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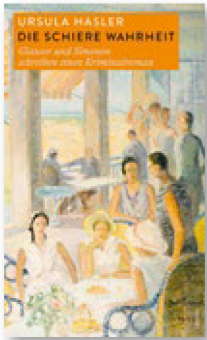
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What really happened



URSULA HASLER
"Die schiere Wahrheit.
Glauser und Simenon
schreiben einen
Kriminalroman."
Limmat Verlag 2021

Ursula Hasler's "Die schiere Wahrheit" (What really happened) is a crime novel with two intertwined narratives. It is June 1937. Friedrich Glauser meets his literary idol Georges Simenon at the seaside resort of Saint-Jean-de-Monts on the French Atlantic coast. The two of them use their chance encounter to share some literary wisdom. This prompts them to venture an experiment and write a whodunnit together in which Glauser's Sergeant Studer teams up with Simenon's Amélie Morel (Simenon has recently put Commissaire Maigret out to pasture.)

This fictional meeting between the two crime writers marks the beginning of a cleverly woven story based on their literary kinship. Both Glauser and Simenon believed that a good crime story is more than just about putting the world to rights by solving

a puzzle. Glauser: "It is also about deciphering and understanding the culprit as a person." Hence Glauser quickly found his role model in Simenon. In Ursula Hasler's novel, the two of them partake in a game to prove that they are kindred spirits.

Nurse Amélie Morel discovers a man dead on the beach. Is it an accident or murder? Because the deceased is a Swiss-American dual citizen with good connections, Sergeant Studer is brought in from Switzerland to help in the case. Under pressure from his superiors, the French investigator Inspector Picot is in a hurry to treat the death as an accident. But both Studer and Morel believe a crime has been committed. They try to find out what really happened.

Hasler has carefully read through Glauser and Simenon to lend a flavour of their crime writing to her novel. The investigation unfolds in an amusing plot with both Simenonian and Glauseresque traits. Hasler's double narrative switches between the murder case itself and dialogues in which Glauser and Simenon excitedly discuss their literary style as well as issues like justice and fairness. Their imaginary encounter develops into a delightful to and fro. It is an enjoyable, stimulating exchange, shining a light on the current boom in crime fiction and examining what readers expect from the genre.

BEAT MAZENAUER

A rainbow world



HECHT:
"Hecht for Life"
Gadget, 2022

Forever young, with loud colours everywhere and cheerful music to match. Eye and ear-catching band Hecht rule the Swiss German dialect scene at the moment. Four years on from their successful and most recent album "Oh Boy", the Lucerne combo are now back with a chart-topping record that mainly appeals to young listeners. The quintet will round off their current tour with a performance at Zurich Hallenstadion in November.

"Hecht for Life" is a colourful LP in many ways. This includes the album cover – a light-hearted picture of the brightly dressed band members on a beach, framed by a rainbow and a row of equally technicolour flowers. The music is also light-hearted: fluffy, danceable wide-screen pop with airy, expansive, soaring effects. Hecht wear their heart on their sleeve, but wear it lightly.

They put a spring in your step. The boys accurately refer to their music as 'euphoria pop', but also as thoughtful pop. Rare moments of introspection prove this point now and again.

Frontman Stefan Buck likes to tell interviewers that their music is about life, death and love – the core of human existence, no less. Be that as it may, "Hecht for Life" is essentially a party album full of streamlined earworms. Some may find it shallow, but the music certainly isn't annoying. Anyone ready to lose themselves in the positive energy and pastel universe of Hecht is set for an aural endorphin shot.

The aptly named single "Prosecco" is a case in point, featuring a singing, dancing, smiling Stefan Buck. "Me trinkt so viel Prosecco / Sie schtiigt us de Stiletto / Ah, sie isch perfetto" (We drink so much Prosecco / She takes off her stilettos / Ah, she's perfetto). The song is about enjoying life and the positive vibes that come with it, say the band. Sounds banal. But it works. And it sounds authentic. "Prosecco" is rose-tinted summer holiday music – nothing more, nothing less.

MARKO LEHTINEN