

"Ingo Schulze is our new epic storyteller."  
—Günter Grass, Nobel Prize-winning author of *The Tin Drum*



INGO SCHULZE  
Author of 33 Moments of Happiness

## Simple Stories

*Ingo Schulze*

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# Simple Stories

*Ingo Schulze*

## Simple Stories Ingo Schulze

Prize-winning German writer Ingo Schulze's first novel, **Simple Stories**, is a marvel of storytelling and craft. Set in the East German town of Altenburg after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it deftly leaps among an array of confused characters caught in the crossroads of their country's history: a lovelorn waitress who falls for a visiting West German investor; an art historian turned traveling salesman; a former Communist official plagued by his past; an unsuccessful writer who asks his neighbor to break his leg so that he can continue to live on welfare.

Schulze skillfully intercuts an assortment of moving and comic vignettes about seemingly unconnected people, gradually linking them into an exhilarating whole of tidal unity and emotional force, until we see that all the time we have been reading a novel in glittering fragments, spun by a master. With a piercing eye for detail and a magical ear for dialogue, Schulze portrays the tragi-comedy of ordinary people caught up in the last great historical upheaval of the century.

## Simple Stories Details

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Author : Ingo Schulze

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# From Reader Review Simple Stories for online ebook

## Marina (Sonnenbarke) says

Il titolo dice la verità, queste storie sono davvero semplici. Scrittura minimalista, fin troppo. Storie minimaliste, decisamente troppo, per i miei gusti. Banali: ed era certo quello l'intento dell'autore, descrivere la banalità della vita post-caduta del muro, la DDR subito dopo. A me, però, faceva venire un gran sonno ogni volta che lo aprivo. Mi aspettavo di più.

Note:

- \* mai fidarsi troppo della quarta di copertina;
  - \* ogni tanto essere un po' meno rigidi e abbandonare la lettura.
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## Georg says

Eine klasse Idee, brillant umgesetzt. 13 Kurzgeschichten, die - jede für sich - schon lesenswert sind, ergeben einen schlüssigen, spannenden und unterhaltsamen Roman. Selbst wenn man - wie ich- kein Freund von Ostwestgeschichten ist: Ein richtig gutes Buch.

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## Nathan Modlin says

Vielleicht nur deswegen, dass wir in meiner Sitzung das Buch nicht komplett durchgelesen haben, war die Lektüre ziemlich schwierig zu folgen, beziehungsweise die Zeitstruktur. Sonst sind die Geschichten sehr ineinandergreifen, interessant, und kreativ.

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## Fred Rose says

Ugh. Unreadable. The many separate stories in the beginning may come together to create something great but I have neither the patience or memory to get to that point. Didn't finish..

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## Miriam says

A very interesting read! Not least of all because of the way the story (or rather the stories) are told. At the beginning of the book one might perhaps think that this is going to be a series of independent stories, with each chapter telling the tale of a different character - but that is not the case. Instead it is gradually revealed how all of the tales are carefully woven into each other, with characters meeting and talking about each other, bit by bit revealing how they're connected and detailing how the story of person A ends up influencing the story of person B. It's truly a very exciting read, as the full picture of the community is only gradually revealed to the reader, and the tiniest mention of an event in one of the early chapters might end up being a hint to the outcome of the story of another person who only gets his tale told towards the end! I loved almost every second of reading this book - even though I had to read it for uni ;)!

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## Magdelanye says

To allow that this book is rather amazing is not to say that I loved it. Taking into consideration the fact that it is a translation from the German, I had to work too hard to unravel the various tangled threads that weave through this convoluted tale of dislocation and shifting alliances. I'm sure a lot of the metaphors and allusions went right over my head. At first I was delighted with the quaint table of contents and it was easy to spot the connections between the characters. In a way, it was like peering into a doll's house, observing the parallel lives. But as the number of characters proliferate, and events unfold in various time frames, it is necessary to begin each chapter, narrated from a different perspective, with a radical shift in POV. There is no central protagonist and the connections between these people, often extremely tenuous, are never clearly articulated.

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## Linda says

13 short fragmented stories that will give you a glimpse of how disjointed the lives of East Germans were after the wall came down.

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## Simona says

Credo che il titolo "Semplici storie" riassume molto bene le storie che Schulze ha voluto raccontare. Le storie raccontate in questo libro che si intrecciano l'una all'altra hanno come cornice la Germania dell'Est, la Germania post caduta Muro di Berlino, in cui i protagonisti sono alle prese con delusioni, illusioni, amarezze, come in "Soldi nuovi" in cui una cameriera conosce un uomo giunto in città per sbrigare alcuni affari, se ne innamora, ma il mattino dopo scopre che se ne è andato senza lasciare traccia o in "Sorrisi" in cui padre e figlio si ricongiungono dopo 24 anni. Sono storie semplici, ma anche banali, accomunate da speranze che si sciolgono come neve al sole. Sono storie che ci fanno capire che la semplicità è forse la chiave per raggiungere la serenità.

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## Cheryl says

Schulze has really done something different with this book. Although it's a novel, it is really more like a collection of short stories whose characters' lives all intertwine to create a masterful (yet confusing) tapestry that explains what life was like in East Germany after 1989. Although I know a lot of people who absolutely hated this book, I loved it. It was very well written and entertaining.

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## **Karschtl says**

Dass mir Short Stories nicht liegen, ist ja nicht neu. Dennoch hatte ich gehofft, diese hier wenigstens alle lesen zu wollen. Weil mich das Thema an sich sehr interessiert. Aber nach circa der Hälfte hatte ich wirklich keine Lust mehr, da mich keine der einzelnen Schicksale so wirklich gepackt hatte. Manchmal kommt später auch eine Referenz auf eine Figur aus einer früheren Geschichte, die man aber schon längst vergessen hat (und nachblättern ist zu mühsam, zumindest wenn man das Buch wie ich im Fitnessstudio am Stepper liest). Dadurch, dass die Einblicke in die einzelnen Leben immer nur so kurz sind, entstand bei mir keine wirkliche Basis für Identifikation oder zumindest Interesse für die Figuren. Noch dazu waren die geschilderten Erlebnisse komisch oder uninteressant.

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## **Tumchenmamentumlein says**

Piccole storie dopo la caduta del muro. Pochi accenni al passato, gli episodi che più mi hanno colpita sono la storia della cameriera, il figlio che ritrova il padre dopo 24 anni e l'ultimo episodio in cui due amanti litigano nel bagno. Alta tensione emotiva. L'autore descrive gli eventi con grande semplicità eppure i dettagli sono descritti con precisione e le emozioni dei personaggi colmano il quadro. Osserviamo la scena come in un film.

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## **Georgina Thynne says**

A series of very confusing and minimalist stories, all told by different characters, which only just hang together to give a depressing description of life in Germany after the East and West are united. It is impossible to know who all the characters are, even when turning back constantly to the summaries at the start of each chapter. A very confusing book. And the 'style' is bland and boring (even bearing in mind that I read a translation).

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## **dely says**

The Italian edition I have read has only six stories.

The reader is put into a story without knowing anything about the characters or the plot. There isn't a real plot, it is as if there were many snapshots of common life of common people in East Germany. I thought it could have been interesting, but there isn't much in these stories. They are also interlinked because in a few stories we meet the same characters, but in a different moment of their lives, and this doesn't help, on the contrary, it's even more confusing because there is so little about the characters that it's nearly difficult to remember their names. I was also bored to death and didn't like the writing style, too minimalist.

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## **Kate Picher says**

A collection of unusually described and sometimes confusing stories of life in a small East German town directly after the fall of the wall. I found some of the description filled with anachronisms, which confused me about the time frame. Can't say I would recommend the book, but a few of the stories were entertaining.

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### **Paul says**

This guy weaves a set of short stories into a unified whole so subtly and cannily that you don't notice its happening until well into the book - suddenly you realize - as you are reading - that it is a novel! - the sneaky part is that you don't think about it and decide the author must have been trying to do that - the experience actually shifts from reading a (very) good short story collection to reading a novel - sort of felt like a figure-ground switch in those Gestalt visual illusions, but mental....pretty impressive! I want to read more by this guy....(great translation btw!)

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