



REVIEWS

"Hackl's use of emotional triggers related to injustice and redemption are both subtle and commanding. In the same way that we relate to injustice of the oppressed, this author delivers stunning situations in which innocent families and characters are destroyed by an unjust rule of law. Yet the ultimate value of a book like this lies in the author's delivery of life between the lines, beyond the vagaries of a reader's sentient ability to comprehend. Here, Hackl elicits his best and most enduring success."

– Charles S. Weinblatt, *New York Journal of Books*

"The clash of fascism and communism on two continents over half a century, as traced through a few family photographs. ... Hackl is like an investigating detective pursuing a case where all the principals are long dead and the few who remain may be reluctant to talk...These powerful inquiries spurred by photos are history made flesh, the untold lives of the mostly forgotten."

– *Kirkus Reviews*

"Erich Hackl's concise and hauntingly dense works of prose have gained him a huge audience and great success. At the bottom of his efforts are usually some forgotten beings, victims of our century's cruel history, with their authentic albeit not exactly remembered biographies. Here Hackl, the Austrian author, overly sensitized perhaps because of his own country's extreme insensitivities, steps in and tries to bring about an act of belated justice and redemption. This obviates the question whether Hackl is a fiction writer or a historian, a lawyer of the 'small people' or a missionary voice of human dignity: he is all of these."

– Erich Wolfgang Skwara, *World Literature Today*



READING GROUP QUESTIONS

1. *The Consequences* opens with Minnie falling silently through ice on the river. How are water and ice used as metaphors throughout the book? Discuss specific instances where they provide a shock or break from the progression of the narrative.
2. How is femininity defined, elaborated, and ultimately imploded by the end of the book? How does Minnie's sense of her own sexuality stand in contrast to her mother's?
3. How do Minnie's artworks reflect the circumstances surrounding her birth? How do they foreshadow her near-death and rebirth? Discuss some specific examples of artworks that seem most connected to these existential themes.
4. Dr. Johnstone puts a great deal of faith in the philosophies and rituals of ancient civilizations and their importance to his own work, which may seem odd for a man of science. How does he incorporate them into his therapies? What effect did they have on Minnie throughout her life? Discuss implicit as well as explicit examples.
5. How does Minnie think about and feel about her body? How is her body described, and what does that reinforce or contradict in your understanding of her character?
6. Did the discussions of contemporary artists add to your understanding of Minnie's art and how she approaches it? How? Take your favorite examples and discuss the commonalities between those varying art practices and that of Minnie's. Where is Minnie's originality?
7. What are some of the ways in which the public misunderstands the concepts behind Minnie's art? What or who do you think is ultimately responsible for such misunderstandings between artists and the public?



8. Why does the author include details about the deaths of other artists in her discussion about the impact of their artwork? In what ways are the events of an artist's life and biography important to an understanding of the work they create? Is this specific to certain kinds of art?

9. Discuss the clinic's Zen motto, *All the fish needs is to get lost in the water*. How does it or doesn't it address the complications of life in the modern world? How does it relate to Minnie's life in particular?

10. Discuss the episode where it is revealed that Minnie, as a child, had a thing for wallets. What does she do with them and why? How does this prefigure her life and her fate? How does the awkward scene of Minnie encountering her mother "repurposing" a credit card fit into larger themes of Minnie's thoughts on money, fame, love, and fortune?

11. To which character or characters do you relate to most in the book? What do you think that says about you?

12. Discuss the last episode of the book. What do the luggages and line of people have to do with other references to passages between states of being that are ongoing themes in the book?

13. How does the personal journey that Minnie takes through the book reflect on themes in contemporary art? In celebrity culture? In spirituality?

14. Did the book change the way you thought about any aspect of life? How? And what comparisons can you draw between Minnie's experiences and the way trauma changes a person? Despite her deadpan delivery and humor, was Minnie traumatized?

15. Discuss the way Minnie sees and observes reality and where it might be different from what is considered mainstream. What is Minnie's relationship to capitalism? To consumption? To consumerism?





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DoppelHouse Press is based in Los Angeles, a home to many exiles and immigrants from all over the world, which makes us further able to reflect on global conditions, cultures, politics, and crises that disperse creative people to new homelands, where they often flourish, transform local vernaculars, and influence future generations.

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