



## The Glitter Scene

*Monika Fagerholm*

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### **The Glitter Scene** Monika Fagerholm

Teenage Johanna lives with her aunt Solveig in a small house bordering the forest on the outskirts of a remote coastal town in Finland. She leads a lonely existence that is punctuated by visits to her privileged classmate, Ulla Bäckström, who lives in the nearby luxury gated community. It isn't until Ulla tells her the local lore about the American girl and the tragedy that took place more than thirty years before that Johanna begins to question how her parents fit into the story. She sets out to unravel her family history, the identity of her mother, and the dark secrets long buried with her father. In the process of opening closed doors, others in the community reflect back on the town's history, on their youth, and on the dreams that play in their minds. Soon a new story emerges, that stirs up Johanna's greatest fears, but ultimately leads to the answers she is searching for. *The Glitter Scene* is a riveting mystery that explores the roles of truth and myth, reality and fiction, and the repercussions of family secrets.

“The conclusion of *The American Girl* narrative will delight fans of the series.” —*Publishers Weekly*

“Complex and interesting.” —*Booklist*

“*The Glitter Scene* balances on the ice-cold tones of David Lynch and the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice . . . a remarkable story of guilt, revenge, and betrayal. A beautiful novel where the distance between blissful fantasy and grim reality is never very far.” —*Smålands Posten*

“With the same inimitable style as in the previous novel, Monika Fagerholm opens up a dizzying world full of secrets . . . It is intense and compelling.” —*Västra Nyland*

### **The Glitter Scene Details**

Date : Published August 9th 2011 by Other Press (first published 2009)

ISBN : 9781590513057

Author : Monika Fagerholm

Format : Paperback 528 pages

Genre : Fiction, European Literature, Finnish Literature, Scandinavian Literature, Contemporary, Swedish Literature

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## From Reader Review The Glitter Scene for online ebook

### Gretchen says

This book jumps from 1969, 1989, 2006, and back and forth as the characters tell their stories and their views on the death of an American girl in 1969 in a remote town in Finland. The girl dies from falling off a cliff, and it is assumed that her boyfriend pushed her and then hung himself. But is there more to this story? Various different characters, with varying degrees of connections to this event, tell their stories. As the book goes on, you uncover some answers that relate to this mystery, discover information about mysteries you didn't even suspect, and at last get a final resolution on the American girl mystery. The book is written in an odd style. The best way I can describe it is each character is written in a stream of consciousness style. And you discover as the book goes on, some of the narrators are unreliable. This style of writing was unusual and confusing for me and I felt detracted some from the story. While you get a sense of the character some of what the character says doesn't make a lot of sense (at least to me though some things become clearer by the end of the book). I eventually got used to the style though, but I can't rate the book any higher because of it.

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### Sara says

Won this book to review, but I'm sorry, I just could not get into it. I'm one of those crazy people who like a book with a beginning, middle, and end. This book, however, makes me feel like I'm listening to a story told by someone suffering from attention deficit disorder who has run out of medication.

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### Rebecca McNutt says

It was a bit difficult to stay interested in *The Glitter Scene* for its duration simply because it has an odd style of pacing and leaps from one time to the next with little explanation or movement in the progression of the plot. Nonetheless I still really liked it. It's a captivating book and I loved the vocabulary and the author's way of writing the characters. Although it's a murder mystery, its style reminded me very much of Maureen Medved's *The Tracey Fragments* in that it's very much an "all-over-the-place" kind of story, and it's up to the reader to piece together the flashbacks and memories on their own to put it together.

While this style of writing is creative, it can be really complicated to follow along with and it doesn't necessarily lead up to anything significant. At over 200 pages, it's a fairly long book with a lot of depth and complexity, but it seems to really focus on this one mystery which isn't very mysterious, nor do readers really get a full explanation to what's happening throughout the story.

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### Brittany says

The follow-up to *The American Girl*, Monica Fagerholm's *The Glitter Scene*, sparkles a bit brighter than its older sibling. Which makes you wonder: As the entirety of the two lengthy novels deal with siblings and family relationships - could it be? Is Fagerholm trying to play the two novels against each other? If this is the case, then expect *The American Girl* to commit suicide shortly. No, not the actual American Girl, she's already dead. [And don't fret, that's no spoiler. Fagerholm has an interesting habit of telling you everything that has happened and then retraces her steps as to *why*.]

All joking aside, I really did enjoy *The Glitter Scene* despite being at first wary of its size. Having read some reviews that warn against waiting too long between the books, I dove in quickly. Yes, sometimes the 1000 pages of repetitive nature gets you down, but underneath it all is a very well connected story. Fagerholm must have one hell of a storyboard set up in her office, because the interconnectedness of the characters is indicative of a seriously masterminded plan.

*Disclosure: The above book was provided to me by Other Press through the Goodreads First Reads program. The opinions are all my own.*

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### Leeann says

I honestly could only read the first few pages. I found this style of writing very hard to read. It seemed so fragmented and confusing. I received this book along with American Girl thru a giveaway from Goodreads.com. I probably won't even attempt to read American Girl b/c I assume it will be the same style of writing.

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### Jenni says

Not everyone will like this book. To be honest, I can't even imagine someone saying, "Well, it was so-so"--you either love it or hate it, and there aren't many stories I have run into that are able to do this. The reasons for extreme reactions are: multiple unreliable narrators (a trope which I happen to love!); so many flashbacks and flash-forwards that you run out of breath (I don't mind at all); nothing is said explicitly.

The last point is what makes this really hard to chew, but also why I loved *The American Girl* and now this sort-of-a sequel: in order to find out who killed the American girl, the protagonists have to look deep into their own pasts and face unpleasant truths--but nobody is willing to do it, because they are human after all. Instead, further webs of lies are spun in order to protect the mental well-being of selves and other people while trying to dig into each others' lives, and it's all done to the eventual detriment of everyone. The result is a dream-like story, where you don't quite know whose reality matches what truly happened, and where sentences are cut off like they would in real life when you are about to say too much. The same phrases and the family stories they come from repeat and repeat to a point where they become axioms that are no longer attached to any particular time or reality.

I had just finished reading *Good Morning, Midnight*, which I criticized for repetitions. *Säihkenäyttämö* is riddled with obvious repetitions, but the author lays down the reasons why in the novel. It's all not just intentional, but has meaning. And that's the really fun part about this book: if you try to just skim through to get to the meat of the murder investigation, you're doing it wrong--the phrases and family legends repeat and repeat, but suddenly there is half a sentence that either explicitly explains on a meta-level what is happening, or it shocks you into reality, revealing something you never expected and changes the way you view the characters. This is definitely not a book to read when you are half asleep or distracted.

It's hard for me to say why I like this novel over many other stream-of-consciousness style books, which I often find unbearably gimmicky. There is something honest about the way these characters act and view themselves, as if they are actors on the Glitter Scene that the novel keeps on referring to and the childhood games and plays the children put up; they're all trying to elevate themselves to the stuff of legends when in reality, most of them are petty, gossipy, violent, envious, unhappy people from a very small town who just want to be whisked away. The only thing making their lives glamorous is their proximity to the American Girl and the mystery of her violent end. Does it even matter, then, who killed her? Knowing who did it might break the spell. (Spoiler, sort of: The readers will find out the murderer, but not without some mental gymnastics!)

## **P says**

I am grateful to have won this and its first part as a Goodreads Giveaway. I am equally grateful to be finished with them. Left with many questions at the end of *The American Girl*, I was looking for clarification here. Instead, things were muddled even more. The stream of consciousness style and annoying repetition saw to that! I have NO IDEA what really happened plot-wise. I did like the way the characters lives intersected at all kinds of different points, but I didn't really like anybody! It was quite a dysfunctional lot. I'm gonna need a straight-up, good, old-fashioned STORY now.

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## **Jeanette says**

I won this novel in a Goodreads giveaway. The premise sounded compelling, and at times the book was, but mostly it failed to live up to it's promise. The timelines were difficult to follow as were some of the narrators. I liked the idea behind this novel, but not the execution. It felt like some books from the 90's that tried so hard to be artsy with the narrative structure that they lost readers. I am glad I gave it a try and finished it, but it was not to my taste.

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## **Janne Typpi says**

<http://piippuhyllylla.blogspot.fi/201...>

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## **Mayda says**

*The Glitter Scene* is a novel, in the strictest sense of the term. It tells of Johanna, who lives with her aunt, and who questions her past, uncovering different mysterious elements of her family's history. However, with this book, the story is not the most distinctive characteristic--rather, it is the *storytelling* that drives the reader to finish the story and that remains with the reader long after the book is over. The prose is very artsy, for want of a better term, and the book itself is a remarkably aesthetic work. The multiple voices and mysterious repetitions have a dizzying effect, and they lend the book a dreamlike quality. Reading this book is very much like walking through an art museum and seeing many different colors all at once, or like sledding very fast down a steep hill. The journey, not the destination, is important. If you are looking for a straightforward story geared only toward a plot, then this is not the book for you. If, however, you would enjoy a book that treats the novel as an art form in itself, you might enjoy Monkika Fagerholm's *The Glitter Scene*. I received this book free through Goodreads First Reads.

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## **Molly says**

When I received this book, courtesy of the publisher, I was a little puzzled as it was described as a murder mystery but the cover was unlike any other murder mystery book I'd seen. At this point I have to admit that I am a bit of a font and book nerd and the cover of this volume is absolutely beautiful – not just beautiful to

look at, it is tactile as well (one point scored for the supporters of the “kindle-will-never-replace-that”). But I digress.

I started reading and I kept thinking I was missing words. The style of this book is so peculiar it was like reading Ulysses all over again: you will see what I mean when you read the book. It is like modern art or contemporary classical music: it takes a while to understand, and you think it's really weird, but amazingly it all works, and eventually you do understand it, a little while after having closed the book. Which is exactly what happened to me.

I don't think you can summarise the plot, as it is anything but linear: there are different points of view, flashbacks and overlap between them. It is an “impressionistic” book in that you have to let the words take you where the author wants you, the reader, to be. The characters are viewed from their own point of view and the point of view of one other character in the story: there isn't an omniscient narrator that we can rely on and trust, to help us form an opinion of the characters. This prevents empathising with them, but makes the reader be the narrator him/herself: it is almost as if the story is unfolding in front of our very eyes, with all its complexities, emotions and lack of objectivity.

I liked this book once I finished it – it is, more than a story, an experience or an emotion.

The translator has done a brilliant job for a book which must have been a very difficult assignment indeed.

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### **Laura Walin says**

Fagerholmin kieli on lumoaavaa. Toistoa on paljon mutta sepä ei olekaan rasittavaa vaan luo kirjan ihan omanlaisensa ilmapiirin, joka pistää lukijan pohtimaan, mikä on totta ja mikä on vain jonkun kuvitelmaa. Mysteeri ja draama kiertyy auki vähän kerrallaan, ja kirjailija onnistuu vielä loppuvaiheessakin yllättämään. Se, mikä ehkä jää kaiheartamaan lukijan mieleen on kysymys, miten pienelle ruotsinkieliselle paikkakunnalle kertyykin iin paljon onnettomuutta. Ehkä trilogian päätösosa valaisee tätkin?

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### **Kwoomac says**

I tried very hard to read this book but after 256 pages, I still don't have the slightest idea what's going on. The story's timeline jumps around, the narrator changes, and the different stories don't match up. One character relays a story in which she murders another character. Later, we learn that she may not have killed this character and that said character suddenly went away on vacation, thus explaining her disappearance. BUT, you never learn which version is accurate, at least not by page 256. I was thoroughly confused and thought I'd take a break from reading this. Now, the thought of having to finish the book is making my stomach tie up in knots. Not a good sign. I'm not doing a very good job of reviewing the story, a great review can be found on <http://marywhiplereviews.com>. Check it out if you'd like a comprehensive review of the book. Goodreads giveaway.

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### **Gwilanne Carlos says**

Just couldn't read it

## **Teea Kortetmäki says**

Partly continues in the scenes and stories of The American Girl, yet changing the time and the characters. You could say there are multiple miniature stories going on in the book.

I loved The American Girl and it was one of those books that stay within my thoughts a long time. Compared to that, The Glitter Scene was a bit disappointing experience. Not bad, but this book tried to play too much with the same scene, while losing the small things that were the most fascinating in TAG. To sum up, a bit blunt semi-sequel.

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