

Mécaniques du chaos
 “The Mechanics of Chaos”

Daniel Rondeau

August 2017, 464 pages



Longlisted for Prix Renaudot and Prix Interallié

What do Habiba, a Somali teen who survives a shipwreck off the coast of Malta, Grimaud, a French archaeologist living in Tunisia, and Levent, a Turkish businessman working with the Erdogan government, all have in common? At first glance, not much... And yet, we will learn that their lives are inextricably linked. From France to the Mediterranean basin, by way of Africa, Daniel Rondeau offers us a novel that, similar to the motion picture film “Babel”, interweaves the stories of its different characters, while also shining a light on the great geopolitical and societal issues of our times.

Everything begins with Habiba, a Somali adolescent who survives a shipwreck off the coast of Malta. She washed up on the beach a few days earlier, after a long and exhausting journey across the sea. Her brother has also made it, though he is in critical condition. They are the only survivors of a disaster in which dozens of migrants have died. Having lost everything, they have no idea where to go...

At that same moment in Tunisia, Sébastien Grimaud, a Frenchman and retired archaeologist who now devotes his time to writing, is contacted by Levent, a man working for the Turkish secret services. Levent’s father was a friend of Grimaud’s and, despite their political differences, had been a great help to the Frenchman’s archaeological digs. Levent would now like to take advantage of Grimaud’s expertise, and offers him the chance to join him in the illegal traffic of art works...

From the streets of Istanbul to the ruins of an ancient city pillaged by Islamists, from Tunis to the French suburbs abandoned by the state, Daniel Rondeau ties and unties the threads of contemporary chaos, where greed, politics, and religion intertwine... This novel will fascinate readers with its ambition, intelligence, and incredible gallery of characters.

Daniel Rondeau has published a number of works with Grasset, including *Dans la marche du temps*, which was critically acclaimed by the international press, *Les vignes de Berlin*, *L'Enthousiasme*, *Malta Hanina* and *Boxing Club*. In 1998, he received the Grand Prix Paul Morand de l'Académie française for his body of work.

Foreign rights sold for previous works: English (Cedars Publishing), Maltese (Faraxa Publishing), Russian (Center for Book)

“One of the most shocking works of this fall literary season.” *Paris Match*

“Daniel Rondeau has built a powerful literary machine against a geopolitical backdrop. Here is a wildly ambitious novel, where the ultimate goal is nothing less than to make sense of our insane era, and have the real world enter a paper parallelepiped, like a boat inside a bottle, tossed into the sea.” *Livres Hebdo*

“An archaeologist, dealers, secret agents, and Salafists, all cross paths in this spy novel written by someone who knows the Mediterranean world quite well. More than just a geopolitical thriller, it is a meditation on the catalysts of terrorism.” *Le Magazine littéraire*