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Johnston Public Library Book Discussion Questions

An Elderly Lady is Up to No Good by Helene Tursten

Summary

Maud is an irascible 88-year-old Swedish woman with no family, no friends, and...no qualms about a little murder. This funny, irreverent story collection by Helene Tursten, author of the Irene Huss investigations, features two-never-before translated stories that will keep you laughing all the way to the retirement home.

Ever since her darling father's untimely death when she was only eighteen, Maud has lived in the family's spacious apartment in downtown Gothenburg rent-free, thanks to a minor clause in a hastily negotiated contract. That was how Maud learned that good things can come from tragedy. Now in her late eighties, Maud contents herself with traveling the world and surfing the net from the comfort of her father's ancient armchair. It's a solitary existence, but she likes it that way.

Over the course of her adventures—or misadventures—this little bold lady will handle a crisis with a local celebrity who has her eyes on Maud's apartment, foil the engagement of her long-ago lover, and dispose of some pesky neighbors. But when the local authorities are called to investigate a murder in her apartment complex, will Maud be able to avoid suspicion, or will Detective Inspector Irene Huss see through her charade?

Discussion Questions

1. What did you think of the book overall? Did you enjoy reading it? Why or why not? Did it hold your interest?
2. What did you think of the format of this book, that is, a collection of short, interconnected stories? Would you have preferred a more traditional long-story format? How did the format affect your enjoyment of the book?
3. This book is first in a series and contains a character – Inspector Huss – who appears in another series by this author. Would you read other books in these series? Why or why not?
4. *“But she had learned that it was smart not to reveal that all her senses were in full working order; instead, she allowed people to act in accordance with their own preconceptions. This was often a useful source of information, and Maud could form her own opinion of the person and the*

situation.” Discuss your thoughts about this quote. Do you sometimes downplay your own abilities or skills? If so, to what end? If not, why?

5. The humor in this book is dark. Did you find the book funny or were you dismayed by how the author wrote about murder?
6. Did you find the characters and situations to be believable?
7. Did you have a favorite passage to share with the group? Was there a place in the story where you laughed out loud?
8. Was there anything about the book that you disliked? If you were to rewrite the book, what would you change?
9. Was this a book you read quickly, or did you find yourself slowing down to make it last longer?
10. What, if anything, will you remember about this book a year from now?

Summary from Goodreads.com
Discussion Questions provided by JPL staff