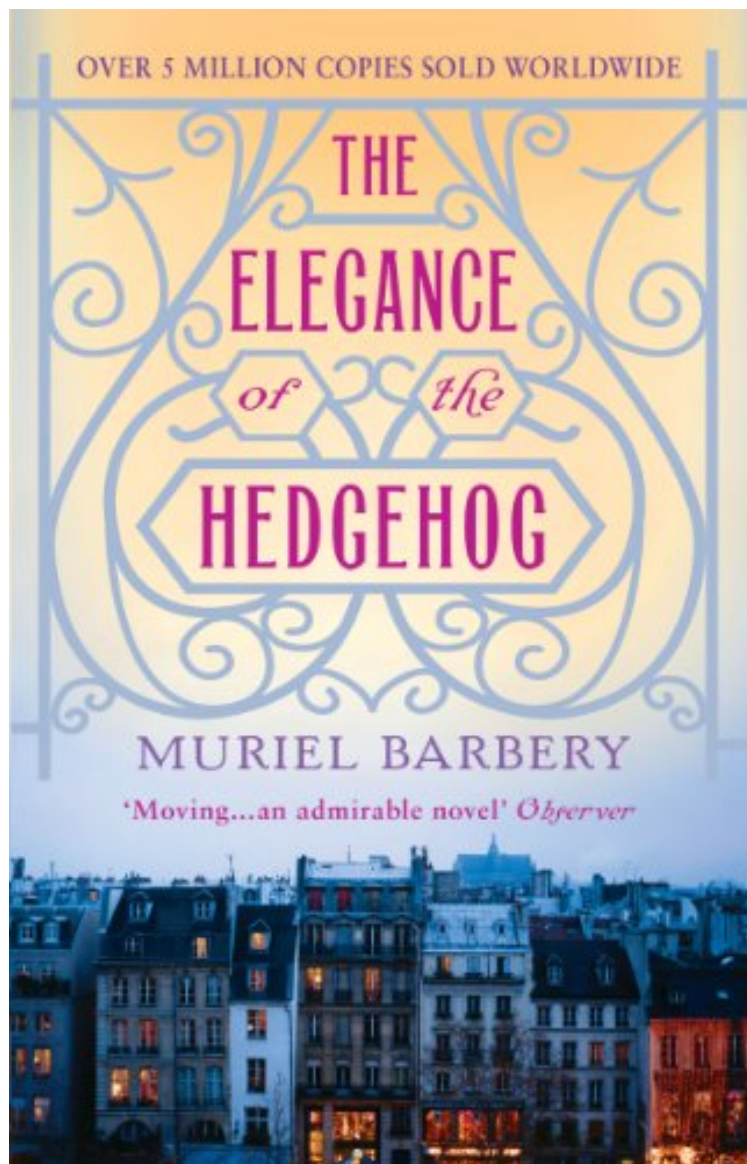


(Mobile ebook) The Elegance of the Hedgehog

The Elegance of the Hedgehog

Von Muriel Barbery

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Von Muriel Barbery : The Elegance of the Hedgehog before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Elegance of the Hedgehog:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen3 von 4 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. THE ELEGANCE OF THE HEDGEHOG: Does it pass the cherry plum test?Von Irma FritzRecently, I had occasion to see Carrie Fisher's, "Wishful Drinking." It's billed as a hilarious one-woman show. What it was, was Carrie "dishing" on

herself, her family, and her friends, knocking herself with one put-down after another. I find this brand of humor about as uproariously funny or entertainingly hilarious as watching a drunk vomiting in public. What emerged from the actress's mouth was a stream of foul-mouthed self-loathing, a performance so demeaning to herself, it was utterly painful to watch. Just as I was repulsed by Carrie's act, so was I unable to work up any sympathy for the self-denigrating protagonist of "The Elegance of the Hedgehog," Muriel Barbery's wildly popular novel, and a New York Times bestseller, of a Parisian concierge who works in an up-scale condominium, filled with upper-class, self-important, and foolish tenants. Rene Michel is the self-described hedgehog of the story. She depicts her physical appearance in the most disparaging words of self-hatred. To this, she adds, defiantly, that she is neither friendly nor makes an effort to be liked. She is "the child of nothing, struggling to make her way in a world of privileged affluent people." Later we are asked to believe that the cause of Rene's innate dislike of the rich has its origins in her sister's past misfortunes. Rene takes a sadomasochistic pleasure in the fact that her appearance so matches up to the building tenants' narrow-minded expectations of a concierge. Secretly, she takes them to task for their faulty grammar, for their pretensions and social climbing, while she assumes--relishing this fact--that they regard her as boorish and stupid. What Rene is hiding from them is her love of art, music, and literature. She spouts philosophy (albeit to herself and her cat, Leo), and dotes on all things Japanese. Just as we begin to weary of Rene's philosophical musings, we are treated to the "profound" thoughts of Rene's foil, Paloma, the 12-year-old daughter of wealthy tenants who faithfully journalizes her low judgment of others, as well as her plans for suicide and arson. Rene and Paloma are equals in intelligence and disparaging wit, a fact both keep hidden from others and each other. In addition, they share a grudge against the world they live in: Rene against the wealthy; Paloma against grownups. Eventually, the two become friends. The person who brings them together is the new tenant, Kakuro Ozu. He is a wealthy and cultured Japanese man, sought-after by his neighbors. As he has a gift for recognizing the truly intelligent who share his fine appreciation of art, in this fairy tale, Monsieur Ozu snubs his rich neighbors in favor of the lowly concierge and the bratty child. As Rene and Kakuro sip tea, discuss art and literature, they discover that they are soul mates. Just as with Carrie Fisher, Rene eventually does get the chance to air out her family closet of dirty laundry before she is whisked off in a deus ex machine moment of the story, with Paloma having the last word as we are made to believe that the child somehow finds a sense of catharsis in this ridiculous ending. Although, I'm not able to read Ms. Barbery's work in the original French, in translation, her sentences are fluid and pleasing. While I'm not persuaded that the book is social satire motivated by a Swiftian spirit to mend the world, I found "The Elegance of the Hedgehog" a thought-provoking work. Furthermore, I applaud Europa editions for bringing contemporary European literature to American readers in English translation. I have no experience with French concierges and perhaps Ms. Barbery has never met any of the confident, well-groomed, and resourceful concierges who work at American condominiums, at business buildings, and at hotels, and are hired for their abilities, rather than their disabilities. Reading "Hedgehog" I can't help but wonder how concierges all over the world regard this book. Perhaps as a novel that should have been set in the 19th, rather than the 21st century? And speaking of the 19th century, I wonder if Ms. Barbery ever read John Fowles' insightful novel, "The French Lieutenant's Woman." Fowles was able to create his character Sarah, a woman who finds herself in a situation similar to that of Rene, as a sympathetic victim, and also give us a satisfying plot in which Sarah in the end recognizes her own madness. Finally, I believe the book should be judged by the author's own standards. In one chapter, Ms. Barbery, in the voice of Rene, teaches us the cherry plum test by which to discern worthwhile literature. You eat the plum while you read the book and see if the book can hold its own against the fruit. Says Rene, ". . . for there are very few works that have not dissolved--proven both ridiculous and complacent--into the extraordinary succulence of the little golden plums." In my opinion, "The Elegance of the Hedgehog," does not pass the cherry plum test. 1 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Beautiful Von Stein JA wonderful book from France. Set in a Paris apartment building, this is the story of the concierge Renee, who pretends to be totally uncultivated, but is actually an intellectual. She makes friends with 12 year old Paloma from upstairs, who is lonely in her upper class world. The interaction of these two beautiful minds is fascinating. 1 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Genial! Von MKMK42 So wie aus dem Leben geschrieben - leider aber mit eine berraschende Element - mehr mchte ich nicht sagen ausser - LESE ES!!!

Kurzbeschreibung Rene is the concierge of a grand Parisian apartment building, home to members of the great and the good. Over the years she has maintained her carefully constructed persona as someone reliable but totally uncultivated, in keeping, she feels, with society's expectations of what a concierge should be. But beneath this faade lies the real Rene: passionate about culture and the arts, and more knowledgeable in many ways than her employers with their outwardly successful but emotionally void lives. Down in her lodge, apart from weekly visits by her one friend Manuela, Rene lives resigned to her lonely lot with only her cat for company. Meanwhile, several floors up, twelve-year-old Paloma Josse is determined to avoid the pampered and vacuous future laid out for her, and decides to end her life on her thirteenth birthday. But unknown to them both, the sudden death of one of their privileged neighbours will

dramatically alter their lives forever. Pressestimmen 'Resistance is futile. you might as well buy it before someone recommends it for your book group. It's charm will make you say yes.' - The Guardian. Kurzbeschreibung Rene is the concierge of a grand Parisian apartment building, home to members of the great and the good. Over the years she has maintained her carefully constructed persona as someone reliable but totally uncultivated, in keeping, she feels, with society's expectations of what a concierge should be. But beneath this faade lies the real Rene: passionate about culture and the arts, and more knowledgeable in many ways than her employers with their outwardly successful but emotionally void lives. Down in her lodge, apart from weekly visits by her one friend Manuela, Rene lives resigned to her lonely lot with only her cat for company. Meanwhile, several floors up, twelve-year-old Paloma Josse is determined to avoid the pampered and vacuous future laid out for her, and decides to end her life on her thirteenth birthday. But unknown to them both, the sudden death of one of their privileged neighbours will dramatically alter their lives forever.