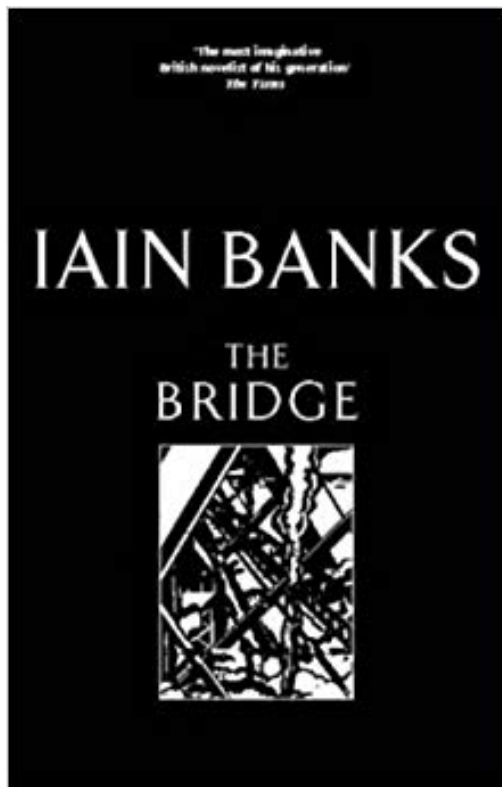


## The Bridge *by* Iain Banks



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**ISBN:** 0316858544

**ISBN13:** 978-0316858540

**Author:** Iain Banks

**Book title:** The Bridge

**Pages:** 288

**Publisher:** Time Warner Books Uk (July 2001)

**Language:** English

**Category:** Contemporary

**Size PDF version:** 1919 kb

**Size ePUB version:** 1855 kb

**Size FB2 version:** 1818 kb

**Other formats:** lit txt doc lrf

The man who wakes up in the extraordinary world of a bridge has amnesia, and his doctor doesn't seem to want to cure him. Does it matter? Exploring the bridge occupies most of his days. But at night there are his dreams. Dreams in which desperate men drive sealed carriages across barren mountains to a bizarre rendezvous; an illiterate barbarian storms an enchanted tower under a stream of verbal abuse; and broken men walk forever over bridges without end, taunted by visions of a doomed sexuality. Lying in bed unconscious after an accident wouldn't be much fun, you'd think. Oh yes? It depends who and what you've left behind. Which is the stranger reality, day or night? Frequently hilarious and consistently disturbing, THE BRIDGE is a novel of outrageous contrasts, constructed chaos and elegant absurdities.



## Reviews of the *The Bridge* by Iain Banks

Ndav

Have you ever had the experience of finishing a book with goosebumps all over? Have you ever had the experience of still having those bumps come and go an hour later after you've done several other things?

Banks' "Wasp Factory" is frequently called "One of the 20th century's 100 greatest novels". It pales in comparison to "The Bridge".

This multi-layered story had me telling my friends 'He has a lot of plates spinning, I don't see how he can wrap this up... bound to dissappoint'. Instead, Banks manages to ratchet upward toward the end. The physical metaphors present in his dream worlds become the vehicle to converge the story lines. A reader's 'informed suspicions' begin to come true.

In some venues, 'figuring it out too early' is a self-spoiler. In this book, each tiny confirmation of a foreshadowing becomes a progressive victory to the reader.

There is almost nothing I can say about the story itself without revealing some of the progression, and therefore undoing some of the satisfaction. Avoid the reviews that give a plot summary... just go read the book.

As a side note, I've read every one of Iain M. Banks "Science Fiction" novels. I put that in quotes because those books are thinly veiled political/social commentary. A post-scarcity society is just a backdrop to explore human motivation, and sometimes folly. I am now reading all of Iain Banks "literary" novels in order. I put that word in quotes because these novels are magnifying glasses, often wavy with distortion, held over human behavior... and almost always folly. Most of use only ahve to be struck between the eyebrows with a bloody great club a dozen or so times before things begin to penetrate. And Banks wields one of the heaviest clubs I've recently encountered.

Iseared

This book is a fascinating read, whether worthwhile or not is hard to say. The protagonist, never named, is wrenched from a hedonistic, but quite successful, lifestyle into a long dreamful coma by a road accident on the Forth bridge brought about, at least in part, by alcohol and marijuana. The protagonist appears to resemble the author in many respects but one is never sure to what extent, if any, this is actually autobiographical. The dreams, of a life on a never-ending bridge, have a Coleridge-like quality, but, unlike Xanadu, are apparently well remembered on the eventual emergence from the coma. The reader probably has to be British, maybe even Scottish, to understand a lot of what is going on here for its reflex far left, Scottish independence, drug and alcohol besotted, women galore experience and outlook. That this guy continues as a successful engineer is asserted but not well explored or explained; this life would finish most of us.

Tane

Numerous tales intertwine here, each intriguing and pulling the reader onward. I felt like I was bobbing in a troubled sea, waves and currents increasing from many directions until they finally generated a great concluding waterspout.

All of the curious characters are finely wrought; John Orr and his dreams real and made up, his temptress Abberlaine Arrol, the barbarian swordsman and his familiar, Andrea and her lover(s). Not unlike seeing some movies of late ("The 6th Sense" comes to mind) I felt ready and needing to reread "The Bridge" upon its conclusion. To help settle the images, ideas and plots that it had planted in my imagination, and because the delicious texture and pace of the novel invites the wish that it wouldn't end quite yet.

I can't call this CyberPunk, but it feels familiarly like it. I can't say that it's post-apocolyptic but it feels that way too. Two of my favorite genres disguised as the dark world of Iain Banks' "The Bridge".

An intense compelling read indeed!

AfinaS

I first read this book when it was first published 30+ years ago, before the publishers wrote a synopsis of the plot on the back cover. It's a great read with imaginative plot twists.

Monin

It is probably one of the most intriguing books I've ever read; it definitely made its place in my top ten. An antiphony of metaphors and realism. It is not for the impatient and those of you that look for a weekend reading should stay away. Once you start reading, it will make its own pace. A brilliant novel.

Kajishakar

Loved the story and was fascinated by the history included in it.

MisterMax

I really enjoyed The Bridge. Doug Marlette is a fantastic writer. The story is a fascinating look at one family's history and the mysteries that unfold as the main character delves into the past and gets to know his grandmother after he moves closer to her. Spellbinding!

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