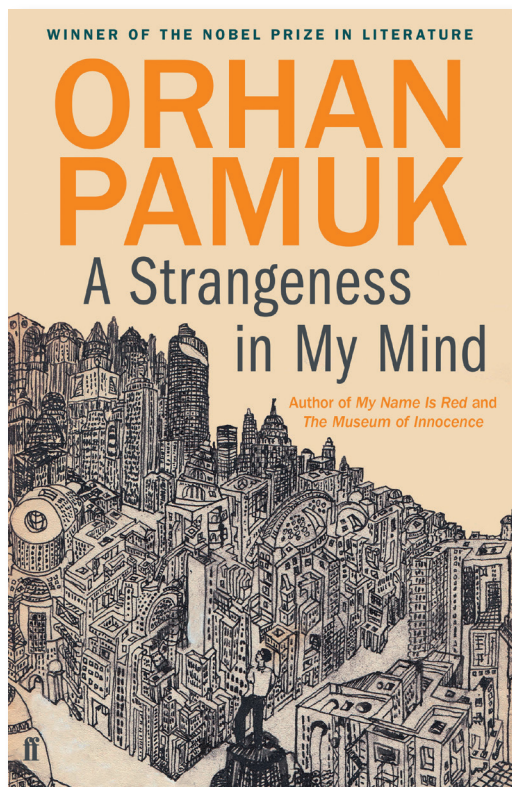


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Reader's Guide



Other novels by Orhan Pamuk

The Black Book (1990)

My Name Is Red (1998)

Snow (2002)

The Museum of Innocence (2008)

A Strangeness in my Mind Orhan Pamuk

Translated by Ekin Oklap

Faber & Faber

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About the author

Orhan Pamuk is the author of many celebrated books, including *The White Castle*, *Black Book*, *Istanbul* and *Snow*. In 2003, he won the International IMPAC Award for *My Name is Red*, and in 2006 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. His most recent novel, *The Museum of Innocence*, was an international bestseller, praised in the *Guardian* as 'an enthralling, immensely enjoyable piece of storytelling.' Orhan Pamuk's work has been translated into over 60 languages. In spring 2012, his Museum of Innocence opened in Istanbul, where he lives.

About the translator

Ekin Oklap was born in Izmir, Turkey, and grew up in Italy. She is a graduate of the University of Cambridge and the School of Oriental and African Studies. In 2012, she translated Orhan Pamuk's *The Innocence of Objects*. She lives in London, where she works as a literary agent.

About the book

A Strangeness in My Mind is the story of boza seller Mevlut, the woman to whom he wrote three years' worth of love letters, and their life in Istanbul. In the four decades between 1969 and 2012, Mevlut works a number of different jobs on the streets of Istanbul, from selling yoghurt and cooked rice to guarding a car park. He observes many different kinds of people thronging the streets, he watches most of the city get demolished and re-built, and he sees migrants from Anatolia making a fortune; at the same time, he witnesses all of the transformative moments, political clashes, and military coups that shape the country. He always wonders what it is that separates him from everyone else - the source of that strangeness in his mind. But he never stops selling boza during winter evenings and trying to understand who his beloved really is. What matters more in love: what we wish for, or what our fate has in store? Do our choices dictate whether we will be happy or not, or are these things determined by forces beyond our control? *A Strangeness In My Mind* explores these questions while portraying the tensions between urban life and family life, and the fury and helplessness of women inside their homes.

Discussion points

Where do you think the title comes from, what is the strangeness in Mevlut's mind? Why does he feel himself to be an outsider? Does this change?

The Guardian describes the book as 'above all a love letter to the city in all its faded, messy, dusty glory ...' What were your perceptions about Istanbul and how does the city change throughout the novel? What does Mevlut believe that boza represents in the book?

What did you think about Mevlut's relationship with Rayiha? How did the relationship develop, did marrying her work out for the best?

The book is narrated by multiple characters, how effective is this as a narrative device, what did it contribute to the book?

How do you feel about the ending of the book? What is Mevlut's relationship with Istanbul at this point?

Themed reading

Jonathan Franzen *Purity*
Colum McCann *Thirteen Ways of Looking*

Useful links

<http://www.orhanpamuk.net/>

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/21/books/review-orhan-pamuks-a-strangeness-in-my-mind.html?_r=0

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/oct/02/strangeness-in-my-mind-orhan-pamuk-review-istanbul-novel>