



On the Map: A Mind-Expanding Exploration of the Way the World Looks (Ala Notable Books for Adults)

By Simon Garfield

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On the Map: A Mind-Expanding Exploration of the Way the World Looks (Ala Notable Books for Adults) By Simon Garfield

Cartography enthusiasts rejoice: the bestselling author of the *Just My Type* reveals the fascinating relationship between man and map.

Simon Garfield's *Just My Type* illuminated the world of fonts and made everyone take a stand on Comic Sans and care about kerning. Now Garfield takes on a subject even dearer to our fanatical human hearts: maps.

Imagine a world without maps. How would we travel? Could we own land? What would men and women argue about in cars? Scientists have even suggested that mapping—not language—is what elevated our prehistoric ancestors from apedom. Follow the history of maps from the early explorers' maps and the awe-inspiring medieval Mappa Mundi to Google Maps and the satellite renderings on our smartphones, Garfield explores the unique way that maps relate and realign our history—and reflect the best and worst of what makes us human.

Featuring a foreword by Dava Sobel and packed with fascinating tales of cartographic intrigue, outsize personalities, and amusing “pocket maps” on an array of subjects from how to fold a map to the strangest maps on the Internet, *On the Map* is a rich historical tapestry infused with Garfield's signature narrative flair. Map-obsessives and everyone who loved *Just My Type* will be lining up to join Garfield on his audacious journey through time and around the globe.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Garfield follows up the best-seller *Just My Type* (2011) with an engrossing, endlessly fascinating history of maps. Following a foreword by popular-science writer Dava Sobel, he invites readers along on a trip through time and around the world that is enlightening and impossible to put down. The narrative dances from Marco Polo to Vinland, the first atlas (“the world in a book”), Lewis and Clark, the grids of Manhattan, and even the opening sequence of *Casablanca*. The people and places he has chosen to discuss are a collection of curiosities without peer, and even short “pocket map” visits with J. M. Barrie, the explorers Burke and Wills lost in Australia, and Winston Churchill’s WWII Map Room are diversions not to be missed. The length and breadth of his scholarship are staggering, while the witty tone makes for the most convivial of literary guides. There are dusty archives, library echoes, and abandoned destinations, but also the most contemporary of surveys with brisk considerations of Google Maps and the MRI. Popular history is an overused term these days, but Garfield rewrites the definition by issuing an irresistible invitation to see the world, and delivering on his promise of “the map as story, the map as life.” --Colleen Mondor

Review

Praise for *On the Map*

“Simon Garfield is charming company. His passion for the graphic carries the reader along [...] *On the Map* offers a world of revelation.”

—*USA Today*

“Mr. Garfield’s book serves an immense need, connecting the latest geocacher with both the ancient art and modern science of the cartographer. Each may benefit from learning how the other approaches maps. Mr. Garfield uniquely provides that bridge.”

—*Pittsburgh Post Gazette*

“There is a great deal that is good and charming and fun about this book.”

—Simon Winchester, *The Washington Post*

“Garfield has a knack for creating high-spirited, erudite and user-friendly books on subjects that may seem crashingly dull to all but a few fanatics. [...] *On the Map* is a treasure: exhilarating, witty, compulsively readable and just plain fun.”

—*Seattle Times*

“A collection of marvelous anecdotes that explore the role maps have played in shaping human culture since ancient times.”

—NPR.org

“Garfield’s new book details the evolution of cartography and why maps play such a vital role in our lives. [...] his reverence for the form shines through vividly.”

—*Penthouse*

“Garfield’s interest in the human side of mapmaking— the personalities, anecdotes, curiosities—is what makes *On the Map* such an enjoyable read. [...] vastly entertaining.”

–BookPage

"Garfield is a wonderful writer who deploys suspense to excellent effect, making each chapter read like a delightful short story or mini-mystery; his book speaks of vast, hidden depths."

–*Smithsonian Magazine*

"A vivid foray into the romance of maps. [...] A fine, fun presentation of the brand of cartography that continues to whet our imaginations."

–*Kirkus*

"Engaging ...full of little conversation pieces"

–Janet Maslin, *New York Times*

"Enlightening and impossible to put down [. . .] The length and breadth of his scholarship are staggering, while the witty tone makes for the most convivial of literary guides."

–*Booklist*

"Readers will enjoy this romp through 16,000 years of mapmaking."

–*Library Journal*, starred review

"Delightful... If maps be the fuel of wanderlust, read on."

–From the foreword by Dava Sobel, author of *Longitudes*

"There couldn't be anyone better to write about our love for maps than Simon Garfield, who is a master at unearthing strange facts and mixing them with a lively personal narrative...fascinating."

–Giles Foden, *Condé Nast Traveller (UK)*

"Completely enthralling."

–*Daily Mail (UK)*

"Garfield has a genius for being sparked to life by esoteric enthusiasm and charming readers with his delight."

–*Times (UK)*

"Simon Garfield's new book is a rollicking sweep through map history, packed with curiosities and written with verve . . . *On the Map* will inspire you to take a trip to somewhere new, buy an antique globe to chart the rise and fall of empires, or just dig out a tatty orange Ordnance Survey Explorer map and let its filigree of contour lines evoke a long-forgotten walk in the rain . . . a great book."

–*Independent on Sunday (UK)*

"A pub quizzers' dream . . . Rather than over-romanticise the experience of map-reading, Garfield allows his varied, expertly researched stories to speak for themselves, and in so doing helps us see that there are fewer things in life more useful, rewarding and beautiful than a map that does what it's supposed to. Perhaps if Apple had read the book a few months ago, today's iPhone users would have a much better idea of where they're going."

–*Daily Telegraph (UK)*

Praise for *Just My Type*:

"This is a smart, funny, accessible book that does for typography what Lynne Truss's best-selling *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* did for punctuation: made it noticeable for people who had no idea they were interested in such things."

—Janet Maslin, *The New York Times*

"An engaging look at the world of fonts. [...] *Just My Type* urges us to put on the brakes and take in the scenery as far as typography goes. Whether you're a graphic designer or a layperson with no background in this area, reading what Garfield has to say will change the way you perceive the written word forever."

—*The Los Angeles Times*

"Reading Simon Garfield's *Just My Type* can transform your daily life into an endless quest for knowledge of the typefaces in which signs, books, magazines, newspapers, etc. are set."

—*The Washington Post*

"Highly entertaining ... Garfield takes readers on a rollicking tour of the world of typography, from book jackets to road signs, TV shows to computers."

—*USA Today*

"A deliriously clever and entertaining book"

—*The Boston Globe*

"Informative, delightful — and essential reading for word geeks everywhere."

—*The Seattle Times*

"Lively [...] intriguing [...] a cheeky book about the human side and our reaction to fonts."

—*Seattle Post Intelligencer*

"This is a book for typography lovers who just can't get enough of their favorite fonts. In this well-researched book, Garfield takes a look back at the history of typefaces and how they've influenced consumers throughout the years. Using specific examples, Garfield shows just how powerful different fonts can be."

—*Philadelphia Intelligencer*

"For typomaniacs [...] who can't rest until they've identified a font, Garfield's engaging history of letter design will be eye candy."

—NPR.org

"Irresistable."

—*The Huffington Post*

"Garfield's romping history (with multitype text) is zestfully informative."

—*Booklist*

"Garfield dances across 560 years of typographic history, sprinkled with fascinating anecdotes and vignettes, to infect you with his own inability to walk past a sign without identifying the typeface and some curious factoid about it. Funny and fascinating, irreverent and playful yet endlessly illuminating, the book is an absolute treat for the type-nerd, design history geek, and general lover of intelligent writing with humor."

—*The Atlantic*

“A thoroughly entertaining, well-informed tour of typefaces”

—*Kirkus*

A “lively romp through the history of fonts. Garfield’s evocative prose entices us to see letters instead of just reading them.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Whether you’re a hardcore typophile or a type-tyro, there’s something here for you: be it the eye-opening revelations of Eric Gill’s utter and complete perversity, or the creation of the typeface that helped Mr. Obama gain entrance to the White House.”

—Chip Kidd

"*Just My Type* is an entertaining romp through the world of type design. Mr. Garfield explains the angst and the joy of typography; this is a great book for design geeks to press into the hands of the uninitiated in hopes of conversions, like missionaries with a religious tract."

—Audrey Niffenegger, author of *The Time Traveler's Wife*

“With wit, grace and intelligence, Simon Garfield tells the fascinating stories behind the letters that we encounter every day on our street corners, our bookstore shelves, and our computer screens. As someone who’s worked with typography for over three decades, I kept finding lots of surprises. So will anyone who cares about the culture of reading and writing and this most ubiquitous of design forms.”

—Michael Bierut, Partner, Pentagram Design, New York

"There is even a photograph of a quick brown fox literally jumping over a lazy dog. What a clever, clever book."

—Lynne Truss

“Did I love this book? My daughter’s middle name is Bodoni. Enough said.”

—Maira Kalman

"Mapping out the historical intricacies of the ampersand and the short-lived interrobang, the serif and the sans serif, Simon Garfield reveals an invisible world behind the printed word. From Trajan’s Column to the ubiquitous Helvetica to the latest typefaces, like Dirtyfax, the lives of the designers and the letters they’ve created have never been more clearly detailed with so much flair."

—Jessica Kerwin Jenkins, author of *Encyclopedia of the Exquisite*

About the Author

Simon Garfield is the author of fourteen acclaimed books of nonfiction including *Just My Type*. He lives in London and St. Ives, Cornwall.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Charles Owens:

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