



Turbulence

David Szalay

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The brilliant new short story sequence from the Man Booker-shortlisted author of *All That Man Is*

Twelve people on the move around planet Earth, twelve individual lives, each in turmoil, and each in some way touching the next.

In this nuanced and deeply moving sequence, David Szalay's diverse protagonists circumnavigate the world in twelve plane journeys, from London to Madrid, from Dakar to Sao Paulo, to Toronto, to Delhi, to Doha, en route to see lovers and parents, children and siblings, or nobody at all.

Along the way, Szalay deftly depicts the ripple effect that, knowingly or otherwise, a person's actions have on those around them, and invites us to consider our own place in the vast and delicately balanced network of human relationships that is the world we live in today.

Turbulence Details

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From Reader Review Turbulence for online ebook

Bandit says

The concept of interconnectivity has often been utilized in narration, but (for me at least) it seems to have always been more of a cinematic affair. Turbulence, though, does it in book form and oh so well. This slim volume of tangentially connected stories, each jetting off (literally since as the title might have given away they are all tied together by plane flights) where the last one left off until coming around in a circle to where it began, takes the readers all over the world and is positively enchanting with its quiet beauty of observational character driven narratives. The stories themselves are sometimes barely more than sketches, but they seem to do such a great job of representing each individual character at their present location and state of mind. This is purely credit to the author's talent. Actually I haven't read him before of even heard of him, but he's been shortlisted for Man Booker among other prizes and based on this book alone it's easy to recognize why. I'd be very interested in reading more of his work. So yeah, there's interconnectivity all over this book in every meaning of the word, global citizenry being such a modern thing, one short (or long) flight and you're in another world, but there seems to always be turbulence (another theme utilized literally and otherwise) along the way. Lovely collection, such an enjoyable read. Recommended. Thanks Netgalley.

Rebecca says

(3.5) These 12 linked short stories, commissioned for BBC Radio 4, focus on travel and interconnectedness. Each is headed by a shorthand route from one airport to another, and at the destination we set out with a new main character who has crossed paths with the previous one. For instance, in "YYZ – SEA" the writer Marion Mackenzie has to cancel a scheduled interview when her daughter Annie goes into labor. There's bad news about the baby, and when Marion steps away from the hospital to get Annie a few necessities from a supermarket and is approached by a pair of kind fans, one of whom teaches Marion's work back in Hong Kong, she's overcome at the moment of grace-filled connection. In the next story we journey back to Hong Kong with the teacher, Jackie, and enter into her dilemma over whether to stay with her husband or leave him for the doctor she's been having an affair with.

As he ushers readers around the world, Szalay invites us to marvel at how quickly life changes and how – improbable as it may seem – we can have a real impact on people we may only meet once. There's a strong contrast between impersonal and intimate spaces: airplane cabins and hotel rooms versus the private places where relationships start or end. The title applies to the characters' tumultuous lives as much as to the flight conditions. They experience illness, infidelity, domestic violence, homophobia and more, but they don't stay mired in their situations; there's always a sense of motion and possibility, that things will change one way or another.

My favorite story was "DOH – BUD," in which Ursula goes to visit her daughter Miri and gains a new appreciation for Miri's fiancé, Moussa, a Syrian refugee. I also liked how the book goes full circle, with the family from the final story overlapping with that of the first. Though a few of the individual stories are forgettable, I enjoyed this more than Szalay's Booker-shortlisted All that Man Is, another globe-trotting set of linked stories.

A favorite line: "In fact it was hard to understand quite what an insignificant speck this aeroplane was, in terms of the size of the ocean it was flying over, in terms of the quantity of emptiness which surrounded it on

all sides.”

Originally published on my blog, Bookish Beck.

Ian Brydon says

One of my favourite books in 2016 was *All That Man Is* by David Szalay (which, I understand is pronounced ‘Shollay’). This was a collection of thematically linked stories focusing on a series of men, all of whom found themselves alone and a long way from their respective homes, and their musings on their situation. I recognise that that synopsis might serve to make it sound pretty dire - it was actually marvellous, written with a hypnotic charm. *All That Man Is* was a great critical and commercial success, and made it on to the Booker Prize Shortlist.

In this latest book, Szalay has taken the format of thematically linked stories to a higher level. There are twelve stories, all identified by a combination of the three letter codes for international airports, each focusing on a peripheral character from the previous tale. This is a clever idea, but I suspect that in setting such a rigid format, Szalay imposed too great a burden on himself. While some individual stories show a moving insight into the challenges of some relationships, the format denies Szalay the space adequately to explore them.

In the end, this book represented a triumph of form over substance, and was a great disappointment.

Kayo says

Was really looking forward to this one, but very disappointed. Dialogue didn't flow, and it felt so disjointed.

Thanks to author, publisher and Netgalley for the chance to read this book. While I got the book for free, it had no bearing on the rating I gave it.

Jaclyn Crupi says

Szalay has always propelled his characters into motion and here he takes his approach to storytelling to its natural place: twelve linked people flying from place to place. Each of them is in turmoil and disrupted. The common (unfair in my opinion) criticisms of his incredible book *All That Man Is* may well have weighed on him and here he has a much broader cast of characters. But toxic masculinity is still his target and he delves with a lovely light touch.

Bookthesp1 says

This is the latest outing from wunderkind David Szalay who made headlines with his wonderful book of stories, *All That Man Is*, shortlisted for the "manbooker" prize. Turbulence may also be shortlisted, if only

for being short itself- a thin volume that is neither novel nor novella- more an offcut or echo of *All That Man Is*, written in the same compelling tone and with a very similar structure. The front cover is designed like a aircraft boarding pass, and the reader boards the plane with the character (12 characters infact all taking flights or in transit to or from a flight) and in a state of personal turbulence or reflection. Characters link stories so we see a different point of view or a backstory. This is all a tasty morsel for Szalay fans (like me) and as usual, Szalay is in reflective mood himself describing soundscapes, cityscapes and the human condition with sometimes almost reluctant prose which needs to be teased out, like the sticky portions of airline meals..... These pieces were originally written for radio and have a certain aural rhythm that points to carefully considered construction and the usual trick of leaving the reader wanting more or picking a favourite story that could be developed more fully. Still, Szalay is always a rewarding read- a flight of the imagination indeed. One is just left with the feeling that he has collected his baggage a little too early and made dash for home, when he should have lingered in arrivals and departures and filled out his stories to a jumbo size meal....ah well....

Petra says

I received a copy of this book via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

This book is basically 12 short stories, each story with a new main character that has at some point crossed paths with the main character from the previous chapter. In the end, it all goes full circle.

I didn't think I would like this book so much. Short stories just aren't my thing. I did wish that some of the chapters were longer so we could learn more about the characters, but the whole purpose (in my opinion) was to give a snapshot of their lives, just a few moments were you get to learn about them.

Would recommend it, it's easy to read and though provoking

Deborah Stevens says

A really unusual, short, lyrical group of interrelated stories.

This collection is constructed like a relay, in which the baton is passed from one character to the next as they meet in transit. We get little slices of their lives, and in some cases the intersections between them. It is the kind of writing that leaves you wishing for more, and pondering the author's choices.

With thanks to Scribner and NetGalley for the ARC in exchange for my honest review.

Jay says

I'm a fan of David Szalay's works. I read *All That a Man Is* and left mesmerized. In the wake of that reading, I digested his other, earlier, novels.

His newest work, *Turbulence*, is, in the words of one reviewer, “a chilling achievement”. Twelve linked stories—a kind of relay race with one story beginning in London and ten others passing thru 10 international cities, before ending with the 12th story back in London.

Actually, calling them “linked stories” is probably misleading because they are attributes of the same story played out over a month’s time. The entire work is a haunting evocation of a humanity in constant movement thru life’s ongoing turbulence. The people who move through the work’s 136 pages—who move through turbulence-- leave the reader with a profound sense of rootlessness and uncertainty.

Flow says

The book has a rigid construction principle (which in itself does not say anything about quality). Its short stories, and protagonists' lives, are interlinked by international flights. Each life thus connected has its "turbulence" ... death, infidelity, family conflicts. The first three are great, and devastating, but soon the surprising ideas give way to "hot topics": a secretly gay guy in an arabic country, rich daughter marrying a Syrian refugee, and a few I've already forgotten. It's easily consumable and topical, so it could be a Hollywood movie at some point. This too does not say anything about quality.

Annette says

Not bad, it held my attention and is nicely written but the whole thing is slight. Not even really a collection of short stories though the connections are skilfully made, each story is too short and the whole isn't saying much other than lots of people lots of connections.

Another offering by an author who is very talented but has probably been pushed into publication with 'something' to keep their publisher happy.

Gumble's Yard says

BDP-LHR: David Szalay, who lives in Budapest, was shortlisted for the London based 2014 Booker prize for his book “All That Man Is” – a collection of short stories, examining the crisis of masculinity, and which the judges felt to be eligible as a novel and fulfilling the “unified and substantive work” criteria.

LHR-LAX: The winner of the Booker Prize that year was “Sellout” – a novel set in Los Angeles and which has been criticised as an attempt at stand up comedy masquerading as a novel.

LAX-TLV: A few months later, the 2017 Man Booker International Prize was won by David Grossman for “A Horse Walks into a Bar” – a novel about a stand-up comedian, giving a routine in portentous circumstances, in a small Israeli coastal town.

TLV-DBV: The Man Booker International Prize was won this year by Olga Tokarczuk for “Flights” which among much, much else both good and bad including a vignette on a Croatian Island, was a linked collection of vignettes, with a focus on travel, particularly 21st Century air travel.

DVB-LHR: A little like “Turbulence” by David Szalay.

Linda Crossman says

Meaningful vignettes beautifully woven together

Turbulence takes a series of brief passing moments between relative strangers and weaves them together into short glimpses into wildly varying but somehow interconnected lives.

The individual stories are simply snapshots of the characters lives but tell a good deal in a few, well written words.

The author does an excellent job seamlessly moving from one voice to another. It was an engrossing, quick read that left me wanting more.

Edna says

Turbulence By David Szalay

A woman strikes up a conversation with the man sitting next to her on a plane after some turbulence. He returns home to tragic news that has also impacted another stranger, a shaken pilot on his way to another continent who seeks comfort from a journalist he meets that night. Her life shifts subtly as well before she heads to the airport on an assignment that will shift more lives in turn.

In this wondrous, profoundly moving novel, Szalay’s diverse protagonists circumnavigate the planet in twelve flights, from London to Madrid, from Dakar to Sao Paulo, to Toronto, to Delhi, to Doha, en route to see lovers or estranged siblings, aging parents, baby grandchildren, or nobody at all. Along the way, they experience the full range of human emotions from loneliness to love and, knowingly or otherwise, change each other in one brief, electrifying interaction after the next.

Written with magic and economy and beautifully exploring the delicate, crisscrossed nature of relationships today, Turbulence is a dazzling portrait of the interconnectedness of the modern world.

Thank you, NetGalley for the advance copy for an honest review.

The book was brilliantly written. How everyone person connected from all over the world. A wonderful concept. How twelve people flights connect for good and bad.

Steph says

A wonderful and lovely read that was way too short. But what a great idea. I'm definitely gonna check out other books by this author.
