

THE NEW YORKER

# The Fiction Editors: Deborah Treisman



CHOKING

ALEXANDRA

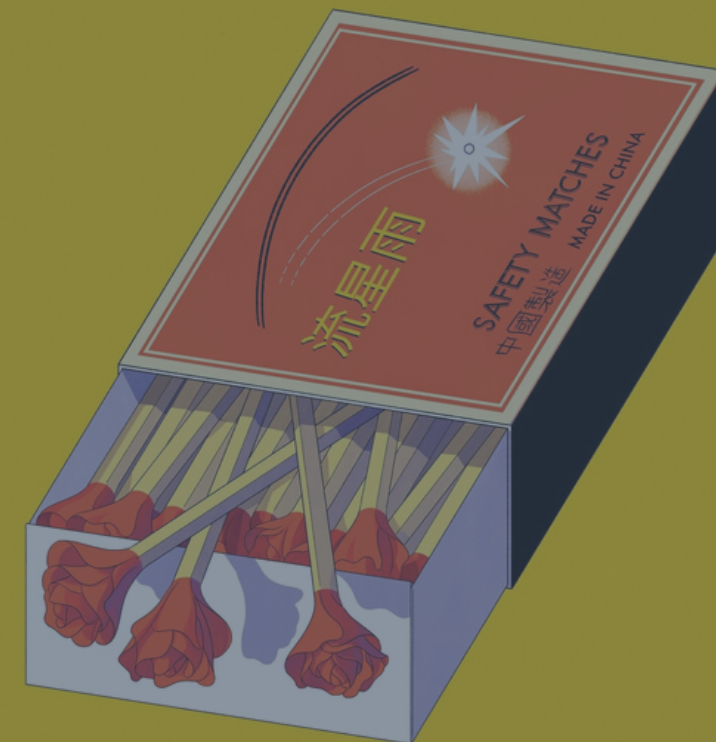
KLEEMAN

The Miracle

Lara Vapnyar

For the Best

Ann Beattie



JOHN LANCHESTER  
SIGNAL





# Background

---

- Born in Oxford and moved to Vancouver at age 8
- Family of academics and scientists
  - Parents and siblings are professors
  - Step-father shares a Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences



# Background

---

- Received her first literary rejection from the New Yorker at age 11
- Degree in Comparative Literature from UC Berkley
- Joined the New Yorker's fiction department at 27



Javier Marías on John Ford's Movies

John Berger: A Place Weeping



- EDITOR AT THREEPENNY REVIEW
- INTERNSHIP AT HARPER'S BAZAAR
- EDITOR OF GRAND STREET

LITERARY  
BACKGROUND

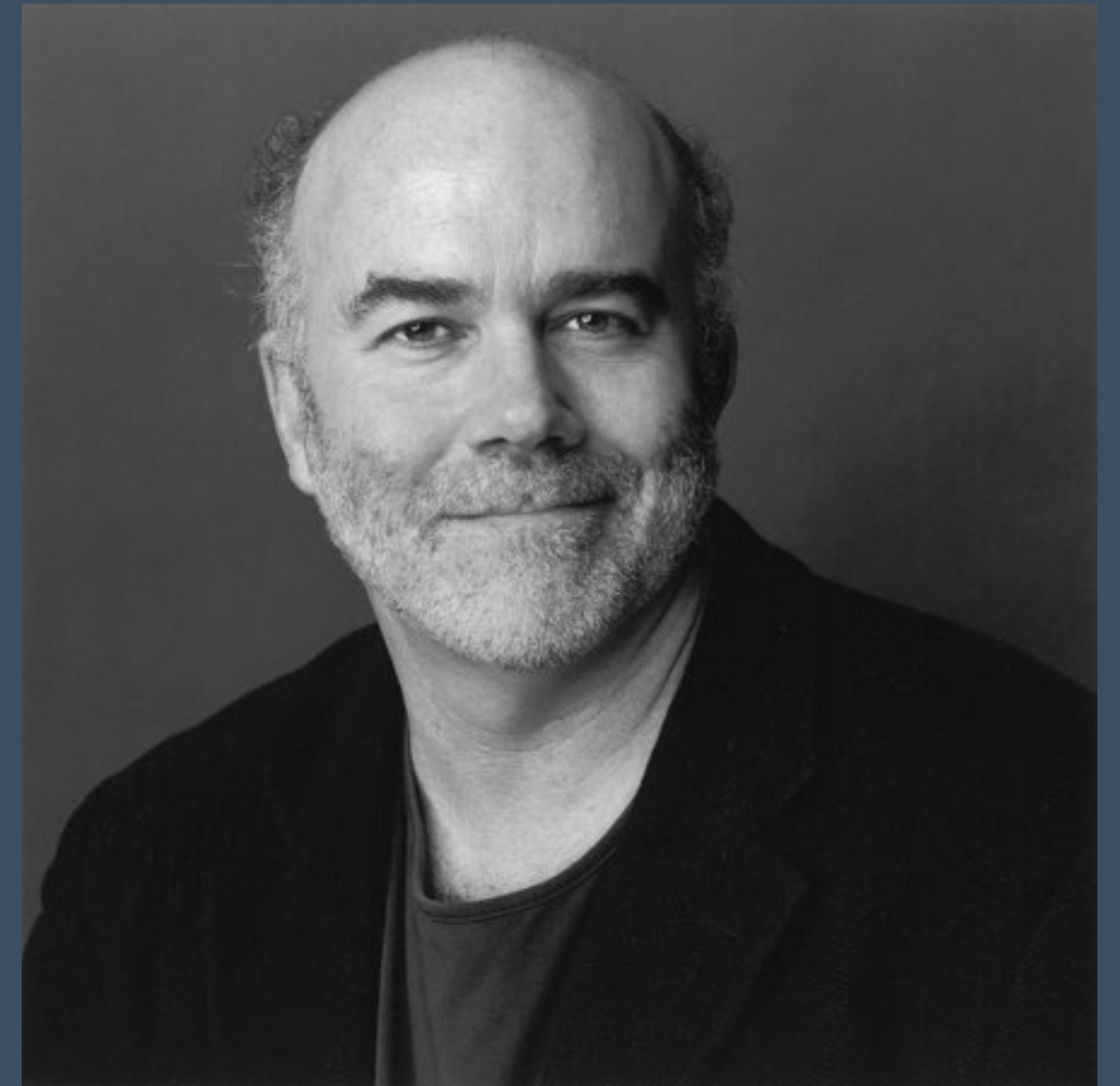
# The New Yorker



- Meets Bill Buford
- Deputy fiction editor for five years
- Appointed by David Remnick, editor of the New Yorker, in 2002 at 31 years old
- "The truth of the matter is that she has already been running the place," Mr. Buford said. "It will run much more smoothly with her in place."

# Bill Buford: Previous Fiction Editor

- APPOINTED BY TINA BROWN IN 1995
- SLUSH PILE
- MALE-CENTRIC
- PUBLISHED AUTHORS SUCH AS ZADIE SMITH AND JUNOT DÍAZ



# Appointment Reception

And what of Treisman? She's young (32), stylish, hip, and married to an indie-rocker whose band apparently sounds like a cross between The Who and My Bloody Valentine. Clearly, she is one of us, or at least a much cooler and more interesting version of us. At last, Updike and Munro would be put out to pasture because Treisman knows that the kids *are* alright! In the *Times* story announcing her elevation, she commented, 'We publish the best work we receive.' This sounded good to us since we knew *our* stories were plenty good, but as of yet, we hadn't met Salman at any cocktail parties.

**"I was here for five years, working very closely with Bill Buford, the last fiction editor, and in many instances we absolutely agreed about fiction, so there isn't a radical shift."**

■

DEBORAH TREISMAN, 2003

**"There are certainly voices that appeal to Bill that don't appeal to me, although I think the gender issue is barking up the wrong tree."**

■

DEBORAH TREISMAN, 2002

- "Our slush pile fairly often yields stories that merit serious consideration."
- "At any given time, there are scores of writers whom we're reading and following and encouraging through rewrites, in addition to those we're actually publishing."
  - Authors obtain agents during rewrites

# The Slush Pile

"For us, agents function as first-round readers, pulling talent out of their slush piles and bringing it to our attention. It's a great service, and it can save writers quite a bit of time. So, although we don't discriminate in any way against writers who don't yet have agents and we will always search through our slush pile as well, we do appreciate the judgment and discernment of the agents who consistently recognize raw talent and send it our way."

## The Slush Pile



## SUBMISSIONS

"...approximately 200 to 300 submissions a week, of which she reads about 40."

## CRITICISM

"...about 20 to 25 % are written by unknown authors."

## SELECTION PROCESS (OR LACK THEREOF)

"...a published story must 'achieve on its own terms..' [it] 'must do what it set out to do.'"



—  
**THE NEW  
YORKER**

- DESPITE PREVIOUS COMMENTS ABOUT GENDER, FEMALE AUTHORSHIP IN THE *NEW YORKER* HAS INCREASED UNDER TREISMAN
- "A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO STAY OPEN" REGARDING DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS
- FICTION PODCAST

CONTRIBUTIONS

**"I SUPPOSE IT IS NOT WRONG  
TO SAY THAT THAT I AM  
INTERESTED IN YOUNGER,  
MORE EXPERIMENTAL, EDGIER  
VOICES."**

---



**“But just realising how uncomfortable it made me, I thought that’s a reason to put it out in the world because it’s stirring things up. It’s making people think.”**

Deborah Treisman on "Cat Person"



"I fear this goes back to the basic rules of narrative structure: without some form of conflict, you have no plot. Happiness doesn't provide progression or development. It's very difficult to write an entirely cheerful story and have it be interesting."