to take it—which is murder, and which love. I have been the confidant of an honorable assassin who killed women, not to rob them, but to ravish them. His trick was to manage things so that his sexual climax coincided

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exactly with the death–spasm of the woman: 'At those moments,' he told me, 'I imagined I was a God, creating a world!'"

Hotel Theory

In this highly accessible introduction, Brian Nelson provides an overview of French literature - its themes and forms, traditions and transformations - from the Middle Ages to the present. Major writers, including Francophone authors writing from areas other than France, are discussed chronologically in the context of their times, to provide a sense of the development of the French literary tradition and the strengths of some of the most influential writers within it. Nelson offers close readings of exemplary passages from key works, presented in English translation and with the original French. The exploration of the work of important writers, including Villon, Racine, Molière, Voltaire, Balzac, Flaubert, Zola, Proust, Sartre and Beckett, highlights the richness and diversity of French literature.

Against Nature (riverrun Editions)

Against Nature

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Against Nature is Huysmans's great fin-de-siècle novel anticipating many of the strains of modernism in its appreciation of Baudelaire, Moreau, Redon, Mallarmé and Poe. 'It will be the biggest fiasco of the year - but I don't care a damn! It will be something nobody has ever done before, and I shall have said what I had to say.' As J -K Huysmans announced in 1884, Against Nature was fated to be a novel like no other. The hero, des Esseintes, is a neurasthenic aristocrat who has turned his back on the vulgarity of modern life and retreated to an isolated country villa. Here, accompanied only by a couple of silent servants, he pursues his obsessions with exotic flowers, rare gems, and complex perfumes and embarks on a series of increasingly strange aesthetic experiments, starting with the decision to give his giant pet tortoise a jewel-encrusted shell "Huysmans' study of obsession and aesthetics got up no end of reviewers' noses on its 1884 publication. It's not hard to see why: decadent aristocrat Jean Floressas des Esseintes, afflicted by nerves so grievous they cause his spine to freeze when he sees a servant wringing out washing, takes turns kicking out at classical poets, modern novelists and the church. The poor are grotesque, the rich are decaying and the bourgeoisie simply insufferable. Only Dickens, Baudelaire and the odd enema provide respite. Cloistered in an opulent house in the suburbs of Paris, Des Esseintes undertakes a series of experiments in living which prove to be an absolute hoot. He decorates an unfortunate tortoise with precious stones, tries to go to England, but only makes it as far as a nearby pub, and attempts to turn an urchin into a killer by buying him credit at a brothel. This largely plotless mix of bilious satire, broad comedy and

literary criticism may have lost some of its immediacy, but it remains a captivating, contradictory work of art." James Smart in The Guardian

The Encyclopedia of the Novel

Now a major motion picture from USA Films starring Kristin Scott Thomas and Sean Penn, and director Philip Haas (director of Angels and Insects). In *Up at the Villa*, W. Somerset Maugham portrays a wealthy young English woman who finds herself confronted rather brutally by the repercussions of whimsy. On the day her older and prosperous friend asks her to marry him, Mary Leonard demurs and decides to postpone her reply a few days. But driving into the hills above Florence alone that evening, Mary offers a ride to a handsome stranger. And suddenly, her life is utterly, irrevocably altered. For this stranger is a refugee of war, and he harbors more than one form of passion. Before morning, Mary will witness bloodshed, she will be forced to seek advice and assistance from an unsavory man, and she will have to face the truth about her own yearnings. Erotic, haunting, and maddeningly suspenseful, *Up at the Villa* is a masterful tale of temptation and the capricious nature of fate.

Against Nature

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Duc Jean des Esseintes, the wealthy last survivor of a once-powerful family, has retreated from his bourgeois life in Paris. Overwhelmed by the absurdities and grotesqueries of human affairs, he dwells in an isolated villa, spending his days in intellectual and aesthetic contemplation. In an environment of ascetic medievalism and hermit-like seclusion, des Esseintes reviews the compendium of human experience. Color, food and drink, literature, art, music, philosophy, and religion—all are scrutinized, sifted, and analyzed according to his delicate, highly selective tastes. Filled with weird images, manifestations of a bizarre imagination, and biting wit, this novel scandalized Victorian critics with its break from naturalism and embrace of fin-de-siècle decadence. It nevertheless exerted considerable influence over French and English writers and remains a classic account of the quest for enlarged experience and new sensations. This edition includes a Preface written by the author 20 years after the book's original 1884 publication.

Against Nature

Against Nature (A rebours) centers on Jean des Esseintes, an eccentric, reclusive, ailing aesthete. The last scion of an aristocratic family, Des Esseintes loathes nineteenth century bourgeois society and tries to retreat into an artistic world of his own creation, following his aesthetic tastes, musings on literature, painting and religion.

The Cathedral

The work of Michel Houellebecq – one of the most widely read and controversial novelists of our time – is marked by the thought of Schopenhauer. When Houellebecq came across a copy of Schopenhauer's Aphorisms in a library in his mid-twenties, he was bowled over by it and he hunted down a copy of his major philosophical work, *The World as Will and Representation*. Houellebecq found in Schopenhauer – the radical pessimist, the chronicler of human suffering, the lonely misanthrope – a powerful conception of the human condition and of the future that awaits us, and when Houellebecq's first writings appeared in the early 1990s, the influence of Schopenhauer was everywhere apparent. But it was only much later, in 2005, that Houellebecq began to translate and write a commentary on Schopenhauer's work. He thought of turning it into a book but soon abandoned the idea and the text remained unpublished until 2017. Now available in English for the first time, *In the Presence of Schopenhauer* is the story of a remarkable encounter between a novelist and a philosopher and a testimony to the deep and enduring impact of Schopenhauer's philosophy on one of France's greatest living writers.

Narcopolis

A novel of Africans and British, community and exile, set against the backdrop of

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the Ghanaian fight for independence: “A talented writer.”—The New York Times It is a time of change in West Africa, as the land known as the British Gold Coast is transformed into a new, independent nation known as Ghana. This lyrical, vivid novel follows multiple characters—a schoolteacher torn between his loyalty to his tribe and his hopes for his country’s future; a British business executive who distrusts Africans; a passionate nationalist—as they experience all the tensions of the time, the excitement, anticipation, and dread. A novel that confronts issues of race, gender, and the effects of colonialism, *This Side Jordan* is by Margaret Laurence, the author of *The Stone Angel* and a winner of two Governor General’s Awards, one of Canada’s most prestigious literary prizes. “Artistically and expertly written and constructed...unusual and noteworthy.”—Kirkus Reviews “A first novel of rare excellence.”—Mary Renault, *Saturday Review* “Highly recommended.”—*Library Journal*

The Cambridge Introduction to French Literature

Hotel Theory is two books in one: a meditation on the meaning of hotels, and a dime novel (*Hotel Women*) featuring Lana Turner and Liberace. Typical of Wayne Koestenbaum’s invigoratingly inventive style, the two books — one fiction, one nonfiction — run concurrently, in twin columns, and the articles “a,” “an,” and “the” never appear. The nonfiction ruminations on hotels are divided into eight dossiers, composed of short takes on the presence of hotels in the author’s dreams

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as well as in literature, film, and history. Guest stars include everyone from Oscar Wilde to Marilyn Monroe. Hotel Theory gives (divided) voice to an aesthetic of hyperaesthesia, of yearning. It is an oblique manifesto, the place where writing disappears. A new mode of theorizing — in fiction, in fragment, through quotation and palimpsest — arises in this dazzling work.

The Man in the Red Coat

Shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize Written in poetic and affecting prose, Jeet Thayil's luminous debut novel charts the evolution of a great and broken metropolis across three decades. A rich, hallucinatory dream that captures Bombay in all its compelling squalor, Narcopolis completely subverts and challenges the literary traditions for which the Indian novel is celebrated. It is a book about drugs, sex, death, perversion, addiction, love, and God and has more in common in its subject matter with the work of William S. Burroughs or Baudelaire than with that of the subcontinent's familiar literary lights. Above all, it is a fantastical portrait of a beautiful and damned generation in a nation about to sell its soul.

AGAINST NATURE

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“A beautifully written, highly seductive debut....The chemistry between Branwell and Lydia positively crackles on the page....Masterful storytelling which is sure to delight fans of the Brontës and of historical fiction.” –Hazel Gaynor, New York Times bestselling author of *The Lighthouse Keeper’s Daughter* This dazzling debut novel for fans of Mrs. Poe and *Longbourn* explores the scandalous historical love affair between Branwell Brontë and Lydia Robinson, giving voice to the woman who allegedly corrupted her son’s innocent tutor and brought down the entire Brontë family. Yorkshire, 1843: Lydia Robinson—mistress of Thorp Green Hall—has lost her precious young daughter and her mother within the same year. She returns to her bleak home, grief-stricken and unmoored. With her teenage daughters rebelling, her testy mother-in-law scrutinizing her every move, and her marriage grown cold, Lydia is restless and yearning for something more. All of that changes with the arrival of her son’s tutor, Branwell Brontë, brother of her daughters’ governess, Miss Anne Brontë and those other writerly sisters, Charlotte and Emily. Branwell has his own demons to contend with—including living up to the ideals of his intelligent family—but his presence is a breath of fresh air for Lydia. Handsome, passionate, and uninhibited by social conventions, he’s also twenty-five to her forty-three. A love of poetry, music, and theatre bring mistress and tutor together, and Branwell’s colorful tales of his sisters’ elaborate play-acting and made-up worlds form the backdrop for seduction. But Lydia’s new taste of passion comes with consequences. As Branwell’s inner turmoil rises to the surface, his behavior grows erratic and dangerous, and whispers of their passionate relationship spout from her

servants' lips, reaching all three protective Brontë sisters. Soon, it falls on Lydia to save not just her reputation, but her way of life, before those clever girls reveal all her secrets in their novels. Unfortunately, she might be too late. Meticulously researched and deliciously told, Brontë's *Mistress* is a captivating reimagining of the scandalous affair that has divided Brontë enthusiasts for generations and an illuminating portrait of a courageous, sharp-witted woman who fights to emerge with her dignity intact.

Against the Grain

"Lights Out in Wonderland has all the verbal wit and energy of Vernon God Little."—Financial Times Gabriel Brockwell—aesthete, philosopher, disaffected twenty-something decadent—is thinking terminal. He's decided to kill himself—but not immediately. His destination is Wonderland. The style of the journey is all that's to be decided. Traveling between London, Tokyo, and Berlin, Gabriel is in search of the bacchanal to obliterate all previous parties. His adventure takes in a spell in rehab, a near-death experience eating a poisonous Japanese delicacy, and finally an orgiastic feast in the bowels of Berlin's majestic Tempelhof Airport. Along the way, Gabriel falls apart, only to reemerge with a new outlook on the world and a mission to right his past wrongs. *Lights Out in Wonderland* is an allegorical banquet, a sly commentary on these End Times and the march toward banality, and a joyful expression of the human spirit.

With the Flow

Against Nature (A Rebour's)

First published in 1883, but never before translated into English, this collection of J.-K. Huysmans' art criticism reveals the author of *Against Nature* to be as combative in his aesthetic opinions as he was in his literary ones. At a time when the Impressionists were still being ridiculed, or worse still ignored, Huysmans defiantly proclaimed Degas to be the best painter in France. He filled his pages with analyses of the works of artists whose genius and popularity have been confirmed by time: Gustave Caillebotte, Paul Gauguin, Mary Cassatt, Edouard Manet, Berthe Morisot, Odilon Redon and Gustave Moreau. Huysmans intersperses his reviews of these independent artists with those of the annual Official Salon, whose conventional and dryly academic works he lambasts with his customary gusto and invective. This is the first complete translation of *L'Art moderne*, and includes 200 black and white illustrations, notes and a glossary of artists.

Bronte's Mistress

The cult novel of fin de siècle decadence that inspired Oscar Wilde 'It will be

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biggest fiasco of the year - but I don't give a damn! It will be something nobody has ever done before.' Joris-Karl Huysmans on *Against Nature* The title page of the first complete English translation of *Against Nature* (published in the French as *À Rebours*) included the caption 'the book that Dorian Gray loved and inspired Oscar Wilde.' It was, declared Wilde, one of the best novels he had ever read. It is the story of Jean des Esseintes, the last of a proud and noble family, who retreats from the world in disgust at bourgeois society and leads a life based on cultivation of the senses through art. Des Esseintes distills perfumes from the rarest oils and essences, he creates a garden of poisonous flowers, sets gemstones in the shell of a tortoise's gold-painted shell and plans to corrupt a street urchin until he is degraded enough to commit murder. Des Esseintes aesthetic pilgrimage is described in minutely documented realistic detail and was widely regarded as the guidebook of decadence. This influential novel is now available in a startling new translation by Theo Cuffe and includes a new preface by Luc Sante.

This Side Jordan

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concur, that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public. To ensure a quality reading experience, this work has been proofread and republished using a format that seamlessly blends the original graphical elements with text in an easy-to-read typeface. We appreciate your support of the preservation process, and thank you for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant.

Marthe

This classic novel pushed 19th-century literary decadence to its limits. Introduction by Havelock Ellis.

French Decadent Tales

À rebours, Against the Grain or Against Nature in English, is an 1884 novel by Joris-Karl Huysmans. Anti-hero Jean Des Esseintes despises the bourgeois society he lives in and withdraws into the aesthetic and artistic ideals that he has created. Believing the novel would be rejected by both critics and public, Huysman declared: "It will be the biggest fiasco of the year - but I don't care a damn! It will be something nobody has ever done before, and I shall have said what I want to say" The novel did receive great publicity on its release, but even though it was

heavily criticized it also became influential with a new generation of writers and aesthetes.

The Life of J.-K. Huysmans

Up at the Villa

"No one, not even Toulouse-Lautrec, was so tireless a tracker of Paris's genius loci as Huysmans. Like many of his radical contemporaries, he was obsessed by the idea of beauty within the ugliness of back-street Paris, by the thought that the distortions of depravity presented a truer picture of our spiritual nature than conventional religion or revolutionary excess. The excellent introduction to these cameos show how Huysmans saw his art as complementary to the painter's. As the stories themselves testify, however, the results were not always successful. Compare for example, the sharp impressionistic portrayal of 'A Streetwalker' with the hazy, self-regarding raptures of 'The Overture to Tannhauser', a hyperventilating review characterised by sonorous phrases which pile up and collapse. But his symbolist mode yields as many rockets as damp squibs: 'A Nightmare' is genuinely chilling and oddly exultant. A tale about the wandering Jew is a mini-masterpiece. In this and other pieces, Huysmans begins and ends his tale

with the same description - giving the whole the air of a medieval chant."
Murrough Obrien in The Independent on Sunday

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Torture Garden

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Hello Love

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A pithy work of philosophical anthropology that explores why humans find moral orders in natural orders. Why have human beings, in many different cultures and epochs, looked to nature as a source of norms for human behavior? From ancient India and ancient Greece, medieval France and Enlightenment America, up to the latest controversies over gay marriage and cloning, natural orders have been enlisted to illustrate and buttress moral orders. Revolutionaries and reactionaries alike have appealed to nature to shore up their causes. No amount of philosophical argument or political critique deters the persistent and pervasive temptation to conflate the “is” of natural orders with the “ought” of moral orders. In this short, pithy work of philosophical anthropology, Lorraine Daston asks why we continually seek moral orders in natural orders, despite so much good counsel to the contrary. She outlines three specific forms of natural order in the Western philosophical tradition—specific natures, local natures, and universal natural laws—and describes how each of these three natural orders has been used to define and oppose a distinctive form of the unnatural. She argues that each of these forms of the unnatural triggers equally distinctive emotions: horror, terror, and wonder. Daston proposes that human reason practiced in human bodies should command the attention of philosophers, who have traditionally yearned for a transcendent reason, valid for all species, all epochs, even all planets.

Against Nature (A Rebours)

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This brutally gripping novel about the African-American Great Migration follows the three Moss brothers, who flee the rural South to work in industries up North. Delivered by day into the searing inferno of the steel mills, by night they encounter a world of surreal devastation, crowded with dogfighters, whores, cripples, strikers, and scabs. Keenly sensitive to character, prophetic in its depiction of environmental degradation and globalized labor, Attaway's novel is an unprecedented confrontation with the realities of American life, offering an apocalyptic vision of the melting pot not as an icon of hope but as an instrument of destruction. *Blood on the Forge* was first published in 1941, when it attracted the admiring attention of Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison. It is an indispensable account of a major turning point in black history, as well as a triumph of individual style, charged with the concentrated power and poignance of the blues.

Becalmed

The only thing that gets recent widower Dan through the long lonely nights is Anni, his cherished dog. Stolen from Dan's front yard, Anni is rescued from an abusive tenant by Andrea Keller, who is recovering from the heartbreak of a messy divorce. As Anni works to find her way home, can she bring these two lost souls together?

Down Stream (A Vau-l'eau) and Other Works, Including Marthe,

A Dish of Spices (Le Drageoir Aux Épices), Critical Papers (from Certains and L'art Moderne), and a Twenty-year-after Preface (to A Rebours)

Now available in a single volume paperback, this advanced reference resource for the novel and novel theory offers authoritative accounts of the history, terminology, and genre of the novel, in over 140 articles of 500-7,000 words. Entries explore the history and tradition of the novel in different areas of the world; formal elements of the novel (story, plot, character, narrator); technical aspects of the genre (such as realism, narrative structure and style); subgenres, including the bildungsroman and the graphic novel; theoretical problems, such as definitions of the novel; book history; and the novel's relationship to other arts and disciplines. The Encyclopedia is arranged in A-Z format and features entries from an international cast of over 140 scholars, overseen by an advisory board of 37 leading specialists in the field, making this the most authoritative reference resource available on the novel. This essential reference, now available in an easy-to-use, fully indexed single volume paperback, will be a vital addition to the libraries of literature students and scholars everywhere.

Against The Grain (À Rebours)

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Against the Grain

In the Presence of Schopenhauer

Like Froude's biography of Carlyle, Holroyd's Shaw, and Ellmann's Joyce, Robert Baldick's Life of J.-K. Huysmans has become not just a standard reference work, to be consulted as regularly as the writing of the author whose life it chronicles, but a work of literature in its own right. First published fifty years ago, Baldick's classic biography presents a compelling narrative of Huysmans' life and work in all its various phases - from the Naturalism of the 1870s to the Decadence of the 1880s, and from the occult vogue of the 1890s to the Catholic Revival of the turn of the

century - and it is written with such impeccable scholarship that it is still relied on today as regards matters of fact and detail. For this new edition - the first time the biography has been reprinted in English - Baldick's notes have been extensively revised and updated by Brendan King to take account of new developments and publications in the field of Huysmansian studies.

Blood on the Forge

For Downstream: "Set in late-nineteenth-century Paris, Downstream is the story of civil servant Jean Folantin, a man beset with melancholy induced by middle-aged loneliness, nihilism, and toiling for a wage that scarcely allows him to subsist. His days are composed of office drudgery; in the evenings he searches in vain for a decent meal. His nights are spent alone." "Whether Downstream is the political tale of a man's enslavement by poverty or, instead, a psychological tale of his reluctance to genuinely invest hope in anything that actually matters, it is J.K. Huysmans in a foul and visionary mood." -- Jacket from another manifestation of this work.

Against Nature

'He had become the dandy of the unpredictable.' A quest for new sensations, and

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an avowed desire to shock possessed the Decadent writers of fin-de-siècle Paris. The years 1880-1900 saw an extraordinary, hothouse flowering of talent, that produced some of the most exotic, stylized, and cerebral literature in the French language. While 'Decadence' was a European movement, its epicentre was the French capital. On the eve of Freud's early discoveries, writers such as Gourmont, Lorrain, Maupassant, Mirbeau, Richepin, Schwob, and Villiers engaged in a species of wild analysis of their own, perfecting the art of short fiction as they did so. Death and Eros haunt these pages, and a polymorphous perversity by turns hilarious and horrifying. Their stories teem with addicts, maniacs, and murderers as they strive to outdo each other. This newly translated selection brings together the very best writing of the period, from lesser known figures as well as famous names. Provocative and unsettling, these extraordinary, corrosive little tales continue to cast a cold eye on the modern world. ABOUT THE SERIES: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the widest range of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, helpful notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

Lights Out in Wonderland: A Novel

From the Man Booker Prize-winning author of *The Sense of an Ending*—a rich,

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witty, revelatory tour of Belle Époque Paris, via the remarkable life story of the pioneering surgeon, Samuel Pozzi. In the summer of 1885, three Frenchmen arrived in London for a few days' intellectual shopping: a prince, a count, and a commoner with an Italian name. In time, each of these men would achieve a certain level of renown, but who were they then and what was the significance of their sojourn to England? Answering these questions, Julian Barnes unfurls the stories of their lives which play out against the backdrop of the Belle Époque in Paris. Our guide through this world is Samuel Pozzi, the society doctor, free-thinker and man of science with a famously complicated private life who was the subject of one of John Singer Sargent's greatest portraits. In this vivid tapestry of people (Henry James, Sarah Bernhardt, Oscar Wilde, Proust, James Whistler, among many others), place, and time, we see not merely an epoch of glamour and pleasure, but, surprisingly, one of violence, prejudice, and nativism—with more parallels to our own age than we might imagine. *The Man in the Red Coat* is, at once, a fresh portrait of the Belle Époque; an illuminating look at the longstanding exchange of ideas between Britain and France; and a life of a man who lived passionately in the moment but whose ideas and achievements were far ahead of his time.

Là-bas

This new translation by Brendan King is the first for nearly fifty years. Capturing the lively linguistic inventiveness of the original, it also includes an introduction

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and comprehensive notes. First published in 1876, *Marthe* was an important landmark in J.-K. Huysmans's literary career and propelled him into the growing ranks of the Naturalist movement, then beginning to take shape under Zola's direction. *Marthe* was one of the first French novels to tackle head-on the subject of prostitution, a theme that was to become a central preoccupation in the work of many novelists, painters and poets. Set in and around the demi-monde of the Parisian music hall, it centres on a would-be actress, Marthe, who works in one of the lowest dives in Paris, and tells the story of her brief and ultimately doomed relationship with Leo, a romantic searching for something to take the place of his lost illusions.

Meditations

'Their icy blasts are refreshing and restorative. They tell you the worst. And having heard the worst, you feel less bad' Blake Morrison
Written in Greek by the only Roman emperor who was also a philosopher, without any intention of publication, the *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* offer a remarkable series of challenging spiritual reflections and exercises developed as the emperor struggled to understand himself and make sense of the universe. While the *Meditations* were composed to provide personal consolation and encouragement, Marcus Aurelius also created one of the greatest of all works of philosophy: a timeless collection that has been consulted and admired by statesmen, thinkers and readers throughout the

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centuries. Translated with notes by MARTIN HAMMOND with an Introduction by DISKIN CLAY

Les Diaboliques

One who seeks to discover the brutal reality of fin-de-siècle French bourgeoisie society, will find it here, in Huysmans's melancholy tale. Class struggles form the background of this harrowing tale; Huysmans uses steadily devolving arguments over family fortune to comment on interclass inequality in 19th century France. The greed of bourgeoisie men prevail: their dilemma vastly disparate to those of lesser fortune. A truly mordant tale, A Dilemma reflects the deeply depressing reality of class prejudice. This translation is brought to you by Aaron J. Clarke, whose tireless work allows this story to be read here, in contemporary Australia. Clarke sees the value of this profoundly moving tale and its ironic prevalence today.

A Dilemma

Architecture lovers and Francophiles, rejoice. French writer Joris-Karl Huysmans' novel set at the famed cathedral at Chartres contains such detailed descriptions of the site's layout and construction that early tourists sometimes used it as a

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guidebook. The book is the third in a series of works that follow the religious conversion and spiritual life of Durtal, the protagonist that Huysmans modeled on himself.

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