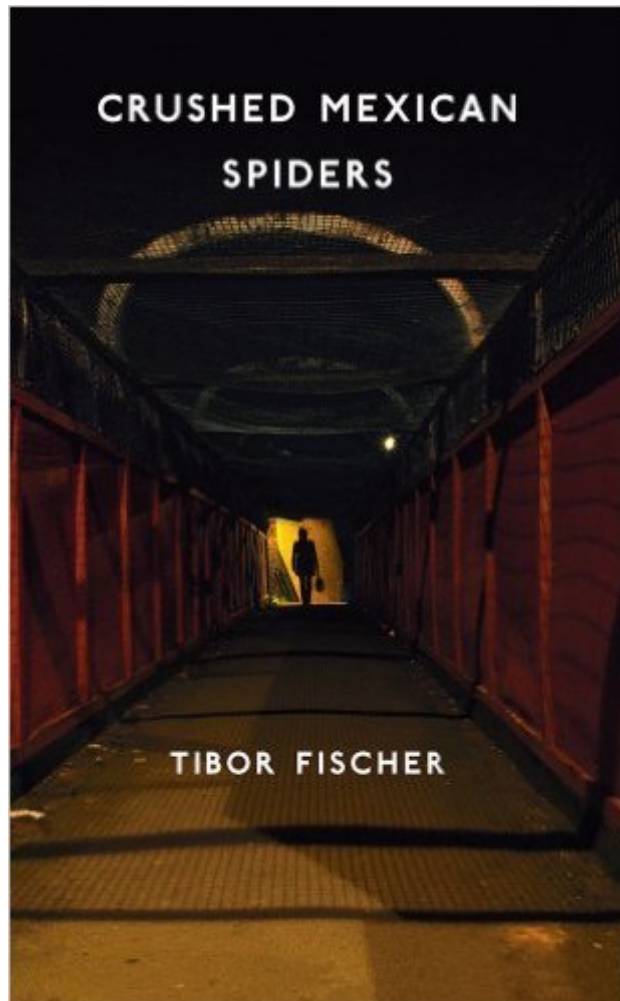


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Crushed Mexican Spiders: & Possibly Forty Ships



Synopsis

The appearance of any new work by Tibor Fischer is a cause for celebration. Here are two dazzling new stories that show why he is so admired. The first, *Crushed Mexican Spiders*, is classic Fischer. Don't be fooled by the title: the poet laureate of London grime is on home ground as a woman returns home to discover the key to her Brixton flat no longer works. Haunting images and crisp one-liners are about all that link it with the second tale, *Possibly Forty Ships*, the true story of the Trojan War. In a scene straight out of a Tarantino movie, an old man is being tortured, pressed to reveal how the greatest legend of all really happened. (Let's just say it bears scant resemblance to Homer: "If you see war as a few ships sinking in the middle of the waves, a few dozen warriors in armor, frankly not as gleaming as it could be, being welcomed whole-heartedly by the water, far, far away from Troy, if you see that as war, then it was a war . . .") The stories are published in a beautiful small hardback edition, each one illustrated by the work of the acclaimed Czech photographer Hana Vojtková. The book has two front covers: read one way you're in south London at night; turn it over and you're being burned by the harsh glare of Mediterranean sunlight.

Book Information

Paperback: 64 pages

Publisher: Random House UK (November 24, 2011)

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Product Dimensions: 4.5 x 0.4 x 7.2 inches

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Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (2 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

The first thing to note about the book is how short it is. "Crushed Mexican Spiders" is a mere 12 pages on small pages and "Possibly Forty Ships" is 20 pages. The book is nicely put together, a dinky hardback with the stories printed flipside by side so you have to turn the book around to read

the other story when you've finished the other one, and the jacket is nicely designed. And that's basically what you're paying for, a nicely put together book with some ok-ish but very short stories. "CMS" is about what living in London does to a person, how it changes them from decent people into soulless, mistrustful drones. A woman returning from a business trip finds her key won't open her flat door and that someone else is living in it. She doesn't recognise her neighbours nor does anyone recognise her. Her bank cards don't work, her friends and family phone numbers don't work, and she is all alone in London with nowhere to go and no idea what's happened to her life. The story stands out for its ambiguity and could be read as what homelessness and mental illness must be like or a kind of witch's curse story (the protagonist kills her neighbour's spiders who were specially bred - maybe her neighbour magicked her life away?). But it's haunting finale and overall creepy factor make this an interesting story and the better of the two. "PFS" is about what "really" happened at Troy and is told by a witness of the events, revealing that in fact what happened was there were far fewer ships, men, and heroes, and it was mostly a lie. It's an interesting-ish idea, that I think Fischer thought was funny but really isn't, and the writing of it isn't that great to read. Also, who cares about Troy - really? The book is put out by Unbound, a crowd sourced publisher who say they are doing something revolutionary though they are only putting out second rate material from already established writers - for my money, not that revolutionary. If you go to their website you can find out more about how it works and if you chip in with a donation, you get your name printed in the book, the list in this book being almost as long as the stories themselves. Still, an interesting experiment but I think self-publishing via the Kindle is far more revolutionary. Not the best work from Tibor Fischer but a well-made book and at least one of the stories was fun. That said, it takes about 10 minutes to read so if you love book design you'll be buying this more for the tactile object of the book rather than the content. For anyone else, you have to ask yourself if paying seven quid for 32 pages is worth it or not - for me, not really.

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