



by Maren Wurster
Hanser Berlin
July 2017 / 160pp
Fiction

This book is outside of the five-year window for guaranteed assistance with English language translation. We suggest getting in touch with the relevant funding body for an informal conversation about the possibility of support. Please refer to our recommendations page for books that are currently covered by our funding guarantee.

The Fur *Das Fell*

review

Consumed with jealousy when her boyfriend takes his ex-wife and their young daughter on holiday, a woman gradually transforms into an animal.

Victoria ('Vic') is in her thirties and lives in Berlin. The novel opens as her all-consuming psychological obsession takes hold, eventually spiralling into complete darkness. Her boyfriend Karl has left to go on holiday with his ex-wife and their small daughter. Driven by anger and jealousy, with no response to the messages she sends him, she decides to follow them. She packs a backpack and heads for the Baltic Sea on her bike. She plots revenge, considering throwing a stone at Karl's head the minute she sees him. There is hatred brewing inside her, alongside frustration and fear of abandonment. In that dark, claustrophobic place the novel has an almost dystopian, Kafkaesque quality.

On her journey north Vic remembers their relationship, the good times and how they met, while sending Karl increasingly threatening text messages. She is showering at a campsite when she realises with horror that hair has grown on her back. Over the following days a thick fur begins to spread all over her back, but there is nothing Vic can do about it. She travels across the flat landscape through peaceful little villages, staying at guesthouses and campsites and encountering all sorts of people, listening to their stories while trying to find her own voice. Ashamed and afraid that her appearance will attract attention and disdain, she keeps her distance and covers her

back with a scarf. In one small town she finally sees a doctor, but we never find out her diagnosis.

Struggling with her transformation and her anger about Karl, she arrives at the Baltic Sea and observes the little family having dinner at their guesthouse. She stands paralysed in front of Karl and is about to confront him – the stone in her hands – when she realises that her journey has changed her and finds herself unable to attack him. She leaves Karl and his family behind and takes the train back to Berlin. In the last passage, she puts on a dress with a low-cut back and we understand that she has grown more comfortable with her changed body and is trying to adjust to her new condition.

The Fur is a wonderfully bizarre road novel full of exact, sharp observations. Maren Wurster's lyrical debut is reminiscent of Lena Andersson's *Wilful Disregard* in its captivating style and elegant, literary writing.

press quotes

Maren Wurster debuta en la novela con la idea de reavivar las percepciones del lector... Y lo logra de modo asombroso.
– Deutschlandfunk

With her first novel Maren Wurster aims to waken the reader's senses – with astonishing success.
– Deutschlandfunk

about the author

Maren Wurster was born in 1976 and lives in Berlin. She studied theatre, film and TV studies, German philology and philosophy in Cologne. In 2016 she completed her Master's degree at the Deutsches Literaturinstitut Leipzig. *Das Fell* is her first novel.

rights information

Carl Hanser Verlag

Kolbergerstrasse 22, 81679 Munich, Germany

Contact: Friederike Barakat

Tel: +49 89 99830 509

Email: friederike.barakat@hanser.de

www.hanser-literaturverlage.de

Carl Hanser Verlag was established by its eponymous owner in 1928 in Munich, and its founder's interests in both literature and science have been maintained to the present day. The firm publishes fiction and non-fiction for both adults and children. Its authors include Italo Calvino, Umberto Eco, Jostein Gaarder, Lars Gustafsson, Milan Kundera, Harry Mulisch, Philip Roth, Susan Sontag, Botho Strauß, Raoul Schrott, Rafik Schami, Alfred Brendel, Elke Heidenreich and ten Nobel prizewinners, among them Elias Canetti, whose works have been translated into more than thirty different languages.