



Johan Harstad

## *Under the Paving-Stones, the Beach!*



Gyldendal 2024  
976 pages  
Original title: *Under brosteinen, stranden!*  
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*Under the Paving-Stones, the Beach!* is a novel about the discovery of a paving-stone shaped object which, when touched, allegedly creates the illusion of having lived an entire lifespan within seven minutes. Centered around a group of teens in late-nineties Stavanger, but containing numerous historical and geographical detours to places like The Soviet Union, Berlin, Warszawa, Akureyri, Shanghai and not least the island Tristan da Cunha in the sixties, and populated by everything from suburban youth on the hunt for the next industrial exhaust fan to warm up by in the evenings to Cold War spies with multiple sets of faltering loyalties, Zapatistas on a local level and pot wholesalers of dubious mental caliber, young people in love and amateur radio dads who are all widowers, old-school sailors and new-school sailors, Icelandic Eco-Terrorists, suicidal single moms and self-crossing clinical directors, some who are psychiatric patients and some who probably should've been, an adventurous meteorologist from Forus, Stavanger and an astrophysicist with an urgent need to explain himself about non-academical topics, and guest starring people like Andrej Tarkovsky and Erich Mielke, the novel explores the idea that time might never really have been on our side after all.

This is a large-scale story about waiting; for life to begin, for things to pass, waiting for the right one, waiting for death and waiting in vain. It is the novel about Ingmar, Jonatan and Peter. And Ebba.

*'A LITERARY MASTERPIECE. An homage to the world's raging realities and amazing opportunities.'*

- VG

*'Under the Paving-Stones, the Beach! is a massive achievement from a man with an extra-ordinary knack for storytelling and an affinity both for horror movies, spy thrillers and cowboy classics. The best of the best in this enormous novel is the coming-of-age story set to Forus and Stavanger in the 90s, a heartfelt and at the same time carefree story of friendship, love and the youthful restlessness of waiting for something wonderful to happen.'*

- NRK

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## Johan Harstad

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Johan Harstad (b. 1979) offers a wholly original voice and is one of the most obvious talents published by Gyldendal for many years.

He sees human fates in modern reality in a way that is both urgent and refined, offering a complete involvement and a particular sense of absurd humor. His characters often stand slightly to one side, at a distance to the major pulse of society. They are vulnerable, lonely, different.



Johan Harstad made his debut 21 years old, with a contribution to *Postboks 6860* in 2000, releasing his first collection of prose works, *From here on you just get older*, in 2001. In addition to his critically acclaimed novels, Harstad has also written four pieces for the theatre, collected in *BSIDES* published in 2008.