



A Year in the Scheisse: Getting to Know the Germans

Roger Boyes

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Writing incisively, hilariously, and almost without prejudice, a British journalist describes the peculiarities of everyday life in Germany.

"The three of us were the backbone of the British press corps. No cliché about Germany left the country without us having given it our seal of approval." Laugh-out-loud funny, this is the memorable story of an English journalist's adventures—including his encounters with women—as he tries to get to grip with the Germans. Facing bankruptcy, Roger is advised by his accountant to make use of a legal loophole: in Germany married couples have their tax bill halved. So the search is on for a German bride. Meanwhile his father, a former bomber pilot and war hero, is also in financial trouble and is threatening to move to Germany and sponge off his son. The combination of financial, romantic, and parental crises sets in motion a hilarious romp during which we readers more than they really wanted to about speed-dating, nudist beaches, the British media obsession with Adolf Hitler, how to cheat at the Berlin marathon, curry wurst, and stuffed cabbage.

A Year in the Scheisse: Getting to Know the Germans Details

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Author : Roger Boyes

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George Foord says

I really enjoyed this book and was gripped throughout. I think you should read it and make up your own mind instead of reading these other reviews.

Jessica Zoop says

A jerk bumbles about & blames his dating problems on the fact that he is a British man living in Germany. When in fact, his problem is that he's a selfish, lazy, jerk.

There are a few amusing insights into the German culture but otherwise the book is mediocre at best.

Justin says

Slightly disappointing with little interesting or amusing insight. This reads very much more like a novel rather than a work of journalistic non-fiction; it is all just too improbable otherwise. It is also apparent that this was written and published initially in Germany, where the humour is possibly more successful. It is a comedy of errors that reminds me of Benny Hill or Mr Bean, both popular in Germany from my experience, and also reminiscent of the ghastly Mrs Brown's Boys. I think the humour is too heavy-handed and clumsy to deal successfully with stereotypes. The book deals more with English stereotypes and seems to play to what might be popular German perceptions; in the book the English are insensitive, bumbling idiots dashing from one ludicrous caper to the next (perhaps not unlike Jeeves and Wooster, or Last of the Summer Wine), treating people obnoxiously, and otherwise obsessed with the Second World War - although there's certainly truth in some of those stereotypes. Boyes himself comes across as a really unlikeable idiot, and I found myself having virtually no sympathy for him in the various "comic" situations he finds himself in. Overall, I wouldn't particularly recommend the book, although it's not a terrible book - I at least finished it, and finished it quickly, and there were one or two moments that were amusing.

John says

I gave up 1/3 of the way through - gleaning "humor" out of this one was a real needle-in-a-haystack adventure with which I lost patience.

GONZA says

In the end it was not so funny, or maybe it is if you love something like Mr.Bean.

Questo tipo di simpatia alla Mr.Bean con me non ha mai funzionato.

Dzor says

Pretty pointless. Protagonist rather unlikeable, but a few redeeming characters and moments of humor.

Paul says

Boyes arrives in Germany hoping to understand the German people better and to collect anecdotes about Hitler for the UK press. But he is up the financial creek without a paddle and his accountant advises him to find a bride quickly for tax reasons. And so begins the amusing tales of his year in Germany.

Immersing himself in the culture he tries speed dating, inadvertently visits a nudist beach, spectacularly fails at cooking several times, has a massive relationship disaster and alienates two women in the process, and has his father and his friend turn up.

It is a mildly amusing book, and is as much about the British culture, as it is about German culture. It does end on a happy note, but not for the reasons that you think.

Ingrid says

Despite the beginning of the book seemed to me a little "slow", with the beginning of the plot it became catchier and catchier, and in the end I couldn't stop reading it! For those who have read "a year in the merde" from Stephen Clarke, I have to tell you that this book has nothing to do with it and has a different style. I suppose when I started reading "A year in the Scheisse" I was expecting the same story but moved to another country, and that's why the beginning was not that interesting or funny for me, coz until i got into the plot I was just adapting from one writer to another. I know France, and I know Germany, and I expected to see all this cultural shock reflected on the book -like it happens in "A year in the merde", but in fact the main character has been living already for 30 years in Germany, so of course many of those things that may have shocked him at the beginning of his stay in the country have turned now into part of his routine. So what I mean is that the book tells a story happening in Germany, and goes behind apparent clichés, wanting more to analyze characters personalities, but all this in a hilarious context.

In a nutshell, the book is about a cynical journalist in tax debt who needs a miracle, or a crazy plan, to solve his situation.

Chrissi says

Roger Boyes tells life like it is - messy, ridiculous, and absolutely hilarious. The good and the bad, the struggles and the joys - but the struggles seem to bring the most laughter. Whether it was his description of going to the gym locker room, the elaborate cheating game at the Berlin Marathon, or the fiery confrontation between two girlfriends on the Baltic holiday, I pretty much laughed for most of this book. It reminds me of

the same issues I've had in travel - things that are so mad they could only happen in real life and only to me. I am looking forward to picking up the second book to see how the adventures continue.

Robert Schulz says

Boyes, seit 1993 Korrespondent der The Times in Deutschland, geht in seiner Erzählung auf Entdeckungstour im deutschen Alltag. Allerdings lotet er nicht die Untiefen der intensiven deutsch-englischen Hassliebe aus, sondern stochert in langweiligen Klischees, wie der deftigen deutschen Küche, wie sie so wohl nur noch in einigen geschützten Reservaten vorkommt. Auch sonst wirkt das Buch unkreativ und unmotiviert und ist schlichtweg weder interessant noch erheiternd. Mal wieder ein klarer Elfmeter, der von englischer Seite verschossen wird.

Angelo Vassallo says

I read this book after having read two similar ones („Quattro Stagioni: ein Jahr in Rom“ and „Das Kind unterm Salatblatt“). I have to say that the past two were better than “My dear Krauts”. To be honest with you I don’t know if the reason is the author or the different history. Maybe since the first two are located or have as protagonists Italian people, I felt them closer to me, but I think as well that their humor was more brilliant of the “My dear Krauts”. In effect, even if you have funny histories in this book, I cannot say that I completely enjoyed this humor and I’m not quite sure if I should read the second book “How to be a Kraut”.

Norbert P says

It's not only the title that makes this book comparable with 'A Year in the Merde', but the perspective of the author seems to be another. Boyes's protagonist seems to be well in his fourties, a journalist looking for a wife in order to reduce taxes. The amorous adventures he gets into are therefore somehow planned but happen to be completely unexpected in their outcome and in the end it's not him who is going to be married. Although Boyes too artificially plays with the differences between two cultures, the plot of his book is always the more important part whereas in Clarkes novel the plot only serves to create a succession of comic situations in order to ridicule french lifestyle which is funny indeed but remains always a bit adolescent compared with 'A Year in the Scheisse'. A really funny book with lovable characters, a page-turner from the first to the last chapter.

Inga says

"My Dear Krauts" von Roger Boyes lag schon eine ganze Weile in der Kiste mit zu Lesendem neben meinem Bett. Heute habe ich es zuende gelesen und frage mich, wie das Werk es auf die Bestsellerlisten geschafft hatte. Zugegeben, vielleicht bin ich zu kritisch oder aber vielleicht abgestumpft, was die Komik des Buches angeht.

Ich habe ein Jahr in England gelebt, ich kenne die Briten oder zumindest bin ich nicht komplett unerfahren im Umgang mit ihnen, auch wenn ich anteilig mehr durchgeknallte 18-jährige Erstsemester kennen gelernt habe als "normale Briten". Zudem habe ich knapp drei Jahre in Berlin gelebt und weiß, wie Berliner so sind,

sein können, sein wollen - wie auch immer.

Der durch Berlin mäandernde britische Journalist aus Roger Boyes' Buch erzählt also keine echten Neuigkeiten. Die Idee, ein Brite könnte ernsthaft beim Berlin-Marathon betuppen, nur um eine Frau zu beeindrucken, die er vielleicht heiraten will, um seine Steuerlast zu verringern, damit er seinen in England in Finanznot geratenen Vater mit durchbringen kann, ist schlichtweg absurd. Könnte komisch sein, vielleicht ist es komisch, ich bin mir nicht sicher. Ich hatte jedenfalls Lustigeres erwartet - so hat sich das Buch für mich nicht wirklich gelohnt. Macht nichts, dafür war es leicht zu lesen. Ob Boyes bzw. sein Protagonist wirklich "die Deutschen entdeckt" hat, wie im Untertitel behauptet, oder vielmehr eine etwas vorpubertäre Seite seines eigenen Selbst, bleibt anzuzweifeln.

Kristina says

Nothing special.

Expected more details about German life and instead, there was a persistent complaining the whole book.

Mark Jones says

As an Englishman living in Germany, I immediately grabbed this book when I saw it in the second-hand store. It looked like an entertaining read - the experiences and observations of other British guys living in this brilliant country appealed to me. What I got, however, was a series of spurious anecdotes from a selfish, lazy prick regarding his experiences of speed dating, and travelling around Germany in pursuit of tabloid journalism garbage to publish. Sure, I read through (most of) this thing in a day, giggling once or twice in the process - I guess I could credit the author with making a train journey less dull. That's about it.
