



The Mystery of Henri Pick

By David Foenkinos



In the small town of Crozon in Brittany, a library houses manuscripts that were rejected for publication: the faded dreams of aspiring writers. Visiting while on holiday, young editor Delphine Despero is thrilled to discover a novel so powerful that she feels compelled to bring it back to Paris to publish it.

The book is a sensation, prompting fevered interest in the identity of its author - apparently one Henri Pick, a now-deceased pizza chef from Crozon. Sceptics cry that the whole thing is a hoax: how could this man have written such a masterpiece?

*An obstinate journalist, Jean-Michel Rouche, heads to Brittany to investigate. By turns farcical and moving, *The Mystery of Henri Pick* is a fast-paced comic mystery enriched by a deep love of books - and of the authors who write them.*

David Foenkinos is a French author and screenwriter. He studied literature and music in Paris. His novel *La délicatesse* is a bestseller in France and he was awarded the Prix Renaudot in 2014 for his novel *Charlotte*.

Discussion Questions

- 1) What are your thoughts on the concept of a library of rejected manuscripts?

- 2) How is the idea of sanctuaries explored within this novel? For example, the library as a sanctuary for rejected novels or Magali's affair as a sanctuary from reality.

- 3) Do you think Foenkinos establishes a strong sense of place?

4) How does the novel within this novel, *The Last Hours of a Love Affair*, compare or contrast the romantic relationships?

5) Do you think the author wants the reader to sympathise with Magali in her attempt at finding happiness through an affair?

6) Do you think the romantic relationship between Delphine and Frederic genuine?

7) Are Delphine and Frederic likeable characters?

8) Were you expecting the twist at the end of the book? Did it shift your opinions of any of the characters?

9) Did you enjoy the style of writing in this novel? Was there some use of poetic language that you particularly liked? Alternatively, did you think Foenkinos' language should have been more to the point?

Thank you to our volunteer Ella for choosing this title and creating the resource.