



Doppler

Erlend Loe

Don Bartlett, Translator

Don Shaw, Translator

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Cutting satire and humorous jeremiads expose the hypocrisies of keeping up with the Joneses in Erlend Loe's novel *Doppler*.

After his father dies, Andreas Doppler suffers a breakdown, drops out of society, and goes to live in a tent in the forest. Though he's seeking isolation from all other living beings, Doppler reluctantly befriends an orphaned moose calf, Bongo, whose mother he killed for meat. But then Doppler's decision to become a recluse attracts attention, and other people move into the forest to join him. Doppler finds himself fighting against the pressures of society once again, asserting his right to live life on his own terms.

Doppler is a man with opinions, and his mind threatens to explode from all of the things that get him riled up. He expounds on everything from the expectations of a perfect life in the suburbs to the irritating veneer of niceness that pervades polite society to the benefits of a barter economy over the capitalist monetary system. Through his internal monologues and one-sided conversations with Bongo, Doppler repeatedly reveals, but does not recognize, his own blind spots, hypocrisies, and anger management issues. (He is of the opinion that he is doing motorists a service when he, an aggressive cyclist, gives them a piece of his mind.) Absurd juxtapositions expose the contradictions within Doppler as well as the people around him as they try to force him to conform.

Doppler's wrangling with the outside world reads like a swift and precise whirlwind. Each tangent has a purpose, and a deadpan, occasionally dark, sense of humor is maintained throughout. The translation from the Norwegian by Don Bartlett and Don Shaw retains the cadence and incisive naïveté of Erlend Loe's high-strung original prose.

Doppler is a humorous satirical novel that cuts to the quick of what ails modern society.

ERIKA HARLITZ KERN (May/June 2019)

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