



by Katharina Geiser  
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Fiction

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## The Dragonfly, or Happiness Four Ways

### *Vierfleck oder Das Glück*

#### review

In Katharina Geiser's latest book she applies her celebrated light, poetic touch to the interconnected lives of a fascinating group of characters. With echoes of Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften* (Elective Affinities), the novel's vivid glimpses of unconventional, bohemian lives also recall Christopher Isherwood.

The protagonists in *The Dragonfly* are the good-natured Eugen Esslinger, a once-wealthy heir to his family's corset business; his younger, vivacious wife Mila; Heinrich Zimmer, a charismatic professor of Indian studies whom they meet while living in the same house; and Christiane, the daughter of the eminent writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal, whom Heinrich eventually marries. Eugen is secretly gay but suppresses his feelings, hoping that his marriage to Mila will provide a respectable family life. Mila soon falls in love with Heinrich, however, and has three children with him. In a highly unusual arrangement, Mila continues to live with Eugen, and Heinrich himself has another three children with Christiane, who is also well aware of the situation.

These intimately connected lives are revealed through snapshots and letters covering four decades, from 1900 to 1944, through war, poverty, and exile. With its universal themes and unique style, *The Dragonfly* is guaranteed to be a striking addition to the English-language market.

## press quotes

*'A poetic, poignant and at times very funny book that is absolutely worth reading.'* – Bittner Bookstore, Cologne

## about the author

**Katharina Geiser** was born in 1956. She studied German and English Philology as well as pedagogy. She lives by Lake Zurich and between Eider and Treene in Schleswig-Holstein.

### **Previous works include:**

*Diese Gezeiten* (2011)