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Chaperoned



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Synopsis

When an old friend invites her to help renovate a bar in a posh resort town, single gal Christine immediately agrees, anticipating two blissful weeks of sun, cocktails, and gorgeous men. Her excitement is short-lived, however, thanks in no small part to her overbearing mother and one heavy-handed guilt trip. Now, for the first time in nearly thirty years, Christine and her best friend Dorothea find themselves saddled with an unexpected chaperone: Christine's father, Heinz. The trip is a catastrophe from the get-go. For starters, Heinz insists on taking charge of the bar's overhaul. And when he learns that the locals are hunting for an escaped con artist, he promptly joins the investigation. At the top of his suspect list? Johann, the handsome, mysterious traveler who makes Christine go weak at the knees. But just when she thinks she can't take one more day of his father knows best routine, Christine makes a poignant realization that will forever change the way she looks at Heinz. Sparkling with humor, this delightful novel, which spent over one hundred weeks on Germany's bestseller list, captures the unique and occasionally exasperating bond between fathers and daughters.

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Customer Reviews

If not for her mother's imminent knee surgery, Christine Schmidt would be free to join her friends Marlene and Dorothea on the island of Nordeney (off Germany if you're a geographically-impaired American reader like me), to help fix up Marlene's bed-and-breakfast. But because her seventy-something dad, Heinz, can't be trusted to cope on his own, she's forced to bring him along. He's color-blind and allegedly has a bad hip, but has more on the ball than both his wife and daughter give him credit for, so exactly who is chaperoning who is ambiguous. On the boat ride over, he meets up with two flamboyantly dressed husband-hunting women, who he decides to chauffeur to the hotel, leaving Christine behind to hike. The wacky high jinks take off from there, as the cast of colorful characters accumulate, and a mystery develops in the form of a guest who doesn't appear to be what he claims, but who Christine falls hard for. Is he really a con man, as many of the clues seem to point to, or is he just the victim of Christine's dad and his cronies' over-active imaginations? Now I get that the whole set-up is supposed to be comic, but especially toward the end, it seemed over-the-top implausible. Still, I enjoyed the rapport between Christine and her dad, found most of the novel engaging and humorous, so my rating is four stars. According to an end note, "Chaperoned" came out in 2008 and was a best-seller in Germany. The pop culture references (except for the penguin movie) may not be familiar to American readers, but it's still a good summer read.

This book starts cracking you up in the first chapter and you're still laughing all the way through it. Christine is 45 and she and a friend are planning on going to help another friend on the island of Nordenay fix up a restaurant there. She is planning on having a little fun and summer romance as well. Her mother calls and begs her to take her father along because she has to have knee surgery and he can't be left alone...because he has a tendency to get in trouble. He looks like Paul Newman and acts like Scooby Doo according to Christine. To me he seemed like Larry David in Curb Your Enthusiasm....he merrily goes along creating chaos, but totally unaware that he's doing it. He's very sweet though and you'll love him. The trouble starts as soon as he arrives in town and she picks him up to begin their trip. He has loaded his suitcase down with tools. While she is in the bathroom he goes off leaving the case while he gets a hot dog. She comes out to find the police hanging over it thinking it's a bomb. He stands on the sidelines watching her trying to get out of trouble while he calmly keeps eating his hot dog. Christine just knows this vacation is going to turn out to be a disaster. Once they get to the island, Heinz, her father, tries to take over telling everyone how to do the renovations. It just keeps getting funnier and funnier. Poor Christine has a chance for a summer

romance but there is a problem there too. The best looking man she's ever seen may be a con man. Heinz and a host of new crazy friends he has made on the island decide to check him out and start following him everywhere. So...a little bit of mystery and a little bit of romance...but mostly just laugh out loud humor. I will definitely be reading this author's books from now on.

When her mother goes into the hospital for knee surgery, Christine reluctantly agrees to take her father Heinz on her two-week working vacation on the island of Nordeney off the coast of Germany. Although Christine loves her dad, and has warm memories of him from her formative years, Heinz can be insensitive, overbearing and outright exasperating -- and not just to Christine, but to everyone he interacts with. Heinz, now in his early 70s, bosses Christine (who is 45 years old) around as if she's still ten. This could be endearing because it's fairly typical of parents who love and care about their offspring to give advice no matter what advanced age has been reached; it's a natural instinct to want to protect your child. But Heinz, who is colorblind, takes being a nudge to a whole new level. He even gives opinions and advice on how others should dress and the colors they should wear! As Christine heads off to buy a dress, Heinz advises her: "Make sure you buy yourself something nice. Colors suit you, too. You shouldn't always wear those frumpy monotone dresses. You're not that old, you know. And besides, it's summer." (236) Aside from Heinz, himself, a short section of the novel beginning with the chapter "A Night To Remember," and other short sections (which seemed superfluous) and some filler dialogue where people keep fetching cups of tea or coffee, or asking each other if they would like tea or coffee, I thought this was an entertaining read. Typical of farce, it was comic, involved the characters in improbable situations and frenzied actions, with twists and turns and a case of mistaken identity. Readers who are fans of farce will undoubtedly love this story.

This book was a bit of a challenge to read for me. It took a while to get to know the characters and understand their roles. Christine, a woman of supposed maturity, knowledge and experience seemed to be without direction. Her father, Heinz, was a pain in the butt - opinionated, judgemental, dictatorial and thought he should always be the center of attention. He actually performed the role of "Chaperone" quite well as he told Christine what to do; how to do it; when to do it and with whom to do it. Had she been an adolescent instead of a 40 plus year old woman, his 'way' would have been a bit easier to digest and accept. Christine snuck around behind his back and she felt like she had to lie to him in order to get away from his constant 'guard'. Yes, there was adventure and a bit of mystery as Christine met "the man of her dreams" but her lack of confidence and self-esteem

almost ruined her chance of being happy. In the end, she finally stood up to her dad and surprisingly, he seemed to 'let go' of his over-protective ways and he actually accepted her choice and decision of what she wanted to do. Throughout the book, the description of the island, beaches and town made me want to try to find it and explore the beauty of it all.

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