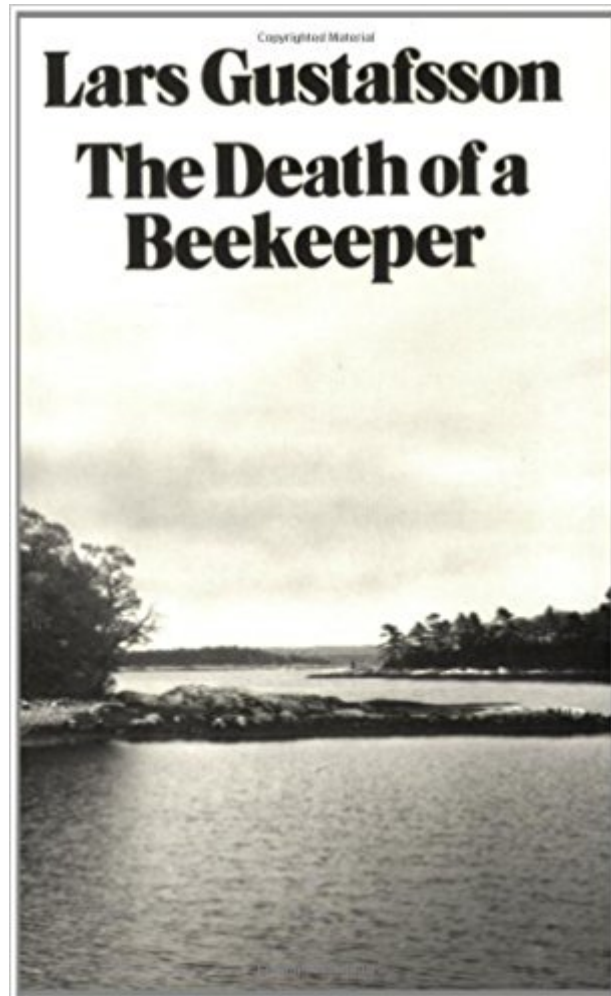


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The Death Of A Beekeeper



Synopsis

Book by Gustafsson, Lars

Book Information

Paperback: 163 pages

Publisher: W W Norton & Co Inc (November 1981)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0811208109

ISBN-13: 978-0811208109

Product Dimensions: 0.4 x 5.1 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

The author cleverly uses a series of notebooks in this existential exploration of death. From the initial diagnosis to the apparent end, the reader journeys through the beekeeper's life through a series of reflections and painful ruminations in the present. While avoiding his reality, the beekeeper discovers the joys and sorrows of his journey in an exploration of the self. The book begins with an explanation of the notebooks. This is helpful to the reader's understanding the flow of the book. Before his death, the beekeeper kept notes in three notebooks. These notebooks are arranged in a way that tells the beekeeper's story. The author tells his story beginning with adolescence and continuing with a failed marriage, an abandon teaching career, and new life as a beekeeper. While many of his thoughts are enlightening, no role is more important to the book than his being a "beekeeper". Particularly in seeing the death of bees and their ruination, we seen the beekeeper's true insight to life as his body and profession wither. On many levels, "The Death of a Beekeeper" is a clever book. Yet on some levels, the storyteller holds back too much. Perhaps the author's sense of realism in writing this book prevented him from revealing too much. As well written as it is, the reader can not help but wonder what more there is.

"Kind readers," this novel begins. "Strange readers. We begin again." And so I began this book, again, for probably the fifth or sixth time. Like Walker Percy's The Moviegoer, The Death of a

Beekeeper is a book I return to every couple of years when I am in need of something quiet and beautiful. The protagonist is one Lars Lennart Westin, who once taught at "the local elementary school in Ennora on the northern shore of the lake." By the time this narrative comes into our hands, Westin is dead, but during the writing of the three notebooks that comprise the novel, he is very much alive. The Yellow Notebook is concerned with beekeeping and household expenses; the Blue Notebook is a commonplace book of sorts, containing "newspaper clippings, excerpts from Westin's readings, and his own stories;" the Damaged Notebook contains telephone numbers and brief notes about the progression of Westin's cancer. The physical and mental impact of pain, the intricate lives of bees, the frozen landscape of North Vastmanland, and the mysterious workings of a fictional galaxy called Aldebaran are detailed in equal and exquisite measure. I admire the gentle precision of Gustafsson's prose, the author's eye for odd and interesting trivia, the novel's meditative nature. This is a book of ephemera that cannot be easily categorized, a book of lists. For example, page 106 features a "Table of art forms according to their level of difficulty." Art form number one (the least difficult) is eroticism; at the other end of the spectrum is artillery (number 28). The art of the novel is, according to our protagonist, less difficult than squash, weight lifting, high trapeze, bicycle acrobatics, and the building of fountains, but slightly more difficult than surfing and significantly more difficult than poetry, which weighs in at a humble 3.

when i took the book from the library i thought it would be a real burden. I think it's the best book i have ever read and I really recommend it. The story is so sad but contains some of the greatest quotes ever. Lars is a great author that can really reach out and grab you- sometimes when you least expect it and sometimes he can really make you cry.

As the previous reviewer said, this book is a very powerful story of a man trying to deal with cancer and at times can make you cry, but also laugh. Lars's descriptive powers are incredible. There is one part where a friend of his dives to the bottom of deep stream, and by the end of the chapter, I could feel the cold and wet of the stream. Overall excellent book- HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!!

Lyrical, spare, captivating. Think you won't care about a Swedish beekeeper dying of cancer? Guess again. Gustafsson makes his narrator's world our world, and when we're faced with losing it, we do care.

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