



by
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Fiction

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Why the Gentlemen Are Wearing Starfish

Weshalb die Herren Seesterne tragen

review

Karl, a retired teacher and father to a grown-up son, sets out to find out what happiness really is. He has chosen a snowless ski resort as the base for his research, and moves into an inn where he is the only customer, with just the disgruntled innkeeper and her dog for company. The King of Bhutan, we learn, once designed a questionnaire to measure the Gross National Happiness of his country. Karl modifies it and starts to question the villagers – but will this quasi-scientific method lead him to the answers he desires?

This, the author's second novel, was longlisted for the German Book Prize and has been widely praised for its unique style and idiosyncratic plot. Her protagonists are ordinary people in an ordinary, provincial part of Austria, but Weidenholzer's fractured narrative and her succinct, laconic tone are anything but. Funny, original and as strange as its title, this short novel is an immersive and unforgettable reading experience.

rights information

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