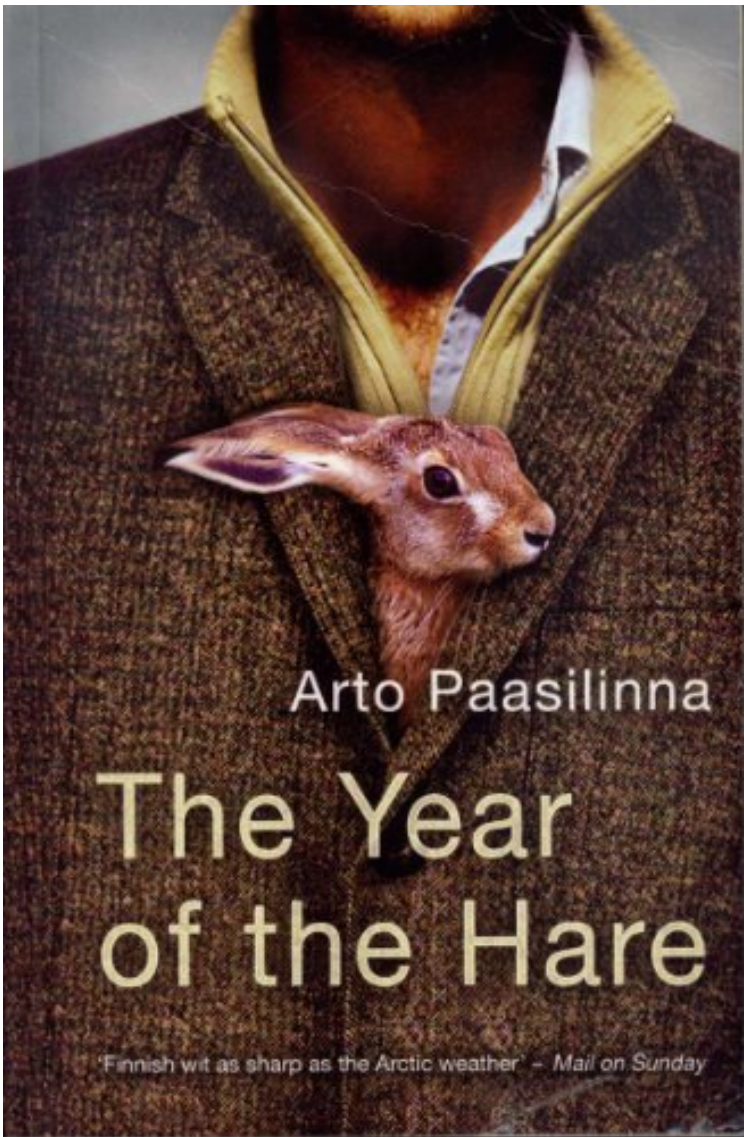


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The Year of the Hare



Par Arto Paasilinna
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurVatanen the journalist is feeling burnt out and sick of the city. One summer evening while on assignment his car hits a young hare on a country road. He goes in search of the injured creature.

This small incident becomes a life-changing experience for Vatanen as he decides to break free from the world's constraints. He quits his job, leaves his wife, sells his possessions to travel the Finnish wilds with his new-found friend. Their adventures take in forest fires, pagan sacrifices, military war games, killer bears and much more. A long-time best-seller in Finland and in France, The Year of the Hare is the author's favourite among his works. It has also been translated into Italian, German, Dutch, Greek, Hungarian, Japanese, Swedish and many other languages. It is frequently dramatized for the stage and has twice been made into a movie.From Publishers WeeklyIn this back-to-nature picaresque from Finland, a "dissatisfied, cynical"

journalist adopts an injured leveret as his companion on a series of mildly quixotic, satirically rendered wanderings. Leaving behind a spiritless job and a loveless marriage in Helsinki, middle-aged Kaarlo Vatanen lights out for the territories, the hare de-civilizing him as much as he tames it. While the hare wavers between companion, pet and symbol, the pair's innocent retreat is complicated at every turn by either man or nature. Foresters, bureaucrats and endangered-species laws are as likely to threaten them as bears, ravens and forest fires as they travel to the Arctic Circle and across the Russian border. Paasilinna's low-key narrative is translated plainly, but it never makes the most of its protagonists' experiences, despite such tempting scenarios as a bear hunt hosted for diplomats by the Finnish military or a defrocked divinity student looking for animal sacrifices for Finno-Ugric rituals. Instead, these adventures of a man and his hare unfold as superficially, though with as much ease, as a daydream. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. Booklist

A Finnish journalist and a photographer out on assignment one June evening suddenly hit a young hare on a country road. The photographer, ultimately unsympathetic, abandons his journalist companion Vatanen, who sets off to find the wounded hare. Vatanen develops a close bond with the hare and in their adventures together, they witness people's avarice, inhumaneness, hypocrisy, cruelty, participation in bureaucracy, and mere existence, rather than living, in the world. This last realization in particular is life altering for Vatanen: he quits his job, discards his hopeless marriage, sacrifices financial security, and sells his most prized possession (a boat). All this Vatanen replaces with a life of odd jobs and on-the-road experiences. This picaresque novel could simply depict a middle-age crisis, but it reaches beyond fantasy or fiction, becoming mythic in its universal themes. The story is inventive, satirical, and quite humorous. It is also refreshingly sentimental in the sense that Paasilinna reaffirms our connection with the animal world and our inherent need for happiness and freedom to maintain quality of life. Janet St. John