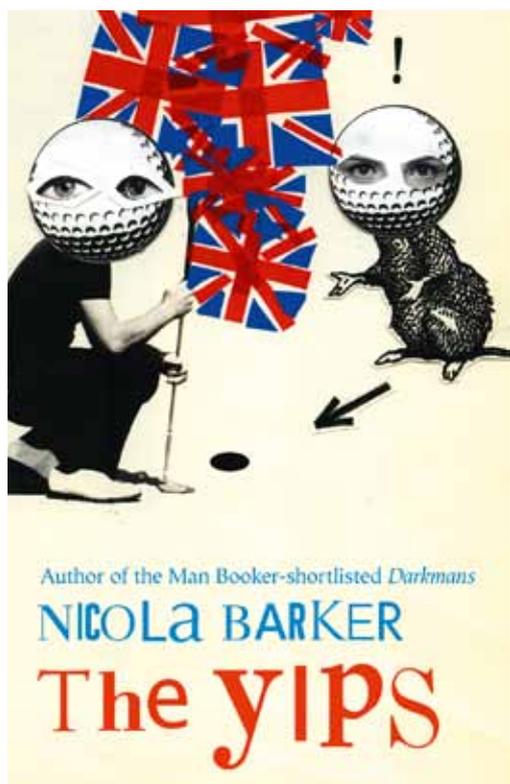


The Man
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2012

Reader's Guide



Other novels by Nicola Barker

Burley Cross Postbox Theft (2010)

Darkmans (2007)

Clear: A Transparent Novel (2004)

Behindlings (2002)

Five Miles from Outer Hope (2002)

Wide Open (1998)

Small Holdings (1995)

Reversed Forecast (1994)

The Yips

Nicola Barker

Fourth Estate

Hardback £18.99

Ebook £16.31

Paperback published March 2013

www.themanbookerprize.com

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About the author

Nicola Barker was born in 1966 in Cambridgeshire.

She was the winner of the David Higham Prize for Fiction and joint winner of the Macmillan Silver Pen Award for *Love Your Enemies*, her first collection of stories.

Her other works include *Five Miles from Outer Hope*, *Behindlings*, *Clear: A Transparent Novel*, and *Heading Inland*, which received the John Llewellyn Rhys/Mail on Sunday Prize. Her novel *Wide Open* won the IMPAC Prize in 2000, while *Clear: A Transparent Novel* was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2004 and *Darkmans* shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2007.

In 1993 she was voted one of Granta's 'Best Young British Novelists' of the decade.

Nicola Barker lives and works in East London.

The Yips

'The Yips' is a noun describing a condition in which nervousness or tension causes an athlete to fail to perform effectively, especially in missing short putts in golf.

The Yips is the story of professional golfer Stuart Ransom, described as an equal to Martin Amis' John Self in the pantheon of male literary grotesques. Set in Luton, this comic novel also includes a woman priest with an unruly fringe, the troubled family of a notorious local fascist and a free-thinking Muslim sex therapist, as it delves into the murky recesses of the masculine psyche.

Discussion points

Nicola Barker has been described as a fascinating and frustrating novelist. Having read *The Yips*, do you identify with this description?

The Yips features many eccentric and unconventional characters, which is most interesting and whose story would you like to explore further?

Almost the entire novel is set in dialogue and the third person narrator plays a minor role. What impact does this have on the narrative and the reader?

Do you agree with the reviewer who wrote 'what lingers after Nicola Barker's customarily exhausting blurt of eccentricity is her treatment of how husbands and wives, mothers and daughters, get on (or don't)'.
Stephen Abell, *The Daily Telegraph*

Themed reading

Philip Hensher *The King of Badgers*
Martin Amis *Money*
Hilary Mantel *Beyond Black*

Useful links

[Metro and The Guardian interviews with Nicola Barker](#)

<http://www.metro.co.uk/lifestyle/903927-nicola-barker-tiger-woods-inspired-the-burned-out-celeb-golfer-in-the-yips>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/3623313/A-writers-life-Nicola-Barker.html>

[Bibliography and critical perspective](#)

<http://literature.britishcouncil.org/nicola-barker>

<http://www.faber.co.uk/author/nicola-barker/>