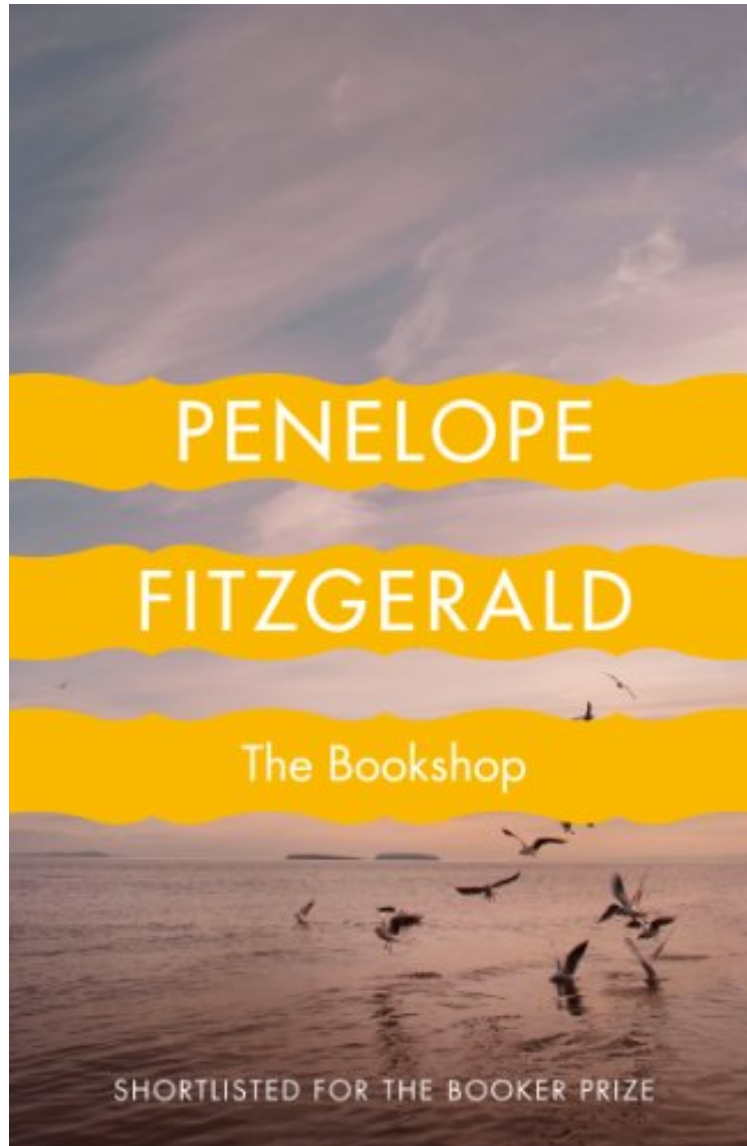


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Von Penelope Fitzgerald

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Von Penelope Fitzgerald : The Bookshop before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Bookshop:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A good readVon Claude RawlingsI noticed that several readers objected to the bleak ending of this book. Fortunately or unfortunately, I already knew the ending because it was given away in one of the New York Times reviews (don't they tell them not to do that?), and so I was prepared for it. Ms. Fitzgerald seems to me to be a genius: She is almost

uncannily observant in terms of both landscape and character (including animals in the latter), and she provides a smooth and pleasant read in the tradition of Anita Brookner, Elizabeth Bowen, and Elizabeth Taylor -- a perfect book for a rainy Sunday and, for me, as satisfying as a pot of good English tea. A bit too much cuteness creeps in at times ("a bit twee," as the English would say), and I found the poltergeist not convincing. (However, I was interested to read in .con's interview with the author that the poltergeist was based on an actual experience of the author's in a real-life small-town bookstore.) All in all, I believe Ms. Fitzgerald will be a wonderful discovery for almost anyone who loves English literature.² von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Small-minded pettiness Von fbm@northnet.com I had previously read, and been most disappointed by, Penelope Fitzgerald's novel *The Gate of Angels*. Thus, it is only because of its strong recommendations and very short length (if it's too bad, at least I won't waste a lot of time reading it) that I took up her novel *The Bookshop*. Dickensian in the naming of places (the book is set in Hardborough, which it certainly is) and some characters, but not in length (only 123 pgs), Lively tells the story of a middle-aged widow who invests her small inheritance in a bookstore, the only such enterprise in her new hometown. In so doing, she makes a few enemies, and is at last forced to succumb to the small-minded pettiness that rural communities can foster. This is a sad book, and it makes one grieve for how mean people can be when they wish. That said, it is an excellent novel, and ample food for thought¹ von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. I was not interested enough to even finish reading it. Von Ein Kunde As with many readers, I was intrigued with the subject of the book and being a lover of English country-sides, people and lifestyles really looked forward to curling up with this book. But I found it so tedious I could not even finish reading it. I thought the plot was lifeless, characters undeveloped. I wanted to get emotionally involved with Mrs. Green - there was such potential for development in this character - the place she was at in life, starting over, not quite fitting in, the bookshop not being wanted - but without the development of the plot and characters, there was no life to this book. My first experience with the author - I won't go running back quickly. A total disappointment.

Kurzbeschreibung From the Booker Prize-winning author of *Offshore*, *The Blue Flower* and *Innocence* comes this Booker Prize-shortlisted story of books and busybodies in East Anglia. This, Penelope Fitzgerald's second novel, was her first to be shortlisted for the Booker Prize. It is set in a small East Anglian coastal town, where Florence Green decides, against polite but ruthless local opposition, to open a bookshop. She had a kind heart, but that is not much use when it comes to the matter of self-preservation. Hardborough becomes a battleground, as small towns so easily do. Florence has tried to change the way things have always been done, and as a result, she has to take on not only the people who have made themselves important, but natural and even supernatural forces too. This is a story for anyone who knows that life has treated them with less than justice..de Penelope Fitzgerald's books are small, perfect devastations of human hope and inhuman (ie, all-too-human) behaviour. *The Bookshop* unfolds in a tiny Sussex seaside town, which by 1959 is virtually cut off from the outside English world. Post-war peace and plenty having passed it by, Hardborough is defined chiefly by what it doesn't have. It does have, however, plenty of observant inhabitants, most of whom are keen to see Florence Green's new bookshop fail. But rising damp will not stop Florence, nor will the resident, malevolent poltergeist (or "rapper", in the local patois). Nor will she be thwarted by Violet Gamart, who has designs on Florence's building for her own arts series and will go to any lengths to get it. One of Florence's few allies (who is, unfortunately, a hermit) warns her: "She wants an Arts Centre. How can the arts have a centre? But she thinks they have, and she wishes to dislodge you." Once the Old House Bookshop is up and running, Florence is subjected to the hilarious perils of running a subscription library, training a 10-year-old assistant and obtaining the right merchandise for her customers. Men favour works "by former SAS men, who had been parachuted into Europe and greatly influenced the course of the war; they also placed orders for books by Allied commanders who poured scorn on the SAS men, and questioned their credentials." Women fight over a biography of Queen Mary. "This was in spite of the fact that most of them seemed to possess inner knowledge of the court--more, indeed, than the biographer." But it is only when the slippery Milo North suggests Florence sell the Olympia Press edition of "Lolita" that Florence comes under legal and political fire. Fitzgerald's heroine divides people into "exterminators and exterminates", a vision she clearly shares with her creator--but the author balances disillusion with grace, wit and weirdness, favouring the open ending over the moral absolute. Penelope Fitzgerald's internecine if gentle world-view even extends to literature--books are living, jostling things. Florence finds that paperbacks, crowding "the shelves in well-disciplined ranks", vie with Everyman editions, which "in their shabby dignity, seemed to confront them with a look of reproach." Pressestimmen `Reading a Penelope Fitzgerald novel is like being taken for a ride in a peculiar kind of car. Everything is of top quality - the engine, the coachwork and the interior all fill you with confidence. Then, after a mile or so, someone throws the steering-wheel out of the window.' Sebastian Faulks `Wise and ironic, funny and humane, Fitzgerald is a wonderful, wonderful writer.' David Nicholls `Its stylishness, and this low-voiced lack of emphasis are a pleasure throughout, its moral and human positions invariably sympathetic. But it is astringent too: no self-pity in its self-effacing heroine, who in a world of let-downs and put-downs and poltergeists, keeps her spirit

bright and her book-stock miraculously dry in the damp, seeping East Anglian landscape.' Isabel Quigley, Financial Times `Penelope Fitzgerald's resources of odd people are impressively rich. Raven, the marshman, who ropes Florence in to hang on to an old horse's tongue while he files the teeth; old Brundish, secretive as a badger, slow as a gorse bush. And this is not just a gallery of quirky still lives; these people appear in vignettes, wryly, even comically animated...On any reckoning, a marvellously piercing fiction.' Valentine Cunningham, TLS