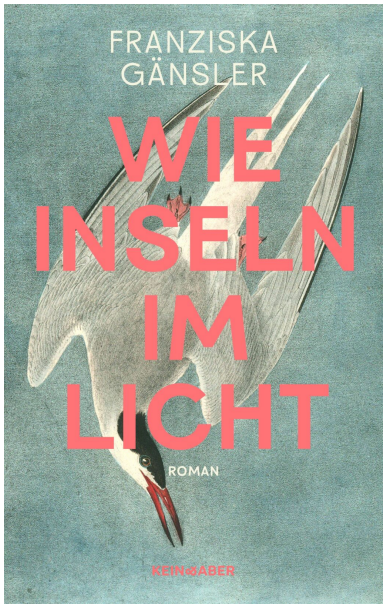


by Franziska Gänsler
Kein & Aber
March 2024 / 208pp
Fiction

Islands of Light

Wie Inseln im Licht

review

Franziska Gänsler's latest novel, set on the Côte d'Argent, is a haunting story of loss, grief, and new beginnings.

Twenty years ago, when Zoey was still a child, her younger sister Oda vanished without a trace from the trailer park by the sea where they lived with their mother. Zoey returns to the French coastal town after her mother's death, planning to scatter her ashes in the sea. Zoey's memories of what happened to Oda all those years ago are disjointed and contradictory. She cannot be sure whether her sister is dead or alive, and sometimes wonders if she existed at all. She fears she might have had something to do with her sister's disappearance. Did she take her into the woods, where she remembers a group of unfriendly campers? Was Oda even in the trailer with her on the night she disappeared?

Zoey starts to investigate, meeting people at the park who remember her mother or have heard of her. Zoey also contacts the police and visits the local newspaper archives, only to discover that no missing children were reported at the time of Oda's disappearance. A mysterious woman who has been watching Zoey introduces herself as her grandmother and reveals the truth about her sister's fate. She explains that Zoey's sister had been severely ill, and that their mother's alternative lifestyle had led her to refuse conventional medical help. Against her daughter's wishes, the grandmother took Oda to the hospital, but it was too late, and the little

girl died there.

Overwhelmed by grief and guilt, Zoey's mother fled to Berlin, telling Zoey that she had no family and refusing to reveal the truth about Oda's disappearance or even mention her again. Only now does Zoey begin to understand that her own lifelong perception of reality has been based on lies.

Franziska Gänsler paints pictures with words, creating a tense, atmospheric scenario that is immediately gripping and keeps the reader on edge until the very end.The narrative explores themes of protection and escape, and the complex nature of family relationships and their lasting impact on our lives. The cast of strong, believable characters includes a number of vividly drawn women who help Zoey come to terms with her experiences, providing a bridge between her troubles and the world around her. 'Islands of Light' is a captivating, thought-provoking read, taking a highly original approach to themes of motherhood, family, and grief. It is, quite simply, unputdownable!

Find out more:
https://www.keinundaber.ch/buecher/wie-inseln-im-licht?variant=47099911

press quotes

> *A book like the grand cinema of Ozon and Sorrentino: shimmering, elegant and – in the best sense – bizarre.*

Yael Inokai

> *Franziska Gänsler is a gentle and superlatively skilful storyteller, in whose hands this tale of perception and truth gradually unfolds, powerfully drawing you in.*

Theresia Enzensberger

> *Franziska Gänsler's books come back to bite you!*

Helen MacCormac, NBG Reader

about the author



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Franziska Gänsler, born in 1987 in Augsburg, studied Art and English in Berlin, Vienna, and Augsburg. In 2020, she made the short list for the Blogbuster Prize and was a finalist in the 28th Open Mike competition. ‘Islands of Light’ is her second novel; her highly acclaimed debut, Ewig Sommer (‘Eternal Summer’), was sold to a number of countries. Franziska divides her time between Augsburg and Berlin.

Previous works: Ewig Sommer, Kein & Aber, 2022. Translated as Eternal Summer, Other Press, 2024.

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Kein&Aber Verlag

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