

Borderlines

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Résumé ou extrait : Europe's internal borders have rarely been 'natural'; they have more often been created by accident or force. In Borderlines, political historian Lewis Baston journeys along twenty-nine key borders from west to east Europe, examining how the map of our continent has been redrawn over the last century, with varying degrees of success. The fingerprints of Napoleon, Alexander I, Castlereagh, Napoleon III and Bismarck are all there, but today's map of Europe is mostly the work of the Allies in 1919 and Stalin in 1945. To journey to the centre of the story of Europe, Baston takes us to its edges, bringing to life the fascinating and often bizarre histories of these border zones. We visit Baarle, the town broken into thirty fragments by the Netherland-Belgium border, and stop in Ostritz, the eastern German town where Nazis held a rock festival. We meander the back lanes of rural Ireland, and soak up the atmosphere in the coffee houses of the Ukrainian city of Chernivtsi. Through these borderlands, Baston explores how places and people heal from the scars left by a Europe of ethnic cleansing and barbed wire fences, and he searches for a better European future - finding it in unexpected places.

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