



Postřížiny

Bohumil Hrabal

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Správce nymburského pivovaru má krásnou, ale trochu moc živou manželku. Krom? ní mu d?lá starosti kvalita a odbyt piva a také jeho hlu?ný bratr, který za ním p?ijel na návšt?vu.

Post?ižiny Details

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Author : Bohumil Hrabal

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Bjorn says

Short is indeed the key word here; a 120-page novel in 12 short chapters, told from the POV of a woman in a small Czech village in the first half of the 20th century as the modern world starts closing in. Maryska (based on Hrabal's own mother) is the wife of Francin, who oversees daily operations at the local brewery, and her life is one joy after another; precious gifts from her loving (but reserved and very busy) husband every time he comes back from Prague, taking long bike rides with her long hair flowing behind her, lighting the old-fashioned lamps at the brewery after the generator closes down at night, helping out with the annual pig slaughter and sampling the results... and of course, helping take care of Francin's brother who came back from the war a little weird and won't leave.

There's a great deal of warmth mixed with almost slapstickish bizarre humour in this, with kooky but alive small-town characters and told in a beautifully descriptive, down-to-earth language. Hrabal is such a great stylist that you'd almost be forgiven for thinking it's a pure piece of comic nostalgia about how everything was better and simpler back in the good old days - the novel ends before Hrabal himself is actually born.

But then there's the knowledge that this was a piece of forbidden literature back in the 70s, and the longer we get into the novel, the more a creepy undertone starts appearing as things start getting... shorter. Skirts, hair, tails, lives. As humorous as the presentation is, everything that gets cut off or out makes life poorer, duller, darker. Considering the circumstances it was written under, the subtext is subtle but insidious: the more of the little unnecessary, fun bits of life you cut off, the less humorous it gets. And then the jokes, and the stories, stop and all that remains is authority and punishment.

And, of course, a whole lot of laughter in between. It is mostly a comedy, after all. Just a darker one than it seems at first.

Nick says

I had no idea what to expect from this short novel, and picked it up because I thought it would be something totally different to anything else I have read recently. I was right about that.

It is composed of a series of humorous incidents in the life of a vivacious brewer's wife, Maryska, and her adoring but long-suffering husband Francin, in a small town in what's now the Czech Republic. Maryska's adventures include climbing up the brewery chimney - just for the hell of it - shortening her skirt to make it easier for her to ride her bicycle, and - in a similar spirit - cutting off half of her dog's tail.

The writing is often lyrical, often rambling, with sentences and paragraphs that roll on and on. But the sense of place and character is sharp. Maryska in particular has a vivid quality, as if she represents some immortal, irrepressible spirit of adventure, almost like William in the Richmal Crompton stories, but a woman, obviously, and very much a grown woman at that. The writing teeters on the verge of sex all the time without ever depicting it - and though Hrabal's portrayal of Maryska might be criticised as a male writer's fantasy of a liberated woman, the fact that she generally seems to have the upper hand (arguably, even on the novel's scandalising final page) softens that impression.

While this book didn't fill me with the desire to immediately read more of Hrabal, it did make an enjoyable diversion from ploughing through longer, more serious works, and offered the chance to escape for a short while into a completely unfamiliar time and place populated by characters who were nonetheless somewhat recognisable - which is after all one of the great joys of reading.

João Reis says

Hrabal was a master of the short novel and no one could blend tenderness and cruelty in such a humorous way as him. In this short novel we go back to the past (always in an after-Austro Hungarian Czech Republic) and meet some well-known characters from other novels such as Uncle Pepin and Francin. Chapter 2 can be hard to digest for someone like me.

Vojt?ch says

Jeden z mála p?ípad?, kdy je film lepší než kniha.

Michaela Gester says

Cutting it short är en bok att jobba med. Tänka ett extra varv och sedan vrida tankarna ett varv till. Till synes händer det inte mycket på ytan, livet tuffar på i det lilla bryggeriet där Anna och framförallt hennes man Francin arbetar. Men livet där är ändå fullt av motsättningar. Anna verkar ha ganska tråkigt, och vill ur sin roll som fru (eller bara sin könsroll), utmanar normerna och gör sånt som ingen anständig flicka/kvinna skulle göra. Allt till Francins bedrövelse, som han trots allt snart kommer över. Berättelsen byggs upp av episoder, den ena mer absurd än den andra. Hrabal är, åtminstone i engelsk översättning, både humoristisk och djup. Jag både skrattade och våndades när jag läste boken.

Dolors says

What a surprise this little book has been; a surprise not exactly pleasant though. I expected Hrabal's poetic cartwheels and his incredible descriptive skills, but I was nonplussed by the black humor and the skepticism that drenched this story.

Set in a small Bohemian town between the wars we follow the eccentric doings of a young woman called Maryska and her husband, who runs the local brewery. A wild arrange of characters populate a tale full of rather comic situations that won't leave any reader indifferent: a feast of blood of butchered pigs, trips to Prague that bring back the most astonishing gadgets, an uncle who is not right in the head that explains the most peculiar stories of WWI... Scenes straddling the grotesque and the cultured that allude to a dark reality where not only skirts, tails and hair are cut short, but also free will and basic human rights.

In Hrabal's most quirky style, a double narrative is exposed and Maryska's eccentricities signify something bigger than her daring not to conceal her uninhibited personality. The repressive atmosphere of the last pages bespeaks of the greater evil of totalitarian regimes, which permeates Hrabal's fiction as few other authors do,

leaving the reader dumbfounded about what he has truly read. A pity that I missed half of the joke and that the bitter taste of failure is what I will mostly remember of this rather dark but poignant tale.

Bram Peeters says

First book I read by Hrabal (in Dutch translation, "Gekortwiekt"). 12 chapters that could all be short stories by themselves, not all shine, the characters are a bit flat, and there isn't really an overarching story that makes a difference (if that would be a requirement), but that's all balanced by some brilliant sentences (Hrabal was a poet, that shows), some bizarre but brilliant scenes - somehow involving cruelty to animals, but also floating in beer, climbing chimneys, strange electrical gear and stealing watches. I enjoyed it, will definitely read some of his better known novels.

daniela says

P?i tení Hrabalových knih se mi po duši permanentn? rozprostírá klid. Nahlížím do prostého života prostých lidí s jejich prostými radostmi a cítím, že jsem tam s nimi.

Doba, kdy se ženy nesm?ly více projevovat, p?izp?sobovaly se zažitým konvencím a p?edstavám o ideální ženušce v domácnosti. Maryška se proti tomu bou?ila. Cht?la být volná, jist jako chlap, nespoutan? pohazovat h?ívou svých vlas?, lozit po komínech, prohán?t se s p?íliš krátkou sukňí na kole po nám?stí, provokovat sousedy vyzývavými pohledy, pít pivo,...

Možná bychom m?li být v n?kterých ohledech všichni trochu jako Maryška.

Zuzka Kucha?ová says

N?jak jsem si s Post?ižinami nesedli...

Kai Weber says

Just like poetry nearly always loses when it is translated into another language, it is a very difficult thing to transform a prose work into a stage play. So is the case in those play versions of prose works of Bohumil Hrabal, too. There are two separate pieces in this volume. The first is attempting to put Post?ižiny (Cutting it Short) onto the stage. In its original version it is a very charming story of an idiosyncratic young lady in a Bohemian small town of the 1920s, where a first radio appears and gives everyone the impression of modern times coming and making everything shorter and faster. To keep up with those modern times, the young woman has her long shiny hair, that everyone admires, cut off to look like Josephine Baker. The second play is a collage or medley of small motifs from different works of Hrabal, cut+pasted together.

Both plays are seemingly not working well. Even though Hrabal has been interested in collage techniques, when writing prose he was seaming things together in a very unique way, resulting not so much in cut-up effects but rather in tidal flows and waves. I didn't compare this book with the prose originals directly, but I think on a microscopic level many dialogue bits are taken directly from the prose. Yet on a larger scale, those bits don't fit together the way they do in the prose, so the typical Hrabal tone is only half there.

While I was reading I tried to imagine those two pieces as original works, not dramatizations. Yet there is

neither drama in them nor do they have those carefully laid-out epic structure in the Brechtian sense - or as we might observe in works from Ibsen via Wilder to current times. The scenes and their development seem just random and unmotivated.

Therefore those pieces have no artistic merit on their own; they draw all their merit from the original prose works. That still makes them work alright as introductions - if I imagine somebody who is very fond of going to the theatre but doesn't like to read prose, then that's the perfect audience. Hrabal fans can live without this.

(P.S.: I wonder how much Hrabal himself was involved in this book. He is listed as the main author on the cover and in the colophon, yet the dramatizing is attributed to two other persons.)

Nigeyb says

'Cutting It Short'

by Bohumil Hrabal

I read 'Cutting It Short' straight after having read and enjoyed another book by Bohumil Hrabal called 'Closely Watched Trains'....

[Click here to read my review](#)

'Cutting It Short' is an interwar tale narrated by vivacious, carefree and sensual Maryska, who is married to Francin. Francin runs the local brewery, and is perpetually appalled at his wife's style and conduct...

"As I crammed the cream horn voraciously into my mouth, at once I heard Francin's voice saying no decent woman would eat a cream puff like that."

'Cutting It Short' certainly has its moments of comedy and plenty of Hrabal's trademark surreal vibe but I enjoyed it less than 'Closely Watched Trains'.

The book opens with a pig slaughtering scene which is very graphic and described with far too much enjoyment for my taste. Later in the book Maryska cuts her dog's tail off for no apparent reason other than to illustrate her impetuosity. Add in some somewhat dubious gender politics and I found it increasingly unpleasant. Different times and a different culture I suppose.

2/5

Bohumil Hrabal met a rather tragic end...

Suicide or accident?: The Death of the Sad King of Czech Literature, Bohumil Hrabal...

When Bohumil Hrabal either jumped or fell from a fifth floor window of Prague's Bulovka Hospital while feeding pigeons at 2:30 p. m. on February 3, 1997, it marked the end of a phenomenal literary career spanning six decades and contributing enormously to Czech culture. His death from the fifth floor has an undoubtedly symbolic dimension, whether sought or merely coincidental: In his works he wrote about philosophers and writers who had jumped to their deaths from the fifth storey and even confessed that he

sometimes wanted to jump from the fifth floor window of his flat. Whether he did jump or whether he fell will forever remain a mystery. Yet one thing was for certain. The sad king of Czech literature was dead.

The rest of the article is here...

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Albena says

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Paradoxe says

3,5

Δε μπορε?ς να μην υποκλιθε?ς στη δυναμικ? εικονογρ?φηση του συγγραφ?α, ε?ναι οπερατ?ρ και σκηνοθ?της και τ?ποτα δεν αφ?νει να π?σει καταγ?ς. Χειρ?ζεται σκην? και χαρακτ?ρες βιρτου?ζικα και τις σκ?ψεις τους σα να ε?ναι μ?ρος τους. Αγνοε? κ?θε φ?λτρο ωραιοπο?ησης χρωμ?των και κιν?σεων. Ο ?χος, η εικ?να, η οσμ?, η εν?ργεια δ?νονται ?πως συμβα?νουν. Γιατ?; Γιατ? η ωρα?α φτιαγμ?νη εικ?να, η φτιαγμ?νη στυλιστικ? ?ψη ταιρι?ζει με τα παραμ?θια, τον κινηματογρ?φο και το facebook. ?χουμε κ?ποιον που ο Καλβ?νο θαρρετ? θα του πρ?σφερε το χ?ρι του και που θα ?κανε τον Κρ?νενμπεργκ να π?θει συμφ?ρηση. Ο Χραμπ?λ ασχολε?ται μ?νο με την κ?τοψη, την τομ? και τα η/μ. Τα υπ?λοιπα δεν τον αφορο?ν.

Κι αν ακ?μα διαφων? με το συμπ?ρασμα για το π?πλο δ?ους που μας τυλ?γει πριν απ' το θ?νατο, γιατ? κανε?ς μας δεν γνωρ?ζει, εντυπωσι?ζομαι κι ευαισθητοποιο?μαι, που ε?ναι πρ?θυμος να σαμποτ?ρει ακ?μη και τους αγαπημ?νους του χαρακτ?ρες, αρκε? να τον?σει τις σκ?ψεις του για τα ζ?α. Δε θαυμ?ζει τα ζ?α, τα σ?βεται. Κ?τι που δε θα μπορο?σε να καταλ?βει καν?νας ηλ?θιος απ' ?σους συνεχ?ζουν με τις ζητ?σεις τους και διαιιων?ζουν τα puppy mills, τους byb και τις φαινοτυπικ?ς εκτροφ?ς. Μπορε? εδ? να υπ?ρχουν μ?νο ?λογα, γονυρ?νια, ρακο?v, ?νας γ?τος κι ?να σκυλ?κι που το λ?γανε Μο?τσεκ κι εγ? να μιλ?ω γενικ? για ?να φαιν?μενο της αντι-ευζω?ας αλλ? ο συγγραφ?ας με κ?νει να αισθ?νομαι ασφαλ?ς να μιλ? εκ μ?ρους του.

Πρ?τη φορ? π?ντως συναντ? συγγραφ?α να χρησιμοποιε? αμε?λικτα αυστηρ? ρεαλισμ? και παρ?λληλα να δουλε?ει πολ? το σουρρεαλιστικ? χιο?μορ και την αλληγορ?α, σ' ?να βιβλ?ο ταξ?δι στα παλι? χρ?νια, με τα χ?δια και τις σκληρ?ς τους συγκιν?σεις κι ?σα χ?θηκαν ?σπου να φ?τσουμε σε μια εποχ? που ε?ναι απλ? διαδικασ?α να πατ?σεις το διακ?πτη για ν' αν?ψουν τα φ?τα κι ωστ?σο παραμ?νει διαδικασ?α, σχεδ?v, ασ?νειδη πρ?ξη. Δεν εμπερι?χει καν?να τελετουργικ?, προσκυν? μ?νο την ευκολ?α. Που να 'χε δει ο Χραμπ?λ τις σ?γχρονες τ?σεις με τις λ?μπες των εκατομμυρ?ων αποχρ?σεων, που ρυθμ?ζονται απ' τα κινητ? τηλ?φωνα. Θα ντρεπ?ταν για 'μας και τη σκοτωμ?νη ελευθερ?α μας.

Υπ?ροχη η κρυστ?λλωση του αντιφατικο? ανθρ?που στο πρ?σωπο του Φρ?νσιν. Δειλ?ς, σκλ?βος, υποτακτικ?ς, θ?μα του καθωσπρεπισμο? και των σιωπηλ?ν παθ?ν που αποκτο?ν δικα?ωμα μ?νο π?σω απ? την π?ρτα και μαζ? ?νας ?νθρωπος που στα ωρα?α του μπρ?τσα βλ?πει αδυναμ?α, που σταματ?ει με μια φων? και μια ατσ?λινη λαβ? το απειθ?ρχητο ?λογο και τιθασε?ει τον πληθωρικ? αδελφ? του κι ?νας βαθει? ερωτευμ?νος ?νθρωπος με την γυνα?κα του, που ε?ναι ?σα δεν ε?ναι εκε?νος. ?νθρωπος της συν?θειας, του καθ?κοντος, του υπερβολικο? σεβασμο? και την ?δια στιγμ? ?νας επαναστ?της που δεν κ?νει τ?ποτα πραγματικ? δριμ? για να καθυποτ?ξει τη γυνα?κα του και που προτιμ?ει τα ταξ?δια με μια σαραβαλιασμ?νη μοτοσυκλ?τα που μον?μως χαλ?ει και κουβαλ?ει ως και τ?ρνο για να την επιδιορθ?νει, σε μικρ?ς αποδρ?σεις στην Πρ?γα, που π?ντοτε η επιστροφ? συνοδε?εται απ? χαρ?ς μικρ?ς ελευθερ?ας, στο τελετουργικ? των δ?ρων της επιστροφ?ς, στην Ιθ?κη του.

Αυτ? η γρι? ?λη την ημ?ρα χλαπ?κιαζε ασταμ?τητα μ?λα και γλυκ? και τρι?ντα ολ?κληρα χρ?νια κλαιγ?των: παιδι? θα πεθ?νω σ?ντομα, δεν ?χω ?ρεξη να κ?νω τ?ποτα, μ?νο να κοιμηθ? θ?λω, νυστ?ζω συν?χεια ... και ε?μαι κ?πως ?ρρωστη, ?λεγε ο θε?ος λ?νοντας αμ?τρητα λουρ?κια απ? το σ?κο του και ξαφνικ? τον γ?ρισε αν?ποδα και π?σανε στο π?τωμα δι?φορα εργαλε?α του τσαγκ?ρη κ?νοντας πολ? θ?ρυβο. Ο ?ντρας μου, ?ταν ?κουσε τη φασαρ?α, ?κρυψε το πρ?σωπο του μεσ? τις παλ?μες κι ?βαλε τα κλ?ματα σα να του π?ταγε ο Π?πιν τα εργαλε?α στο κεφ?λι. << Θε?ε Ι?ζην >> ε?πα κι ?βαλα μπροστ? του ?να ταψ? με γλυκ? << π?ρτε ?να κομμ?τι π?τα >>. Και ο θε?ος καταβρ?χθισε δυο κομμ?τια με μια χαψι? και δ?λωσε: << ε?μαι κι εγ? λ?γο ?ρρωστος >>.

Το βιβλ?ο ε?ναι ακ?μη μια παραβολ? π?νω στις σωστ?ς επιλογ?ς που χειριζ?μαστε εντελ?ς λαθεμ?να, απ? αδυναμ?α να τις υπερασπιστο?με στον εαυτ? μας, στερ?ντας του το ρ?λο που ε?χε στην επιλογ? τους. Και κ?ποια περιστατικ?, π?ως κι εξ?ιστορ?σεις του Π?πιν υποθ?τω πως σημα?νουν κ?τι πολ? ιδια?τερο για τη μν?μη των Τσ?χων, που σ' εμ?ς θα ?ταν αδ?νατον να ανιχνε?σουμε, π?ως ?νας Τσ?χος ? ?νας Αμερικαν?ς δε θα μπορο?σε ποτ? να κατανο?σει συμβολισμ?ς του Βεν?ζη, λ?γου χ?ριν. Παρ?λ? αυτ? μως δε βοηθο?ν να μειωθε? η απ?σταση που δυστυχ?ς δημιουργε? η μακροπερ?οδη στατικ?τητα της ιστορ?ας, που αποκαθ?σταται ελ?χιστα, με την πνο? που δ?νεται στο τ?λος. Και τελει?νοντας, ?χω μια αστ?ρικτη εντ?πωση ?τι η Μαρ?α ε?ναι μια πολ? ενδιαφ?ρουσα τομ?, π?νω στην ?δια την ιστορ?α της Τσεχ?ας, στο οπο?ο συναινε? και η παραληρηματικ? ιστορ?α, του κοψ?ματος των μαλλι?ν, ?σο κι αν μαζ? ε?ναι μια οργιαστικ? εκδ?λωση της δυσφορ?ας του συγγραφ?α, για ?λες εκε?νες τις εποχ?ς που η γυνα?κα δεν ε?χε δικα?ωμα στον εαυτ? της και που αποχαιρετ? ο συγγραφ?ας εν μ?ρει με τη Μαρ?α του, παρ? το φιν?λε της τρ?μπας που ε?ναι μαζ? κ?θαρση και ρ?πισμα του ν?ου ξεκιν?ματος.

Κλε?νοντας, μου ?ρεσε ο επ?λογος της μεταφ?στριας, η οπο?α ?μμεσα συνδ?εται με τον ?διο το Χραμπ?λ? π?ως κι η ιστορ?α της οικογενε?ας της και το ?φος της με κ?νει να υποθ?τω πως η λανθασμ?νη επιλογ? χρ?νων δεν ξ?ρω τελικ? αν ?ταν αβλεψη? του χτεν?σματος της μετ?φρασης, ? σχετ?ζεται με επιλογ?ς του ιδια?τερου τ?νου του συγγραφ?α, που θα παρ?πεμπε β?βαια σε ?λλου ε?δους συμβολισμ?ς. Π?ντως, ο επ?λογος της σχεδ?ν αφομοι?νεται στην ιστορ?α και μ?νει τελευτα?α εικ?να ο Χραμπ?λ να απομακρ?νεται στο δ?σος με το ποδ?λατο, φων?ζοντας στο νεαρ? συνοδ? της, υπονο?ντας ομοι?τητες με τη γιαγ? της, << ?μπλεξες >>.

Λ?ω, Μπ?ντια, να μου κ?ψετε τα μαλλι? ?πως τα ?χει κομμ?να η Τζοζεφ?ν Μπ?ικερ

ΠανωςK says

Ο συγγραφ?ας του σ?ντομου αυτο? μυθιστορ?ματος θεωρε?ται απ? τους σπουδαι?τερους τσ?χους δημιουργο?ς του 20ο? αι?να -?τσι τουλ?χιστον λ?ει η wikipedia, και δεν το αμφισβητ?, απλ?ς υποθ?τω πως η αναγν?ριση αυτ? δεν οφε?λεται στο συγκεκριμ?νο βιβλ?ο. Για να το θ?σω ευγενικ?, δηλαδ?.

Lubos Panda says

Jako by to opravdu psala manželka správce pivovaru. Bohumil Hrabal je v tomhle nep?ekonatelný.
